

**CONCEPTUALISING COMMUNITY RADIO: FROM GLOBAL HISTORIES TO  
THE KENYAN EXAMPLE**

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By

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In loving memory of my mother Mrs Rael Keter who always believed in my ability to succeed in this academic journey. You are gone but the belief you had in me has got me this far.

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## **DECLARATION RELATING TO PLAGIARISM**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work. I have acknowledged all other authors' ideas and referenced direct quotations from their work. I have not allowed anyone else to borrow or copy my work.

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## ABSTRACT

This study sets out to gain insight into the way that the establishment of community radio in Kenya is located within the global history of ideas about such radio. The first four chapters in this study provide terms of reference for this examination through a series of literature reviews. It sets out, firstly, to locate the internationally shared conceptualisation of community radio within an existing spectrum of approaches to social analysis. It proposes that community radio can be located at the critical, emancipatory end of this spectrum. It then maps out the global circulation of ideas about community radio and proposes that such circulation was informed by the broader history of critical, emancipatory social analysis. The final literature review then deals with community radio in Kenya and examines the way in which the establishment of this sector was shaped by the social and political history of this country. It is argued that the establishment of a community radio sector became possible only when support for emancipatory approaches to media became acceptable in Kenya, in context of the establishment of multiparty democracy. It is proposed, further, that the articulation of a vision for community radio in Kenya depended in part on the existence of international support for such radio and in part on the efforts of local actors in civil society. The empirical component then focuses on the way global ideas about community radio have become realised in Kenya. The study achieves this purpose by drawing on qualitative interviews with individuals from within civil society who have participated in the history of the establishment and growth of community radio in Kenya. These individuals demonstrate consciousness of the internationally shared set of principles that can facilitate a successful establishment of community radio. However, they are also sceptical of the assumption that guidelines for community radio are universally applicable. They point, in particular, to the challenges involved in the realisation of these guidelines in an environment in which economic resources are limited, and which is characterised by extreme social inequality and conflict. The study concludes that it is individuals such as these participants, who are embedded within the local context, who are best placed to articulate locally appropriate alternatives to these guidelines.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and People's Rights
AMARC	World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
AMNET	Alternate Media Network
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAK	Communications Authority of Kenya
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CHE	Commission for Higher Education
CIMA	Center for International Media Assistance
CLAN	Civic Local Affairs Network
CRAK	Community Radio Association of Kenya
DANIDA	Danish International Development
DDC	Switzerland's Development et cooperation
ENA	Eco News Africa
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FM	Frequency Modulation
FOWOPA	Foundation for Women Pastoralists
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KCOMNET	Kenya Community Media Network
KIMC	Kenya Institute of Mass Communication
KMD	Kenya Meteorological Department
KNA	Kenya News Agency
KRECORNET	Kenya Registered Community Radios Network
KU	Kenyatta University
MCDIP	Mang'elete Community Integrated Development

MMUST	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NFCB	National Federation of Community Broadcasters
NWICO	New World Information and Communication Order
OSF	Open Society Foundation
OSIENALA	Friends of Lake Victoria
RANET	Response and Assistance Network
SIDAREC	Slums Information Development Resource Centre
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VOK	Voice of Kenya

## INTRODUCTION

The idea for this study originated from my interest in supporting the growth of community radio in Kenya. In context of my education as a student of Communication and Media Studies at Masinde Muliro and Moi University, I had come to appreciate the role that such radio can play in contributing to the achievement of development goals. It was also my observation that community radio in Kenya was failing to realise its full potential in this regard. Anecdotal evidence suggested to me that the Kenyan community radio sector has been slow to develop and that those stations that have been established tend to be poorly resourced. For this reason, I decided to dedicate my doctoral studies to the exploration of ways in which the community radio sector in Kenya could be strengthened.

However, when I began to review available literature about community radio I realised that there was a need, firstly, to interrogate the assumption that existing guidelines for the establishment of such radio are appropriate to the Kenyan context. Particularly within resources intended for community radio practitioners (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998; The Community Radio Charter for Europe, 1994; KCOMNET, 2014; African Charter on Broadcasting, 2001), discussion of the purpose of such radio and ways in which this can be realised is presented as if it is of universal relevance. There is, in other words, a lack of acknowledgment that ideas about community radio have emerged from historically specific processes. Instead, these ideas tend to be presented as a universally available set of principles that exist separately from the particularities of time and place (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998; Open Society Foundation, 1999; African Charter on Broadcasting, 2001; Australian Communications & Media Authority, 2010; CIMA, 2007). I understand this tendency to be essentialist in nature, operating as a reification of the concept of community radio. I believe that such reification places constraints on assessment of the way ideas about community radio become implemented within a specific context.

With this realisation in mind, I decided to frame this study as a critical investigation into the historical development of ideas about community radio, both globally and in the Kenyan context. My initial perception was that it is possible to identify evidence of an internationally shared conceptualisation of such radio. I aimed to gain insight into how such understanding may have been shaped by the interests and agendas of the individuals and groups who played a role in its articulation. I also aimed to map out how these ideas have circulated globally and how they may have informed the development of community radio in Kenya.

I decided to pursue this goal by drawing on the knowledge and experience of individuals who were directly involved in establishing a community radio sector in this country. I hoped to gain insight into the values and principles that informed their work in this respect. Furthermore, I wanted to trace the origins of these values and principles, in order to determine whether they have a relationship with an internationally shared conceptualisation of community radio, and if so, to consider what that relationship might be. I also aimed to explore how these individuals engaged with the realities of local context in putting ideas about community radio into practice in Kenya.

I understood this research project to have the status of a case study, in the sense that it represents an examination of the way in which internationally circulating ideas and values about community radio are taken up in a historically specific context. It is, more specifically, a case study of a community radio sector as it has come to exist in an African society. The Kenyan community radio sector is understood, within this research design, to be a 'case' of such a sector. It is, of course, understood, that African societies differ from each other in many respects, with regards to factors such as political identity, culture, language and economic conditions. It is, indeed, for this very reason that close analysis of community radio sectors as they have come into existence in different African societies can be of value. This study is offered as one contribution to the establishment of such knowledge about community radio as it exists in Africa.

As part of this study, I set out to explore the ways in which aspects of the social are invoked in discussions of community radio. I was interested, in particular, in scrutinising three terms that recur within these discussions. The most central of these terms, which is embedded in the word community radio itself, is that of 'community'. The other two terms are that of 'empowerment' and 'development', which frequently recur in discussions of the beneficial role that community radio can play in society. I aimed to establish the extent to which these terms are presented as if they exist outside time and space or, alternatively, whether their socially constructed nature is acknowledged. In this way I hoped to make sense of the extent to which conceptualisations of community radio allow for socially situated engagement with ideas about such radio.

As such, the research project is framed as a study in the sociology of knowledge, concerned with the history of the construction and circulation of ideas about society. It focuses on how the articulation of ideas about community radio form part of this broader history of knowledge of the social, as this unfolded in the twentieth and twenty-first century. I understand this broader history to be centrally informed by a series of shifts in the

dominance of different paradigms of knowledge about society. I argue in this study that these shifts in paradigm have had important implications for the way in which community radio has come to be conceptualised both within the international domain and in local contexts.

Part One of the dissertation is presented as a series of literature reviews which aim to establish how the history of ideas about community radio are situated within the broader history of authoritative knowledge about society. With this task in mind, Chapter One sketches out the evolution of paradigms of knowledge about society as these emerged during the course of the twentieth century and beyond. It places particular emphasis on the histories of the three concepts that I have identified as recurring in discussions of community radio – ‘community’, ‘empowerment’ and ‘development’. Against this backdrop, Chapter Two describes the parameters of an internationally shared understanding of community radio, while Chapter Three traces its emergence and global circulation during the course of the twentieth century. Chapter Four deals with the way these ideas are taken up in context of the Kenyan history of community radio. Throughout, the aim is to explore the location of ideas about community radio within the spectrum of approaches to authoritative knowledge of the social that have been mapped out in the first chapter.

Part Two takes the form of an empirical study of community radio as this has developed within the Kenyan context. It draws on qualitative interviews with individuals who have participated in the processes of the implementation of the ideas about community radio in Kenya. In this way, the empirical component of the study further explores the historical patterns in the construction and implementation of ideas about community radio, as identified in Part One. Chapter Five describes and evaluates the research design that was developed for this empirical study and comments on its implementation. Chapter Six and Seven describe the findings of this research.

## **PART ONE: LITERATURE REVIEWS**

### **CHAPTER ONE**

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW I: HISTORIES OF SOCIAL ANALYSIS**

##### **Introduction**

As noted in the introduction to this dissertation, a central purpose of this study is to demonstrate how ideas about community radio have been informed by the broader history of authoritative knowledge about the social. It deals with this broader history as it can be traced from the period in which ideas about community radio first emerged and then evolved and circulated around the world. With this timeframe in mind, this chapter presents a broad-stroke sketch of the history of paradigms of knowledge about the social as these developed from the mid twentieth century onwards. It focuses, as part of this, on the implications for the three concepts that have been noted in the introduction to this dissertation to be core to the definition of community radio; those of ‘community,’ ‘empowerment’ and ‘development’.

Section One draws on historical studies of social science in order to map out broad paradigm shifts that have taken place within this field from the mid twentieth century onwards. It does so by describing the articulation, within the American context of the 1950’s, of a positivist approach to social analysis in the social sciences. The discussion then outlines the global emergence, during the latter half of the twentieth century, of alternatives to such positivist social analysis. It is argued that each of these paradigms deal differently with the concepts of community, development and empowerment.

Section Two then presents an analysis of each of these three concepts as they are invoked within the context of social science as a knowledge domain. The discussion demonstrates how distinctions in approach to these concepts can be seen to be informed by the differences in paradigm. In particular, invocation of these concepts that recur within positivist social science literature can be seen to form part of the maintenance of existing relations of power in society. Reference to such concepts framed by a constructivist understanding of knowledge tends, in contrast, to form part of the interrogation of those relations of power.

## **1. Histories of social analysis: positivism versus constructivism**

This section serves as a review of historical studies of social science that deal with the articulation, in mid twentieth century America, of a positivist tradition in the study of society. It then reviews commentary regarding the emergence of constructivist alternatives to positivist social science in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond.

### **1.1 The dominance of positivist social analysis in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century**

Historical studies of science point out that positivist social science is centrally informed by the understanding that credible knowledge of the social must be based on systematic and objective observation and verification (Bryman, 1988; Delanty, 1997). The emphasis is, furthermore, on observations that can be objectively and precisely measured. For this reason methodical, quantitative research is understood to add credibility to the study of society (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). In contrast, subjective experience is seen to compromise the achievement of scientific insight. Indeed, it is assumed that credible scientific knowledge about the social must not make value-based judgements about its subject matter. Investigation of the social should therefore be designed to minimise the influence of subjectivity (Bryman, 1988). This understanding of authoritative knowledge of the social is based, then, on the assumption of a dualistic opposition between fact and value. The dualism depends on the assumption that truth is arrived at independently of ethical self-reflection or personal subjectivity (Delanty, 1997). It is assumed within positivist social science that through such study it becomes possible to uncover general laws that can be used to predict social processes (Bryman, 1988; Eichelberger, 1989; Delanty, 1997). The assumption is also that over time, through the accumulation of insights drawn from research that meets these criteria, it is possible to achieve scientific knowledge of the social that is universally true (Bryman, 1988; Delanty, 1997).

This ideal of value free scientific study of society gained dominance within American social sciences in the mid twentieth century (Whetsell, Travis, & Shields, 2013 p. 7; Nordenstreng, 2004). Within the social sciences, traditions of study emerged that employed quantitative empirical research and data analysis to draw conclusions about American contemporary society (Anderson, 2007). The emphasis was often on ‘administrative’ research, in which large-scale surveys were used to inform policy development and governmental decision-making processes (Schweber, 2002, p.8). Such studies laid the foundations for the establishment of internationally accepted approaches to the use of



quantitative evidence and statistical techniques for social analysis. These approaches have become standard around the world within research communities in the social sciences generally (Anderson, 2007; Delanty, 1997).

Critical histories of the American tradition in positivist social science point out that it was informed by a functionalist conceptualisation of society. Commentators refer, in this context, to Talcot Parson's theorisation of society, arguing that it gives articulation to the vision of the social that is implicit within social science studies of this time. From Parsons' perspective, society is imagined as a structured system made up of interrelated parts. The constituent elements of this system include a range of social institutions, cultural norms and practices (Urry, 2000; Bourricard, 1981). Each of these elements is defined in terms of the function that it performs within the operation of the system as a whole. Each is understood, furthermore, to contribute to the stability and well-being of society as a whole (Talcot, 1975).

Commentators note that this functionalist vision of society is by its very nature one that is invested in the ideal of social stability. It is pointed out, furthermore, that this vision is accompanied within the social sciences of this time by a more general tendency towards conservatism. It has been argued that this tendency towards conservatism should be understood in context of the degree to which the American government, and the military more particularly, had begun to invest in quantitative social research during the war years. The research traditions that emerged as a result of such support showed evidence of declining confidence in a model of democracy that depends on broad participation by civil society (Gross, Medvetz, & Russell, 2011). Social scientists were, in other words, increasingly skeptical of the idea that ordinary people could be trusted to govern themselves. They argued, instead, for a society governed by social administration in which a class of professionals pulled the levers of power and decided what was best for people (Gross et al., 2011).

The emergence of this tradition of conservative social science is understood to form part of a broad shift towards conservatism amongst authoritative groups and institutions within American society in the post war years. This shift is interpreted as a response to broad social changes that were taking place at this time, which challenged established relations of power. Such challenges could be seen in the increasing diversity of American society, the rise of anti-establishment politics, the strengthening of the civil rights movement and the growth of organised labour. The tendency towards conservatism is read as a response to the threat that these trends posed to established systems of authority (Kim, 2011; Gross et al., 2011).

The shift towards conservatism within the social science community was met with criticism from within its own ranks. Historians point, in particular, to sociologist C Wright

Mills who argued against an emphasis on disinterested observation, proposing that it compromised the responsibilities of social scientists as public intellectuals. He also proposed that democratic society depends on an educated, politically engaged public and that in this context social science should serve to sustain intellectual discourse that involves that public. Mills suggested that in the post-war period the American intellectual community had abandoned this role, at least partly because of the professionalisation of academia. He was, however, a marginal figure within the academic community of this time and his critique of positivist science was not widely supported (Seidman, 2004, p. 97-104).

It is possible to argue, then, that mid twentieth century America was characterised by an approach to knowledge about society that was strongly based in conservatism and as part of this the maintenance of established systems of institutional authority. This tendency could be observed not only within the social sciences but was in fact more broadly indicative of conceptualisations of knowledge about society amongst the establishment (Gross et al., 2011). Later chapters of this dissertation will explore the significance of this conceptualisation of knowledge of the social for the way that community radio came to be imagined at this time.

## 1.2 The constructivist turn

In the late 1960s, social theorists around the world began to call into question the soundness of positivist social science (Sousa, 2010, p. 459; Nordenstreng, 2004; Webber, 2009). It was increasingly argued that studies of the social that do not acknowledge subjectivity will necessarily fail to provide adequate knowledge about human consciousness and social action. Positivist social research was thought to be constrained, in particular, in its ability to scrutinise aspects of human experience that exist outside the realm of an objectively observed world (Fagan, 2003). It was argued that studies of society need to be able to make sense of ways in which human consciousness is socially and historically mediated. As part of this, social science must enable itself to engage with the role that the observer plays in the constitution of social reality. It is because positivist science deliberately evades such engagement that it remains unable to appreciate the effect that historical and social conditions have on the construction of social experience (Fagan, 2003). Instead, it reifies social reality as existing objectively and independently of such processes of construction (Fagan, 2003; Feigi, 2018). Such critique was also accompanied by challenges of the political positioning of positivist social science. It was argued, above all, that the kind of knowledge of the social that

was produced by positivist social science served to justify existing relations of power in society (Fagan, 2003; Nordenstreng, 2004; Webber, 2009).

Such critique was accompanied by the emergence of alternative traditions of social research based on concepts and methodologies that enable engagement with human subjectivity (Nordenstreng, 2004; Riley, 2007). These research traditions can broadly be categorized as being constructivist in nature, in the sense that they were concerned with the way in which human beings make meaningful sense of the world. One strand within the broad school of constructivist social science is represented by interpretive social research, which first emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. This tradition remained invested in some of the assumptions of positivist social science regarding the nature of credible scientific knowledge of the social. In particular, it continued to invoke the principles of neutrality and rationality as key to the production of scientific knowledge. However, unlike positivist social science, interpretive social scientists were centrally motivated by an interest in understanding how people make sense of their own social experience (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 28; Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999, p.7). They proposed that it is not possible to conceptualise the social world independently of the lived experience of its members. For this reason they argued that understanding of social experience cannot adequately be achieved by using positivist methods of research such as surveys or laboratory-based experiments (Malinowski, 1922, p. 18). They drew, instead, on research methods such as field observation and qualitative interviewing because these enable observation of the complexity of social phenomena when they are viewed in social context (Deacon et al., 1999, p. 250). In this way, the interpretivist tradition facilitated the acknowledgement of subjectivity and social context as necessary aspects of knowledge about society (Priest, 1999, p. 100-101; Frome, 2001, p. 39).

A second strand of constructivist social science emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, represented by critical approaches to the study of society. This tradition built on the insights of the interpretivists and, like them, drew on methods such as qualitative interviewing, participant observation and textual analysis. However, in contrast to interpretivism, it rejected the idea that credible scientific knowledge must be free from political interest. Instead, researchers within this tradition began from the assumption that the production of authoritative knowledge of the social is necessarily informed by historical context and social interest. From this perspective it was then also argued that positivist social science tends to be constructed in service of the social elite (Thompson, 1988; Richardson, 2004, p. 47-68). Critical social theorists proposed, as an alternative, that the study of society should stimulate

progressive political and social change. They aligned themselves in this respect with the concerns of social groups that were disenfranchised or marginalised within relations to power. They believed that their main task as producers of authoritative knowledge about society revolved around challenging oppression of such groups (Littlejohn, 2002). As such, the critical tradition in social science offers valuable terms of reference for engaging with the role of power within the history of ideas (Harney, 2012).

### 1.3 The decolonial turn

The challenges to positivist social science referred to in the previous section were primarily articulated by scholars located in Western industrialised nations. It is, however, also possible to identify a parallel history of critique, associated with social theorists based in environments from the global south such as Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012; Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2011; Maldonado-Torres, 2011). One context that was crucial for the development of this tradition of critique was that of international conferences. These were not only academic conferences but also included meetings between representatives of countries to discuss shared political and economic concerns. Historians refer, in this context, to the significance of the Bandung conference of 1955. This is described as the first formal international meeting of African and Asian states with the goal of pursuing cultural and economic co-operation. Many of the participants at this meeting were representatives of countries that had previously existed under colonial rule and had recently gained independence. The discussions that took place at the Bandung conference enabled the articulation of a shared analysis of global relations of power. This analysis drew attention to the continued embeddedness of global economic and cultural systems within the international history of colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). In the years that followed Bandung, such analysis served as the foundation for a tradition of social enquiry dealing with the continuing impact of colonialism on contemporary society. This included critique of the positivist paradigm of social science, which is seen to be informed by an interest in the maintenance of existing global inequalities (Maldonado-Torres, 2011).

This tradition of critique is grounded in the argument that even though former relationships of colonial rule may have broken down, they have left behind a legacy of ‘coloniality’ that continues to inform relations of power in contemporary society. This legacy can be observed in the continued reproduction within new social orders, throughout the twentieth century and beyond, of forms of discrimination and exploitation that are rooted in colonial history (Maldonado-Torres, 2011). Such discrimination and exploitation operated to

entrench disenfranchisement and marginalisation on the basis of social categories such as those of race, ethnicity, gender, class and national identity (Quijano, 2007). Commentators argued that the struggle for liberation and self-determination by the global south require of them to delink social processes from the logic of coloniality, or the ‘colonial matrix of power’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Mignolo, 2011).

Decoloniality theorists argued, as part of such critique, for the reinvention of accepted systems of knowledge production (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012; Fanon 1968). They pointed out that a rigorous approach to the production of knowledge does not have to adhere to the questions, concepts, and standards that had emerged from only one region of the world. Indeed, the system of knowledge production that had been articulated by the West is necessarily compromised, because it is characterised by blind adherence to its own social perspective and interests. There is a need, in other words, to move beyond the limitations of a Eurocentric perspective, within which knowledge production remained bounded by particular geographical, cultural and political horizons (Maldonado-Torres, 2011, p. 10).

It is pointed out, within this tradition of critique, that there is a tendency within Western social science towards the reification of individualism. This is seen to lead to an examination of society in which the individual is situated as the basic unit of analysis for researching all aspects of social life. From this perspective, society is understood to be an atomistic collection of self-interested and self-sufficient individuals whose concerns and actions give rise to the values and institutions around which social life is organised. As an alternative to this vision, decoloniality theorists offer a framework of social analysis that foregrounds communitarianism. Here the well-being of society is understood to be dependent on the connection between individual and community, on relationships within communities and on shared conception of social good. It is proposed that this vision of communal dependence has important implications for conceptualising the kind of change that is desirable in society and how this may be achieved. Such change becomes conceptualised in terms of the interests of the community as a whole (Etzioni, 2003; Adeno, 1993).

From the discussion in this section it should be clear that, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond, a broad spectrum of approaches became established within social analysis regarding the production of credible knowledge about society. Positivist social science can be placed at one end of this spectrum while critical social science and decoloniality theory can be positioned at the other end. The interpretivist approach to social science can be located in between. Within this spectrum, we encounter different conceptualisations of the way in which social meaning is constructed and the role that

historical context and power relations play within this. At the positivist end of the spectrum, knowledge about society is understood to exist separately from social conditions. From the interpretivist location in this spectrum, such knowledge can only be acquired by immersing oneself in social context. The assumption remains, however, that the production of knowledge must occur separately from political interest. At the critical and decolonial end of the spectrum it is assumed that knowledge about society necessarily occurs in context of power relations and will always be informed by political interest. Furthermore, it is argued from this position that credible social research should be emancipatory in nature, serving the interests of the disenfranchised. Subsequent chapters of this dissertation will explore the relevance of each of these perspectives to the conceptualisation of community radio.

## **2. Theorising the core concepts: community, empowerment and development**

The introduction to this dissertation identified three terms relating to aspects of the social that recur throughout literature dealing with conceptualisations of community radio. The first, which is embedded in the word community radio itself, is that of ‘community’. The other two terms, which occur in context of discussions of the benefits that such radio holds for communities, are that of the ‘community empowerment’ and ‘community development’. This next section reviews ways in which these three terms have been defined within the field of social science. It is demonstrated that such definition is informed by the paradigms of knowledge about the social described in Section One of this chapter and by the historical debates that informed them.

### **2.1 Community**

Within the social sciences, there is broad agreement that ‘community’ refers to a group of people that have something in common (Lee, 1992). Such groups are typically understood to share the same history, traditions and cultural background (Kasoma, 2002, p.23). They are bound together by ties of blood, language, history, territory or culture (Upadhya, 2001). It is also generally assumed that such a group exists as a sub-unit of a larger society (Goode, 1957).

One of the most common ways in which social scientists invoke the concept of community is in context of a group of people who occupy the same geographical space. Within such descriptions, community is understood to have a physical boundary that makes it distinct or separate, for example by means of a river or a street. Examples of such geographic communities would include a village, or a neighbourhood within a town (Brown, 2004;

Aggarwal, 2009; MacQueen et al., 2001; Patrick & Wickiezer, 1995). However, the concept of community is also invoked to refer to a 'community of identity', which is bound together not by geography but rather by common identifiable attributes or interests (Aggarwal, 2009; MacQueen et al., 2001). Such communities may exist separately from geographical location with its members identifying with each other across physical boundaries (Etzioni, 1993; Rovai, 2002). Identification with such a community may occur because members of the group share common languages, music, religions or customs. Moreover, identification may also be based on age, gender or sexuality (Aggarwal, 2009). In addition, the concept may refer to a group of people who are brought together by solidarity as a 'community of interest'. Such communities may form part of social movements such as those involving women's rights, loyalty to political party, commitment to peace, concern for the environment, advocacy for public education and so on (Aggarwal, 2009; Sharma & Kashyap, 2014). It is noted in the literature that individuals tend to become a part of such communities first and foremost through personal choice. An extreme version of a community of interest is thought to be an 'intentional community', comprising of individuals who come together voluntarily and are supportive of one another. Examples of such community include mothers of young children who meet regularly, students who form a study group or retired senior employees who meet at a local park (Aggarwal, 2009, p.5).

Within some of these discussions, the community as a social unit is understood to be by its very nature beneficial to society and in particular to play a role in the maintenance of human welfare. Such descriptions often emphasise the fact that community members come together to support one another in achieving their basic needs. They are described as collaborating in order to develop, implement and sustain their own solutions to problems. It is argued that such collaborative processes are crucial to helping the members of a community to shape and exercise control over their physical, social, economic and cultural environments (Community Development Foundation, 2006).

However, some commentators also caution against the assumption that communities are by their very nature benign. They point out that while communities may operate to contribute to the well-being of a society they are also by necessity informed by relations of power. Such power relations may function in ways that are repressive, exclusive and undemocratic (Aggarwal, 2009). Inequality may emerge in the form of uneven distribution of wealth and resources and in context of systematic exploitation and repression of one group by another (Aggarwal, 2009; VeneKlasen & Miller, 2006). Marginalised groups may be excluded from making decisions, from occupying positions of power and from taking part in

activities geared towards making their lives better (Aggarwal, 2009; VeneKlasen & Miller, 2006, p.39). When such excluded groups attempt to raise their voices to correct the wrongs done to them, the dominant groups may resort to direct and indirect form of violence as a way of maintaining their power (Aggarwal, 2009; VeneKlasen & Miller, 2006).

These conceptualisations of community can be located along the spectrum of approaches to knowledge about the social that was described in Section One. As we have seen there, positivist social research is less suited to the study of subjective experience. In contrast, constructivist studies are able to engage with the processes through which people create meaningful relationships with each other and with their social environment. For these reasons, 'community' becomes primarily visible at the positivist end of the spectrum in terms of its existence as a geographical entity. From the constructivist perspective, it also becomes possible to create credible knowledge about communities that exist as groups of people bound together by shared interests and by their choice to associate with each other. This approach allows, then, for an exploration of the role that communitarianism plays within groups, and for an emphasis on how people experience their social worlds.

Furthermore, the 'benign' vision of community as a sub-unit of society that contributes to the cohesion of a bigger social whole can be seen to exist as a normative ideal that is informed by functionalism. As such, it is located at the positivist end of the spectrum of approaches to credible knowledge about the social. From the constructivist perspective, in contrast, it becomes possible to acknowledge that communities are necessarily informed by relations of power. Such recognition becomes possible, in particular, at the critical and decolonial end of the spectrum.

## 2.2 The empowerment of communities

Within social science literature, it is often argued that a community's empowerment starts with that of the individual. Reference is often made, in context of such argument, to the importance of the achievement of individual 'consciousness'. Such consciousness is understood to relate to an individual's growing awareness of their own social condition. It is argued that individuals are best placed to understand their own social experiences and then to define and act upon them, according to their own needs (Rappaport, 1987; Cochran, 1986). Secondly, such consciousness is understood to involve the individual's recognition of their value in achieving change in their own lives. Recognition of the value of the self allows individuals to remain invested in contributing to processes of change because they know that their efforts are worthwhile (Sadan, 1997; Rappaport, 1987). Thirdly, consciousness is



understood to relate to acknowledgement by an individual of their own agency and with this their ability to control their lives and achieve desirable outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Rappaport, 1987).

However, some commentators caution against dealing with processes of empowerment as if they are purely situated within the individual. They point out that such an approach is based in the atomized vision of society discussed in the previous section, in which social processes are understood primarily in relation to the interests of the individual. This vision places limitations on the achievement of empowerment for a community as a whole (Glass, Rud Jr, & Higgins, 2012; Trompenaars & Turner, 1998; Parsons & Shils, 1951). As an alternative, such commentators propose an approach to empowerment that is based in the ideology of communitarianism. This approach starts from the understanding that individuals do not exist in isolation (Glass et al., 2012; Aggarwal, 2009). Instead, the well-being of each member of a community depends on their ability to work together to achieve a common good (Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, & Meyer, 1992; Sadan, 1997; Aggarwal, 2009). Indeed, a community's empowerment only becomes possible when founded within such collaboration (Sadan, 1997).

Within this communitarian understanding of empowerment, consciousness is conceptualised differently from that of individual awareness. Instead, it is understood to involve awareness of shared social conditions; recognition of the value of the contributions that can be made by fellow members of a group and acknowledgement of the agency that can be achieved by collaborating (Keiffer, 1984, Community Development Foundation, 2006; Sadan, 1997; Aggarwal, 2009, Makara, 1994; Minkler, 1992, Rich & Stoker, 2009). It is argued that working together as a community increases the chances of arriving at better decisions that positively influence the lives of community members as a whole (Sadan, 1997). Furthermore, a strong emphasis is placed on the concept of participation, which is presented as fundamental to the successful implementation of programmes that are meant to change the lives of all community members (Aggarwal, 2009; Cavaye, 2006; Lee, 2006).

From this perspective, it is also typically argued that the empowerment of a community is only possible through the achievement of an enabling environment. Such an environment should involve access to both material resources and to knowledge (PAGE, 2016; Lord & Hutchinson, 1993). It is, furthermore, acknowledged that community members play a role in the construction of such knowledge. One way in which such knowledge is shared is when community members come together to deliberately influence change (Lord & Hutchinson, 1993; McClelland, 1975; Aggarwal, 2009).

An enabling environment is also understood to be inclusive of the external context. Reference is made in this context to the role that external agents play in a community's empowerment processes. Such agents may for example contribute to the training and education of community members and the facilitation of participatory processes geared towards self-empowerment (Mekonnen, 2007). They may, alternatively, be involved in monitoring and evaluating a community's own empowerment strategies. It is argued that insights drawn from such observation may help external actors to become more effective in supporting community's empowerment processes (Holland & Ruedin, 2012).

Many commentators that speak from the communitarian perspective also caution that the empowerment of a community is only possible if principles of democratic decision-making are taken into account. Crucially, it should be ensured that all members of a community have agency within processes of empowerment. The achievement of community empowerment depends on the achievement of this requirement (Aggarwal, 2009; Lee, 2006). Guidelines that make democratic participation possible include a commitment to inclusivity, so that everyone is acknowledged regardless of differences such as race, education and occupation (Aggarwal, 2009; Flora, Flora, Spears, & Swanson, 1992; Lee, 2006). As part of such a commitment, there is a need to ensure a relationship of mutual respect in which all community members can be assured that their contributions are welcomed and treated respectfully (Aggarwal, 2009).

This emphasis on democratic decision-making and the maintenance of mutual respect is indicative of the recognition, referred to in the previous subsection, that communities are necessarily characterised by unequal relations of power. Certain individuals or groups may, furthermore, be personally invested in the maintenance of these relations of power (Social Sciences Team, 2005). As a result, access to power may become the preserve of certain groups and not the community as a whole (Social Sciences Team, 2005). Furthermore, individuals may also internalise a feeling of powerlessness which may contribute to their reluctance to participate in empowerment processes. They may for example feel that their own actions are inadequate in influencing the outcome of any empowerment process (Keiffer, 1984). Such powerlessness may lead to an individual's internalised belief that change cannot occur (Lerner, 1986). For all of these reasons unequal relations of power can become deeply embedded within communities. It is also for all of these reasons that empowerment may require external interventions that engage directly with such inequality, in order to undo its influence.

At the same time, the emphasis on democratic process is based on recognition that a community's empowerment can be impeded by external forces, even when these forces are utilised for the good of the community. Commentators refer, in this context, to the relationships of power that exist between external facilitators and the communities that they work with. It is pointed out that external actors need to be wary of technocratic and controlling tendencies that have disempowering effects (Holland & Ruedin, 2012). It is further argued that external assistance is often short term, which poses challenges to the attainment of sustained empowerment (Community Development Foundation, 2006).

These conceptualisations of community empowerment can, again, be located within the spectrum of approaches to credible knowledge of the social set out in Section One. On one hand, the vision of empowerment as located in individual consciousness can be associated with the functionalist view of society characteristic of positivist social science. The vision of empowerment as communitarian and as depending on shared social goals and mutual understanding can be associated with constructivism and with decoloniality theory as well as the interpretivist perspective. Insistence on the requirement of interventions that ensure democratic process in order to mitigate against both internal and external power struggles can again be located as constructivist, at the critical and decolonial end of this spectrum.

### 2.3 Development of communities

Within social science literature, 'development' of a community is generally understood as a process of positive and desirable change, leading to improved quality of life for the members of that group (Cavaye, 2006; Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, 1975; Bellu, 2011). It is further assumed that such changes requires of community members to take part in decision-making processes that affect their local affairs. It is also assumed that desirable changes occur when community members possess the attitudes, knowledge, skills and resources that are crucial for solving their own problems (Cormack, 1983).

Discussions of such change as these emerged in the social sciences of the mid twentieth century tended to foreground the achievement of economic growth as a key measurement of the development of a community (Aziz et al., 2015; Jacobs & Slaus, 2010; Bellu, 2011; Feldman, Theodora, & Lauren, 2015). One reason for this tendency may be that assessment of economic growth is quantifiable and can be approached through the identification of clear and measureable objectives for policy and decision making. As such,

the preoccupation with economic growth as a success indicator can be seen to be informed by the positivist emphasis within the social sciences of this time.

However, since this time, the conceptualisation of the development of a community within the social sciences has become more holistic and comprehensive (Sen, 1999, p.14). In more recent approaches, it is pointed out that development is not only about improvement of the local economy but should involve the more general enhancement of community members' lives (Acuna-Alfaro, 2007). Indicators of successful development may then include better education for all, high standards of health and nutrition, a clean environment, equality of opportunity, individual freedom and a rich cultural life (World Bank, 1991). In contrast to the exclusive focus on economic factors, this understanding of development makes it possible to focus on more than just the improvement of material resources within a community. Instead, emphasis is placed on the extent to which the enhancement of resources leads to improvement of the well being of all community members (Bellu, 2011; Alkire, 2010; UNDP, 2010).

This shift in emphasis can be seen to be informed by an interest in equitable change, which benefits all members of a community. It is also informed by an interest in 'sustainable' development, which is understood to refer to the achievement of long-term prosperity (Stanton, 2007; Costanza et al., 2009). It is argued that such sustainability can only be achieved if economic improvement does not compromise other aspects of a community's life, such as its environmental, political and social well-being (Bellu, 2011; Kates, Paris, & Leiserowitz, 2005).

This people-centred approach to development requires acknowledgement of the autonomy and agency of individuals. Processes of development need, in other words, to give priority to individual aims and choices (Anu, Kati, Eva, & Juri, 2002; Schenck & Louw, 1995). This is because individuals only have the potential to bring about change when they accept responsibility for themselves and for their own actions (Anu et al., 2002). At the same time, commentators also refer to the importance of a collaborative approach, in which members of a community interact with one another in order to realize their desired goals (Nagan, 2016). Within such an approach, community members take part actively in all stages of a development process, from decision making to management, monitoring and evaluation. By participating in these stages, all community members become actively and jointly involved in taking charge of their development (Roodt, 2001).

It is, again, possible to locate these conceptualisations of community development along the spectrum of approaches to credible social knowledge. The tendency to foreground

economic change to the exclusion of other factors can be seen to be associated with the positivist extreme of the spectrum. Increasing acknowledgement of qualitative factors allows for a focus on the holistic well-being of a community. From the critical and decolonial end of the spectrum, it becomes possible to emphasise the need for change that benefits all members of a community in an equitable way.

## **Conclusion**

The first section of this chapter began to build this dissertation's conceptual framework by analysing the history of paradigms of social science as they unfolded from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. It mapped out a spectrum of approaches to credible knowledge of the social, with positivist social analysis situated at one end of the spectrum and critical analysis on the other. The second section added to this framework by tracing approaches in social science to three aspects of the social that are key to the conceptualisation of community radio: that of 'community', 'community empowerment' and 'community development'. This discussion demonstrated that different theorisations of these terms can be located along the spectrum of approaches to authoritative knowledge of the social described in the first section. It is possible, firstly, to identify certain theorisations of these three aspects of the social that are framed by the functionalist vision of society associated with positivist social analysis. As we have seen, historians have described this as a vision that is informed by conservative social interests and with this a commitment to the maintenance of existing relations of social inequality. At the same time, there are alternative theorisations of the three terms that can be located on the constructivist and critical end of the spectrum. From this perspective, the theorisation of the three concepts form part of an emancipatory vision of the social in which the emphasis is on the achievement of progressive change. The next chapter attempts to establish which versions of the three terms are invoked in context of the conceptualisation of community radio.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW II: THEORISING COMMUNITY RADIO

This chapter presents a review of internationally available literature of relevance to the conceptualisation of community radio. It focuses on such conceptualisation as it can be observed in three domains of knowledge: that of academic scholarship, broadcast regulation and media advocacy. It is assumed that, within scholarship, community radio exists as an object of research while in broadcast regulation it is constructed as a legal entity. In the realm of media advocacy, NGO's and media practitioners produce guidelines to assist in the global development of community radio. The discussion identifies an internationally shared understanding of such radio that cuts across these three domains.

Within the realms of media regulation, academic scholarship and media advocacy, the term 'community radio' is usually understood to represent one tier of broadcasting as it exists within a nation-specific system. Typically, it is seen to exist alongside two more tiers: firstly, that of public or state radio and secondly that of commercial radio. The distinctions between these tiers are defined within the regulatory frameworks that apply in those countries and may therefore vary from one social environment to another. It is, nevertheless, possible to observe broad similarities in the way that community radio is defined within these frameworks. The discussion in this chapter maps out these similarities.

Within the realm of media advocacy, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) has played a significant role in the conceptualisation of community radio. AMARC is an international non-governmental organisation which serves the global community radio movement, uniting community radio workers across five continents. As such it is well recognised to play a central role in the establishment and maintenance of an internationally shared understanding of community radio (Delorme, 1992). At the more local level, national support networks for community radio can also be seen to play a role in such conceptualisation. Such networks are credited for facilitating a better understanding of community radio amongst local stakeholders through the distribution of promotional material and educational resources (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). For these reasons, the discussion in this chapter refers to the role that both AMARC and these more local networks continue to play in defining community radio.

In reviewing how community radio is defined within these three knowledge domains, the discussion deals, firstly, with the way the social purpose of such radio is understood. It

then looks more closely at understandings of the way such social purpose can be realised in practice. Throughout, it demonstrates the recurrence, within this literature, of the three concepts that have been identified by this study as core components of the definition of community radio. These are the concepts of ‘community’, ‘community empowerment’ and ‘community development’.

## **1. The social purpose of community radio**

Within discussions of the purpose of community radio, commentators identify groups in society who, in their view, should be the main beneficiaries of such radio. They also map out ways in which community radio should impact on its social context, in order to be of benefit to these members of society. The discussion in this section has been organised around an examination of commentators’ exploration of these two themes.

### **1.1 The beneficiaries of community radio**

Within the literature about community radio, it is generally assumed that the purpose of such radio is primarily to be of benefit to groups in society who are disadvantaged or marginalised. The disempowerment of such groups is typically understood to be informed by the role that social categories such as those of race, gender, or class play within established social systems. These groups are seen to include, amongst others, the youth, women, indigenous people, immigrants, refugees and black communities. The significance of community radio to such groups is repeatedly invoked in both academic and media advocacy literature across the globe (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998; Arora, Ramakrishnan, & Fernandez, 2015; Olorunnisola, 2002; Fraser & Restrepo, 2001; Hassan & Rahman, 2016; Light, 2011; Gumucio, 2005; Boivin, 1993). Similar allusions can be observed in broadcast policies, where keen emphasis is placed on the challenges faced by marginalised groups and the role that community radio can play in addressing them (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2010; CIMA, 2007; African Charter on Broadcasting, 2001). Reference is made to the role that such radio can play in enabling marginalised groups to participate in public debate in order to articulate their perspectives on social issues (Arora et al., 2015; Rukaria, 2008). Such participation is understood to represent an alternative to ‘top down’ structures of public communication, in which voices of officialdom and authority dominate (Gumucio, 2001).

Within such literature, the beneficiaries of community radio are typically referred to as being neglected by other tiers of broadcasting, by print media and by digital media. It is explained that the rural poor, in particular, remain isolated from the mainstream media. Community radio is then cited as one kind of media that serves the needs of these marginalised communities (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998; Johnston & Menichelli, 2007; Siemering, Fairbairn, & Rangana, 1998; Girard, 1992; Patil, 2010).

The groups that community radio stations should serve are, furthermore, understood to take the form of ‘communities’ (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998; Girard, 2001; Kasoma, 2002; Natrayan, 2013). This term is applied to groups of people who share common characteristics or interests (Alumuku, 2006; Girard, 1992; Price & Jo Tacchi, 2001; Jankowski, 2003; AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998; Alumuku, 2006). It is often explicitly defined in this way within broadcast policy. In South Africa, for instance, the broadcasting Act (no. 4 of 1999) describes a community as a “...geographically founded or group of persons or sector of the public that has a specific ascertainable common interest”.

The beneficiaries of community radio are also broadly divided into two kinds of community. On one hand, there are geographic communities, whose membership is determined by the fact that they share the same physical space. This space may be represented, for example, by a township, village or an island (Tabing, 2002; Sharma & Kashyap, 2014). On the other hand, there are so-called ‘communities of interest’, whose membership is defined by shared cultural or social agendas (Alumuku, 2006; AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998). Such groups are typically understood to include religious communities, campus communities and groups who are bound together by their love for a genre of music (Center for International Media Assistance, 2007; Kruger, Monji, & Smurthwaite, 2013). This distinction between geographic communities and communities of interest recurs internationally within different legal frameworks (The Community Radio Charter for Europe, 1994; KCOMNET, 2014).

It should be apparent that the concept of ‘community,’ as this occurs in discussions of community radio, can be located on the constructivist side of the spectrum of approaches to knowledge of the social discussed in Chapter One. We see, for example, that these discussions acknowledge that ‘community’ exists both as a geographical entity and as a set of relationships based on interest. It is also clear that the conceptualisation of community radio is centrally informed by recognition of the inevitable role of relations of power. The concept is, indeed, informed by an emancipatory interest in the empowerment of members of society



who have historically been marginalised. As such, the invocation of the word ‘community’ can be located at the critical end of the spectrum of approaches to knowledge.

## 1.2 How an audience benefits from a community radio

In context of this literature review, the researcher was able to identify eight main themes that recur within discussions of the potential benefits that community radio holds for marginalised communities. Firstly, such radio is understood to play a role in strengthening civil society. Here it is typically noted that communities’ marginalisation and oppression are often exacerbated by a lack of access to media as a platform for communication and debate (Johnston & Menichelli, 2007; Siemering et al., 1998). It is argued that the establishment of community radio stations within such environments can help to establish such access (Fraser & Restrepo, 2001; Van Zyl, 2005). Stations can then help to mediate the relationship between communities and local authorities and politicians (Fraser & Restrepo, 2001). They can do so, particularly, by providing platforms on which community members can speak out about their concerns and participate in decision-making processes. In this way, such radio contributes to communities’ self-empowerment and, as such, to the strengthening of democratic culture (CIMA, 2007; Van Zyl, 2005; Ngugi, 2015).

Secondly and as a closely related issue, community radio is generally understood to play a role in the safeguarding of human rights. It may do so, for example, by providing a forum in which community members can agitate for access to basic services like clean water and electricity (Gumucio, 2001; Van Zyl, 2005). Commentary suggests that marginalised groups often establish stations specifically to highlight their rights and interests (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998, Gumucio, 2001).

Thirdly, community radio stations are seen to have the potential to act as agents of peace. There is general emphasis, within the literature, on the role that such radio can play in peace building strategies, and particularly in reconciliation processes. It is understood to play this role by adopting a non-violent stance and playing a role in conflict resolution and conflict management (Shahzalal & Hassan, 2019; Ahalt, Grant, Inks, & Wolff, 2009). The role that community radio can play in this regard is often strongly supported by international organisations with a peace-building agenda (Cammaerts, 2009).

Fourthly, community radio is understood to play a role in improving a community’s local economy. Here it is argued that such radio can enable a collective assessment by community members of their own economic conditions and a review of options for improving them (Shahzalal & Hassan, 2019; Fraser & Restrepo, 2001; Kasoma, 2002). In

addition, involvement with community radio stations can also provide communities with opportunities for skills development and the creation of job opportunities (Johnson & Menichelli, 2007).

Fifthly, community radio is believed to have the potential to promote the health and general well-being of communities (Ahalt et al., 2009; Waters, James, & Darby, 2011). Here commentators suggest that such radio may be useful in educating communities so that they are better able to take care of their own health. Such commentary occurs, in particular, in context of discussion of collaboration between community radio and organisations that deal with health concerns such as hygiene, dengue fever, nutrition and HIV/AIDS (Waters et al., 2011).

Sixth, community radio is often recognised as a potential resource in addressing environmental concerns. Mention is made, in this context, of the role that community radio can play in discouraging people from engaging in activities that can be detrimental to their environment. Examples of such commentary include reference to the felling of trees and the use of pesticides that contribute to environmental degradation (Shahzalal & Hassan, 2019; Gumucio, 2001). By raising awareness about such concerns, community radio is understood to play a constructive role in conservation and prevention of environmental degradation (Gumucio, 2001; Van Zyl, 2005).

Seventh, community radio is referred to as playing a role in the enhancement of access to education (Al-Hassan, Alhassan, & Abdulai, 2011; Gumucio, 2001; Ahalt et al., 2009). It is seen to do so, firstly, through programming that provide educational content even to far-flung areas, where such resources tend to be non-existent. In this way, community can operate as an infrastructure that enables distance education (Gumucio, 2001).

Finally, community radio is understood to play a role in the protection and nurturing of local culture. Reference is made, in this context, to the role that community radio can play in preserving a community's identity or character by laying emphasis on such culture (Alumuku, 2006; Fraser & Restrepo, 2001; Fairchild, 2001; Shahzalal & Hassan, 2019). It is often mentioned, within such discussion, that community radio can assist in the preservation of local languages. Such preservation is understood to be of great importance, given that many local languages are being threatened with extinction. It is argued that community radio can act as a prime defence against this threat to language and culture and, with this, the impoverishment of cultural diversity (Fraser & Restrepo, 2001; Gumucio, 2001).

It is possible to conclude, from a review of this list, that commentators generally assume that the purpose of community radio is to facilitate social change in a way that will be

of benefit to marginalised communities. Such change is understood, furthermore, to be achieved through mobilising marginalised groups to initiate such change on their own terms. This assumption can be observed, in particular, within references to the role that such radio can play in strengthening civil society, upholding human rights, providing for access to education and strengthening the local economy. In other instances, the list of benefits can be seen to advantage not only marginalised people but also more privileged social groupings. This applies, in particular, to the role that community radio can play in peace building, health, promotion of environmental awareness and the nurturing of cultural heritage.

It would seem, then, that conceptualisation of the purpose of community radio is centrally embedded in the notion of community empowerment and community development as envisaged from a critical perspective. Although some reference occurs to ways in which more privileged members of society can benefit from these processes, the main emphasis remains on historically marginalised groups. The ways in which such communities may benefit is, then, conceived of in holistic terms, embracing a wide range of aspects of social life. In this sense, conceptualisation of the purpose of community radio can again be located on the constructivist, communitarian and critical side of the spectrum of approaches to knowledge of the social mapped out in Chapter One.

## **2. Realisation of a community radio's purpose**

Commentary on how community radio can achieve its purpose often deals with the potential power of radio as a medium and how this power can be taken up by a community radio station. Reference is also made to the type of relationship that should exist between community radio and the community it serves. In addition, commentators explore the guidelines that community radio stations should follow to mediate between the interests of the communities they serve and other social agendas. Finally, they focus on how a community radio station can achieve its purpose through its approach to radio production. The discussion below deals with each of these four areas in turn.

### **2.1 The power of radio**

Radio is described in literature about community radio as a medium that is well suited to addressing the needs of marginalised communities (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998; Alumuku, 2006; Van Zyl, 2005). It is understood to have this potential because, more than any other mass medium, it enables communities to have access to processes of

public communication. As such, it is a medium that operates at the ‘grass roots’ level (Khan, Mahmudul, Firoz, & Shah, 2017; Khan, 2014; Fraser & Estrada, 2001).

Commentators point out, in this context, that radio listenership continues to be larger than that of any other mass medium worldwide, reaching to all corners of the globe (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). One reason for this is that access to radio is relatively cheap and easily affordable, even to the poor (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998; Alumuku, 2006). Furthermore, radio is accessible to people who cannot read (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998). Such commentary challenges the assumption that more sophisticated media such as television, the internet or social media will replace radio within the foreseeable future.

Radio is also thought to be more accessible for the purposes of production than print media or television because the establishment and maintenance of a small radio station is relatively simple and inexpensive (Gordon, 2016; Fraser & Estrada, 2001; AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998). Production costs are lower, because equipment is far easier to maintain and does not need constant intervention from engineers beyond some initial training (Fraser & Estrada, 2001).

More recent examples of such discussion maintain that all of these affordances remain true in the digital age. Here it is argued that radio is particularly adaptable, responding quickly to the potential advantages of digital technology (Mano, 2012; Dubber, 2013; Kaul, 2012). Cell phones have, for example, become key to the distribution of radio signals in areas with poor telecommunication infrastructure (Mano, 2012). Stations have also developed strategies that enable them distribute and receive content through satellite links and the internet (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998).

The remainder of this section focuses on what commentators say about the requirements of harnessing the power of radio for the realisation of the eight benefits that were listed in the previous section.

## 2.2 The relationship between a station and the communities that it serves

It is generally pointed out that the goals and objectives of community radio can only be achieved when stations are ‘community based’. It is, in other words, crucial to establish a relationship of ownership and control of a community radio station by the particular group of people it is supposed to serve. For such a relationship to be achieved, those people must be centrally involved in the establishment of a station. They should, firstly, participate in a process of consultation in order to define the purpose of the station and how this purpose can

be achieved. They should also, thereafter, contribute directly to the establishment and further management of the station, drawing both on their own resources and those acquired from benefactors. If these steps are followed, stations have the potential to operate in service of such a community, responding to their needs and desires (Kasoma, 2002, Open Society Foundation, 1999). It is also generally argued that the long-term sustainability of stations depends on this relationship of community ownership (Fairbairn, 2009).

At the same time, it is acknowledged that the establishment and maintenance of a community radio station tends to require the involvement of groups from outside the community who are invested in serving that community. Such groups may include non-profit organisations and groups that are responsible for services provided by the state or local council (Open Society Foundation, 1999; Jankowski, 2003; Lush & Urgoiti, 2011). It is argued that the involvement of such groups need not lessen the extent to which communities have ownership over a station, as long as systems are in place to protect such ownership (Fraser & Restrepo, 2001).

Crucial to such systems of ownership are guidelines for ensuring that community members' participate in the management and the daily running of a station. These systems should be designed to involve them in decision-making processes (Fombad, 2016; Open Society Foundation, 1999; Kasoma, 2002). As part of such a system, community members should be represented within a station's governance and management structures (CIMA, 2007). Such members are then tasked with ensuring that the station responds to the needs and interests of the community whom they represent (Kasoma, 2002).

Community members are, furthermore, expected to be involved in the production of the station's programming (Mhagama, 2016; Jankowski & Prehn, 2002; Urgoiti, 1999; Berrigan, 1979). Such involvement enables them to have a say in the selection and provision of content (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998; Lewis 1976; Girard 2001; Wanyeki 2000). In this way, community radio is understood to 'become the voice' of a community, representing and articulating the needs, wants and concerns of its members (Maheshwari & Supriya, 2018; Open Society Foundation, 1999). One way in which such involvement is achieved is through the establishment of fora that are convened regularly, where community members can discuss plans for programmes (Open Society Foundation, 1999). Guidelines for the management of community radio stations typically foreground the need for such fora in order to facilitate on-going interaction between a community radio station and the community that it serves (Fairbairn 2009; Girard 2001; OL/MCM, 2004).

Of equal importance is thought to be the direct involvement of community members in the production of programmes, by means of volunteerism. Community radio stations are typically expected to recruit volunteers from the communities they serve (Maheshwari & Supriya, 2018; AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998). Such volunteers are understood to be essential to strengthening the relationship between a station and its community. One reason for this is that their membership to that community is understood to ensure that they have a well-informed understanding of the needs of that community and can represent them within the station (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998).

There are, however, also some instances of scepticism within the literature regarding the value of depending on volunteers. It is argued, in particular, that it can become difficult to rely on a volunteer model in contexts that are economically fragile (CIMA, 2007). Communities that are faced with lack of employment view radio stations as avenues for employment and under such conditions volunteerism becomes fraught. Reference is made to the experiences of community radio stations in South Africa, where volunteers abandoned stations upon their realisation that there was insufficient income to cater for salaries (Siemmering & Fairbairn, 2007).

Within this discussion of how ideas about community radio can be implemented, there is ongoing acknowledgement of the inevitability of relations of power. A key strategy for engaging with these relations of power is that of participatory communication. There is, in particular, a strong emphasis on the articulation of guidelines that can enable members of a community to establish shared ownership of a station, despite the existence of relations of power. It can be argued that the articulation of such guidelines becomes possible because the conceptualisation of community radio is located on the constructivist and communitarian end of the spectrum of approaches to social knowledge referred to in the previous chapter. It is from this location that the existence of power relations and the influence of social interest become visible and along with this the need to conceive of shared practices and systems through which the influence of power can be managed.

At the same time, there is recognition within the literature that the implementation of these guidelines may pose difficulties in certain social contexts. This can be observed, in particular, in context of scepticism about relevance of the volunteer model within economically fragile environments. As such, these debates reveal some consciousness of the threat that an essentialist understanding of community radio may pose to its implementation in such environments.

### 2.3 Mediating between community interests and other social agendas

Discussions of community radio also make reference to the need for guidelines and systems that can protect the interests of communities so that they are not compromised by other social interests. Of particular relevance, here, is protection from the influence of market interests. Community radio stations are expected to have a non-profit structure, which is supposed to safeguard them from commercial exploitation. It is often noted, in such discussion, that community radio cannot be seen to operate like commercial radio, in which the primary value of an audience is understood to be the extent to which it can be delivered to advertisers (Lush & Urgoiti, 2012; Jankowski, 2003; Buckley, 2009; Open Society Foundation, 1999; African Charter on Broadcasting, 2001; Australian Communications & Media Authority, 2010; CIMA, 2007). While profit making is the central purpose of commercial radio, it is not the reason why community stations are established (Brunetti, 2000; Kasoma, 2002; Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Van Zyl, 2005).

At the same time, commentary warns against the assumption that it is inappropriate for community radio stations to integrate income-generating strategies within their operations. One of the central objectives of such stations should, in fact, be to strive for financial sustainability. Income generation is therefore a desirable goal as long as any surplus money is reinvested in the station and its community (Kasoma, 2002; Mtimde, 2000). In contrast to a commercial station, no individual member can claim personal ownership of money that is generated by the station or given to that station. For this reason, financial transparency becomes key to the management of stations in order to erase any doubt that board members or management are being privately enriched. Some countries have put in place regulations to enforce such financial accountability and transparency (Fairbairn, 2009; Mtimde, 2000).

Commentators also note that community stations need to be protected against the influence of political interest. Here it is pointed out that stations need to operate independently, without any form of interference from the government or political parties (Lush & Urgoiti, 2012; Buckley, 2008; Maheshwari & Supriya, 2018). This should not be interpreted to mean that such radio should reject financial assistance from government. However, when financial assistance is provided, there is a need to ensure that the station's independence is not compromised (Lush & Urgoiti, 2012). Such protection can be achieved through the provision of transparent contractual agreements (Lush & Urgoiti, 2012).

A third threat to the interests of communities that is frequently referred to is represented by religious institutions. Here it is often acknowledged that a community radio

station may be established to serve the interests of religious groups (Gumucio, 2001; Van Zyl et al., 2003). Such stations are understood to focus on religion because they target a religious community and therefore to serve the interests of that community (Kebede, 1999, p.2; Mjwacu, 2002, p.1). In many cases, however, geographic community stations are reluctant to include religious programming because of the complexity of responding to the diversity of religious groups within their target community (Girard, 2007; Habteab, 2004).

Within this discussion there is, again, constant acknowledgement of the way relations of power and the existence of social interests need to be managed in order to ensure that a community radio station serves its purpose. Such purpose can only be achieved if a station responds to the requirements of participatory communication and as part of this to the need for ownership and control of a community radio station by its target community. For this to be possible, stations need to be transparent and accountable in the approach to their own management. The conceptualisation of empowerment that informs this discussion can clearly be seen to locate itself within a constructivist, communitarian and an emancipatory understanding of social knowledge.

#### 2.4 Guidelines for programming and production

Community radio is generally expected to provide its audiences with a diversity of programmes in order for it to achieve its purpose. Such programmes can be presented in a wide variety of formats, which may include (amongst others) roundtable discussions, reportage, interviews, talks, call-ins, debates and live broadcasts of meetings in the community (Fraser & Restrepo, 2001; Howley, 2005; Jankowski, 2003; Rennie, 2006; Open Society Foundation, 1999). These formats are, indeed, similar to those that form the basis of commercial and public radio. The key difference in the case of community radio is found, rather, in the locally grounded and participatory nature of its approach to content generation. The emphasis is very powerfully on ensuring that the perspectives and interests of a station's target audience is represented in its programming (Kuyucu, 2014).

Guidelines for community radio programming state that the interests of a station's audience should be the central reference point for the selection of content. Content is expected to cover the expressed desires and needs of that audience (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998; Lewis & Booth, 1989; Ojebode, 2016; Ojebode, Ayobami, & Akingbulu, 2009). It is typically assumed that such content should deal with ways of improving a community's quality of life, for example through economic growth, promotion



of health and engagement with environmental concerns (Fraser & Restrepo, 2001; Johnson & Menichelli, 2007; Jankowski, 2003).

The literature also generally notes that a community radio station should disseminate its content in languages that are well understood by the community it serves (Githaiga, 2008; Fraser & Estrada, 2002; Alumuku, 2006). Indeed, it is argued that the presence of local languages and expressions within a station's programming is essential to the project of community empowerment and development (Githaiga, 2008; Chapman, Blench, Kranjac-Berisavljevic, & Zakariah, 2003).

When it comes to processes of production, commentators stipulate that the purpose of community radio can only be realised if community members become directly involved in a station's programming (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). This should be achieved both through a high level of audience participation and the direct involvement of community members in the production of programming. Through such participation, stations can ensure that the content of programming is relevant to their audience's needs and interests (Fraser & Estrada, 2001, p.57). Contributions from community members can ensure that programming includes reference to experiences and events that are of unique significance to them (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Tabing, 2002). Such contribution also provides opportunities for community members to participate in decision-making processes as a way of taking charge of their own development paths (Mhagama, 2015).

Finally, commentary suggests that community radio should carry out locally grounded audience research in order to evaluate and improve its content. This research is expected to establish how audience members respond to existing content and also to establish what other kinds of programming they may find desirable. It is generally assumed that their response to such research will help stations identify the kind of content that might benefit that community (Fraser & Estrada, 2001, p.52; Kasoma, 2002). One proposed guideline for pursuing such research is by integrating processes of community consultation within stations' daily operations. This can be achieved, for example, by setting up regular meetings where community members become involved in the assessment of programming. These goals can also be achieved by asking listeners questions about programme content when they call in to the station to participate in on-air discussions, or by asking visitors to the station to fill in simple questionnaires (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998). Focus group discussions are also thought to be an ideal method where insights of relevance to community radio's content can be obtained (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). Reference is also made to the

establishment of ‘listener clubs’, which are thought to help community radio stations develop content that is relevant to their audiences (Faisal & Alhassan, 2018; Chirwa, 2005).

However, the use of a locally based audience research as a means to successfully evaluate and improve a community radio station’s content has been an object of criticism from researchers, most of whom advocate for more qualitative and critical approaches to audience studies. These researchers question the potential of an audience, whom they refer to as being diverse, to effectively engage in an alternative or oppositional interpretation of media’s content (Napoli & Voorhees, 2017). Their scepticism, in more general terms, is that such an audience may fail to answer detailed questions that require of them to interpret media’s content given their inability to remember everything in great detail. These critics argue that seeking for people’s detailed accounts on media products of the past is not sufficient as a strategy for determining its value. One problem, in this respect, is that over time, the accuracy of listeners’ recall of past content tends to decline (Mytton, Unesco, UNICEF, & BBC World Service Training Trust, 1999; Webster, Phalen, & Lichty, 2006). Doubts also emerge on the effectiveness of the use and value of listener clubs in improving community radio programmes. Critics propose that club members’ participation in feedback is strongly informed by power relations that exist amongst those members (Chirwa, 2005; Banda, 2007; Nutrohealth For Development, 2009; Manyozo, 2005).

These guidelines can be seen to be representative of a participatory approach to communication. As such, they enable the production of content relevant to the needs and interests of a local community. Indeed, the fulfillment of the vision of community radio depends on such participation. This suggests an approach to community empowerment and development that is, again, located at the constructivist, communitarian and critical end of the spectrum of approaches to knowledge of the social.

## **Conclusion**

It has been demonstrated, in this chapter, that community radio as it is conceived of internationally is informed by a constructivist, communitarian and critical framework of social analysis. As such, it is strongly anchored in commitment to emancipatory social change. Furthermore, its approach to the achievement of such change is based in recognition of the role that very localised social context plays in the shaping of social experience. And yet, as we saw in this dissertation’s introduction, literature that deals with the implementation of this shared set of ideas has a tendency to be reified as if they are universally applicable. This is true, in particular, for literature located in the realm of media advocacy, in which

NGO's and media practitioners produce guidelines to assist in the local and global development of community radio. Such reification becomes problematic when one considers the differences in context that characterise the environments of community radio around the world. As commentators referred to in this chapter have pointed out, some of the practices that have been developed in order to achieve the goals of community radio in one environment may not translate well to another. Two key examples of such a practice appear to be that of volunteerism and audience research, which are generally presented as being central requirements for the achievement of participatory programming. Discomfort with the assumption of universality tends to surface, in this way, when discussion deals with ways in which the ideals of community radio can be realised in practice. In subsequent chapters of this dissertation, the importance of acknowledging such difference in social context is further explored.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LITERATURE REVIEW III: THE GLOBAL HISTORY OF COMMUNITY RADIO

#### **Introduction**

In Chapter Two it was concluded that it is possible to identify, within available literature, a globally shared set of normative ideas regarding the definition and purpose of community radio. This next chapter focuses on the historical development of this set of ideas by examining the contexts in which they were first articulated and then tracing their international circulation.

In order to establish contextual terms of reference for this discussion, Section One reviews literature dealing with the broader history of international debate about the social purpose of media. The focus is on debates that deal with the relationship between the media on one hand and concepts of ‘development’ and ‘empowerment’ on the other. As we have seen, in Chapter One, concern about the location of systems of knowledge production within global relations of power was central to the ‘decoloniality’ debates. It is proposed, in this next section, that a key site for the articulation of these debates as they apply to media was the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). This location is of significance to this study since, as will be demonstrated in later chapters, UNESCO has played a central role in the international circulation of ideas about community radio.

Section Two reviews literature dealing with the global history of community radio. It traces references, within this literature, to the emergence in the mid twentieth century of a shared set of ideas about such radio. It then maps out reference to a series of waves in the international circulation of these ideas from the 1950s onward. The discussion attempts to make sense of these patterns of circulation in context of the history of international debate about the social purpose of media, as discussed in Section One.

#### **1. Inside UNESCO: a history of debate about the social purpose of media**

An important moment in the history of global debate about the social purpose of media (and particularly about the relationship between media, development and empowerment) occurred within the United Nations in the 1970s. It is of relevance that, at this time, developing nations were becoming increasingly vocal about their own marginalisation within global relations of power. The resulting discussions formed part of the broader emergence of debates concerning coloniality, as discussed in Chapter One. In context of these debates it became increasingly

possible to interrogate established assumptions about the role that media plays in the international domain within processes of development and empowerment. The discussion in the first subsection, below, maps out these debates as they originally occurred within UNESCO and then examines their continued relevance within the contemporary world. The second subsection then presents an examination of the history of ideas about the relationship between media, empowerment and development, as this has occurred within UNESCO.

### 1.1 Media, empowerment and development – the NWICO debates

In the 1970s, debates within the United Nations became focused on the relationships of inequality that existed between western industrialised nations and the developing world. Many participants in these debates represented countries that were newly liberated from colonial rule and who were in the process of laying claim to their own political sovereignty and economic development (Carlsson, 2003). These countries challenged western nations, pointing out that industrially advanced countries dominated the international political and economic landscape. They described such dominance as an impediment to the attainment of equal status for developing countries within the international domain and agitated for recognition of their interests within the world community (Okeh & Sumaya, 2012; Nordenstreng, 2011; Vincent, 2013). They pointed out that western, industrially advanced nations were beneficiaries of colonialism. They argued in this context for a process of decolonisation through which structured relationships of global inequality could be dismantled (Carlsson, 2003). Only through such a process of decolonisation would it become possible to establish the conditions that would enable development in the so-called ‘third world’. In context of such arguments, development was initially understood to refer to economic growth but it gradually also came to include advancements in political, social and cultural spheres (Carlsson, 2003).

As part of these debates, representatives of developing countries also pointed out the extent to which western, industrial nations dominated the international media landscape. They argued that such dominance created imbalances in global communication, leading to a one-way flow of information in which media was produced by the developed world and then circulated globally. This arrangement was understood to contribute to the maintenance of global relationships of inequality because developing nations could only play a marginal role in their own representation within the international domain. Furthermore, the sovereignty of developing nations were placed under threat because media representations that flowed from the centre of the global economy to its margins were controlled by countries from the West.

This relationship of so-called ‘cultural imperialism’ was understood to impact on the ability of developing countries to lay claim to the authority of their own national and cultural identities (Raube-Wilson, 1986; Carlsson, 2003).

The concerns raised by the developing countries led to the formulation of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). Reference to NWICO emerged in context of the MacBride Commission, a UNESCO panel set up to formulate guidelines that could address the power imbalances within the international media landscape. These guidelines paid particular attention to the need for a free and balanced flow of information across the international domain. It was argued that this free flow of information could be achieved by challenging the degree to which former colonial powers were controlling systems of communication around the world (Nordenstreng, 2011; Okeh & Sumaya, 2012). It was thought that this imbalance in power could be addressed by ensuring that developing countries established control over the production of their own media, informed by the needs and aspirations of local communities (Vincent, 2013). Such control was thought to be key to their achievement of autonomy and their attainment of equal status within the global domain. The strengthening of local media sectors would, furthermore, operate to consolidate democratic processes within these countries since local control of the media would enable participation of citizens in decision-making processes (MacBride Report, 1980). In this way, NWICO articulated a set of guidelines that were a prerequisite to the development and empowerment of these nations (Carlsson, 2003; Raube-Wilson, 1986).

The NWICO debate challenged established assumptions amongst the UN’s member states with regards to the role that media plays in processes of development and empowerment. Arguments for the decolonisation of global communication systems put into question the idea that these media systems were free and fair and that they could contribute unproblematically to global processes of democratisation and development. The United States and Great Britain, in particular, expressed discomfort with the terms of reference of these discussions. Indeed, by the mid 1980s, both of these countries had withdrawn from UNESCO, citing the organisation’s role in the articulation of NWICO as one reason for doing so. The withdrawal of these two powerful nations impacted heavily on UNESCO’s ability to discharge its functions. In the longer term, in context of such lack of support from industrial nations, the concept of NWICO was withdrawn from UNESCO’s international agenda (Vincent, 2013; Carlsson, 2003).

Some commentators have proposed that, given the progress that has been made since the 1970s in the establishment of media systems in developing nations, the concerns of

NWICO have now been put to rest. Indeed, from this analytical perspective, it is suggested that the concerns raised in context of NWICO are no longer of global relevance. Such commentators point out that flows of information within the global media landscape have greatly diversified and include a far higher contribution from the developing world than was possible in the 1970s (Carlsson, 2003; Nordenstreng, 2011). Furthermore, the rise of digital media has radically transformed this landscape, so that media has become less constrained by economic, social and political boundaries. Commentary suggests that in this new digital era, many more sources of news are available to people around the world than was conceivable twenty or thirty years ago and the circulation of news has become far more decentralised (Okeh & Sumaya, 2012; Carlsson, 2003).

However, from a more critical perspective, it is argued that the concerns raised within UNESCO in the 1970s about global inequality still apply within the contemporary media sphere. Within such analysis it is pointed out that the industrially advanced nations continue to command more than 70% of the world's wealth (Fuchs, 2008; Sklair, 2002; Fuchs, 2010). Furthermore, the corporations that own and control global digital media systems are primarily located in these Western nations (Fuchs, 2008; Sparks, 2012). Developing nations continue to occupy a subordinate position within the global landscape, with their economic and political interests remaining subordinate to that of developed nations (Sparks, 2012, p. 9). Commentators describe these conditions as resulting from what they refer to as modern imperialism. Members of developing nations continue to speak of the need to defend their sovereignty against such dominance (Fuchs, 2010; Carlsson, 2003).

It has been argued, from this perspective, that issues raised in context of the NWICO debate in 1970s regarding the role that media plays in reproducing such relations of inequality remain valid today. Indeed, it is proposed that the NWICO debates need to be considered again as a way of addressing key issues within contemporary global policy (Nordenstreng, 2011). In this context it is argued that today's media continues to be characterised by cultural imperialism, manifesting as the penetration of media produced by developing nations in the developing world (Fuchs, 2010; Nordenstreng, 2011; Sparks, 2012, p. 13).

## 1.2 Debates about media and development in UNESCO

A second context in which it is possible to trace a history of debate about the role that media plays within global processes of development and empowerment can be observed within UNESCO itself. Such debate has occurred in policy discussions that took place in this forum

from the 1970s onwards. Since this time, UNESCO has played an essential role in the planning and execution of media-related projects that serve a developmental purpose in newly emerging democracies, particularly in the global south (Huesca, 2003; Scrampickal, 2006). As part of this work, UNESCO has organised regular meetings that brought together experts in communication for development from different regions of the world. A review of some of the discussions that took place at these meetings suggests that a series of shifts took place, over time, in the conceptual frameworks that informed UNESCO's understanding of the relationship between media, empowerment and development.

An early example of these frameworks can be observed in context of a meeting that took place in 1977 in Yugoslavia. At this time, UNESCO was invested in the articulation of practical guidelines designed to enable the establishment of participatory media which can contribute to development (Scrampickal, 2006). Contributors to the discussion at this meeting were tasked with the articulation of such guidelines (Scrampickal, 2006; Huesca, 2003). They identified three concepts that they understood to be essential to the achievement of this purpose; that of 'access', 'participation' and 'self-management' (Servaes, Jacobson, & White, 1996; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Access to media by all members of a group or society was understood to be a central goal to the achievement of developmental goals. Such access should guarantee that the content of media is representative of the needs and interests of this group (Servaes et al., 1996; Berrigan, 1979; Huesca, 2003). However, such access could only be achieved if participation by members of the group in the management, planning and production of media was ensured (Servaes et al., 1996; Berrigan, 1979). Such participation was understood to occur at different levels of intensity, with 'self-management' as the most advanced form (Servaes et al., 1996). It is clear that this discussion was strongly informed by recognition of the social importance of participatory media as a vehicle for the achievement of development goals. The guidelines for the achievement of such media are, furthermore, strongly reminiscent of those that inform the conceptualisation of community radio, as set out in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

About a decade later, a different framework can be observed in context of discussion of the relationship between media and development at UNESCO's general conference in 1989. Discussion dealt with the need for policies that could allow media and communication systems in developing countries to thrive. It was proposed that this goal could be achieved if a free flow of information was guaranteed within these environments. UNESCO sought to promote such free flow of information through the adoption of its Third Medium Plan. It was anticipated that the plan would help set in place mechanisms that would make it possible for



information to flow freely both at national and international levels (Unesco, 1989; Servaes, 2008). It is possible to observe a shift, within this discussion, away from the preoccupations of the meeting that had taken place in Yugoslavia in 1977. In that instance, the emphasis was on prioritising the articulation of practical guidelines for achieving participatory communication for development. Now, the focus was on more abstract discussion of the concept of ‘free flow of information’, in which a hands-on methodology for achieving participatory communication remains unexamined.

It is arguable that this shift was informed by the degree of support that existed, at different moments in time, for the NWICO agenda. In the late 1970s, at the time of the meeting in Yugoslavia, recognition of the validity of NWICO was in ascendance. It is possible that in this context UNESCO could pursue practical guidelines for communication that engages with the way that power relations compromise a ‘free flow of information’. They could, as part of this, develop concrete strategies for ensuring media access, with particular emphasis on the requirements for the achievement of participatory media. However, by the end of the 1980s, the pendulum had swung, and the concept of NWICO no longer framed UNESCO’s international agenda. Recognition of the extent to which media systems remain embedded in unequal relations of power was no longer foregrounded. The ideal of independent media sectors that were ‘free and fair’ could again operate as the primary point of reference, without paying close attention to how this ideal can be achieved in practice.

In discussions that took place in UNESCO from this point onward, the relationship between media, empowerment and development shifted even further away from the “how” of participatory media. The focus turned, instead, to the general need for media independence, and on ensuring the coverage of social issues that were of pressing global concern. In the mid 1990s, for example, attention turned to the role that media could play as an instrument for building peace. Discussion focused on the extent to which the maintenance of peace had become fragile and tenuous in many regions of the world, in context of on-going and newly flaring social conflicts. In its Fourth Medium Term Plan for 1996-2001, UNESCO structured its peace building strategies around three areas, which included those of conflict prevention, emergency assistance and post-conflict peacebuilding (Servaes, 2008). One strategy that was presented as key to such peace building was that of supporting the growth of independent media. It was thought that the establishment of an independent press could help to counter the prevalence of warmongering propaganda and media that incited hatred, factors that could trigger and escalate conflicts (Servaes, 2008). This preoccupation with the requirements of

peace was followed, in the early 2000s, by a focus on the role that media can play in supporting the maintenance of cultural diversity. Indeed, UNESCO's 31<sup>st</sup> general conference that took place in 2001 in Paris presided over the adoption of a Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which was the first major international standard-setting instrument conceived to embrace cultural diversity by promoting intercultural dialogue (Servaes, 2008). Most recently, UNESCO's attention has shifted to the role that media can play in response to climate change. This focus was placed on the institution's agenda in context of one of its international conferences that were held in Japan in 2014 (UNESCO, 2016). At this meeting it was argued that climate change was quickly becoming one of the most pressing social concerns in the world. UNESCO recognised the need for individuals across both developing and developed nations to be informed about the change in global and regional climate patterns and its potential for serious consequences. By making people aware of such consequences, it was anticipated that they would become fully prepared to live with some of the effects of climate change. In addition, there was hope that this information would empower them to adopt more sustainable lifestyles (UNESCO, 2016).

This history suggests that debate surrounding media, empowerment and development as this unfolded in the context of UNESCO since the 1970s has been informed by broad historical shifts in paradigm. Within discussions that took place in the late 1970s, the focus was on the practical guidelines for establishing ownership and control of the media by communities, so that the requirements for participatory communication could be met. This was understood to enable such communities to set their own social agenda regarding the subject matter of the media. As such, these debates were fundamentally emancipatory in nature. From the 1990s onward, however, the focus of discussion shifted from the methodology of participatory media to the more abstract, generalised invocation of the ideal of media independence and of a 'free flow of information'. This can be seen as a return to a more positivist conceptualisation of the social purpose of media, in which the inevitable influence of relations of power and political interest are not fully acknowledged. Discussion no longer foregrounded the involvement of audiences in setting their own social agendas. Instead, the focus shifted to discussion of what that agenda should be; a far more 'top-down' approach to facilitating the role that media plays within developmental processes.

It is of interest to note that the social concerns mentioned within the UNESCO discussions as issues that media should engage with resonate with the list of issues mentioned in Chapter Two, in context of descriptions of the social purpose of community radio. The achievement of peace, the maintenance of cultural diversity and the management of

environmental concerns are all on the list of goals that such radio should contribute to. This may be because the conceptualisation of community radio has been informed over time by broader discussions regarding the social purpose of media, in forums such as that of UNESCO. The next part of this chapter will explore the location of the global history of the conceptualisation of community radio within this broader history of ideas.

## **2. The global history of community radio**

Historical accounts point to two broad patterns in the global development and circulation of ideas about community radio. On one hand, there is the development of ideas about community radio as articulated from within communities. On the other hand, there is the introduction of such ideas into communities by external agents. The discussion in this section looks at each of these two broad historical patterns in turn.

### **2.1 Ideas about community radio as articulated from within communities**

It is possible to identify three waves in the development of community radio as articulated from within communities. The first of these waves began in the 1940s and continued until the end of the 1970s, primarily in the context of Latin America. The second wave can be observed in the 1970s and 1980s, in context of the industrially advanced countries in Europe and North America. The third wave was located primarily in developing environments and took place from the 1990s onwards. The discussion, below, deals with each of these waves of development in turn.

#### *2.1.1 From the 1940s to the 1970s: the first examples*

Historical literature suggests that the earliest usage of the term ‘community radio’ emerged in the late 1940s in Latin America. One seminal example is thought to be that of Radio Sutatenza which was established in the town of Tenza Valley in Colombia in 1947. This station was founded by Joaquin Salcedo, a catholic priest, in response to the high levels of illiteracy that existed in local farming communities at this time. He was granted a broadcast license by the Colombian Ministry of Communication in order to provide local communities with a means for accessing education. Over time, Radio Sutatenza became a platform for educational programming designed to improve quality of life in local communities. Programming focused, for example, on simple arithmetic and the fundamentals of reading and writing (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Gumucio, 2001, p. 38-39; Lewis, 1984).

A second example that is often cited is that of the so-called Bolivian miners' stations, which first began broadcasting in 1949. These stations were founded by trade unions associated with the Bolivian mining industry as part of a communication strategy designed to empower and mobilise their membership. The stations were used by unions to involve their membership in deliberations on their shared concerns and to advocate around issues such as better working conditions on the mines (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). By 1952 a network of twenty-six stations had been established across Bolivia (Dagron, 2001; Huesca, 1995). They flourished during the 1960s and 70s, serving as a key system of communication within local communities (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Gumucio, 2005, p. 319).

Radio Sutatenza and the miners' stations have gained the status of a worldwide model of how community radio can successfully achieve their desired social purpose (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Gumucio, 2005, p. 319). They are thought to have gained this status particularly because they demonstrate the role that community radio can play in the development and empowerment of local communities (Fraser & Estrada, 2001).

Both of these examples are repeatedly cited within the literature to demonstrate the extent to which community radio operated at this time as a response from within communities to their own marginalisation in society. Such radio is then often described as the 'voice of the voiceless' (Olorunnisola, 2002, p. 127). Stations are said to form part of communication strategies articulated by local communities in order to lay claim to their own empowerment and development. Furthermore, they are understood to have formed part of broader liberation movements that are motivated by resistance to oppressive rule. Examples of community stations that played this role are identified in countries in Latin America such as Chile, Peru and Argentina (Open Society Foundation, 1999; Curran & Park, 2000; Sosale, 2004). Others are seen to emerge after the collapse of dictatorial regimes as part of strategies adopted by local communities in order to rebuild themselves (Soley, 1982; Fanon, 1994; Light, 2011).

Throughout discussions of community radio as it emerged in this stage of its history, reference is made to the role that it played in safeguarding the human rights of local communities. A central way in which such radio is understood to have played this role is in the context of education and in particular the advancement of literacy (Gumucio, 2001; Fraser & Estrada, 2001). It is thought to have achieved this purpose in particular by enabling community members to develop strategies for strengthening the local economy and with this their quality of life (Fraser & Restrepo, 2001; Open Society Foundation, 1999). As we have seen in Chapter Two, reference to these social benefits became core to what is now the internationally shared conceptualisation of community radio.

### *2.1.2 The 1970s and 1980s: community radio in the first world*

A second wave in the development of community radio can be observed in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in the context of Europe and North America. By this time, support for community radio was being driven by government legislation. In France, for example, supportive legislation in the early 1980s made it possible for thousands of local radio stations to apply for licenses in a span of only four years (Rennie, 2006; Howley, 2005). In Australia and Canada, licensing of community-based broadcasters started in 1972 and 1974 respectively (Kings, 2017).

However, despite this emphasis on legislative support, the motivation for the establishment of community radio is still understood to have emerged organically from within local communities. It is explained, in particular, that the legalisation of community-based broadcasting in these countries inspired minority groups to establish their own stations. In Canada, indigenous groups established networks of radio stations that came to play an important role in bridging the divide between rural communities that were separated by enormous distance (Fairchild, 2001). In the Australian case, aboriginal people actively lobbied for the establishment of their own community radio networks (the first such station was launched in Mount Stuart in 1972) (Forde, Kerrie, & Meadows, 2003). It is argued that these stations came to play a central role in the promotion of aboriginal culture by projecting an affirmative image of the aboriginal communities (Podber, 2014; Langdon, 1995).

Other stations that also claimed the status of community radio began as pirates in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the context of Western Europe. It is pointed out in the literature that these stations represented a challenge to state monopoly on broadcasting. The membership of these stations, who were closely associated with student movements and youth movements more generally, expressed discomfort with the paternalistic nature of public broadcasting. Many of these stations eventually gained legal status and, although they originally claimed to be examples of community radio, some evolved into commercial stations (Drijvers, 1992).

During this period, the formulation of desirable legislation also enabled the creation of supportive regional and national networks for community radio (Kings, 2017). In the United States, for example, the government established mechanisms to ensure that stations with a community radio ethos could survive alongside commercial radio. For this purpose, the National Federation of Community Broadcasters (NFCB) was established in 1975 to defend the interests of such radio (Cammaerts, 2009, p. 8). Other examples include the

Ontario Association of Campus Broadcasters in Canada, which was established in 1971 to lobby the regulatory commission and the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia that was formed in 1974 to promote community-based broadcasting (Jolly, 2014). Such networks played an important role in the building of shared conceptions of community radio. They became instrumental in strengthening community-broadcasting sectors in many countries. They also operated as lobbying platforms, allowing their membership to be active participants in policy formulation initiatives both at the grassroots and national level. Such networks were, for example, able to recommend more appropriate funding mechanisms for community radio's sustainability as a way of helping such radio to achieve its purpose (Cammaerts, 2009; Jolly, 2014).

Of equal importance was the establishment of global supportive network for community radio, as represented by the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC). This network, which was established in 1983, is a non-profit organisation whose goals include spreading ideas about community radio and its benefits across different social contexts (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998). It has done so, for example, by offering a platform where discussions about community radio practice can take place. This has allowed groups that represent local communities to learn more about the main principles of community-based broadcasting (Delorme, 1992). AMARC's role is understood to be motivated by the view that communication is central to any community's self-development process and that radio can mobilise people from the local, the national and the international levels to take charge of their development (Girard, 2001).

It is clear, from the discussion in this section, that this second wave in the global development of community radio was enabled at least partly by the recognition of such radio by governments in the form of regulatory frameworks. The growth of community radio was, nevertheless, still driven from the ground up by communities who had established their own stations. This groundswell of interest in community radio, bolstered by the presence of supportive legislation, enabled the establishment of national and international community radio networks. As a result, community radio came to exist as a tradition that drew its authority not only from acknowledgement by particular governments but also because it had the status of a global movement.

### *2.1.3 The 1990s and beyond: community radio in the developing world*

A third wave in the development of community radio can be observed in the 1990s, primarily in context of the developing world. One example that is often referred to in this context is that

of South Africa, where community radio emerged just before the first democratic elections at the end of the apartheid era. The establishment of a community radio movement in this country is associated with the work of media activists who were reacting to the state broadcaster's operation as a 'mouthpiece' of the apartheid government. They argued that there was a need for stations that could act as alternative means of empowering marginalised communities (Olorunnisola, 2002; Open Society Foundation, 1999).

In contrast, the establishment of community radio sectors that occurred in other developing countries at this time did so primarily in context of the emergence of more enabling legislative environments. During this period, broadcast sectors in many developing nations were undergoing processes of liberalisation. This included the introduction of legislative frameworks that allowed for the establishment of community radio (Kings, 2017; Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Myers, 2011). Local communities responded by applying for licenses and establishing their own stations (Kings, 2017; Myers, 2011). Examples of these stations are identified in African countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso and Namibia. Within the African context, Mali is often referred to as a success story, where community radio was able to expand rapidly. Mali now has over 300 community radio stations that enjoy a considerable amount of public and political support (Myers, 2011; Ngugi & Kinyua, 2014). Community radio sectors also emerged at this time in Southern Asia, again in context of the emergence of enabling legislation. This is noted, for example, in the case of Nepal and Sri Lanka, where legislation was put in place in 1993 and 1997 respectively. It is argued that the legislation of community radio in these two nations encouraged communities to start talking about the need for such radio. Such discussions contributed to the expansion of community radio in these countries, particularly rural areas (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). The expansion of community radio as a result of a conducive legislative environment is also noted in context of countries in Latin America such as Haiti, Brazil and Argentina. It is explained that periodic announcements by broadcasting authorities of the frequencies that were available for such radio and requests for their use encouraged local communities to establish stations (Fraser & Estrada, 2001).

However, commentators also describe the 1990s as a period during which global development in community radio was, in fact, slowing down. Indeed, in these developing environments, the growth of community radio sectors have remained slow. This remains true despite the establishment of desirable regulatory frameworks, the availability of licensing and the absence of state interference. It is pointed out in the literature that the liberalisation of media markets in the 1990s had also enabled the growth of commercial media sectors, which

impacted negatively on the scope for community media (Siochru et al., 2002; Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003). In context of the prioritisation of commercial media, community radio suffered from lack of recognition. Commercial ventures were, in addition, often confused with community radio, due to misconceptions about the nature and purpose of such radio (Siochru, Kerrie, & Meadows, 2002; Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003; Stalhurt, 2008).

In the contemporary moment, the traditions of community radio that emerge in these environments continue to face major challenges that threaten their survival and sustainability. Commentators point out that, within such environments, the basic regulatory requirements for the protection of community radio have not been met. They note, for example, that legislation often does not ensure that stations enjoy independence from the interests of government. This is true especially in context of authoritarian states where stations are routinely required to broadcast content that has the status of government propaganda (Myers, 2011; Frere, 2008). Regulation also fails to ensure that stations are collectively owned by communities and that they are driven by non-profit principles rather than as commercial enterprises (Frere, 2008).

It would seem, then, that this third wave in the development of community radio was both made possible by the emergence of enabling legislation and constrained by the limitations of such regulation. Lack of support and recognition from government continues to threaten the successful implementation of community radio in such environments.

## 2.2 The emergence of community radio by means of external facilitation

The discussion in the previous section focused on examples of community radio that emerged as a result of mobilisation from within communities. This next section traces a parallel history, beginning in the 1980s, in which community radio became established as the result of external intervention. Such intervention is typically driven by international organisations involved in development work and has been common in context of developing and newly democratic societies in the global south (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). Interventions are usually initiated when regulatory frameworks within such environments become more enabling of the establishment of community radio (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). In such contexts, the external agents often play a central role in the initial articulation of ideas about starting community radio (Langdon, 1995; Waters et al., 2011). Furthermore, they often play a role in ensuring that stations remain on air (Kruger et al., 2013). Some of the organisations involved in these processes of external facilitation include UNESCO, the UNDP, World Bank, Danish International Development (DANIDA), Switzerland's Development et cooperation (DDC) and the Open Society Foundation (OSF) (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Kruger et al., 2013).



One factor that is understood to have inspired this trend towards external facilitation was an internationally shared recognition amongst development organisations of the capacity of community radio to contribute to development goals (Kruger et al., 2013; Kidd & Rodriguez, 2009; Milan, 2013). Community radio was thought, in particular, to enable the inclusion of voices that had historically been marginalised, and in this way to ensure the expression of a greater diversity of interests and perspectives within the public domain (Johnston & Menichelli, 2007; Siemering et al., 1998; Howley, 2005; Rennie, 2006).

Commentators point, as an example of such external facilitation, to the establishment of Mahaweli Community Radio in Sri Lanka in 1981. The Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) and UNESCO provided financial support for this venture (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Alumuku, 2006; Boivin, 1993). This station is described in the literature as the first of its kind in South Asia and came to be considered as a prototype for the region. Its programming strategies included the creation of forums where listeners from local villages would discuss shared social problems and develop strategies to address them (UNESCO, 1983; Boivin, 1993). Other examples often mentioned in literature include Tambuli community radio in Philippines and Radio Ada, which is regarded as one of the founding members of a community radio network in Ghana. While UNESCO and DANIDA are understood to have provided funds that were needed to meet the cost for Tambuli's equipment, Stem van Afrika Foundation of the Netherlands and the World Association for Christian Communication did the same for Radio Ada (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; McKay, 2009). These organisations did not only provide funding for stations; they were pivotal in introducing the original idea for their establishment. They did so by setting up community forums where the need for such radio was explored, in order to convince community members of their potential benefit (Fraser & Estrada, 2001).

Within literature dealing with the role of external facilitators, particular reference is made to UNESCO, who is described as supporting the growth of community radio across many contexts in the developing world. UNESCO's involvement in such support can be traced from the 1980s onward, particularly in context of their development work in emerging democracies (Boivin 1993; Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Alumuku, 2006). They were involved both in the initial start-up of stations, and then in providing stations with ongoing resources in the provision of equipment and training of staff (Gumucio, 2001; McKay, 2009; UNESCO, 1983).

As we saw in Chapter Two, internationally shared guidelines for community radio require of such radio to be owned and controlled by the community in which it is located. A

key challenge for external facilitators is by necessity the achievement of such local ownership and control. Questions about the extent to which this goal is achieved serve as important terms of reference for this study.

## **Conclusion**

In Section One we saw that, in context of the NWICO debates of the 1970s, it was claimed that industrially advanced nations were in control of global media systems and that, in this context, such media served primarily to reproduce unequal global relations of power. It was proposed, in that section, that such concerns continue to be of relevance in this present time, given the penetration of media produced by economically powerful countries in the developing world. As such, the establishment of centres of media production within these environments remains a priority. The remaining part of the discussion in this section attempted to contextualise this kind of media production by analysing UNESCO's series of debates. It was argued that even though UNESCO's contributions were powerfully framed by critical social analysis in the 1970s, more recent debates within the organisation suggest that they have subsequently retreated from this tradition. It was argued that this retreat has impacted on their ability to contribute to resources that were so powerfully informed by constructivist, critical and decolonial framework of social analysis.

In Section Two of this chapter it is demonstrated that, by the late twentieth century, community radio had successfully achieved the status of a global movement. At the same time, the ideas that informed this movement continued to be powerfully embedded within local communities. One reason for this may be the existence of national and regional networks, which sustain the relationship between ideas about community radio as these circulate globally, and their conceptualisation within local contexts.

It is of significance that the tradition of externally facilitated community radio, described in the final part of Section Two, only gained momentum in the 1980s after the global community radio movement had taken shape. It did so, firstly, in context of the emergence of enabling regulatory environments in developing countries. Secondly it took place in context of international recognition of the role that community radio could play in such countries to further the goals of development organisations.

This study concerns itself with the extent to which the traditions of community radio that were facilitated in this context can be said to have gained the status of radio that is locally owned and controlled. The next chapter explores this question in context of an examination of the history of community radio in Kenya.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### LITERATURE REVIEW IV: MAPPING OUT THE KENYAN COMMUNITY RADIO LANDSCAPE

#### **Introduction**

This chapter serves as a review of literature dealing with the establishment of community radio in Kenya. In order to contextualise this discussion, Section One maps out historical developments within the Kenyan media landscape more generally. Section Two then deals with the location of community radio within this broader history.

#### **1. The Kenyan media landscape and the emergence of community radio**

It is possible to identify two distinct phases in the history of the Kenyan media landscape as it has developed since this country gained independence from colonial rule. The first phase can be traced from the 1960s to the early 1990s, when Kenya came to exist as a one-party state (Wanyande, 1995; Kajirwa, 2008). In context of the establishment of this regime, the ruling party took control of the mass media (Ochilo, 1993). State-controlled media, which included the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and the Kenya News Agency (KNA) was run under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, which was headed by a presidential appointee (Ochilo, 1993). The ministry was closely involved in the formulation of editorial policies and the daily management of these media organisations (Wanyande, 1995). The ruling party also extended its control to privately owned newspapers. It did so, firstly, by issuing threats of action in courts of law, accusing the editorial leadership of these papers of libel and slander (Ochilo, 1993; Wanyande, 1995). Newspapers that made a habit of criticising the regime were also banned outright (Oriare, 2008, p. 5). Furthermore, the state placed restrictions on access to ownership of private publications, giving priority to politicians who were loyal to the government (Ochilo, 1993). As a result of this control of the media sector by the state, mass media increasingly acted as the government's mouthpiece (Oriare, 2008; Oriare, Okello-Orlale, & Ugangu, 2010 p.12). By the 1980s, under these conditions, the media could not operate as a public forum where citizens could freely air their views (Widner, 1992).

The second phase emerges in the early 1990s, in context of the achievement of multi-party democracy. At this time, as a result of mounting criticisms from different quarters against the one-party system of leadership, the Kenyan government bowed to pressure and ended the single-party state (Okete, 1998). By revoking the law which had until then only

allowed for a one party system of leadership, the era of the multi-party system became a reality (Oriare, 2008). This was accompanied by a liberalisation of media policies, allowing for the establishment of print and broadcast media that exist independent of government (Wanyande, 1995). This brought about an increase in the number of privately owned media (Mitullah, Mudhai, & Mwangi, 2015; Mbuba, 2015).

The legalisation of pluralism also motivated media practitioners to become involved in advocacy work in order to ensure the establishment of mechanisms for protecting press freedom (Wanyande, 1995). In this context they established organisations with the objective of upholding and protecting the freedom of the media (Wanyande, 1995; Oriare et al., 2010). These organisations came to play an essential role in frustrating the government's efforts towards passing draconian laws that would enable them to regain undue control over the media (Oriare et al., 2010).

As part of these developments, there was also a rise in the establishment of community-based media organisations who began to lobby for the creation of an enabling environment for the practice of community media. Members of this movement took part in the drafting of a bill aimed at giving legal status to community media (Rukaria, 2008). These individuals also participated in advocacy work aimed at raising awareness of the value of community media in Kenya (Rukaria, 2008). They organised meetings, seminars, conferences and workshops for the purpose of training and advocacy (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; African Woman and Child Feature Service, 2013; Gumucio, 2001). In addition, they developed and distributed educational resources about community media amongst civil society organisations (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010).

The work that these organisations have done have enabled a shift in public understanding of the social purpose of media in Kenya. Within the contemporary moment, broad agreement has been established with regards to recognition of the value that media has in the democratisation of society (Wanyande, 1995). There is, furthermore, recognition amongst the Kenyan population of their own right to access information and to express themselves through the media. Media organisations have responded to such consciousness by making it easier for individuals to access information, particularly with regards to so-called 'political' issues. This is understood to include processes of decision-making that surround the formulation and implementation of public policy. It also includes the debates that take place within the public domain between representatives of government and other political parties (Oriare et al., 2010, p. 12).

However, even though such gains are easily recognisable in Kenya's media landscape, media independence has not as yet become fully realised. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation continues to be owned and controlled by government and is subject to constant interference from politicians and government officials (Mitullah et al., 2015). Privately owned media also continue to experience interference from the state, especially in cases where they have exposed government scandals. In one infamous incident in 2006, armed police raided a privately owned media house and burnt newspapers, destroyed property and confiscated equipment (Oriare, 2008). Some commentators note, in this context, that the liberalisation of the political environment that took place in the early 1990s has not, as yet, led to a transformation of the media landscape (Mitullah et al., 2015).

Another factor that is understood to continuously threaten media's independence in this country's contemporary moment is that of market interest. Many commentators argue that the Kenyan media is now generally market driven and as such, it has to deal with commercial pressure that threatens the editorial independence of journalism. Commercial pressure emanates from the fact that media platforms rely heavily on advertising revenue (Oriare et al., 2010). Indeed, media owners often interfere with the editorial decisions of their own media platforms in order to safeguard the interests of major advertisers (Oriare et al., 2010).

It is possible to conclude, from this discussion, that the introduction of multiparty democracy in Kenya in the early 1990s helped to create a favourable environment for the establishment of community radio across the country. At the same time, it would seem that the liberalisation and subsequent commercialisation of the media landscape also placed limitations on the extent to which this sector could succeed. Furthermore, despite the government's relinquishment of authoritarian control of the media, the degree to which they support the growth of media freedom remains in question. As will be explained in the second part of this chapter, the initial articulation and implementation of ideas about community radio was slow to emerge in this context.

## **2. The establishment of community radio in Kenya**

In literature that describes community radio stations that have been founded in Kenya, it is possible to observe the identification of three main categories: those established in rural areas, urban stations, and stations affiliated to educational institutions. The sub-sections below deal with each of these categories in turn. Each section identifies references made in the literature to the actors who were instrumental in the establishment and development of

particular stations. Each also explores claims made regarding these actors' motivations for establishing and maintaining the stations and, as part of this, their ideas regarding the social purpose of community radio and how such purpose can be achieved. Where evidence is available, the discussion deals with assessments of how these ideas were put into practice, both with regards to the management of stations and the production of programming.

Evidence that is presented in these sub-sections was obtained from different categories of writing about community radio in Kenya. These include books and articles, journalistic features, unpublished dissertations, papers presented in conferences and workshops, evaluative reports commissioned by stations and other stakeholders and descriptions of stations obtained from their websites or those of their funders. It is acknowledged that these categories of writing do not have equal status as credible sources of evidence. For this reason, where appropriate, the nature of sources is indicated so that they can be evaluated appropriately.

Reference is made to regions within the Kenyan landscape. In order to make sense of these regions, it should be noted that distinctions between provinces were redefined in 2013 in context of the redrafting of the Kenyan constitution. Until then, the country had been divided into eight provinces, which included the Coast, Rift-Valley, Nairobi, Nyanza and the Central-, Eastern-, North-Eastern- and Western Province. After 2013, Kenya's provinces were replaced by a system of 47 counties. Given that the establishment of stations started in 2009, this redefinition of boundaries complicates the task of discussing the history of community radio in Kenya. For this reason, the discussion mostly makes reference to general regional distinctions, dividing Kenya into the northern, coastal, central, western, eastern and lower eastern regions. Where appropriate, however, reference is also made to the original provincial distinctions.

It should also be noted that the discussion does not identify the specific location of each station within its region, because the inclusion of such detail would become unwieldy. Reference is made, however, to a map indicating the location of stations, provided in Appendix B of this dissertation. Appendix A includes a series of tables, which summarise information regarding the dates on which stations were founded and when they began broadcasting. Detail is also included about individuals and organisations that were involved in their establishment and maintenance. These tables are intended to demonstrate broad patterns that can be observed within the history discussed in this section and reference to the tables are included in the discussion below.

## 2.1 The prehistory of community radio in Kenya: the case of Homa Bay

It is often proposed that the first community radio in Kenya's history was a rural station known as Homa Bay Radio, which was launched in 1982 as a result of a proposal by UNESCO to the Kenyan government. Indeed, this station is frequently described not only as the first community station to be established in Kenya, but also the first on the continent (Quarmyne, 2006; Alumuku, 2006; KCOMNET, 2014; AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 1998). However, it is also pointed out that this station was not representative of the ideals of community radio. It broadcast on an unused frequency allocated to the state broadcaster, the Voice of Kenya (VOK), its staff was VOK personnel, and its programming mirrored that of VOK. The station's management made no attempts to implement strategies for the facilitation of community participation (Javuru, 2011; Quarmyne, 2006). Also, the project did not last long; it was dismantled by the government two and a half years after it went on air (KCOMNET, 2014; Quarmyne, 2006, p. 1)

Commentators suggest that the failure of Homa Bay Radio to live up to the ideals of community radio can be explained by historical circumstance. In the early 1980s, the Kenyan government was not invested in the ideals associated with community radio (Quarmyne, 2006). As we have seen in Section One of this chapter, Kenya existed at this time as a one-party state, with a government that exerted full control of the broadcast sector (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Quarmyne, 2006). The government responded positively to UNESCO's proposal not because they were invested in the ideals of community radio, but rather because they saw in the station an opportunity to strengthen the communication systems of the state. The state broadcasters' reach was limited by the fact that all its programming was presented in English and Swahili. By establishing stations that broadcast in other vernacular languages at relatively low cost, the government would reach a broader audience. Homa Bay Radio was established with this idea in mind and for this reason the station broadcast in Dholuo, a local language spoken by the Luo people (Javuru, 2011; Quarmyne, 2006, p.3). Eventually, the project was halted because the promotion of languages other than English and Swahili was felt by government to be in contradiction to national language policy (Quarmyne, 2006, p. 1; KCOMNET, 2014).

For these reasons it is arguable that the first community radio station to go on air in Kenya was not in fact Homa Bay Radio but rather Radio Mang'etele, which started broadcasting almost a quarter century later, in 2004. Since then, one or two stations have been licensed on a yearly basis, so that there are now at least twenty-five stations that make

up the community radio sector as a whole. Community radio thus became a reality only in the mid-2000s, when the social and political conditions that existed in Kenya had, in fact, already for some time been supportive to the establishment of a community radio sector.

It would seem, then, that representations of the history of community radio in Kenya make very different claims about the moment at which this history commenced. The first of these claims, which associated with the establishment of Homa Bay FM in the early 1980's, refers to a moment when Kenyan society was still defined by a system of authoritarian rule. The second claim, which is generally understood to carry far more legitimacy, is described as the emergence of the first 'real' community radio stations. Significantly, this moment does not occur in the early 1990's, with the establishment of multiparty democracy but more than a decade later. It is therefore arguable that realisation, within the Kenyan context, of the internationally shared idea of community radio required more than just a broad commitment from government to principles of democratic change. The examination, in Chapter 6 and 7 of the history of the establishment of the Kenyan community radio sector attempts to identify these requirements.

## 2.2 Rural stations

### 2.2.1 *The stations*

Most Kenyan community radio stations (16 in all) are situated in rural areas. It is pointed out in the literature that the majority of people inhabiting rural areas in Kenya depend for their livelihood on fishing, subsistence farming and trading. It is further suggested that stations are established to play a role in the encouragement of such activities and more generally to support the achievement of developmental goals within local communities (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010).

The first of these stations, Radio Mang'elete, began broadcasting in 2004 in the south-eastern part of the country (Musyoki, 2008). Over the next two years, four more stations were established – one in the former lower Rift Valley Province (Oltoito le Maa FM) and three in the western regions (Radio Lake Victoria, Radio Sahara and Shinyalu Community Radio) (Njagi, 2012; Peace Initiative Kenya, 2013; Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Ochichi, 2014). Mwanedu FM, one of the only two stations currently based in the coastal area, began broadcasting in 2007 (Ochichi, 2014). Maendeleo FM, which also began broadcasting in 2007, was founded in the south-western region on the shores of Lake Victoria (Majiwa, 2008; Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). In 2008, Kangema FM and MugamboJwetu began broadcasting



in the central and the lower eastern parts of the country respectively (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; KCOMNET, 2014). They were followed by Bulala FM and Serian FM who started broadcasting in 2009 in the western and northern central regions respectively (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). The next station, credited as the first example of ‘handcart’ radio in Kenya, started its operations in the country’s western region (Musyoki, 2008; Wabwire, 2013). Commentators indicate that this project, also known as the ‘wheelbarrow broadcasting station’ remains unique in the Kenyan context (Githaiga, 2011).<sup>1</sup> Kwale Ranet, located in a small town in south-eastern Kenya, started its transmission in 2011 (Internews, 2013; Shaka, 2013). EkialoKiona FM, also known as Mfangano radio, was established in 2012 and is understood to be the country’s first wind and solar powered station (Ohenjo, 2014). Baliti FM, which began broadcasting in 2013, is the only station in Kenya targeting the Borana community and is located in the upper eastern sub-region of the country (Caucus47, 2014; Ohenjo, 2014).<sup>2</sup> Finally, NganyiRanet began to broadcast in 2015 in Kenya’s western region (Ouma, 2015; Sawa, 2015; Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Authorities, 2016; International Development Research Centre, 2015). This was the last station to be established at the time of completion of this dissertation.

The overall pattern that emerges is that one or two stations have been established in each of the regions listed above, but most are clustered in the country’s western regions in what was originally Nyanza Province and the Western Province (see map and table in Appendix A). In the discussion below, this pattern of distribution is further explored.

### 2.2.2 *Actors involved in the establishment and maintenance of stations*

Description of the establishment of these stations suggests that, in many instances, locally based organisations were centrally responsible for initiating them and also continued to be involved in their ownership and management. Such groups include non-governmental organisations (NGO’s) and community based organisations (CBO’s) such as civic organisations. Shinyalu Community Radio was, for example, founded by the Shinyalu Multi-Media Community Centre, and the ‘handcart’ radio project by the Migori Civic Local Affairs Network (CLAN). EkialoKiona is the project of the EkialoKiona Centre, Mang’etele is a project of the Mang’etele Community Integrated Development (MCDIP) and Radio Lake

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<sup>1</sup>‘Wheelbarrow broadcasting’ adopts the concept of a ‘mobile studio’, which is mounted on a handcart or a wheelbarrow. The wheelbarrow moves from area to area, and broadcasts by means of speakers. This concept was borrowed from a system developed in Tanzania for the purpose of selling music recorded on cassettes (Njuki, 2008 pp. 7; Githaiga, 2011; Musyoki, 2008).

<sup>2</sup>See <http://en.unesco.org/radiosict/radios/baliti-fm-kenya>

Victoria is an initiative of an NGO known as OSIENALA- Friends of Lake Victoria. (Njuki, 2008; Javuru, 2011; Ohenjo, 2014; Savage, 2005; Ochichi, 2014; Musyoki, 2008; Wabwire, 2013). Maendeleo FM, in turn, was founded as an initiative of a local youth-based project known as the Bondo Community Multi-Media Centre (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Javuru, 2011). In some instances, more informal groups also played a role in the establishment of community radio. An example is given of Radio Sahara which was established by a group of community members who recognized the beneficial role that radio could play within the local context (Ochichi, 2014, p. 161).

It is noted in historical accounts of the establishment of some of these stations that the organisations who initiated them first carried out consultations with other local interest groups. For example, in a paper presented at seminar focusing on the strengthening of the Kenyan community radio sector, reference is made to the role that such consultation played in the context of Radio Mang'elete. It is explained that the Mang'elete Community Integrated Development (MCDIP), which consisted of representatives of local communities, were consulted on the importance of having a community radio station in their area (Njuki, 2008). Another paper presented in the same seminar indicates that Shinyalu Community Multimedia Centre held meetings with local members to deliberate on the need for having such radio (Majiwa, 2008). According to these descriptions, local consultative processes were fundamental to the establishment of these stations.

The literature also suggests that organisations tend to remain involved with stations either as 'umbrella' bodies who own them and take responsibility for their management, or as partners who collaborate closely with them (Njuki, 2008; Musyoki, 2008; Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). For instance, the 'handcart radio', as mentioned above, exists as a project of a local organisation known as Migori Civic Local Affairs Network (CLAN). This organisation, which may also be described as the station's governing body, was established in 2001 as a policy and advocacy oriented community based organisation. After its inception, the organisation is understood to have proceeded with the implementation of a community radio station as one of its top priorities (Njuki, 2008; Musyoki, 2008).

Another pattern that can be observed is that a number of the stations are managed by women's groups. Such groups often worked in close partnership with local communities in the establishment of stations. Examples include Baliti FM which was (founded by the Foundation for Women Pastoralists or FOWOPA); Serian FM (established by the Reto Women's Association) and Radio Mang'elete (founded as noted above by the MCDIP, an organisation that comprised of 33 women's groups) (Caucus47, 2014; Camp & Portalewska,

2013; Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Mogambi & Ochola, 2015). Many of these groups had been established to promote the local communities' well-being through the initiation of development-oriented projects (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010).

At the same time, the literature also makes clear that the establishment of many of the stations depended on external facilitation. This has occurred, firstly, through the involvement of international organisations. In some instances, such organisations were approached by the founders of individual stations with applications for the provision of funding or equipment. In other examples, international organisations became involved in support for stations because the development of the Kenyan community radio sector forms part of their stated goals. Such organisations, which tend to provide support to multiple stations, include UNESCO, the World Bank, Action Aid and Internews.<sup>3</sup> These organisations tend to take a more hands-on approach to the initiation and development of stations and are often, as part of this, directly involved in the provision of training. In the case of Radio Mang'elete, for example, UNESCO is said to have played a role in building the station's capacity through the training of its staff and the development of its programming (KCOMNET, 2014; Jallo, 2007; Du Toit, 2014). Internews is acknowledged, similarly, for supporting Kwale-Ranet by involving its staff in training and mentorship programmes (Internews, 2013). Stations supported in this way by international organisations include Radio Mang'elete, Bulala FM, Maendeleo FM, Kwale-Ranet and MugamboJwetu (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Majiwa, 2008; KCOMNET, 2014; Jallo, 2007; Du Toit, 2014).

A second context in which external facilitation occurs is through strategic governmental involvement in the establishment of stations. Here the main players described in the literature include the ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD). Indeed, five of Kenya's rural stations were established by KMD, including Oltoilo Le Maa FM, Bulala FM, Kwale Ranet, Kangema FM and Nganyi RANET radio. Two of these stations are based in the western regions while the other three are in the regions where there are fewer community stations. The KMD provided these stations with equipment, recruited their on-air staff and constituted their boards of management. They also continue to offer funds for the stations' rent, management of their equipment and salaries (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). Thus, government intervention has helped to ensure a wider distribution of community stations across the country (Fairbairn &

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<sup>3</sup>Action Aid, is an international organisation working with over 15 million people in 45 countries for a world free from poverty and injustice (<http://www.actionaid.org/who-we-are>). Internews is an international non-profit organization seeking to empower local media across the world (<https://internews.org/about-internews>).

Rukaria, 2010; Njagi, 2012; Kungu, 2014; Sawa, 2015). It can also be seen that, in context of government support, environmental concerns were integral to the establishment of community stations.

In a number of cases, the establishment of stations has also been facilitated by members of parliament who have relationships with the area in which they are based and could lobby for their establishment. This can be seen, for example, in the case of Maendeleo FM where a former member of parliament played a role in ensuring that the station received its license (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Majiwa, 2008). Similarly, MugamboJwetu was established in context of an intervention by the area's local Member of Parliament (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; KCOMNET, 2014). Serian FM's establishment was ensured by a legislator who enabled the station to access the Constituency Development Fund (CDF)<sup>4</sup> (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). The same can also be said of MugamboJwetu, Kangema FM and Maendeleo FM, where members of parliament recognised the beneficial role that such radio could play within local communities. Here too, these individuals helped to facilitate access to CDF resources in order to meet the costs of establishing and running stations (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Majiwa, 2008).

It is also possible to observe a pattern of collaboration, in the establishment and maintenance of stations, between governmental bodies and the international organisations referred to above. For instance, in the case of Bulala FM, the Ministry of Special programmes entered into partnership with World Bank to finance the building of its premises (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). Similarly, a close partnership between the ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the World Bank benefited Serian FM in its initial stages (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). One could conclude from the existence of these partnerships that there is some overlap in the agendas of government and international organisations, with regards to their motivation for establishing community radio stations.

Finally, reference is made to the role played by Kenyan-based organisations who lobby and advocate for the establishment of a sustainable community radio sector in this country. Four such organisations referred to in the literature is EcoNews Africa (ENA), Kenya Community Media Network (KCOMNET), Kenya Registered Community Radios Network (KRECORNET) and the Alternate Media Network (AMNET) (Fairbairn & Rukaria,

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<sup>4</sup> CDF are funds set aside by government from part of its national expenditure to address the specific needs of local communities. As the funds' custodians, some members of parliament channelled them towards the establishment of community radios (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Majiwa, 2008).

2010). These groups are understood to have made valuable contributions to the articulation of the country's communication policies (Gumucio, 2001).

The review presented in this section suggests that many stations in rural Kenya came into existence through the commitment of local members of civil society who believe that such radio would be of benefit to the communities in which they are based. Furthermore, the impetus for the establishment of at least some of these stations appears to have originated from locally grounded consultative processes. At the same time, support from external agents in the form of the Kenyan government and international organisations also contributed to the establishment and maintenance of stations. Indeed, there is evidence that rural stations generally came into being through a collaboration between local participants in civil society and external agents. It is possible that such collaboration could be pursued because the interests that informed the involvement of local and external agents resonate with each other. The fact that so many stations are clustered in the western regions of Kenya can also possibly be explained in context of this close relationship between stations and NGO's \ CBO's. Such organisations are particularly well represented in this region, much more so than other parts of Kenya. Questions regarding the role that such organisations play in shaping the motivations that inform the establishment of stations are further explored in the next subsection.

### *2.2.3 Motivations for the establishment and continuation of stations*

Within the accounts of reviewed literature, it is possible to recognise some connection between the reasons that inspired the establishment of community radio stations in Kenya and those that emerged within the discussion concerning the social purpose of community radio in Chapter Two. It may be remembered that, in context of that discussion, it was explained that advocates for community radio tend to argue for the importance of such radio on the basis of the role that it can play in the strengthening of the civil society, upholding human rights issues, maintaining peace, improving a community's local economy, promoting health and the general well-being of community members, addressing environmental concerns, providing access to education, and nurturing the cultural heritage. In articulating the reasons for their involvement in the establishment and maintenance of community radio, Kenyan actors make reference to at least eight of these motivations. It should be noted that, although these motivations are listed below as if they exist separately, they can also clearly be seen to overlap with each other. For analytical purposes, it nevertheless remains valuable to draw distinctions between them.

The first motivation relates to the role that community radio can play in building civil society. Here some actors explain that they are motivated by the need to ensure that ordinary citizens can play a role in holding government officials and other political leaders accountable for their actions. The suggestion is that, by participating in discussions on community radio, community members can engage with their leaders and monitor their performance. Reference is made to the role that such engagement can play in ensuring that there is more accountability with regards to the use and allocation of CDF funds (Njuki, 2008; Musyoki, 2008). It is also noted that community radio can empower community members to speak out about their needs and to make informed decisions about the management of their resources (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Mogambi & Ochola, 2015). Arguments are put forward, in this context, about the role that such radio can play in the empowerment of particular interest groups. The founders of Baliti FM explain, in this context, that community radio can amplify the voices of women and youth, who tend to be overlooked by the mainstream media (Boru, 2014; Ohenjo, 2014).

Secondly, a number of stations are described as playing a role in upholding and protecting human rights. Some actors note, for example, that they established stations because community radio can help people to confront the damaging impact of certain cultural practices on the rights of women and young girls. Reference is made, in this respect, to the practice of genital mutilation, forced early marriage, and gender based violence (Peace Initiative Kenya, 2013; Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). MugamboJwetu, for example, was specifically established to protect women from domestic violence (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). This station is also described as more generally upholding human rights issues by presenting programmes about the rights of the marginalised groups. Reference is made to tackling the rights of the people living with HIV/AIDS and those of the physically challenged (Ochichi, 2014). In many cases, stations ensure that the rights of such individuals are foregrounded by making them the main topics of discussion on interactive programmes (Ochichi, 2014).

Thirdly, it is explained that some stations were founded on the understanding that they would play a role in peacebuilding. Articulation of this motivation can be observed in relation to stations based in communities experiencing severe internal conflict. This trend is particularly relevant in contexts where conflict has become so extreme that it poses a threat to the safety of inhabitants (Savage, 2005; Ochichi, 2014). This can be observed, for example, in relation to areas that are considered unsafe due to conflict that is brought about by cattle rustling. Serian FM, for example, was set up in such an area with the explicit purpose of

advocating for peace among warring subsections of the local community. A number of other stations, including MugamboJwetu, Oltoilo Le Maa and Radio Lake Victoria are also recognised by local stakeholders for the role they play in campaigning for tolerance regarding cultural diversity (Ochichi, 2014, p. 161; IRIN, 2010). Furthermore, these stations contribute to peace building by reporting on the high incidence of crime within the local community, which is leading to injury and even death. Such crime is understood to be restricting the extent to which people feel able to involve themselves in community activities and even to cause them to move elsewhere (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010).

Fourthly, stations are described as being established because there was recognition of the role that they could play in strengthening the local economy. In the case of Lake Victoria, it is for example suggested that the establishment of this station could enhance the ability of community members to share knowledge on agriculture and trade, which would help in promoting their economic well-being (Musyoki, 2008; Ochichi, 2014, p. 161). Radio Mang'elele is also noted to have been established to provide a platform for the community to uplift their living standards. The station's plans included the promotion of community empowerment projects with a special focus on income-generating activities for women. Similarly, the establishment of MugamboJwetu is understood to have been motivated by the need to facilitate community engagement around economic development (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Ochichi, 2014).

Fifth, some stations are understood to represent platforms for addressing questions relating to the health and general well-being of communities. They are thought to do so, for example, by playing a role in addressing the spread and management of HIV and AIDS. It is noted, in this respect, that community radio can raise awareness of the role that sexual behaviour plays in exposure to the virus (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Mogambi & Ochola, 2015; Ombuor, 2010; Espila, 2014). Reference is also made to the role that stations can play in the eradication of drug abuse which is said to affect some communities, particularly amongst young people (Njuki, 2013). Additionally, stations are also understood to facilitate the emotional well-being of families who are threatened by the possibility of a breakdown in relationships (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010).

Sixth, some stations were established and maintained for the purpose of building environmental awareness and adaptation strategies. As we have already seen, establishment of Radio Lake Victoria was based on such concerns. The founders of this station argued that community radio could encourage community members to engage in conversations about environmental issues that concern them (Ohenjo, 2014). It was felt, in particular, that the

station could educate community members on the importance of restoring the ecological balance of the lake (Ochichi, 2014). Additionally, stations founded by the KMD were set up in areas where flooding and landslides occur as a result of extreme weather conditions, sometimes causing deaths and displacement of local inhabitants. It is felt that stations can help to manage the impact of such threats to the safety of local communities (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). These stations were also set up to establish a working relationship between the scientists and communities in developing a common approach to weather predictions. It is argued that such collaboration can help to reinforce the value of indigenous knowledge (Ouma, 2015; Sawa, 2015; Esipisu, 2016).

Seventh, the establishment of some stations was motivated by an interest in the role they could play in facilitating education within local communities, with a particular emphasis on the achievement of literacy. OlmaaRanet was set up, for example, to tackle the ‘morani’ practice in which boys stop schooling in their early teenage years to undergo circumcision and thereafter become herdsmen. Commentators argue that this practice is contributing to ongoing illiteracy within the local community (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Ngugi, 2015). Similarly, MugamboJwetu was set up to discourage children from dropping out of school to engage in activities that could earn them money. One such activity was understood to be that of the picking and packing of ‘miraa’.<sup>5</sup> Commentators noted this tendency as one of the major factors behind the high illiteracy levels in the area (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010).

Finally, there is recognition of the role stations can play in nurturing cultural heritage within the communities they serve. For instance, Ekialo–kiona’s establishment was motivated by the idea of protecting the Suba language from extinction (Fox, 2014; Hines, 2016). This language was considered to be under threat due to the fact that approximately 119,000 Suba speakers were remaining (Ohenjo, 2014; Center for Health Market Innovations, 2016; Fox, 2014). In other cases, motivation for the establishment of stations includes mention of the role they can play in promoting the cultural identity of local communities. Such comments are made, for example, in the case of Mang’elele, MugamboJwetu and Radio Lake Victoria (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Mogambi & Ochola, 2015).

There is clearly a correlation between the understanding of the purpose of community radio that forms part of the internationally shared conceptualisation of such radio and the understanding of such benefit as articulated by the founders of such radio in rural Kenya. Seven of the eight themes relating to the purpose of such radio, as identified in Chapter Two,

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<sup>5</sup> Miraa is a plant in Kenya whose leaves and soft twigs are chewed for their juice. They are understood to alter the moods of the user. See <http://www.news24.co.ke/MyNews24/Miraa-chewing-and-its-effects-20120514>



recur in the list of motivations provided above. In both instances, the emphasis is on the role that community radio can play in the facilitation of progressive social change. In the Kenyan instance, the motivations suggest that the establishment of these stations was informed by ideals regarding the kind of society that different stakeholders are attempting to bring into being in this country, working at the local level. Firstly, one or two of the motivations are expressive of a commitment to the strengthening of democratic culture. This can be seen, in particular, in the foregrounding of the importance of civil society and human rights. Secondly, and as a stronger theme, there is a commitment to the achievement of development goals. This can be seen in the references to the strengthening of literacy, the local economy, community health and the conservation of cultural identity. Also, as part of this commitment to development, there is a preoccupation with the management of disruption and instability. This is evident in the focus on peace building and responses to crime, as well as the emphasis on the management of the traumatising impact of environmental factors.

The way in which these motivations are articulated also suggest that the introduction of community radio in rural Kenya forms part of a tension between ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ values and interests. It is, in particular, possible to identify a tension between on one hand the achievement of democracy and development and, on the other, aspects of local tradition. This can be observed, for example, in the role that aspects of tradition are understood to play in compromising the empowerment of women and children. The possible existence of this tension is of relevance to the focus, in this study, on the relationship between local and external ideas regarding the social purpose of community radio.

The review, in this section, of descriptions of rural community radio by stakeholders in the establishment and maintenance of this sector points to the existence of a coherent conceptualisation of their social purpose. The coherence is made possible by a shared understanding of the concepts of community, community empowerment and community development. This understanding is located on the critical and constructivist end of the spectrum of approaches to social knowledge identified in Chapter One. From this position, it is always assumed that the purpose of community radio is social change, in which existing relations of power must be interrogated. Furthermore, the achievement of such change is only possible through an inclusive process in which members of a community work together towards shared goals. At least at the level of the conceptualisation of social purpose, then, the Kenyan community radio sector is strongly grounded in the internationally shared understanding of such radio.

#### *2.2.4 Understandings of how goals can be achieved*

Actors involved in the founding and development of stations also identify strategies that community radio can employ in order to achieve the objectives listed above. Each of these strategies can be seen to link to recognition of the particular power that the medium of radio has to achieve those objectives. Within some of the discussions, the emphasis is placed on radio as a vehicle for facilitating access to information. In others, the stress is on radio as a medium for facilitating dialogue and the sharing of community-based knowledge and experience amongst interest groups.

The emphasis on access to information can be observed, for example, in repeated suggestions that stations can succeed in achieving their goals if they cover a wide range of content. This enables them to engage with many of the objectives listed above, from the strengthening of civil society to the preservation of cultural heritage. For instance, Radio Mang'elete, Maendeleo FM, Mwanedu FM, EkialoKiona FM, Bulala FM and Radio Lake Victoria have all been acknowledged for producing programming that consist of a mixture of features on widely different content (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Majiwa, 2008, p. 36; UNESCO, 2015; Savage, 2005; Ochichi, 2014; Ohenjo, 2014; Fox, 2014; Sawa, 2015).<sup>6</sup>

In many instances, the emphasis is more specifically on facilitating access to authoritative information. This can be observed in comments made about the kind of content that stations' programming should include. There is repeated reference, for example, to the inclusion of well-researched show content. Particular reference is made to programming in which expert guests break down complicated terms to facilitate community members' understanding of issues (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Ochichi, 2014; Majiwa, 2008). Such content is understood to assist in the achievement of a number of the objectives of community radio listed in the previous section. It is referred to, for example, in context of the objective of strengthening civil society, where it is noted that stations can create transparency by ensuring that community members have knowledge of the use and allocation of public funds (Njuki, 2008; Musyoki, 2008; Majiwa, 2008). It is also mentioned as a key requirement for the strengthening of the local economy. Reference is made, in this context, to the dissemination of technical information that can help farmers to increase agricultural yields,

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<sup>6</sup>See <http://mobile.nation.co.ke/lifestyle/Saving-the-Suba/-/1950774/2199654/-/format/xhtml/-/7is69iz/-/index.html>

improve livestock production, and prevent disease (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010, Kilimome, 2016; Brotherton, 2012). In addition, it is understood to be of relevance to the management of environmental threats in areas that are affected by extreme weather conditions. Radio can, in this context, update community members about changing weather patterns and how this may affect them, in context of possible flooding and landslides (Njagi, 2012; Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010, International Development Research Centre, 2015; Sawa, 2015). Additionally, it is mentioned in context of the achievement of literacy, through the inclusion of educative content (Majiwa, 2008).

The second emphasis, on dialogue, deliberation and the sharing of community-based knowledge and experience, can be observed in commentary on programming that encourages community participation. One way in which such participation is understood to be facilitated is through programmes that bring people together for discussions – either in the studio, or through audience participation. Commentators indicate that Radio Mang’elele, Radio Lake Victoria, Baliti FM, OlmaaRanet and Kangema FM encourage community members to become involved through phone calls and texting in order to contribute dialogue around a wide range of topics of discussion. Such discussion is often understood to involve the articulation of felt needs, the identification of problems and deliberation on possible solutions (Musyoki, 2008; Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Savage, 2005; Ochichi, 2011; Njagi, 2012; Kungu, 2014; Ohenjo, 2014).

There is, furthermore, an ongoing emphasis on the involvement of community volunteers in the production of programming (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). Commentators note that through such participation, stations can encourage the involvement of different interest groups in deliberative processes around the preservation of culture, peace building, protection of human rights, community health and well-being, etc. (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Ochichi, 2014; Ohenjo, 2014). Reference is also made to the role that such radio can play in ensuring the inclusion of groups who are typically marginalised from public debate such as women and youth (Boru, 2014). Commentators refer to the successful establishment of volunteer teams at Radio Mang’elele, Radio Sahara Maendeleo FM, Serian FM, EkialoKiona FM and OlmaaRanet (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Musyoki, 2008, p.39; Ohenjo, 2014; Center for Health Market Innovations, 2016; Majiwa, 2008).<sup>7</sup> Mwanedu FM and Shinyalu community radio are referred to as making use of student volunteers who are pursuing media and journalism courses (Ochichi, 2014; Oriare et al., 2010; Majiwa, 2008).

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<sup>7</sup>See <http://organichealthresponse.org/ek-fm-ek-youth-community-radio/>

It is also noted that another level of volunteer participation is achieved through the involvement of community members in stations' management structures and systems. Such participation is less often acknowledged or discussed than participation in on air programming. One exception is OlmaaRanet, whose board is described as comprising of representatives from different segments of the community including youth, women's groups, people living with disabilities and religious groups (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). In the case of Serian FM, it is more generally noted that the community supports the station by ensuring that its premises are secured having taken its full ownership and control (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010).

At the same time, in reflecting on the difficulties that stations experience in putting these ideals into practice, repeated reference is made to challenges associated with volunteerism. One comment that is made in this respect is that volunteers tend to be unreliable (Ochichi, 2014). Another is that volunteers do not have the necessary expertise to perform responsible functions at stations (Ochichi, 2014). In the case of Serian FM, it is noted that the station faces challenges in involving volunteers due to the fact that the community members are pastoralists who keep moving in search of new pastures (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). Commentators also point out that the involvement of volunteers necessarily requires the provision of training – and this is often difficult to achieve, due to lack of resources. It is suggested that this is a key reason why volunteer participation is often missing from stations' operational strategies (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Ohenjo, 2014).

Repeated reference is also made to the role that language plays in facilitating access to stations. Such mention occurs in context of both conceptualisations of the power of radio – that is, as a medium that enables access to information and as a vehicle that ensures participation in processes of deliberation and exchange of knowledge. Most of the stations are understood to convey their broadcast content in local languages (Musyoki, 2008; Githaiga, 2011; Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Savage, 2005; Ochichi, 2014). In many cases, stations can be seen to adopt language policies that allow them to engage with an audience that is made up of people from different language backgrounds. In some instances, they do so by broadcasting in one language that is generally understood across different language groupings. Radio Sahara, for example, serves a target audience made up of Luo, Kisii, Luhya, Kalenjin and Kuria communities (Ochichi, 2014). Its programming is presented in Swahili, on the assumption that this is a language that is understood by members of each of these communities (Ochichi, 2014). Other stations adopt a multilingual approach. For example, Mwanedu FM initially broadcast in the Kitaita language but today it broadcasts in a

combination of Kitaita, Kiswahili and English languages (Njuki, 2013). It should be noted that Swahili and English respectively have the status of Kenya's national and official languages (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Javuru, 2011). One can assume that such status played a role in the prioritisation of these languages within station's programme schedules.

The two emphases on the power of community radio – one on access to authoritative information, and one on community participation – may be complementary, but they can also be seen to stand in tension with each other. They may point to different understandings of the power dynamics that define the relationship between stations and the communities they serve. Preoccupation with the role that radio plays in providing audiences with access to authoritative information suggests a 'top down' understanding of this relationship. Emphasis on the facilitative role that radio can play in creating dialogue and exchange of knowledge suggests a relationship that is defined by ownership and control by the community.

### 2.3. Urban stations

This category comprises of only three community radio stations, referred to in some of the literature as 'slum radio'. These stations are Ghetto FM, Koch FM and Pamoja FM. All of them are based in informal settlements within Kenya's capital city, Nairobi, and all three first went on air in 2007. Ghetto FM broadcasts to the Pumwani slum; Pamoja FM targets the residents of Kibera and Koch FM serves Korogocho. Kibera is the biggest slum in Nairobi, with its population estimated to be over 800,000. Korogocho is the third largest slum in the city with a population of over 150,000 residents (Mercier, 2009; Ruvaga, 2014; Orange Magazine, 2012; Njeru, 2015; Ojwang', 2010). Ghetto FM was founded ten years before it finally received its license (Mercier, 2009). All three stations conduct intermittent audience surveys and refer to these surveys in order to establish a rough estimate of their own listenership. Based on this evidence, Koch FM, for example, claims that over 70% of the inhabitants of Korogocho listen regularly to the station. Ghetto Radio on its part claim to have a monthly listenership of about 1.2 million while Pamoja FM is thought to have a monthly listenership of over one million people (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Sturgis, 2013).

As in the case of rural stations, local agents initiated the establishment of each of these stations. Ghetto FM was founded by Slums Information Development Resource Centre

(SIDAREC), which is based in Nairobi.<sup>8</sup> Koch FM and Pamoja FM are both described as having been founded by ‘groups of friends’ (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Gustafsson, 2013; Javuru, 2011; Githaiga, 2011; Ruvaga, 2014). In the case of Pamoja FM, the founding member was Mr Adam Hussein, who is described as a retired journalist and who later became the station’s manager. Hussein and his friends are said to have carried out consultations with organisations and community members in order to establish that there was support for the station (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010).

The establishment and maintenance of these stations has also depended, as we saw with their rural counterparts, on support received from international organisations. This has taken the form of financing, donation of broadcast equipment and provision of training and mentorship programmes (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). BBC Media Action has played a role in the training of presenters at Koch FM and Ghetto FM (Njeru, 2015). Ghetto FM is understood to receive funding from SIDAREC’s donor partners, who consist mainly of funders concerned with youth development<sup>9</sup> (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). Koch FM received donor support from Open Society Institute of East Africa, St John’s Community Centre and Norwegian Church Aid (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). In addition, it benefited from the BBC Media Action’s mentoring and training programmes (Njeru, 2015).

Commentary on the motivations that informed the establishment and maintenance of these three stations suggest a degree of overlap with those that were mentioned, above, in the context of rural stations. This can be seen, for example, in recognition of the role that radio can play in strengthening civil society. This motivation is apparent in context of Ghetto FM, which SIDAREC is said to have established in order to provide the inhabitants of Pumwani with a platform that would enable them to lobby for resources (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Javuru, 2011). An emphasis on the protection of human rights can be observed in the case of Koch FM, which is described as playing a role in promoting the standards of living of the inhabitants of Korogocho (Javuru, 2011; Orange Magazine, 2012; Fairbairn & Rukaria,

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8. SIDAREC is a community based youth development projectgroup operating in the slums of Nairobi. It was established in 1997, and aims at tapping into and consolidating skills and talents existing among the youth in the community for the common benefit of slum dwellers. See <https://www.changemakers.com/competition/entrepreneuring-peace/entries/slums-information-development-resource-centres-sidarec>

9. SIDAREC’s international partners include; Stars Foundation, America Gives Back (AGB), Rotary International Kenya, Comic Relief, Allavida Kenya, Global Knowledge Partnership and Aramex Kenya. See <http://sidarec.org/index.php/partners>.

2010). An emphasis on peace building is present in the descriptions of Pamoja FM, which campaigned for peace during Kenya's post-election violence in 2007/2008. The station invited representatives of different communities to their studio to address their differences and explore the negative effects of living in conflict with each other (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). This is said to have contributed to the restoration of peace in Kibera and is considered to be one of the station's greatest achievements (Ruvaga, 2014; Orange Magazine, 2012). The establishment of Koch FM, in turn, is said to have been informed by an interest in combating gender-based violence (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Kenya Environmental & Political News Weblog, 2007). Improvement of the economic circumstances of communities is referred to in context of Pamoja FM (Gustafsson, 2013; Ruvaga, 2014). Promotion of communities' health and wellbeing is noted in the context of Koch FM, where programming deals with poor living conditions, for example relating to sanitation. This station is also described as focusing, in its programming, on the impact of drug abuse, alcoholism and HIV on the lives of young people in Pumwani (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Gustafsson, 2013). In explaining the reasons for the establishment of Koch FM, reference is also made to its role in promoting environmental awareness and knowledge of climate change (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Kenya Environmental & Political News Weblog, 2007).

It should be noted that two of the motivations listed in context of rural stations are absent from this list – the achievement of literacy and the nurturing of cultural heritage. It could be that the need to address these issues is regarded as less urgent in an urban setting. This may be, firstly, because exclusion from access to schooling is not as extreme a problem in an urban setting. Secondly, the protection of tradition may be regarded as less of a concern in a setting in which the 'modern' is valued over the 'traditional'. This could be possible in an urban environment and in context of the fact that all three stations place a strong emphasis on engaging with young people.

With regard to strategies that stations should adopt in order to achieve the above objectives, it is possible to observe a similar conceptualisation of the power of radio to that which was observed in context of rural stations. There is, again, an emphasis on the role that radio can play in facilitating access to authoritative information. For instance, commentators suggest that Ghetto FM provides slum dwellers with content that can transform their lives and enable them lead decent lives (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Javuru, 2011). Also, the station is credited for raising awareness of the CDF and ensuring that funds from this source is not misappropriated (Eneroth, 2013; Gustafsson, 2013). There is, at the same time, also reference to the role that radio plays in facilitating dialogue and exchange of knowledge and

experience. The stations are, for example, understood to achieve their goals through the promotion of progressive conversations (Javuru, 2011; Orange Magazine, 2012; Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). Ghetto FM is, for example, described as improving the lives of audience members by giving them a platform to share information and participate in community debates (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Javuru, 2011). Koch FM and Pamoja FM are also described as encouraging their listeners to air their views on different topics during live programmes (Eneroth, 2013).

Volunteerism is again discussed, particularly in context of the participation of volunteers in programme production (Javuru 2011; Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). All three stations are said to rely on volunteers for the production and presentation of programmes. In the case of Koch FM and Ghetto FM, it is explained that volunteers are drawn from local communities (Javuru 2011; Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010; Njeru, 2015; Ojwang', 2010). However, in Pamoja FM's case, the volunteer team is mostly made up of students of journalism and mass communication who are placed at the station during their industrial attachments (Javuru, 2011; Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). It is noted that the station is able to establish such attachments due to its policy on youth development (Ruvaga, 2014).

As with the rural stations, reference is again made to the role that language plays in the achievement of access to information and the facilitation of participation of listeners. In the case of the slum stations, however, the emphasis is less on multilingualism and more on single languages that can be understood across different language groups (Gustafsson, 2013).

In comparing the patterns that emerge in the relation to rural and urban stations respectively, there are clearly many areas of overlap. Points of difference appear to relate to the particularities of rural and urban settings. In the urban context, as we have seen above, there may be a stronger tendency to value what is 'modern', and less of an emphasis on the 'traditional'. It may, in this context, be significant that the language policies of the urban stations include an emphasis on English and Swahili, as the official and national language of Kenya. An emphasis on multilingualism, and with this the inclusion of smaller local languages, can possibly be associated with a context in which the protection of heritage is of greater importance.

#### 2.4. Campus stations

A third category of community radio that can be identified in the Kenyan context is that of stations attached to institutions of higher learning (KCOMNET, 2014). Within the Kenyan licencing framework such stations are understood to be 'community of interest' broadcasters



– which means that they target a community that is bound together by a shared interest. This is in contrast to rural and urban stations, which are categorised as broadcasters that serve communities bound together by their geographical location (KCOMNET, 2014).

At the time of writing this dissertation, reference to eight campus stations could be identified in the literature, all of them established about a decade ago. Five of these stations are located in Nairobi. Of these stations, Light FM was set up by St Paul's University in 2007, while KU 99.9 FM was established by Kenyatta University in 2008. Reference is also made in the literature to a station attached to the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication (KIMC) and the Kenya College of Communications Technology (KCOMNET, 2014; Githaiga, 2011). Shine FM was launched in 2007 by Daystar University in Machakos, the capital of Machakos County, situated about 63 kilometers outside Nairobi. Mmust FM was founded in the western region of Kenya in 2007 by Masinde Muliro University in Kakamega. Equator FM is based in the port city of Kisumu, which is the third largest city in Kenya, and was established in 2008 by Maseno University (Githaiga, 2011; KCOMNET, 2014; Oriare et al., 2010).

Many of these educational institutions were established in the 1990s, in response to the increasing demand for university education in Kenya (Oanda & Jowi, 2012). Public universities in particular have expanded, establishing satellite campuses away from their original locations (Oanda & Jowi, 2012). Additionally, Kenya adopted policies that began in the 1980s and 1990s to promote the establishment of private universities (Oanda & Jowi, 2012). The expansion of universities has also been made possible by the conversion of regional vocational colleges into fully-fledged universities. This is acknowledged as a step towards increasing the number of universities operating closer to the people in terms of location and access (Oanda & Jowi, 2012).

The campus stations listed above have been established both in the context of public and private tertiary institutions. The institutions that offer programmes in communications and media studies tend to be based in larger urban centres. These institutions as revealed by the Media Council of Kenya's website currently stands at 26. Of these institutions, St. Pauls University, Kenyatta University, Kenya Institute of Mass Communication, Daystar University, Kenya College of Communications Technology, Masinde Muliro and Maseno are referred to. Moreover, of these, those that have the status of public universities are Kenyatta University, Masinde Muliro University, Maseno University, Kenya College of Communications Technology and the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication. Of these, the ranking web of universities places Kenyatta, Maseno and Masinde Muliro among the top

ranked universities in the country. Daystar and St, Pauls University on the other hand represent those institutions that are privately owned. Privately owned institutions are described to have developed much faster after its recognition by the government more than two decades ago. Reference is made to the enactment of the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) Act in 1995 by the government, which offered a much needed impetus for private universities. CHE is particularly acknowledged for playing a role in chartering and giving interim authority to private universities. Although the enrolment to these institutions may have gone up now, statistics carried out in 2001/2002 suggest that private universities account for about 20 percent of university population in Kenya (Okwach, Nzomo, & Otieno, 2005, p. 12).

Very little information is available, in the literature, regarding actors involved in the establishment and maintenance of campus stations. There is, similarly, little discussion of the goals behind their establishment, and understandings of how these goals could be achieved. However, where motivation is mentioned, the suggestion seems to be that stations were established for very different reasons to the rural and urban stations discussed in the previous two sections. There is very little in the way of reference to the eight goals identified in context of those stations. Instead, it is noted that stations can play a role in providing students at the relevant institutions with opportunities for experiential learning about media production (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). Reference is made, in this context, to the role that such experience plays in students' personal and professional development as well as their identification of career choices (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010). In the instance of Mmust FM, it is also noted that its founders expect the station to become self-sustainable and to generate income for Masinde Muliro University. At the time of writing, there are also plans underway for this station to have its license changed from that of community broadcaster to commercial venture, which will allow it to increase its broadcast footprint. The assumption appears to be that, by reaching a larger audience, this station increases its chances of income generation through advertising. Commentators have suggested that this points to a lack of commitment, amongst the founders of this station, to the ideals of community radio – and a lack of familiarity with the ideals associated with such radio (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010).

Where description is available of the way these stations are managed, it is typically noted that students involved in mass communication curricula participate in programme production and presentation, under the supervision of teaching staff. Reference is made particularly to Mmust FM where students frequent the station as part of their practical lessons (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010).

One reason for the lack of commentary on campus radio may be that much of the available literature on community radio in Kenya is generated by individuals and organisations involved in development work. It is possible that these stakeholders do not take seriously the role that campus radio can play in furthering a development agenda.

## **Conclusion**

The discussion in Section One of this chapter of historical developments within Kenya's media landscape refers to the 1980s as a period in which this country still existed as a one party state. The ruling party exerted strict control on media as way a of protecting its hold on power, and for this reason the regulatory environment did not favour the establishment of a community radio sector. Indeed, as we saw in the previous chapter, most histories of community radio only emerged in African contexts from the 1990s onwards, in context of the liberalisation of media landscapes. It is for this reason that commentators have questioned the claim that Homa Bay radio, which was established at this time, could qualify as an example of community radio. We saw, furthermore, that community radio was slow to become established in Kenya even after the establishment of multiparty democracy in the 1990s. It would appear that liberalisation of the political environment and media landscape was not enough to represent a supportive environment for such radio. The first community radio station in Kenya only received its broadcast license in the mid 2000s, a decade after the government had lessened its strict control on media. It was argued in Section One that the establishment of independent media in Kenya have continued to face threats in context of attempts by the state to constrain them. Furthermore, the growth of commercial media has placed limitations on the emergence of a strong community media sector.

Nevertheless, from the mid 2000s onward, it is possible to observe the emergence of a Kenyan community radio sector. This was made possible in context of the establishment of partnerships between local communities, local NGO's and government institutions. At the same time, international development organisations developed partnerships with these local agents, providing them both with material resources and knowledge resources. In this way, community radio in this country became a reality in context of alliances established between different players at the local, national and international level. These alliances were expressive of shared understandings, amongst the different partners to, regarding the nature of community radio and its potential benefit to the local context. It seems that there was more emphasis on the potential benefit of community radio in rural settings than on urban and

campus settings. This emphasis appeared to relate to different degrees of social particularities that existed within these settings.

The review in this chapter of the resulting landscape of community radio in Kenya gives some indication of the ideas and interests that motivated internal and external agents in the establishment of stations. One pattern that emerges, in this context, is that stations were established both because of a commitment to empowerment and democratisation, and because of interest in the maintenance of social stability. In this way, then, the history of community radio in this country is informed both by an emancipatory interest and an interest in control. The tension between these interests can be observed, in particular, in the co-existence of an interest in the role that community radio can play in upholding tradition, and its value as a vehicle for modernisation. It may be that these tensions result from the complex set of alliances that have been established, within the Kenyan community radio sector, between different agents. The interests of local communities, institutions of government and international development organisations may in some contexts be complementary, but in others stand in contradiction with each other.

Part Two of this dissertation will explore these possibilities in context of further empirical research.



## CONCLUSION TO PART ONE

Chapter One provides a framework of analysis for this study by mapping out a spectrum of approaches to credible knowledge of the social, as this became articulated both in and outside the academy during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At one end of this spectrum, the discussion locates a positivist conceptualisation of such knowledge, based in a functionalist vision of society and a commitment to the maintenance of established relations of power. On the other end of the spectrum there is a constructivist and critical conceptualisation of knowledge, informed by an emancipatory interest in transformation and decolonisation. The chapter then examines three terms that are core to the conceptualisation of community radio: that of ‘community’, ‘community development’ and ‘community empowerment’. It is demonstrated that each of these terms can be differently conceptualised, depending on the vantage point from which it is imagined within the spectrum of approaches to knowledge of the social. From the positivist end of this spectrum, these terms form part of a reasoning that is situated within a framework that seeks to maintain social inequality. At the opposite end of the spectrum, when viewed from the critical perspective, the terms form part of social analysis that seeks to dismantle inequality and achieve social justice for all.

The second chapter describes the internationally shared conceptualisation of community radio, as this has been defined in the domains of academic study, media advocacy and legislation. The chapter again considers the way in which the terms ‘community’, ‘community empowerment’ and ‘community development’ are invoked within this conceptualisation. It argues that such invocation can be located at the critical and emancipatory end of the spectrum of approaches to social knowledge. The primary social purpose of such radio is seen, for this reason, to be the empowerment and development of historically marginalised communities. The assumption is that this purpose can only be achieved if community radio adheres to internationally accepted guidelines for its establishment and management. Of particular importance is the need to establish community-based relationships of ownership and control by embedding stations within a system of community participation. However, there is evidence of doubt within the discussions with regards to the extent to which guidelines for the implementation of the ideals of community radio are universally applicable. Reference is made, for example, to the involvement of volunteers, which is regarded as inappropriate to economically fragile environments. Similarly, reference is made to the adoption of audience research strategies, particularly the use of listener clubs in environments characterised by deep social inequality. Both

volunteerism and listener clubs are adopted within community radio in order to enhance community participation. The suggestion is, then, that the appropriateness of established strategies for participation becomes questionable in certain environments, particularly those that are economically fragile or characterised internally by deeply unequal relations of power.

Chapter Three describes how the globally shared conceptualisation of community radio was first articulated and then circulated internationally. As a backdrop to this discussion, the chapter first deals with the history of global debate about the social purpose of media, as this has been articulated in context of UNESCO. The focus on UNESCO is informed by recognition of the role that this organisation has played in the global expansion of community radio. It is demonstrated that approaches to the social purpose of media as articulated in the UNESCO debates can again be located along the spectrum of approaches to social knowledge that was mapped out in Chapter One. At the critical end of the spectrum one can locate the principles of the NWICO and with this the call for developing nations to claim ownership and control of their own media systems. At the conservative end of the spectrum are the responses of industrially advanced nations who were not prepared to support NWICO. It is proposed that this ambiguity within UNESCO towards critical conceptions of media may be expressive of global dynamics that have impacted on the way that ideas about community radio have become implemented in different environments around the world.

Against this backdrop, the chapter describes how ideas about community radio were first articulated and then circulated globally. The discussion identifies two strands within this history; on one hand, the development of ideas about community radio as articulated from within communities and on the other hand the introduction of such ideas by external agents. It is proposed that the first of these strands surfaced in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and resulted in the establishment of the community radio as a global movement. Although the impetus of this movement was grounded in the agency of communities themselves, it also depended on the international emergence of enabling regulatory environments. The second strand emerged in the 1980s, once community radio had already gained the status of a global movement. Its emergence was informed by recognition amongst international development organisations of the capacity of community radio to contribute to processes of development that they aimed to facilitate in developing countries. It is in context of this second historical strand that UNESCO has contributed to the global establishment of community radio.

Chapter Four serves as a review of literature about community radio as this has become established in Kenya. In order to contextualise this discussion, the chapter first describes historical developments within Kenya's media landscape. It is demonstrated that

the political environment that existed before the establishment of multiparty democracy was not enabling for the introduction and practice of community radio. Furthermore, even within the era of the multiparty state, community radio was slow to develop so that the first stations only became established in the mid 2000s. It is proposed, in this chapter, that this pattern in history should be understood in context of continued constraints placed on independent media by the Kenyan government. Furthermore, the emergence of commercial media has placed limitations on the extent to which community media could become strongly established.

The chapter suggests that the establishment of Kenyan community radio was only made possible by strong alliances between interest groups invested in its success. These groups included local communities, NGO networks, government agents and international development organisations. The alliances established between these partners were necessarily informed by diverse interests. The discussion, in this chapter, of the motivations that informed the establishment of different stations suggests that these interests sometimes complemented each other and sometimes stood in conflict with each other. This can be seen, in particular, in the tension that emerges between a commitment to emancipatory goals and an interest in social stability and control.

Together, the four literature reviews presented in Part One have sketched out the globally shared conceptualisation of radio, described how this conceptualisation circulated globally and located the emergence of Kenyan community radio within this global history. They offer an analysis of the interests and ideas that have informed these historical processes and the material relations that have constrained or enabled them. Part Two of the dissertation takes this exploration further within the Kenyan context, by means of an empirical case study of the establishment of community radio in this country.



## **PART TWO: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY**

### **CHAPTER FIVE**

#### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION**

##### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I describe and discuss the planning and implementation of the empirical component of this study. In Section One, I outline the decisions that were made regarding the design of this research project. In Section Two, I evaluate the implementation of this design and, in light of this evaluation, draw conclusions about the validity and reliability of the research process. I return in this chapter to the use of the first person, which was last used in the introduction to this dissertation. I do so because this chapter represents another moment in which I examine the way that I, as the researcher, locate myself within the production of the study.

##### **1. The research plan**

In this section I outline each of the design decisions that formed part of the original plan for the empirical study and demonstrate how these decisions had been informed by the study's objectives.

##### **1.1 The research aims**

My intention for this empirical study was to build on the literature reviews in Part One of this dissertation by means of a more detailed examination of the way that internationally circulating ideas about community radio have been taken up in the Kenyan context. I decided that the study would focus on the role played, within this history, by individuals based in Kenya rather than agents external to this context. I would do so by exploring the perspectives of individuals who had directly contributed to the history of the establishment and growth of community radio in Kenya. The aim was to gain insight into the interests that motivated these individuals and to identify the ideas about community radio that guided them in their involvement. The study would trace the relationship between these interests and ideas and the internationally shared conceptualisation of such radio. It would also explore how these agents engaged with the realities of local context as part of their attempts to put ideas about community radio into practice in Kenya. Throughout, the researcher would explore the

location of these conceptualisations of community radio within the spectrum of approaches to knowledge of the social, as mapped out in Chapter One. In doing so, he would consider whether the community radio sector as it has come to be established in Kenya can be said to be representative of a critical, constructivist and ‘decolonial’ social project.

### 1.2 The methodological framing: a qualitative study

I located this study within a qualitative paradigm. My decision to do so was based on the realisation that qualitative research is most appropriate for a study that deals with the articulation of ideas within a historically specific environment. I also decided to pursue the study from an interpretive perspective, because it is motivated by my interest in understanding the way local agents give meaning to globally circulating ideas (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002; Merriam, 2009; Nkwi, Nyamongo, & Ryan, 2001). I deem this approach to be appropriate for a study that explores the perspectives of individuals who have witnessed the history of the establishment and growth of a medium within a specific social environment (Fossey et al, 2002; Merriam, 2009; Nkwi et al, 2001).

### 1.3 A case study design

I decided that a case study design would be most appropriate because I aimed to demonstrate how approaches to community radio become expressed within one localised context (Stake, 2005, p.1). Case study designs enable in-depth observation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2009). The example of Kenyan community radio is seen to represent an instance or case of the local appropriation of internationally circulating ideas. Examination of this case can contribute to understanding of the extent to which such ideas are successfully implemented in a historically specific context and of factors that may have impacted on such success. Nevertheless, the research takes the form of an ‘intrinsic’ case study in the sense that it allows for better comprehension of a particular case without making ambitious claims about broader patterns (Yin, 2009; Jwan & Ong’ondo, 2011).

### 1.4 The research method: qualitative interviews

As already mentioned, my aim was to engage with individuals who have actively contributed to the establishment and growth of the community radio sector in Kenya. I decided that such engagement would take the form of in-depth, qualitative interviews, based on open-ended

questions. This method would be appropriate because it would enable me as the researcher to explore the way a group of individuals experience participation in the construction of a media sector (Yin, 2003; Roberts, 2006; Gilham, 2000; Nunan, 1992). Furthermore, the interviewees would be able to play an active role in this process of exploration as co-participants in the research process (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). In this way, I could conduct the research in the true spirit of an interpretive study, as a two-way conversation rather than as an activity that is shaped only by myself as the researcher. I would, in other words, be better able to interpret participants' experiences from their own point of views and represent these experiences in their own terms (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Gamer, & Steinmetz, 1991; Kvale, 1996).

## 1.5 A fieldwork plan

### *1.5.1 Selection of research participants*

I decided that interviewees would be drawn from the three main categories of participants in the establishment and growth of community radio in Kenya, as discussed in Chapter Four. I intended to interview two participants from each of these categories. The first category would therefore be represented by individuals who have contributed to community radio from within the disciplinary context of academic research, teaching and study. The second category would consist of individuals who were involved in drafting policies that were used to lobby for the legalisation of community radio in Kenya. The third category would be represented by individuals involved in activism or advocacy, as part of local and regional community media networks. These categories can also be seen to mirror those that emerged, in context of the literature review pursued in Chapter Two, as the three social domains involved in the global conceptualisation of community radio. I decided that participants from each of these categories would be selected by way of purposive sampling. In addition, I decided to adopt a 'snowballing' technique in which interviewees would assist me in identifying further potential participants.

### *1.5.2 Designing the interview guide*

I designed an interview guide that was divided into four sections (see Appendix C). The first section of this guide explores the research participants' general understanding of community radio. The second section focuses on their description of the history of community radio in Kenya while the third prompts them to describe their own involvement in that history. The

final section deals with their evaluation of that history, focusing on the extent to which it can be seen to have resulted in a locally appropriate implementation of ideas about community radio.

I pre-tested this research guide, working with individuals who held similar attributes to those that would be chosen to participate in the actual study. In this way, I aimed to ensure that the design of the guide was appropriate. The main problem that emerged from this pre-test is that some of the questions confused the interviewees because they addressed more than one issue at a time. I rectified this ambiguity by ensuring that each question focused on one important issue.

### *1.5.3 Guidelines for conducting the interviews*

In preparing for the fieldwork process, I kept in mind that location can contribute to the success of an interview. For this reason, I decided that I would ask the participants to identify the venue that they would be most comfortable to be interviewed in. I also decided to limit the interviews to an optimum length of one hour. I deemed this to be enough time to enable an in-depth, qualitative exploration of the research topic (Jwan & Ong'ondo, 2011). I also aimed to adopt a flexible and responsive approach in which I would be guided by the interviewees as to the level of detail with which to pursue each question. At the same time, I would commit myself to pursuing the clarification of exact and detailed information, which would entail asking participants to elaborate on their responses (Richards, 2003). Lastly, I aimed to adopt an approach of active listening, because interviewees are more likely to provide detailed explanations when they feel that an interviewer is paying close attention (Jwan & Ong'ondo, 2011).

## 1.6 Analysing the fieldwork and writing up the findings

In analysing the resulting interview material, I aimed to be guided by the issues and themes that had emerged from the literature reviews presented in Part One of this dissertation. For this purpose, I decided to adopt the method of thematic analysis. I assumed that this would enable me to trace links between the interviews and themes that emerged in the earlier chapters of this dissertation (Jwan & Ong'ondo, 2011; Clarke and Braun, 2006, p.78). My prediction was that such themes would include, for example, evidence of consciousness of the globally shared understanding of community radio described in Chapter Two. It would

also include comparison between patterns in the establishment of community radio in Kenya and such patterns as they emerged in the global arena, as described in Chapter Three.

In order to identify the presence of such themes, I would first list the categories of discussion that emerged from the transcribed data. I would then identify those categories that seem to relate closely to the themes discussed in the literature reviews. I would finally piece these themes together to create a comprehensive picture of the study participants' collective responses (Aronson, 1994).

I decided that I would present the findings of this study as an analytic story, a style that is generally used in studies within the social sciences (Silverman, 2005). I would tell this story, furthermore, by organising the discussion around the basic structure of my interview guide. This structure already provides an internal logic that would enable discussion of the research findings to be coherently presented. I also decided that my findings would only make sense to readers if it included evidence in the form of direct quotations from the in-depth interviews. I was conscious that I could not present raw data in its entirety as a way of providing such evidence. Instead, I would present the best examples of statements made by participants that are responsive to this study's objectives. In doing so, I would stand a better chance of showing how my findings relate back to both the conceptual and contextual frameworks that were formulated in the first part of this dissertation.

### 1.7 Ethical considerations

In planning the research process, I also kept in mind a number of ethical principles that are appropriate to a study of this nature. I understood, for example, that I would need to meet the requirement of informed consent, by giving the participants an opportunity to voluntarily accept or refuse to participate in this study (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2000; Kvale 1996). Once participants had voluntarily accepted to participate in this study I would need to ensure that the principle of justice, which is an ethical principle that requires all researchers to be always fair to the participants in their research, was upheld. Firstly, I would uphold this principle by making sure that the choice of location for interviews was convenient for all participants. Secondly, I would ensure that all participants were given an equal share of opportunity to respond to questions (Orb et al., 2000).

I would also take into consideration the principle of beneficence, which is seen to apply to the context of human research. This would require of me to minimize or even prevent any form of harm to participants in the study. I hoped to achieve this by allowing participants to identify interview locations that they deemed safe (Orb et al. 2000). I was

conscious that avoidance of harm to participants would, typically, also include the assurance of anonymity. However, I knew that in the context of this project the achievement of such anonymity would not be possible. Even if pseudonyms were used, the identity of the participants would be evident to individuals involved in the community radio sector in Kenya. At the same time, I assumed that the majority of the participants would have no objection to such exposure, given that they have openly participated in public discussions in Kenya around the issues addressed in this study. They may, indeed, be happy to have their identities revealed as contributors in this study. However, I resolved to ensure that all participants understood that involvement in this study would necessarily involve disclosure of their identity. In this way I hoped, again to fulfill the requirement of informed consent (Grinyer, 2002).

## **2. Implementing the research plan**

This discussion deals with the implementation of the fieldwork plan and with the analysis of the resulting interview material.

### **2.1 Fieldwork**

#### *2.1.1 Selection of research participants*

While reviewing literature about Kenyan community radio in the first part of this dissertation, I was able to identify one individual who has contributed very actively to writing and publishing articles on the subject of community radio. This person was Nguri Matu, who has a doctorate in journalism and mass media and is one of the few scholars in Kenya who has dedicated himself to the study of community radio in this country. I contacted Dr Matu in the hope that he would help in the identification of this study's interview candidates. This strategy worked well, given that Dr Matu was able to refer me to individuals who have in different ways played a significant role in the history of community radio in Kenya.

In this way, I was able to recruit seven research participants for this study. Each of them can be seen to fall within one or another of the main categories for research participants identified in the previous section. Dr Nguri Matu and Mr Njuki Githethwa fall into the category of academics who have contributed to the study of community radio in Kenya. Those who belong in the domain of media advocacy are Ms Grace Githaiga and Mr Tom Mboya. Lastly, Ms Caroline Mengich, Mr Lawrence Mute, and Ms Doreen Rukaria occupy the domain of broadcast regulation. However, my examination of these participants reveals

that some of them can fall into more than one of these three categories. I will demonstrate this in the remainder of this discussion but this time, for the sake of simplicity, leaving out the titles of participants.

I recruited Nguri Matu on the basis that he belongs to a pool of very few scholars who have in-depth knowledge of community radio as it exists in Kenya. Few universities in Kenya deal with community broadcasting but Dr Matu has foregrounded the study of this topic within the syllabus of the Department of Communication Studies at Moi University. He is frequently involved in presenting lectures on the subject to students at this university. His efforts in teaching about the ideals of community radio can be traced back to the early 1990s when very few people in Kenya understood the concept of community radio. At this time, he moved around the country, teaching and creating awareness about such radio. He was also a founding member of KCOMNET, which is one of the earliest community radio support networks to be established in Kenya.<sup>10</sup> Dr Matu became the head of this network's training department, which was generally expected to teach community members and other stakeholders about the concept of community radio.

Njuki Githethwa also belongs to the small group of scholars who have pursued the study of community broadcasting in Kenya. His interest in this subject matter can be seen from the number of books and articles that he has published on this topic. Githethwa has also presented discussions on community broadcasting at local and international conferences. He teaches at Tangaza College, which is a Catholic University college in Nairobi. He never misses an opportunity to talk about community radio in his classes. In the 1990s, as a way of promoting the recognition of such radio, he joined first Econews Africa as a programme's officer and later KCOMNET.<sup>11</sup> At the time of writing this dissertation, Githethwa was holding the position of a coordinator of KCOMNET.

Grace Githaiga is a media producer who has tirelessly advocated for community radio's recognition as a third tier of broadcasting in Kenya. She worked as a broadcaster for the mainstream media in the early 1990s before quitting to form KCOMNET. As one of the founding members of this network, she was chosen to head it as its chairperson. One of her

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<sup>10</sup> KCOMNET is a non-profit organisation and the national networking association for community media sector in Kenya. See <https://kcomnet.org/>

<sup>11</sup> Econews Africa is a non-governmental organization in Kenya that works as a backstopping facility supporting the work of non-profit organizations in the areas of social development. See <https://namati.org/network/organization/econews-africa/>

main roles as the chairperson was to lobby for community radio's legal recognition. She did so by interacting with government officials, more so those who were in the ministry of information and the members of parliament who sat in the communication's committee of parliament. In this way she helped to ensure the passage of a legal framework that recognized the practice of community broadcasting. Given her active role in lobbying for community radio in Kenya, Githaiga became elected as the Africa chair of the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC).

As noted already, Tom Mboya also falls in the domain of media advocacy. His contribution to the sector includes lobbying for the licensing of community radio stations in Kenya. When he realised that not much was happening in this regard, Mboya visited the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) to compel them to start issuing community radio stations with licenses.<sup>12</sup> On establishing that the CAK did not even have a policy framework that sets out procedures that should be followed in licensing community radio stations, Mboya decided to assist them in drafting such a policy. Mboya convinced the regulator to add a clause in this framework that would allow community radio stations to sell airtime for advertisements. He believed that it was important for community radio to be allowed to generate revenue through advertisements, as long as they did so purely to ensure their own sustainability and not for the profit of shareholders. He channeled his efforts through local networks such as KCOMNET and CRAK.<sup>13</sup> At the time of writing this dissertation, Mboya was also a board member of the Africa World Organization of Community Radio and Broadcast (AMARC).

Caroline Mengich is an employee at the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK). She has helped to ensure that this agency fulfills the purpose of regulating all broadcasting services in Kenya. Mengich is involved in the allocation of licenses to both commercial and community broadcasting services. She has played an instrumental role in ensuring that all community radio stations that were initially operating with temporary permits have received long-term licenses. She is determined to improve community-broadcasting services in Kenya and has for this purpose pursued a benchmarking process, in which she has referred to regulatory systems established in other countries to help set new standards of practice for community radio in Kenya. She carries out regular visits to community radio stations in

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<sup>12</sup> The Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) is a state agency that is responsible for regulating all broadcasting services in Kenya. See [www.ca.go.ke](http://www.ca.go.ke)

<sup>13</sup> Community Radio Association of Kenya (CRAK) is an alternative representative body for community radio in Kenya (Kimani, 2017, p. 94).



Kenya to establish if these stations are observing these new set of standards. She ensures that those stations that are found to have disregarded these rules are deregistered. However, she tries to avoid deregistering such stations by organizing community forums where community broadcasters are educated about the principles that undergird community radio.

Lawrence Mute is an advocate of the High court in Kenya and a vice president of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR). He played a valuable role in drafting policies that were used by media advocates to lobby for community radio's legal recognition in Kenya.<sup>14</sup> As a legal expert versed in the system of law that is concerned with private relations between members of a community, Mute had been approached by community media advocates for legal assistance. He is generally cited in literature about community radio as being instrumental in shaping regulations and policies that apply to this sector.

Doreen Rukaria started as a community development worker in the early 1990s. In this capacity she was involved in a number of government and international agencies that worked in local communities. Through this work, she became aware that community members were deprived of access to information, and were not well served in this respect by the available media platforms. For this reason she became interested in the idea of community radio, and joined KCOMNET. As a member of this network, she contributed to the design of the communication policy that now regulates community radio in Kenya.

### *2.1.2 Conducting the interviews*

The participants were scattered across different parts of the country, which meant that the interviewing process was time consuming. As planned, I was able to meet with each individual in their venue of choice, which primarily consisted of coffee shops and restaurants. In my estimation, these settings added to the success of the resulting interviews, since the participants were able to be comfortable and speak freely. During these interviews, I recorded each conversation, with the permission of the contributor.

Each interview lasted for an average of an hour, as had originally been planned. I used approximately ten minutes for building rapport with the participants. This was the point at which I managed to obtain their consent before involving them in this study. I then used

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<sup>14</sup> ACHPR is charged with protecting and promoting human and people's rights. See <https://www.achpr.org/aboutus>

another forty minutes to take the participants through the interview guide, and about ten minutes to ask further questions on issues that needed clarification.

While conducting these interviews, I made sure that I observed the principles I had set out to uphold. First, I upheld the principle of particularity by probing the research participants for clarity where there was a need to do so. I also offered the participants a keen listening ear during the interviews and in this way encouraged them to give more information.

## 2.2 Process of analysis and writing

In preparation for analysis, I transcribed each of the interviews (see interview transcripts in Appendix D). Although this process was long and arduous, it enabled me to gain familiarity with the interview material and to internalise its significance. I was then able to scrutinise these transcripts, in order to identify patterns and themes. I accomplished this task by marking phrases, sentences and paragraphs that represented meaningful themes. Having identified these themes, I realised that some of them did not fit into the framework offered by the original discussion in Part One of this dissertation. I therefore discarded those that I found irrelevant and included those that corresponded to the discussion in the first part of this dissertation.

In organising the discussion, I mainly followed the structure of the original interview guide. I also tried my best to present this discussion in a way that would convince the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis. I did so by paraphrasing what the study's participants had said during the interview sessions and retaining direct quotations where this would add to the authenticity of the discussion. Where appropriate, I consulted with participants in order to determine whether they felt that they had been presented accurately. Indeed, all participants were satisfied with how I had reported their responses and therefore allowed me to use those responses in this thesis.

## **Conclusion**

In my estimation, the design of this study as well as its implementation was successful. The original plan had been well conceived, and the interview guide had been tested before it was used in the field. The resulting plan was carefully implemented, and each of its objectives were met. As will be demonstrated in the next two chapters, the quality of the resulting research material shows evidence of the reliability and validity of this design.

## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS I: CONCEPTUALISING COMMUNITY RADIO

#### **Introduction**

This is the first of two chapters that deal with the interpretation of the fieldwork for this study. This chapter focuses on the research participants' understanding of the concept of community radio. Chapter Seven then describes participants' interpretation of the history of community radio in Kenya. Both chapters demonstrate how participants' understanding of community radio can be seen to relate to the globally shared understanding of community radio that was described in Chapter Two.

Section One of this chapter describes how research participants first came to know about community radio. Section Two examines their conceptualisation of community radio. Where relevant, the reader is reminded of the category to which a particular research participant can be seen to belong – that is, whether they come from the domain of the academy, activism or legislation.

#### **1. How participants gained an understanding of community radio**

For the purpose of analytical clarity, the discussion in this section deals firstly with the way participants describe their introduction to ideas about community radio. It then moves to a more detailed examination of sources of knowledge that shaped their consequent understanding of such radio.

##### 1.1 How participants first learned about community radio

All of the participants explain that they first became aware of community radio because they were involved in work relating to the achievement of progressive social change. As part of such work, they came into contact with discussions of community radio and realised that it could contribute to their goals as agents of change. These discussions took place in context of their interaction with advocates for community radio, represented both by people based in Kenya and by people located beyond the borders of this country.

Two of the participants explain that they were initially introduced to the concept of community radio by word of mouth, as an idea that comes from the Global North. Githaiga explains that she first heard about such radio in the early 1980s, when she was still working for the Kenyan state broadcaster. Some of her co-workers had attended a meeting of the

World Community Radio Broadcasters that was organised by AMARC in Montreal and they shared with her what they had learned there about such radio (Githaiga, 2018, p. 21). Mboya notes that he became conscious of community radio much later, when he was working as a community-based media activist in the mid 2000s. He was introduced to the concept by a Norwegian couple, a sound engineer and photojournalist, who were visiting Kenya. They convinced Mboya that putting community radio into practice was achievable in Kenya, given the simplicity of the equipment that was required. Later that year, he was able to learn more about community radio when some of his fellow media activists visited radio stations in Brazil on a fact-finding mission (Mboya, 2018, p. 5).

Mute and Mengich both note, in contrast, that their initial introduction to community radio was not primarily as a concept originating in the Global North but rather as ideas that came from many different spaces, including developing countries. Both of them first came across such ideas because they engaged with groups that were exploring the role that community radio could potentially play within the Kenyan context. Mute explains that he was approached by media activists in the 1990s to assist in the drafting of policies that would make possible establishment of a community radio sector in Kenya. These activists had themselves learned about such radio from a wide variety of environments around the world (Mute, 2018, p. 70). Mengich's introduction followed ten years later, in the mid 2000s, as part of her work for the state regulator. She participated at this time in a benchmarking study to assess the potential of community radio for the Kenyan context. Together with some of her colleagues, she gathered information about the way community radio operated in a wide range of countries, including those in Africa. One of the countries that stood out for her was Tanzania, which she felt offered valuable lessons for the implementation of community radio (Mengich, 2018, p. 63).

The two participants who come from an academic background explain that they first encountered community radio as a set of ideas that had gained purchase within developing environments of the Global South. Matu notes that he was completing a degree in journalism and media studies in the school of journalism at Delhi University in India in the early 1980s and was introduced as part of his coursework to the role that community radio could play in facilitating social change. He explains that, at that time, he was preoccupied with the fact that African countries were discriminated against within global systems, both socially and economically. He understood that such discrimination had contributed to Africa's location within the global domain as a "disadvantaged continent" and felt that it was time for "Africans themselves" to change this circumstance. He experienced his introduction to

community radio as an ‘epiphany’ regarding the role that this medium could play as part of such change in Kenya (Matu, 2018, p. 34-35).

Githethwa explains that when he first heard about community radio in the 1990s, he had already become conscious of the way poor people in Kenya were marginalised by the mainstream media. He had taken part in activist campaigns that responded to such marginalisation and in this context was introduced to the role that community radio can play to empower people. Githethwa emphasizes that the activists who formed part of these campaigns were not the passive recipients of ideas from external agents. He explains that “community radio did not come looking for [Africans]” but rather “[Africans] ... went looking for it”. They may, as part of this search, have drawn from ideas that emerged elsewhere in the world, but only to build on normative principles and communication practices that were already well-established in the local context. He refers to the existence of traditional communication systems, which he loosely describes as “horns and drums”, and of oral communication. Given the existence of such communicative practices, the notion that Africa “borrowed” the idea of community radio from “Bolivia in Latin America” is, to his mind, misleading (Githethwa, 2018, p. 45). It is noticeable that both Matu and Githethwa locate their description of the adoption of ideas about community radio in recognition of the agency and resources of people located in the developing world.

The comments summarised in this discussion demonstrate that while some participants were introduced to the idea of community radio as early as the 1980s, most only encountered the idea in the 1990s or even as late as the 2000s. This difference in timing may relate to age differences between the participants, which would have determined when, as working professionals, they entered environments that would expose them to community radio. Once they did so, they became located within an information network that provided them with access to ideas about community radio from a wide range of social contexts. This network consisted of individuals in Kenya involved in work that contributed to progressive social change that cut across the domains of academia, policy development and media activism. Crucially, the network also links into a broader, international web of communication that allows its membership to draw on ideas about community radio as these circulate around the world.

In the view of the researcher, this allowed, firstly, for a sharing within the Kenyan context of general knowledge about the role that community radio can play to facilitate change in any environment around the world. Secondly, it enabled individuals and groups within the Kenyan environment to collaborate on the establishment of an enabling

environment for the implementation of community radio in this country. Such collaboration can be observed, in particular, in context of the articulation of guidelines for the regulation of community radio. Indeed, it was through contributing to the implementation of such regulation that the majority of the participants took their first step towards making ideas about community radio become a reality in this country.

This review of the participants' initial introduction to ideas about community radio demonstrates that they locate themselves at the critical, communitarian and decolonial end of the spectrum of approaches to social knowledge, as described in Chapter One. This is evident from the extent to which they were drawn to ideas about community radio as a result of their concerns about the social and economic inequity that they could observe within their immediate physical and social settings. It can also be observed in their reasoning that community radio would become a vehicle through which such inequity could be challenged, and progressive social change be achieved. They recognised this potential in community radio because it operated as a strategy for strengthening participatory democratic practice. Furthermore, they understood these ideas to build on already-existing approaches to such practice within Kenyan society, rather than being imported from external sources. This location within available approaches to social knowledge meant that they were highly receptive to the principles associated with internationally shared conceptualisation of community radio.

## 1.2 Sources of learning

After first learning about community radio in the 1980s, 1990s or mid 2000s, all of the participants developed a desire to find out more about this medium and they did so by searching out sources of knowledge. One source that they encountered as part of this search was that of written texts, such as books and articles. Matu explains that he depended for his learning on academic books and journal articles as well as reports commissioned by development organisations (Matu, 2018, p. 35). Mengich notes that she was able to access literature through the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), an organisation with members from different countries. The ITU had a big database of material about developments in media and communication from around the world (Mengich, 2018, p. 64). Rukaria explains that she was able to access material prepared by AMARC, which she obtained from people she worked with in South Africa, West Africa and Latin America (Rukaria, 2018, p. 56). Mboya obtained some learning materials that had been produced by UNESCO, which mostly dealt with ways of strengthening community radio stations (Mboya,

2018, p. 6). All of these texts were written by experts from other countries rather than individuals based in Kenya.

A second source of knowledge was that of workshops and seminars dealing with community radio, organised in Kenya both by local and international organisations. Most of these meetings took place during the course of the 1990s, with the purpose of sharing knowledge amongst stakeholders in the establishment of a Kenyan community radio sector. Matu notes that the earliest of these sessions were facilitated at the beginning of the 1990s by Econews Africa. He explains that their seminars enabled participants to deepen their understanding of the principles on which community radio was based (Matu, 2018, p. 35). Mboya, Rukaria and Githaiga all explain that later sessions were facilitated by KCOMNET and UNESCO. By attending these gatherings, they were able to gain insight into the relevance of community radio to the local context (Mboya, 2018, p. 6; Rukaria, 2018, p. 55; Githaiga, 2018, p. 22).

Finally, the participants learned from their involvement in the establishment of community radio stations in their local context. They explain that such involvement enabled them to observe, in practical terms, what was required for the establishment and maintenance of a community radio station. Githaiga notes that she was able to gain such experience by working on the establishment of stations in East Africa in the mid 1990s. Later, the articles and books that she wrote about community radio drew heavily on this experience of practice (Githaiga, 2018, p. 22). Githethwa notes that he gained such practical insights through his interaction with community activists who had “gravitated towards community radio” in the Kenyan context (Githethwa, 2018, p. 45).

It would seem, then, that all of the participants were invested in deepening their understanding of the principles on which community radio was based and how this could be implemented in the local context. They all had access to local and international networks that provided them with sources of knowledge in the form of texts. Many of these texts were international in nature, rather than locating themselves in one particular social environment. This is true, in particular, of the material prepared by AMARC. It is arguable that, by accessing these texts, the participants were able to consolidate their knowledge of the globally shared conceptualisation of community radio. At the same time, they had access to processes of discussion amongst Kenyan stakeholders in which the local relevance of these internationally circulating ideas could be explored. It would seem that the exchange of ideas that took place in context of these discussions contributed to the articulation of guidelines for

the establishment of community radio in Kenya. The remainder of this chapter maps out the insights that the participants developed in context of such learning.

## **2. Defining community radio**

In the previous section, we saw that participants demonstrated awareness of the role that AMARC played in the articulation of the conceptualisation of community radio. It was also possible to observe the important role that this organisation played in the circulation of ideas about community radio from the global to the local context. When asked to explain what community radio is, a number of the participants voluntarily refer to the importance of AMARC as a source for definition. Githethwa, for example, describes AMARC as a key source of information for the definition of community radio (Githethwa, 2018, p. 43). Rukaria suggests in this respect that she will stick to community radio's "universal definition" as defined by AMARC (Rukaria, 2018, p. 54). Matu, on his part, talks about "classical definitions" of community radio as provided in AMARC's documentation (Matu, 2018, p. 31).

At the same time, the participants demonstrate consciousness that community radio is defined by historically specific legislation, which may differ from one context to the next. Githethwa gives the example of South African and Kenyan regulatory documents (Githethwa, 2018, p. 43). All of the participants explain in this context that, as a regulatory category of broadcasting, community radio is typically distinguished from that of public and commercial radio. Within such regulation, community radio is then defined by the fact that it fulfils a social purpose that the two other tiers cannot adequately achieve. Mengich notes, for example, that "community radio ... [deals] specifically with issues that are not normally dealt with by the other [tiers of broadcasting]." (Mengich, 2018, p. 62). Similarly, Mute describes community radio by comparing it with state and commercial radio:

Community radio is a radio station that is not managed by the state or by people who are interested in making money through advertisements. Community radio's aim is to serve [a community] rather than to make money or do propaganda on behalf of government (Mute, 2018, p. 31).

The next section describes the explanations that the participants provide of this globally shared definition of community radio, both as it emerges from resources such as those produced by AMARC and from regulatory guidelines. As in the review of literature in Chapter Two, the section deals firstly with understandings of the way the social purpose of such radio is understood. It then looks more closely at understandings of the way such social



purpose can be realised in practice. In this way, the researcher aims to simplify the task of comparing the participants' commentary with the literature in Chapter Two.

## 2.1 The social purpose of community radio

Again, as in Chapter Two, discussion in this subsection of the purpose of community radio deals firstly with the identification of groups in society who should be the main beneficiaries of such radio. Attention then turns to the ways in which community radio should impact on its social context, in order to be of benefit to these members of society.

### 2.1.1 *The main beneficiaries of community radio*

The participants identify “non-negotiable” criteria that need to be met before radio can claim to have the status of community radio. They generally agree, in listing these criteria, that the purpose of such radio must necessarily be defined in terms of benefit to a specific community. Githethwa explains the concept in this way:

For me, the definition that makes sense is the one which describes community radio as a form of broadcasting that is ... for ... the community (Githethwa, 2018, p. 43).

The suggestion is that community radio must operate in the interests of that community. As Mengich puts it, “... community radio should [address] the needs of people within a ... community” (Mengich, 2018, p.62). Likewise, Mute suggests that community radio is “radio which ... focuses on [community members’] felt needs” (Mute, 2018, p. 69).

Most of the participants understand such reference to community to apply to a group of people living within a geographically defined area. Githethwa, for example, explains that community radio is “defined by geography” (Githethwa, 2018, p. 43) while Githaiga says that it serves “people who reside within a certain locality” (Githaiga, 2018, p. 16). Mboya also describes community radio as, “... a voice of the people within a particular geographic region” (Mboya, 2018, p. 1). Other participants add that this ‘locality’ refers to the area immediately surrounding a station. As Rukaria explains, community radio is a “...media platform that is for the local community members” (Rukaria, 2018, p.54). Mengich uses similar wording in her explanation:

Community radio is a broadcast service that is set up purely for ... a specific local community (Mengich, 2018, p.62).

Mute provides an example of a geographically located community, to demonstrate this point:

To come back to geography ... we can give an example of Korogocho. People of Korogocho are the ones who ... benefit from [community radio] that is founded in that area (Mute, 2018, p.69).

Korogocho is a slum neighbourhood found in Nairobi. Mute's example suggests, then, that the community served by a station is highly specific in its geographic location, and as such can, for example, be one neighbourhood within a city.

Some participants also point out that community radio stations can target communities of interest. Mboya explains that this term refers to a group of people who are bound together by their interest in one issue:

...people who share a common interest ... like that of pastoralism, farming or transgender groups that may be keen on having their own radio to be able to talk about their issues (Mboya, 2018, p. 2).

Matu adds that such groups are typically invested in engaging with each other about this issue:

Even as we talk of community of interest, we talk of people who know each other and whose concerns and interests are relatively similar (Matu, 2018, p. 31).

Mute, in turn, explains that one example of a community of interest might be "women who like to do a certain thing" (Mute, 2018, p. 70).

In defining the beneficiaries of community radio, the participants also speak about the presence of sub-groups within the community that a station serves. They make reference to relationships of social inequality that may exist between these groups. Githaiga refers in this context to the existence of what she calls the "elements of power within a community" (Githaiga, 2018, p. 16). She explains that some groups hold a dominant position within a community, as "influencers who ... sway the way things go" (Githaiga, 2018, p. 16). At the same time, there are also less dominant groups who are commonly described as the "marginalised groups" (Githaiga, 2018, p. 16). Matu suggests that a community radio station should ensure that both dominant and marginalised groupings benefit from its services:

[Both] the powerful and the marginalised belong to a community and as such [they are] entitled to benefit from community radio ... Everyone needs to be able to benefit from community radio. I mean both the poor and the influential (Matu, 2018, p.32).

In this explanation, Matu equates 'marginalisation' with being poor, and also makes a distinction between poor people and those who have 'influence'. He adds that the more powerful groupings within a community are likely to view the station as a means towards consolidating the role that they play as community leaders:

Of course, the influential are those people who move the agendas. These people view community radio as a facility that makes their work much easier (Matu, 2018, p. 32).

It is of interest to note that, within this definition, the ‘marginalised’ are not the sole target of a community radio station; instead, there is deliberate emphasis on the involvement of people from different categories of privilege. The ‘work’ that is made easier, within this quote, presumably refers to the role that more privileged community members can play in contributing to the well-being of the community as a whole. Nevertheless, other participants argue that the marginalised groups in a community should qualify as the main beneficiaries of community radio. Githethwa observes, in this respect, that this has historically been the main purpose of community radio, and it is a purpose with which he identifies personally:

I would say that from the historical identity of community radio today, and its practice, which is still carried forward by people like me, community radio [is] an instrument for the struggle of the poor, the weak, the exploited and the marginalised. Community radio is not for the ruling class or the middle class ... it is for the underclass (Githethwa, 2018, p. 44).

Mboya also argues that individuals who are “disadvantaged in a particular way are the main people that benefit from community radio” (Mboya, 2018, p. 2). Githaiga states, similarly, that target communities should include “women or certain ignored groups in the community” (Githaiga, 2018, p. 16).

The participants also suggest that the role that community radio plays in serving the marginalised is one that is unique to this tier of broadcasting, enabling it to fulfill a purpose that is not achieved by other tiers. Githaiga, for example, argues that community radio strives to compensate for the exclusion of these groups by commercial and state broadcasting:

Community radio is ... predominantly for the marginalised groups of individuals because other tiers of broadcasting ignore these people (Githaiga, 2018, p. 16).

Rukaria adds that community radio should mainly benefit “people who are disadvantaged either in terms of language or disregarded by the other tiers of broadcasting” (Rukaria, 2018, p. 54). Mboya also proposes that marginalised groups are the main recipients of community radio because they are not provided with adequate access to other spaces within the media landscape:

Community radio [stations benefit] those people who are disadvantaged ... Most of these people ... always have a feeling that their voices are not heard. In this regard ... such [groups] ... will ... start community radio [stations] because they want to be heard and they want their issues ... addressed (Mboya, 2018, p. 2).

It is clear, from this discussion, that all of the participants place an emphasis on the inclusiveness of community radio, in the sense that it ensures that marginalised people become included in the media landscape. This emphasis on inclusivity is understood to represent one of the key distinctions between community radio and other tiers of

broadcasting. At the same time, there is some consciousness within this discussion of the complexities that may surround the involvement, within a given station, of people who occupy different levels of privilege within its target community. It is in this context that the participants stress that community radio should, first and foremost, represent the interests of those members of the community who are most marginalised. As we have seen, this emphasis on the interests of marginalised groups is central to the conceptualisation of the internationally shared concept of community radio described in this dissertation.

### *2.1.2 How a community benefits from a station*

In Chapter Two, we saw that within the internationally shared conceptualisation of community radio, its purpose is understood to be that of contributing to progressive social change. The literature refers to at least eight different aspects of such change, which include the strengthening of civil society, the upholding of human rights, the promotion of peace, improving the local economy to the benefit of all its inhabitants, promoting the health and well-being of community members, addressing environmental concerns, providing access to education and nurturing cultural heritage. Some of these themes recur within the participants' own discussion of the social purpose of community radio. They tend, however, to describe the benefit of community radio in more generalised and holistic terms, in context of the role that it can play in a process they generally refer to as 'development'. Mute explains, for example, that community radio is "...supposed to facilitate community members' [all-round development]" (Mute, 2018, p. 69). Rukaria notes, similarly, that a community radio station is "a media platform [that] seeks to address issues of development..." (Rukaria, 2018, p. 54).

At the same time, the participants do provide more specific suggestions as to aspects of such development. Some participants argue, for example, that community radio should enable its beneficiaries to take part in the implementation of policies that may have a constructive impact on their quality of life. Matu points out that in Kenya, as in many other African countries, "many people are frustrated and are desperately yearning for [social change]". He argues that community radio is an important platform for the achievement of such change (Matu, 2018, p. 32). He suggests, in this context, that community radio makes it possible for communities to discuss policies "that go to parliament to be passed into laws" (Matu, 2018, p. 32). Community members can, then, contribute to the formulation of such policy before it becomes formalised (Matu, 2018, p. 33). Other participants place an emphasis on the role that community radio plays in enabling members of a community to take part in local governance. Githethwa explains in this way that "... each community has

[problems] that trouble it and community radio must be able to [resolve those problems]” (Githethwa, 2018, p. 43). Mengich adds that community radio should focus on specific problems that affect a particular community:

Communities are affected by problems such as drug abuse, alcohol or environmental challenges... [Community radio] should try to help those communities get out of [such problems] (Mengich, 2018, p. 62).

Likewise, Mboya explains that since community radio has the potential of reaching the whole community, “it makes it possible for people to find solutions to whatever social problems that bedevil them” (Mboya, 2018, p.1). This process is, furthermore, understood to work towards the involvement of community members in the achievement of progressive social change:

Community radio is meant to mobilise community members to action. This ... is an action that is geared towards realising social change. Community radio [stations] are geared towards realising social change because they are formed out of a need” (Mboya, 2018, p. 1).

There is a noticeable emphasis, throughout this discussion, on the role that community radio must play in facilitating the participation of community members in the improvement of their own social conditions.

In arguing for the importance of the role that community radio can play in this respect, the participants make reference to aspects of the Kenyan socio-political context. They note, firstly, that the Kenyan government has failed in its achievement of the social development of local communities. They understand this failure to be informed by a disinterest on the part of government officials in the achievement of fundamental change. Matu argues that it is due to such disinterest that the government has not invested in “proper communication structures” (Matu, 2018, p. 31). This forms part of a more general failure to devolve decision-making power from central government to local communities, even though the state has committed itself to this goal:

With the passage of the new constitution in Kenya in 2010, devolution became a reality. This new concept of devolution as provided for by the new constitution was designed to [facilitate social change]. However, as of today, it is possible to see that the concept of devolution has remained theoretical [and failed practically] because ... there are no structures for communication (Matu, 2018, p. 32).

His suggestion, then, is that the devolution of power to local communities depends on the strength of the communicative systems that exist within such environments, and the extent to which these systems link into the decision-making systems of central government. Community radio can strengthen such communicative systems, thus building a civil society in which local groups can participate in decision-making processes that impact on their lives.

The participants also blame commercial and state radio for failing to play a significant role in bringing about social change. Githaiga explain that these two tiers of broadcasting “...have denied many people access to ... relevant information, which pays particular attention on [social change].” She argues that state-owned and commercial radio disseminates content “that fail to speak to peoples’ developmental needs” (Githaiga, 2018, p. 16). Rukaria adds that, in fact, these tiers of broadcasting constrain the ability of community radio to bring about social change. Commercial radio, in particular, deliberately competes for the audiences of community radio stations by broadcasting in the dialects of local communities:

{Community} radio faces challenges towards achieving [social change] when mainstream media comes in, especially in Kenya where we have ... commercial media that have many radio stations that broadcast in literally almost every local dialect (Rukaria, 2018, p. 54).

Nevertheless, the participants understand the presence of commercial radio to be of benefit to community radio in one respect, even if this ultimately is to its long-term disadvantage. Githaiga explains, in this regard, that some community radio members can be “hired to collect news or work as broadcasters” by commercial stations (Githaiga, 2018, p. 17). In other words, after sharpening their broadcasting skills in the context of community radio, such individuals stand a better chance of being hired by commercial stations:

Community radios serve as a springboard for individuals to be gainfully employed in commercial stations. This is beneficial because ... they are going to benefit in terms of making more money (Githaiga, 2018, p. 17).

Githaiga explains that this situation creates a dilemma for the custodians of community radio, because they know that the chance of finding gainful employment is of value to community members who work at stations, even if the stations may suffer from their absence:

I remember once when we were setting up four community stations in Kenya. After establishing them, one of these big commercial stations came and ... poached all of the people that were working in these community stations. Of course, we were very upset but I also thought that this was beneficial to those that were working in these stations... (Githaiga, 2018, p. 17).

It would seem, then, that the participants understand the central purpose of community radio to be that of community involvement. Indeed, such involvement is non negotiable, if stations are to contribute to social change. As we have seen, this is also a key requirement of community radio as it is conceived of in the international guidelines discussed in earlier chapters. It is, furthermore, a requirement that is centrally embedded in the critical and communitarian understanding of social analysis described in Chapter One.

At the same time, the participants express concern about contextual factors that make the achievement of such involvement challenging in Kenya. They refer, in particular, to the location of community radio within the broader media landscape, and point out that the commercial nature of this context constrains the achievement of the goals of community radio. Their comments tend to suggest, in this regard, that acknowledgement of such contextual concerns are of central importance to achieving the aims of community radio in this country.

## 2.2 Realising the purpose of community radio

We saw, in Chapter Two, that it is generally assumed within the literature that a community radio station cannot achieve its social purpose unless its relationship with its target community is one of ownership and control by that community. Such a relationship must be achieved through the involvement of that community in the station's operations. Furthermore, the station should develop strategies that protect the interests of that community from other social agendas, such as those of the marketplace and political domain. The discussion, below, deals with the comments that the research participants make about each of these guidelines.

### 2.2.1 *The relationship between a station and its audience*

Participants agree that the relationship between a station and the community that it serves must be one of shared ownership and control by that community. They also generally agree that one requirement for the establishment of this relationship of ownership is that the community must guide the initial establishment of the station. Matu explains, for example, that community radio must be “conceived at the community level” (Matu, 2018, p.31). Mengich notes in similar terms that a station belongs to a community “because they are the people who decided to establish it” (Mengich, 2018, p. 62). Then, once a station is established, this community must play a core role in its management. Githethwa explains, in such terms, that a community station must be “run by the community” (Githethwa, 2018, p. 43). Rukaria also notes that a community radio station is a media platform that is managed “... by the local community members” (Rukaria, 2018, p. 54). Githethwa argues, also, that community members must control a community station and that “... [their] felt needs drive the community radio forever” (Githethwa, 2018, p. 43). Matu explains that community participation in the management of a station should work towards the inclusion of all interest groups:

Management of these stations should be representative of the entire community. In other words, when the community has people that are old and people that are young, all of them should be represented in the management of community radio. In addition, they are not coming as individuals; they are coming as a community (Matu, 2018, p. 33).

Rukaria explains that when community members are involved in such a manner, it becomes easier for community radio “to move on with its agenda” (Rukaria, 2018, p. 54).

Githethwa suggests that a station may achieve its purpose if community members are frequently involved in assessing whether it is meeting its objectives. Community participation in such assessment ensures that the voices of community members “come out” in the management of a station, to the benefit of all (Githethwa, 2018, p. 44). Ensuring that the community holds the management and board of a station to account in this way will enable them to “...remind themselves why [the station was] established in the first place” (Githaiga, 2018, p. 18).

The participants acknowledge that the involvement of volunteers is generally regarded as central to the achievement of community participation. Mboya explains that “...community radio [stations around] the world are based on the volunteerism model” (Mboya, 2018, p. 3):

Volunteerism is one of the values that help drive the agenda of community [radio]. The question of volunteerism depends [on] a station’s volunteerism policy, which determines the kind of people that work in the volunteer team (Mboya, 2018, p. 3).

The participants generally propose that the degree to which a volunteer system can succeed in Kenya depends specifically on this question of the ‘kind of people’ who are involved. Matu, for example, proposes that volunteerism works best when people who have professional skills, such as retired civil servants, can “offer themselves to work for free” (Matu, 2018, p. 33). Mute also suggests that volunteers should be skilled workers who can contribute in areas for which they have been prepared in context of their employment:

Clearly, you have to have people who perhaps volunteer their time or who are able to do whatever needs to be done as part of the work which they usually do (Mute, 2018, p. 70).

At the same time, some participants also echo the scepticism expressed in the literature quoted in Chapter Two regarding the fundamental appropriateness of a volunteer module to the Kenyan context. Githaiga argues, for example, that volunteerism is a Western concept that does not translate well to the socio-economic conditions experienced in African countries generally and in Kenya more particularly (Githaiga, 2018, p. 20):

Within the [communities] this radio serves, we have people who are looking for jobs and most of these people have just cleared school. Some of them did a radio related course and are searching for jobs that fit that description. Now, how do you tell such a person to volunteer? You cannot tell them to volunteer (Githaiga, 2018, p. 20).



Matu adds that it is not just the volunteers who are negatively affected by volunteerism, but also the families who have invested in them:

You find that normally in these stations, there are those people who come because they have nowhere else to go until they get somewhere else to go. They are volunteers. However, for me, it is painful because their parents are very poor ... they struggled to take them to school until they finished school. However, here they are, volunteering (Matu, 2018, p. 34).

The participants appear, in particular, to be sceptical about the wisdom of building volunteerism around the involvement of 'youth', especially if they are unemployed. They speak, in this context, of the burden that this strategy places on family members who are responsible for the welfare of such young people. Githaiga explains that volunteering can be costly both for volunteers and the families who support them, because they "need bus fare to get to the station and food to eat." She adds that, because volunteers often have no income, it is "difficult to expect them to give the station their time" (Githaiga, 2018, p. 20). Mboya adds that volunteerism may in fact be counterproductive for young people who are unemployed since they become dependent on stations instead of looking elsewhere for work (Mboya, 2018, p. 3). He also notes that, from the station's perspective, depending on young people becomes difficult "because they are not consistent" (Mboya, 2018, p. 3). This is not because young people are by nature untrustworthy, but rather because their economic circumstances require of them to prioritise other obligations, such as the search for employment:

You will find that on a particular day, this person is not on the station because he has gone to look for employment elsewhere. Therefore, he is not there, and worse he gave no notice. It can be challenging if the station only depends on such people (Mboya, 2018, p. 3).

Matu adds that community stations experience a "high turnover ... of staff as a result of low payment or workers working without pay" (Matu, 2018, p. 34).

Some of the participants propose that community radio stations in Kenya should jettison the volunteer model altogether. They argue that stations would be more likely to succeed in establishing participatory relationships with communities if their staff members are 'professionals'. Matu proposes that such staff would, for example, be better able to "assist women groups to record themselves and help them participate in productions" (Matu, 2018, p. 34). Githaiga agrees that it is a small core group of salaried staff who have expertise in the facilitation of community participation that makes community access to stations more possible:

You cannot expect those people from the villages to just get into the station and start making programmes. It is important to have [professionals] who understand some of the

issues that members of a community can comfortably participate in (Githaiga, 2018, p. 19).

Githaiga adds that such professionals could be “creative in establishing how people from the villages can contribute in addressing their pressing needs” (Githaiga, 2018, p. 19).

The participants’ comments, as summarised in this discussion, demonstrates that they accept the fundamental tenets of community radio with regards to the kind of relationship that should exist between a station and the community that it serves. This relationship should be defined by ownership and control of the station by the community. They acknowledge, furthermore, that this relationship depends on the extent to which a community is empowered to participate in a station’s operations. This resonates well with the critical theorisation of community empowerment that was described, in Chapter One, as being fundamental to the internationally shared conceptualisation of community radio.

At the same time, the participants express reservations about the involvement, within the Kenyan context, of ordinary community members as volunteers. Such reservation is informed by recognition of the economic conditions in which stations are based. We have seen, in Chapter Two, that these same reservations find expression in the global literature dealing with the process of implementing community radio in context of the developing world.

### *2.2.2 Mediating between community interests and other social agendas*

We saw in Chapter Two that, according to the internationally shared conceptualisation of community radio, it can only achieve its social purpose if it operates as a non-profit enterprise. The participants generally support this principle. Mboya explains, for example, that community radio “ought to be managed as an enterprise that is not run for profit” (Mboya, 2018, p. 3). Mute argues in similar terms that “in the end, the practice of community radio is not about making money” (Mute, 2018, p. 70). Likewise, Githethwa asserts that community radio “must adhere to the principle of a “... non-profit model” (Githethwa, 2018, p. 44). Mengich also explains that, unlike stations in the commercial sector, community stations are not designed to make profit because “...their purpose is not to generate revenue”. She adds that community radio should not air advertisements for revenue, as is done by commercial radio (Mengich, 2018, p. 63).

The participants also note that some community stations in Kenya are, indeed, run ‘as if they are commercial’. Githaiga explains that stations end up in this situation because they lose focus along the way by “wanting to compete with commercial stations” (Githaiga, 2018,

p. 18). This can mean that they design their programming around the interests of advertisers rather than those of their target community:

You will find some [community radio stations] ... behaving like commercial stations by playing music for 24 hours. Mark you, some of this music may not even be relevant to the communities they serve. For example, they may create a reggae programme because this particular commercial station has such programme. This is just one way of competing with that particular station (Githaiga, 2018, p.18).

The participants generally argue that stations can avoid this mistake if they adhere to the guidelines that have been set up for community radio by regulators. Githaiga explains that the Communications Authority of Kenya has “clear guidelines ... for community broadcasting” (Githaiga, 2018, p. 17). On their part, Mboya and Mengich propose the need for regulators to monitor stations closely as a way of ensuring that they operate within their license conditions. If stations fail to do so, they should have their licenses revoked and “simply fail to broadcast” (Mboya, 2018, p. 2; Mengich, 2018, p. 62).

However, some participants also question the claim that community radio should not adopt strategies for generating money, and they include in this the airing of advertisements. Matu warns that community radio “... will never break through” if it cannot ensure its own sustainability and this means that stations needs to generate an income (Matu, 2018, p. 33-34). At the same time, income should not represent a profit for shareholders; rather, it should be used towards the financing of stations’ infrastructure and operations:

Such funds can help with the running of the station’s daily activities. There are many ways in which funds generated by community radios can help with their daily running (Matu, 2018, p. 34).

Githaiga agrees, noting that income should be “ploughed back into the stations to assist with the running of their day-to-day activities” (Githaiga, 2018, p. 18). Mboya notes in similar terms that the “extra money they make is re-invested back into the stations” (Mboya, 2018, p. 3). Revenue cannot, in other words, be used to enrich individuals in leadership positions, beyond the payment of salaries. Mboya points out in this context that money that community radio generates should “...not go to the shareholders or community members directly” (Mboya, 2018, p. 3). Matu proposes similarly that station management “should decide on how to use those funds but dividends should not be shared” (Matu, 2018, p. 34). These points can, again, be seen to mirror comments made in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, and as such are in line with the globally shared conceptualisation of community radio.

Some participants also point out, however, that even if one is going to allow community radio stations to generate funds by carrying advertisements, they are in any case going to struggle to succeed in this regard. Mboya argues that this difficulty is caused at least

partly by the fact that the sector emerged long after the establishment of commercial stations, who have already taken the lion's share of advertising contracts:

One of the biggest challenges that community radio [stations] face today is the fact that many of them are now coming to an already flooded market where commercial radio stations have already taken over everything. These stations are therefore struggling to see how they can penetrate the overcrowded market because that market is the same (Mboya, 2018, p. 4).

Matu explains that this situation is made even more difficult by the fact that some of the most lucrative advertising contracts involve the promotion of products that may be harmful to target communities. Historically, even in industrially advanced societies, community radio has always faced a serious conflict of interest with regards to such contracts:

Even globally, there were certain adverts that community radio [stations] would not take. For example adverts on alcohol and cigarettes. Some community radio [stations] ignored such adverts because they were looking out for the good of the community. When such products were said to be harmful, the [stations] would not play their adverts (Matu, 2018, p. 34).

At the same time, some participants suggest that stations can also become overly dependent on donors for financial support. Mboya explains that such dependence affect the sustainability of stations, because the priorities of funders change over time:

Some donors have a tendency of withdrawing their funding because donor funding in most cases is time bound. For instance, some of these donors may work in a given area for five years and leave thereafter, leaving community radios stranded. This is one of the ... problems that come with donor funding (Mboya, 2018, p.4).

The participants also point out that dependence on donor funding means that stations are vulnerable to interference from external bodies (Githethwa, 2018, p. 44; Mboya, 2018, p. 2). They nevertheless argue that such stations can still rely on external funders, if checks and balances are in place that protect them from such interference.

This discussion in this section can, again, be seen to mirror concerns raised in literature about community radio, as reviewed in Chapter Two. There, too, we saw reference to the argument that stations must establish financial and political independence in order to protect the interests of the communities that they serve. However, perhaps more so than the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, the participants place emphasis on the challenges involved in maintaining independence not only from the agendas of advertisers but also those of development- and government agencies. Their suggestion is that, given the lack of financial resources in the local context, the maintenance of independence from all of these sources of revenue possibly represents an insurmountable challenge.

### 2.2.3 *Guidelines for programming*

We saw in Chapter Two that programming guidelines for community radio include an emphasis on the requirement of participatory production. This means that stations must involve community members in the selection and production of content as well as the assessment of such content. Such participation is understood to enable stations to identify the needs of community members and the articulation of programming goals that can address these needs.

The participants agree that programming should respond to general development goals. These include the need to strengthen the local economy, to ensure access to education, and to improve the health and general well-being of the local community. Mute explains in this way that community radio must invest in content that “facilitates community members’ [all-round development]” (Mute, 2018, p. 69). Rukaria also states that content should “seek to address issues of development...” (Rukaria, 2018, p. 54). Matu is more specific, suggesting that content must contribute to the eradication of economic hardship. He argues that community radio must have an “effective means of communication” in order to succeed in “liberating people from poverty” (Matu, 2018, p. 31).

At the same time, participants agree that the content of community radio programmes must respond to the specificity of conditions within their target communities. Matu argues for example that a station will only attain its social purpose if it focuses on “conveying relevant content” (Matu, 2018, p. 33). Its goals, in this respect, should be guided by the nature of the community that it serves:

For example, if we were talking of pastoral communities, communities that are known for livestock keeping, would they have the same objectives as those other communities that do not keep livestock? (Matu, 2018, p. 33).

Githaiga argues in similar terms that station programming must engage with the specific resources and survival strategies that exist within the local context:

For instance, in an area where fishing is the main activity..., community radio will provide the residents there with information on how to get enough fish [and] how to get market for their fish ... In [agricultural] areas, community radio may provide useful information on agricultural activities such as better farming techniques, the best time for planting and probably the best planting methods (Githaiga, 2018, p. 16).

The majority of participants suggest that in order for a station to be able to maintain such relevance, it should offer its audience a platform to share ideas. Matu explains that such radio should facilitate communication between different members of its target community:

Community radio ... allows my ideas to go out to other ...community members. When I hear [their ideas] and they ... hear [my ideas] then we stand a better chance of having our needs addressed (Matu, 2018, p.31).

Githaiga proposes in similar terms that, “community radio ... should provide a platform where [individuals] can exchange ideas regarding [different topics] ...” (Githaiga, 2018, p. 16). Mboya adds that a community radio station should make it possible for its audience to reach common ground with regards to the concerns that the station needs to address (Mboya, 2018, p. 1).

All participants agree that community radio can achieve this purpose if community members are actively involved in the production of programmes. Githaiga notes, for example, that community members should generate “community radio’s content” (Githaiga, 2018, p. 19). Githethwa also argues that community radio “must adhere to the principle of ... community participation” in the production of programmes (Githethwa, 2018, p. 44). Mboya notes, similarly, that a station will be able to achieve its purpose when it is “community driven in terms of content” (Mboya, 2018, p. 2). Matu notes that such participation should be representative of all interest groups within a community:

When talking about participation, we are talking about the different groups in the community such as women, men and youth being equally represented in the production of programmes. Participation of this nature is very important (Matu, 2018, p. 33).

Rukaria argues that it is through such participatory programming that stations build a strong relationship with their target communities. She argues that the “... listenership of community radio goes up when community members are involved in the production of programmes” (Rukaria, 2018, p. 55). Mute explains that it is through reference to the knowledge and experience of members of a local community that stations can know how to draw on the knowledge of experts:

I think it is important that programming is as far as possible generated locally. Of course, it does not mean that you do not appreciate the expertise. Expertise still becomes important, but it is the community which is supposed to figure out when and where they need an expert to come in and help (Mute, 2018, p. 70).

There is evidence, from this summary of participants’ comments, that they share a common understanding of the way programming should be designed and see this understanding as being grounded in the globally accepted conceptualisation. Their comments in this respect match with the description, offered in Chapter Two, of such understanding.

## **Conclusion**

It is demonstrated in the first section of this chapter that the participants acquired ideas about community radio from different social environments, at separate moments in time and for diverse reasons. However, despite these differences, their discussion demonstrates that they have a shared understanding of the social purpose of community radio, of guidelines for the achievement of this purpose and of the challenges involved in implementing these guidelines. This understanding is informed by the internationally shared conceptualisation of community radio and by knowledge of local endeavours to establish community radio stations. It is concluded, in this section, that such shared understanding becomes possible because the participants are located within an information network. This network enables deliberation amongst Kenyan stakeholders with regards to the relevance of globally circulating ideas about community radio within the local context.

Section Two of this chapter analysed, in more detail, the understanding of community radio that emerges from this process of information exchange and deliberation. We saw that this understanding endorses many of the basic principles of the internationally shared conceptualisation, locating them as being “non-negotiable”. In other words, the implementation of these principles is deemed by the participants to be key to the achievement of the purpose of a community radio station, wherever one may be located in the world. This applies, in particular, to the requirement that a community radio station operates first and foremost to the benefit of marginalised groups in society; that such a station must be ‘owned and controlled’ by the community it serves; that this can only be achieved through community participation and that systems must be put in place that protects the station from exploitation or the purpose of political or commercial agendas.

At the same time, within this shared understanding, there is skepticism regarding the appropriateness or relevance of some of the globally circulating guidelines for community radio as it can exist in Kenya. This applies, in particular, to guidelines that become unrealistic when applied within economically fragile environments or communities that are characterised by extreme internal division or highly unequal relations of power. The participants make reference, in this respect, to the challenges involved in the implementation of a volunteer model. They also refer to the difficulties that stations face in maintaining both financial stability and independence from commercial and political agendas, in an environment in which they compete for survival with commercial stations and depend on funders who change their priorities over time.

The next chapter traces the participants' commentary on the extent to which these debates are of relevance to the realisation of a community radio sector in the Kenyan context.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS II: HISTORIES OF COMMUNITY RADIO

#### **Introduction**

The discussion in this chapter focuses on the way the research participants describe and interpret the history of community radio in Kenya. Section One examines their description of different stages that can be observed in the development of the community radio sector in this country. It explores their understanding of the relationship between each of these stages and broader shifts in the Kenyan socio-political context. Section Two then examines the participants' description of the landscape of community radio that emerged from this history. It deals, as part of this, with their assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of this sector as it currently exists. It also explores the participants' reflections on the historical factors that have shaped the emergence of this landscape. Throughout the discussion, the participants' commentary is compared to the description of the Kenyan community radio landscape as identified in the literature reviewed in Chapter Four.

#### **1. Stages in the history of community radio in Kenya**

The participants' description of the establishment of community radio in Kenya suggests that there have been three stages in the development of this sector. The first, which occurs in the 1990s, is framed by a focus on the establishment of general consciousness of the role that community radio can potentially play in the Kenyan context. The second, which takes place in the mid 2000s, is triggered by the achievement of an enabling regulatory environment for community radio. The third stage, which commenced in the late 2000s, is characterised by a focus on generating the resources and infrastructure required for the establishment and management of stations.

##### **1.1 The 1990s: advocating for the idea of community radio**

The participants acknowledge that the idea that Kenyan community radio only began in the early 1990s is contested. A number of them mention the claim that the first Kenyan community station was established ten years earlier, in Homa Bay (Mboya, 2018, p. 6; Githethwa, 2018, p. 45; Matu, 2018, p. 39; Githaiga, 2018, p. 23; Rukaria, 2018, p. 57). As we saw in Chapter Four, literature on Kenyan community radio often makes reference to the establishment of Homa Bay Radio in 1982 as a result of a partnership between UNESCO and the Kenyan government. It is then often asserted that this station is the first example of

community radio not only in Kenya but also on the African continent. Out of all of the participants, only Mboya supports this claim that the establishment of Homa Bay Radio can be seen as evidence that the history of Kenyan community radio commenced in the 1980s (Mboya, 2018, p. 6). As we saw in Chapter Four, the literature generally acknowledges that Homa Bay Radio was not representative of the ideals of community radio. The Kenyan government only agreed to its establishment because they wanted to explore the possibility of extending the reach of the state broadcaster through the inclusion of local vernacular language stations. Githethwa argues, in such terms, that Homa Bay radio was “just an experimental radio [station] that was started by UNESCO in partnership with the then Kenyan government” (Githethwa, 2018, p. 45). Its establishment did not, in other words, meet the basic criteria of community radio, particularly with regards to the consultation and participation of local communities. Matu points out that the Kenyan government shut the station down shortly after it had been established. He offers an explanation of this shut-down that does not emerge in context of the literature reviewed in Chapter Four: that the station had been targeted for capture by a political faction in the failed coup of the 1980s. Matu’s suggestion is that, due to this incident, the Kenyan government came to see any expansion of its existing broadcast system as a threat to its ability to control public communication. For this reason, after the closure of Homa Bay Radio, the government lost interest in the idea of establishing a Kenyan community radio sector (Matu, 2018, p. 39).

Unlike Mboya, then, the majority of the participants do not trace the beginnings of the history of community radio to the 1980s. Instead, they argue that community radio only became a possibility in the early 1990s when multiparty democracy was introduced in Kenya (Githethwa, 2018, p. 52; Rukaria, 2018, p. 61; Mute, 2018, p. 73). They point out that, because of its new-found public commitment to an open democratic system, the government was forced to lessen the restrictions it had placed on the regulation of the media. In context of this liberalisation of the media landscape, it became possible to lobby for new kinds of media platforms, including community radio. Mute explains that it was in response to this opportunity that media activists began to lobby for the establishment of a policy that would enable the establishment of a community radio sector (Mute, 2018, p. 73).

Githethwa also points out that, by the 1990s, “...the global community radio movement was quickly taking shape”. Indeed, its impact could already be observed in a range of other African countries, where community radio sectors had become a reality. Kenya was slower to respond, due to its long-standing history of government control of the media landscape. However, consciousness of the growing support for such radio in Africa

strengthened local confidence in the possibility of a Kenyan community radio sector (Githethwa, 2018, p. 52).

The participants generally explain that, at this time, discussion amongst stakeholders in the establishment of a community radio sector focused on creating awareness of its purpose and value (Githaiga, 2018, p. 26; Githethwa, 2018, p. 48; Mute, 2018, p. 72; Matu, 2018, p. 36; Mengich, 2018, p. 64). Many of these discussions took place in workshops and seminars, organised both by individuals within the broadcast regulator and by media activists. At such events, information regarding community radio was made available by the regulator and by community media networks (Mengich, 2018, p. 68; Githaiga, 2018, p. 29). These sessions were attended by local advocacy groups for community radio, international organisations and representatives of government agencies (Githethwa, 2018, p. 46; Matu, 2018, p. 36; Mboya, 2018, p. 7). Rukaria, in her capacity as a member of KCOMNET, was central to the planning of many of these events (Rukaria, 2018, p. 59).

The participants suggest that these discussions assisted in creating broader awareness within both rural and urban communities with regards to the value of community radio, which led to the establishment of community radio projects in such spaces. Mengich explains that community-based groups were quick to respond, given the extent to which the state broadcaster was failing to serve them. They were acutely aware of such neglect, and this led them to become strongly invested in the establishment of their own community radio projects (Mengich, 2018, p. 64). Mboya argues similarly that the fact that commercial media chose to “ignore many issues” that affected local communities gave impetus to the establishment of stations (Mboya, 2018, p. 14). Githethwa also argues that one of the factors that led to the establishment of stations was community members’ realisation that commercial radio was not offering them “space” to air their views. He notes that even though there was a “multiplicity of commercial media”, local communities still felt ignored. He believes that this realisation prompted many local communities to think about establishing community radio stations in order to “have a voice” (Githethwa, 2018, p. 52).

The participants’ observations regarding initial deliberation that took place, in Kenya, around the possibility of establishing a community radio sector can be seen to complement their assertion that this did not begin with Homa Bay Radio in the 1980s. As we have seen in the previous section, they understand community radio to be dependent on broad-based involvement of stakeholders in civil society. In their view, this was not possible in context of the authoritarian system of government that existed in Kenya at that time. However, this changed in the 1990s, in context of the democratisation of the Kenyan socio-political

environment and the liberalisation of its media landscape. Space opened up that made it possible for stakeholders to engage publically with ideas about community radio and to consider their relevance to the Kenyan context. The participants acknowledge that the Kenyan government, through its regulator, played a supportive role in ensuring that such engagement occurred. However, they also suggest that it was activist organisations that ensured that this engagement would result in the broad public recognition of the potential value of a Kenyan community radio sector. The suggestion is, indeed, that without their intervention, such recognition would not have been achieved. It may be that intervention from non governmental groups was required in context of continued hesitance on the part of the state to invest in media that is not owned and controlled by government.

## 1.2 The early to mid 2000s: creating an enabling regulatory environment

The participants generally suggest that, by the early 2000s, the focus of discussion amongst media activists had moved to the need for broadcast policy that would give community radio stations the legal right to broadcast. Githethwa explains that, at this time, Kenya did not as yet “have any registered community radio [stations]” (Githethwa, 2018, p. 46). For this reason, there was a “feeling that Kenya was being left behind” when compared to other African countries where “community radio stations were being [registered and licensed]” (Githethwa, 2018, p. 46). Mboya explains that, for these reasons, stakeholders began to foreground the need to create guidelines for the issuance of broadcast licenses to community radio stations (Mboya, 2018, p. 7). Rukaria notes that activist organisations involved lawmakers in these discussions because it was felt that their “intervention in the legalisation” of community radio was urgently needed (Rukaria, 2018, p. 57; Matu, 2018, p. 37). Matu explains that these lawmakers came from the “parliamentarian committee ... on communication and broadcasting” (Matu, 2018, p. 37).

It was in context of such requests from community media activists that Mute, Mboya and Githethwa became personally involved in articulating policy frameworks for the regulation of community radio. The draft policies that they developed in this way became crucial points of reference in the media activists’ campaign for legal recognition of community radio. Mboya explains that he “... played a role within the support networks of structuring [such] policy frameworks that would [later help to guide] the regulator in registering community radios.” He agreed to make this contribution because “the regulator did not have a policy framework ... for use in the registration of community radio [stations]”

(Mboya, 2018, p. 10). Mboya argues that, if this work had not been done, community radio would never have become a reality in Kenya (Mboya, 2018, p. 15).

The participants generally explain that they depended on these draft policy frameworks in order to lobby for community radio's recognition by law. Rukaria explains that she was among the activists who used these policy frameworks to "push the lawmakers and the other policy makers to draft a bill that would eventually recognize community media as a third tier of broadcasting in Kenya" (Rukaria, 2018, p. 59). Githaiga similarly explains that she used the draft frameworks to make the regulator and the legislators understand what community radio entailed. She reveals that she went to parliament many times to lobby members of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) committee to "pass laws" that would recognise community radio (Githaiga, 2018, p. 27). Githaiga acknowledges these legislators for listening to the idea and supporting it by making it legal (Githaiga, 2018, p. 30).

Githethwa notes that he assisted, both as an academic and activist, in lobbying the state regulator around the final adoption of this policy. He explains that it was extremely important to monitor this process of adoption, in order to safeguard community radio's identity. He tried to ensure that "... what community radio had gained through the drafting ... of this legal framework was not lost". He explains that it was necessary to fight, as part of this process, for the re-introduction of a section that allowed community radio to advertise. The regulator had removed this section during the revision, on the assumption that community stations should not be involved in raising advertising revenue because they are non-profit entities (Githethwa, 2018, p. 48).

According to the participants, the defining moment in this stage of the history of community radio in Kenya came in the mid-2000s when such radio became legally recognised as a distinct sector of broadcasting (Rukaria, 2018, p. 60; Githethwa, 2018, p. 48). Githaiga describes this moment as being of profound importance because it meant that the regulator "had [indeed] started to recognise community radio" (Githaiga, 2018, p. 26). She points out that the regulator's commitment to the establishment of this sector was further substantiated by its willingness to reduce the very high annual frequency fees that had originally been proposed in draft policy (Githaiga, 2018, p. 26).

The participants explain that, in the wake of the formal adoption of this regulatory framework, more stations began to emerge. Rukaria points out that this became possible because there was now a favourable regulatory environment for community radio (Rukaria, 2018, p. 57). Githethwa explains that communities now felt confident about launching

stations because they could finally apply for broadcast licenses (Githethwa, 2018, p. 48). Githaiga notes that, by the mid 2000s, six stations had been launched (Githaiga, 2018, p. 26). Rukaria explains that the first station to be registered was Mang'elele Community Radio, who received their license in 2004. Mboya notes that the next station to receive a license was Koch FM. He describes this as a great moment, because it "opened doors for other radio stations to get their licenses as well" (Mboya, 2018, p. 8).

In describing this second stage in the history of Kenyan community radio, the participants again suggest that such radio would not have become a reality without the intervention of non-governmental stakeholders. As we have seen, the emphasis at this stage had shifted to the creation of a regulatory environment that would enable stations to become established. Only once this task was achieved could the groups who had become invested in the idea of establishing stations in the 1990s become empowered to act. The participants generally assert that the policy that was required to make this possible was articulated by academics and activists, who then lobbied forcefully for its adoption by state officials. This suggests, again, that the Kenyan community radio movement was grounded in a ground-swell of internal support from interest groups in civil society, rather than resulting from an investment in the ideals of such radio on the part of government.

### 1.3 The late 2000s: generating resources and infrastructure

The participants' commentary on the late 2000s suggests that a third stage in the development of community radio in Kenya occurred at this time. They point out that, in the wake of the legalisation of community radio, several international organisations entered the field. These organisations contributed to the creation of an enabling environment for community radio by providing stations with financial support and access to knowledge resources. The participants argue that the availability of donor funding was crucial to the establishment of the community radio sector at this time, in the absence of such support from the Kenyan government. Githaiga explains that these international donors "... believed in the [idea of community radio] and supported it" (Githaiga, 2018, p. 30). Mboya mentions that UNESCO was a particularly important contributor in this context, assisting in the establishment of many community radio stations (Mboya, 2018, p. 15). Matu posits that the community radio sector grew rapidly in the late 2000s because of the support it received from such organisations. He cites Mang'elele Community Radio as one of the stations that benefited from such financial support (Matu, 2018, p. 40).

This description suggests that, at least according to the research participants, the presence of international funders for community radio only became a reality in Kenya once the legal status of such radio had been established in this country. It may well be that such international organisations also contributed to lobbying for such radio in earlier years, but it would appear that their work in this respect was not visible to the participants. They emphasise the fact that investment in the idea of community radio in the 1990s as well as its legalisation in the early 2000s depended on the work of local activists and academics. Their work was then consolidated, in the mid 2000s, by the contribution of international funders.

## **2. An assessment of the community radio landscape**

The section deals, firstly, with the participants' assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the Kenyan community radio sector as it currently exists. It then explores their reflections on the historical factors that have led to these strengths and weaknesses.

### **2.1 Assessing the current landscape**

The participants generally describe the Kenyan community sector as showing general signs of positive growth. Indeed, Mboya proposes that the “history of community radio in Kenya has been a success story”, given the increase in the number of stations over the past two decades (Mboya, 2018, p. 12). Githaiga agrees with this and adds that people are still “putting in requests to establish community radios” (Githaiga, 2018, p. 29). Mengich also explains that there has been a continuous “increase in the [establishment] of community radio stations” due to the fact that people are now “getting to know more about community radio”, which has brought about a “huge demand for [such radio]” (Mengich, 2018, p. 66).

However, the participants also express some reservations about the extent to which all stations are meeting the basic requirements of successful community radio. It was estimated in Chapter Four that, at the time that the interviews with the participants were conducted, there were approximately 25 registered community radio stations in Kenya. Out of these twenty-five, the participants refer to twelve stations that, in their estimation, succeed in fulfilling the ideals of community radio. Mengich explains that when Kenyan broadcast regulator sends officials to visit these stations, they are generally able to confirm that they follow the basic guidelines for successful community radio (Mengich, 2018, p. 67). Githethwa suggests that even though such compliance is not “one-hundred percent”, these stations are at least trying to match up to the ideals (Githethwa, 2018, p. 51). These stations include Radio Mang’elele, Radio Serian, and Radio EkialoKiona. These three stations are all

located in rural areas, and they were all initiated by local community-based organisations. Reference is also made to Olmaa-Ranet, Bulala, Kwale-Ranet, Kangema, and Nganyi-Ranet, stations that were all established in rural areas by the Kenyan government's meteorological department. The only urban stations that the participants mention is Koch FM and four campus stations linked to the universities of Daystar, Egerton, Maseno and Masinde Muliro.

One principle that all of the participants point to, in speaking about the success of these stations, is that of local ownership. Matu, for example, singles out Radio Mang'etele as the "best when compared to other stations" because community members participate in its ownership (Matu, 2018, p. 37). Githaiga refers to Koch FM as an example of best practice because it "allows community members to participate in the [ownership] of the station" (Githaiga, 2018, p. 27). Githethwa talks about EkialoKiona, situated in Suba, which has succeeded in establishing systems that ensure ownership by the surrounding community (Githethwa, 2018, p. 50). He notes that another example of success is represented by Serian FM, and explains that this station continually involves local community members in its programming and management. Serian FM is situated on land that "was donated by the local community", and members of this community constructed the building that houses it (Githethwa, 2018, p. 49).

The participants note that, because of this relationship of local ownership, such stations have succeeded in responding to the needs of their target communities. Rukaria argues, for example, that Serian FM stands out from other stations because its programming highlights issues that directly affect its local community members (Rukaria, 2018, p. 57). She explains that the station includes a focus on encouraging young people to go to school, speaks out against violence against women, provides sex education and "[discourages] negative cultural practices" such as female genital mutilation and child marriages (Rukaria, 2018, p. 57). Mboya describes Koch FM as one of the best community stations in Kenya because it deals with issues that are of particular relevance to the "people of Korogocho" (Mboya, 2018, p. 9). Mengich explains that Oltoilo Le Maa, Bulala, Kwale-Ranet, Kangema and Nganyi-Ranet are succeeding in updating local communities on "the changing weather patterns" in their immediate environment (Mengich, 2018, p. 65). Mboya adds that such information is of growing importance to the safety of rural communities, who can, for example, prepare themselves when they are given advance warning of floods by moving to safer ground (Mboya, 2018, p. 13). Mengich adds that the four campus stations should not be left out, because they serve an important function by providing students with opportunities for experiential learning (Mengich, 2018, p. 65).



The participants also feel that many of these stations stand out because they have overcome challenges and still remain on air, thus proving their self sufficiency and sustainability. Githaiga cites Mang'etele as a good example in this regard because, despite the fact that donors stopped funding the station long ago, it has managed to survive by using its "own resources locally" (Githaiga, 2018, p. 27). Mboya speaks in similar terms of EkialoKiona, noting that even though the station has faced many problems, including a lack of volunteers, it is "still on air and [is] operating for six hours a day" (Mboya, 2018, p. 9). Githethwa describes Koch FM as successful because it is still running despite being situated within an "extremely hostile environment". When presenters make statements on air that local community members find offensive, they are "targeted and beaten". However, despite such challenges, the station has remained on air (Githethwa, 2018, p. 49).

Mboya also refers to the role that some of these stations have played in building peace. He explains that such stations have contributed to the ending of post-election violence of 2007-2008 by advocating for peace. Many of the stations listed by the participants had been established in areas that were hard hit by this violence. By restoring peace in these areas, they succeeded in saving many lives that would have otherwise been lost to this violence (Mboya, 2018, p. 13).

The participants appear to suggest, then, that the Kenyan community radio sector has the potential to succeed, since there are many examples of stations that are demonstrating that this is possible. It is concerning, however, that only half of the existing list of community radio stations meet the participants' requirements for successful community radio. It is possible that the remainder of stations have failed to do so because the sector remains fragile, in context of the many challenges that the participants themselves have mentioned. As we have seen, these include a lack of active support from government for community radio; a highly competitive environment in which stations compete alongside commercial media for advertising revenue; inconsistent support from international funders; and a social context characterised by economic insecurity, inequality and conflict.

It is noticeable that in choosing which stations to list as examples of success, the participants have focused on those that have established strategies for community participation and community-based ownership and control. As such, they are clearly drawing the critical, constructivist framework of social analysis that was argued, in Chapter One, to be core to the internationally accepted conceptualisation of community radio.

## 2.2 Contextual factors that have shaped the sector

The participants identify three main contextual factors that, in their view, give rise to the strengths and weaknesses that they observe within the Kenyan community radio sector. They speak, firstly, about the continued struggle that surround the establishment of a shared understanding of what community radio is. Secondly, they refer to the role that struggles around power play within and around stations. Thirdly, there are the financial challenges involved in running a community radio station in this country.

### 2.2.1 *Establishing a shared understanding of community radio*

The participants suggest that the growth of community radio has been impeded by the fact that many people still do not understand what such radio entails. They explain that ignorance of the concept made it difficult, in the early years, to gain momentum around the establishment of the community radio sector. Mute explains that because many people had never observed such radio in practice, it was difficult to convince them of its significance (Mute, 2018, p. 73). Githaiga and Rukaria agree that insufficient understanding complicated the task of introducing community radio in Kenya. They also note that this problem continues to apply today, even to community members who are involved in stations. Such individuals often assume that community radio is just like other radio, which makes it difficult to realise the full potential of stations. (Githaiga, 2018, p. 28; Rukaria, 2018, p. 60). Both Githethwa and Matu also argue that lack of sufficient understanding of community radio is the main reason why such radio continues to grow slowly in Kenya (Githethwa, 2018, p. 51; Matu, 2018, p. 42).

The participants also point out that many people tend to confuse community radio with commercial radio. Mboya explains that, as part of his advocacy work, he often has to address this confusion. Many people think that Kenya's commercial, vernacular language stations are examples of community radio because they target tribal groupings. He notes that these stations do not meet the criteria of community radio at all and are explicitly driven by market interests (Mboya, 2018, p. 11). Rukaria adds that many of these stations identify themselves as community radio simply because they broadcast in local languages (Rukaria, 2018, p. 60).

Githaiga argues that inadequate understanding of community radio is the main reason why many stations fail to adhere to principles that are associated with such radio. He explains that the management teams of community stations often have insufficient knowledge of the

concept of community radio and for this reason they operate their stations without having the ideals of community radio in mind. Instead, they run stations as for-profit businesses (Githaiga, 2018, p. 29). Mboya, Githethwa, and Githaiga also note that many people have failed to embrace the non-profit model because they started community stations in order to make money (Mboya, 2018, p. 13; Githethwa, 2018, p. 51; Githaiga, 2018, p. 28). Githethwa argues that many such stations operate like commercial stations, presenting similar talk shows and playing the same kind of music. He adds that when one listens to these stations, it is not possible to tell the difference between them and commercial broadcasters because the “uniqueness of community radio in terms of content” is lost (Githethwa, 2018, p. 50).

Some participants also argue that many stations do not stick to the ideals of community radio because the local support networks are not doing enough to build their knowledge of what these ideals entail. Matu argues that networks such as KCOMNET are often lacking in the necessary expertise (Matu, 2018, p. 41). Githethwa adds that KCOMNET, in particular, has been unable to educate stations with regard to “the ethics and principles of community broadcasting” because it lacks a “legal team” that can make this happen (Githethwa, 2018, p. 51).

The participants generally argue, then, that inadequate understanding of community radio is seriously constraining the potential of the sector in Kenya. However, their comments also suggest that this problem can be addressed, with the appropriate investment from stakeholders in this sector.

### *2.2.2 The role of power relations*

The participants generally suggest that the government has not contributed sufficiently to the establishment of an empowering environment for community radio. In fact, they generally suggest that government officials have deliberately created a disempowering environment. They observe this in context of the processes that, in the early 2000s, had surrounded the legalisation of community radio which had, in their estimation, been unnecessarily slow and demanding. Matu suggests that the government did not, in fact, want to license stations and was therefore obstructing the process of their legalisation. He notes that commercial stations, in contrast, were quicker to acquire a route towards licensing. This has, in his view, placed the community radio sector in a position of disadvantage in terms of competing with commercial media for audiences and advertising revenue (Matu, 2018, p. 38). The government’s failure to facilitate a speedy growth of the community radio sector was,

according to Matu, informed by a reluctance to place control of media in the hands of people at the grass-root level (Matu, 2018, p. 39).

This obstructive approach to the community radio can, according to the participants, also be observed in context of the administrative process that now needs to be followed in order to license stations. Mboya criticises the government, for example, for insisting that stations pay exorbitant fees for their licenses. He argues that in so doing, the government is deliberately discouraging communities from establishing their own stations. In his view, the government should instead focus on funding stations in order to boost their capacities. In this way, the government can forge partnerships with communities that can help in the achievement of its “development agenda” (Mboya, 2018, p. 11).

The participants also suggest that local politicians are to blame for not allowing community radio to thrive. Matu notes that such individuals have, in many instances, interfered in the daily running of stations. They claim that they have the right to do so because they assisted in the establishment of these stations (Matu, 2018, p. 41). Githethwa agrees that such interference has made it difficult for stations to establish independence from political interest, so that they can build strong relationships with their target communities (Githethwa, 2018, p. 51). Rukaria notes that many stations that have encountered such interference eventually close down due to conflicts that emerge as a result of such interference. She argues that the closure of these stations can be avoided if regulatory guidelines are put in place that bars politicians from interference (Rukaria, 2018, p. 60).

In addition, the participants mention that there is often prolonged infighting over stations’ ownership by different factions within local communities. Rukaria argues that many of these fights result from a “lack of proper structures”, on the part of the regulatory environment, that can guide the management of stations (Rukaria, 2018, p. 60). Because such structures are not in place, the governing board of a station is often taken over by powerful groups that are not representative of the local community. Rukaria argues that licensing guidelines need to require of stations to have constitutions that can protect stations from the occurrence of such infighting. This constitution needs to include provisions which ensure that the establishment and management of a station’s board is achieved in a transparent and consultative manner. This can be achieved if the “process is always ... [subject] to an election” which ensures that the board is representative of the entire community. However, without the guidance from a broadcast regulator, it is unlikely that stations would develop constitutional guidelines of this kind (Rukaria, 2018, p. 61).

Githaiga adds that commercial stations impede the progress of community radio stations by competing for their audiences and by laying claim to the available advertising revenue. In addition, they raid community radio stations by head-hunting their most experienced staff. In this way, they make it difficult for community stations to establish continuity and capacity amongst either its employed staff, or its body of volunteers (Githaiga, 2018, p. 28).

These comments suggest that power struggles can quickly lead to the demise of community radio stations, if such stations do not have the necessary guidelines in place to guard against them. At the same time, the suggestion is also that such guidelines can be established, if the regulatory authority requires of stations to develop them.

### *2.2.3 Financial challenges*

Mengich suggests, at the same time, that in some instances the board and management of community radio stations are in fact fully aware of the purpose of community radio but still choose to pursue a commercial model. They do so, in her view, because they face “financial difficulties” that make it challenging for them to remain on air if they operate according to the guidelines of community radio. Such stations are often “not operating under the best conditions” due to financial problems (Mengich, 2018, p. 66).

The financial difficulties that these stations face have also complicated the adoption of community radio’s spirit of volunteerism. Githethwa argues, in this context, that volunteerism becomes difficult to sustain when “volunteers want [money] to survive” (Githethwa, 2018, p. 52). Matu explains that because volunteers need money, there is always a “high turnover rate of staff” in these stations (Matu, 2018, p. 41). Mboya notes that stations struggle to maintain continuity because volunteers stay for such a short period of time:

For instance, half of the volunteers who were in Baliti FM a year ago are all gone. They are gone because many of them are young people who are still in colleges while others are looking for employment or seeking to further their education (Mboya, 2018, p. 14).

Within this discussion of financial challenges, there is the suggestion that there are individuals who choose to establish community radio stations purely to enrich themselves financially. On the other hand, some people may be genuinely committed to the establishment of community radio for the benefit of a local community, but struggle to implement guidelines for community radio within an economically fragile context. Dependence on volunteerism is, again, highlighted as an inadequate solution to this problem.

## **Conclusion**

In Section One of this chapter it was noted that the majority of the participants argue that the history of Kenyan community radio only began in the early 1990s. They argue that, at this time, the government became supportive enough of the realisation of a Kenyan community radio sector to make public discussion possible. They point out that it is during this period that open and inclusive deliberations around the need for community radio in Kenya first began. Non-governmental organisations used such deliberation as an opportunity both to encourage a groundswell of interest within civil society and to lobby the government for legalisation. The process of achieving legal status was slow, and the participants suggest that this was because the government was not in fact invested in the establishment of a community radio sector. However, pressure from actors in civil society was too strong, and eventually an enabling regulatory environment was achieved. Once this battle was won, it became possible to establish stations and relationships with international funders, but even then there was limited evidence of support from the state.

In Section Two we saw that, in the participants' estimation, the Kenyan community radio sector is showing signs of success. However, it remains constrained by factors within its environment, which include limitations in local knowledge of community radio; inadequate engagement with the power struggles that surround such radio and a fragile economic context. It is noticeable that the participants offer strategies for overcoming the first two contextual factors but do not have suggestions about what can be done in context of the third. Indeed, as we have seen in earlier comments, the participants are generally concerned about the challenges involved in sustaining community radio stations within the economically fragile context of Kenya. This, then, may be the factor that, in their view, poses the greatest threat to the future of the community radio sector in this country.

## **CLOSING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In Part One of this study we saw that, within the internationally shared conceptualisation of community radio, it is assumed that its primary purpose is to empower and develop historically marginalised communities. It is, furthermore, assumed that this purpose can be achieved by ensuring that local communities establish ownership and control of their own stations. We saw, however, that commentators express doubt about the appropriateness of guidelines for the achievement of this purpose in environments characterised by extreme economic fragility and inequality. Nevertheless, the rise of a global community radio movement has always been grounded in the agency of communities who responded to exactly such conditions in their own environments. It was only in context of the momentum that they created that governments and international funders were able to establish enabling regulatory environments around the world for community radio.

The review of literature about community radio in Kenya, in Part One, suggests that this is the kind of environment that commentators refer to when they express scepticism about the universal applicability of guidelines for community radio. Political and economic inequality have for long made the establishment of a community radio sector impossible in this country. This remained true even after such radio had become a reality in other parts of Africa. However, despite such resistance, actors from within civil society were able to open up opportunities for community radio, so that the growth of such radio in this country finally became a reality.

The empirical study in Part Two explored the role that such actors played in making community radio possible in Kenya. It drew, for this purpose, on the perspectives of individuals in civil society who had participated in the battle to establish community radio in this country. In Chapter Six, we saw that these individuals became familiar with the globally shared conceptualisation of such radio through their location within an information network that cut across the domains of academia, policy development and media activism. This network linked into an international web of communication that allowed its members to engage with ideas about community radio as these circulated around the world. Because they were able to deliberate with each other about the value of these ideas, they could develop a locally appropriate, shared set of ideals with regards to the establishment of community radio in their own country.

In Chapter Seven we saw that these participants contributed directly to the realisation of this vision for community radio in Kenya, by helping to establish an enabling environment

for such radio. They explain that civil society groups laboured to raise public awareness of the potential value of a Kenyan community radio sector. Furthermore, they put in place the foundations of broadcast regulation that would enable community stations to gain a legal status. The participants' suggestion is that this forceful intervention on the part of civil society actors was required, in context of continued hesitance on the part of the state to invest in media that is not owned and controlled by government. When they speak about the factors that still threaten the survival of community radio in Kenya, they refer to the continued importance of maintaining an enabling environment. Their comments suggest that the achievement of this goal will require of civil society actors to remain vigilant.

In light of these findings, it can be concluded that the future of community radio in Kenya cannot be guaranteed by depending purely on the support of government agencies or on the intervention of international funders. It is, rather, the continued commitment of individuals and groups in civil society that will ensure the survival of the sector. It is possible for such groups to establish collaborative partnerships with state officials who recognise the importance of community radio. The momentum for such partnerships will, however, need to come from within civil society itself, through the work of activists, academics and development workers. It is individuals who will need to articulate guidelines for the management of community radio that are more appropriate to the local context. A critique of the volunteer model would need to be central to such a process.

For this reason, it also remains crucial that civil society groups in Kenya maintain support networks that enable them to share and deliberate upon both local and international knowledge about community radio. In order to make this possible, it may be of value to return to the strategies that were adopted in the 1990s, by facilitating discussions amongst stakeholders in community radio. Such discussions should, again, involve representatives from government, in order to strengthen the establishment of a shared approach to the strengthening of community radio in this country. The deliberations that take place in this context should be informed by the lessons that community radio stations are learning about the particular challenges that they face in the Kenyan context. As part of this, attention should be paid to problems that the research participants have listed in this study, such as the threat posed by interference in stations from politicians; the poaching of volunteers by commercial broadcasters; the challenges involved in competing for advertising revenue with commercial stations; the application and license fees that are prohibitively higher for community radio; and conflicts that arise between local community members over the ownership and management of stations.



Such processes of deliberation may allow for the articulation of guidelines for community radio that are more suited to the local context. However, it is unlikely that these guidelines will be implemented without substantial commitment on the part of the Kenyan government to create an environment in which this becomes possible. The participants' commentary suggests, in particular, that there is a need to revise existing regulatory guidelines, so that they are better able to protect the interests of the community radio sector. Such revision should ensure that politicians, in particular, are barred from taking control of stations; that a clear mechanism in which stations can be managed is established so as to prevent conflict amongst community members; that community radio's licensing fee is reviewed from time to time by the government; and that this government builds the capacity of community radio stations by funding them on a yearly basis.

Such processes of deliberation would also benefit from further research that can build on the insights of this study. In this respect, it is proposed that there is a particular need for empirical studies of the stations that the participants list as examples of success. It is possible that the strategies that they are pursuing can provide useful guidelines for the articulation of approaches to community radio that are appropriate to the local context. At the same time, it is of equal importance to produce close studies of the stations that, according to the participants, claim to be examples of community radio when they are actually commercial ventures. A closer scrutiny of these stations would contribute to the understanding of the requirements that stations need to meet in order to claim the status of community radio.

It is my wish that this study will be of a benefit to all stakeholders in the community radio sector, including actors in civil society and government agencies that are committed to strengthening such radio in Kenya. In addition, I hope that all community radio stations in Kenya can draw on this study in order to realise their vision in the best possible way.

## APPENDIX A

### DETAILS OF RURAL COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS IN KENYA

<b>COMMUNITY RADIOS</b>	<b>INITIATORS</b>	<b>YEAR THEY BEGAN BROADCASTING</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
Radio Mang'ete	Mang'ete Community Integrated Development (MCDIP)	2004	Eastern Region
Oltoilo Le Maa FM	Kenya Meteorological Department	2006	Former Rift Valley Province
Radio Lake Victoria	OSIENALA-Friends of Lake Victoria	2006	Western Region
Radio Sahara	Informal group	2006	Western Region
Shinyalu FM	Shinyalu Multi-Media Community Centre	2006	Western Region
Mwanedu FM	Informal group	2007	Coastal area
Maendeleo FM	Bondo Community Multi-Media Centre	2007	South-Western Region
Kangema FM	Kenya Meteorological Department	2008	Central Region
MugamboJwetu FM	MugamboJwetu Community Group	2008	Lower Eastern Region
Bulala FM	Kenya Meteorological Department	2009	Western Region
Serian	Reto Women's Association	2009	Northern Central Region
Hand cart Radio	Migori Civic Local Affairs Network (CLAN)		Western Region
Kwale Ranet FM	Kenya Meteorological Department	2011	South-eastern Region
Baliti FM	Foundation for Women Pastoralists or FOWOPA	2013	Upper Eastern Region
EkialoKiona FM	EkialoKiona Centre	2012	Western region
NganyiRanet FM	Kenya Meteorological Department	2015	Western region

## APPENDIX B

### KENYAN MAP SHOWING REGIONS WHERE COMMUNITY RADIOS ARE BASED



**Key**

Regions	Central	Coast	Western regions (Nyanza & Western)	Eastern	North Eastern	Rift Valley	Nairobi
<b>Community Radios</b>	Kangema FM,	Mwanedu FM, Kwale Ranet FM.	Shinyalu FM, Maendeleo FM, NganyiRanet FM, EkialoKiona FM, Bulala FM, Radio Sahara, Radio Lake Victoria, Hand cart Radio.	Mang'ete MugamboJwetu FM.	Baliti FM	Oltoilo Le Maa FM, Serian.	Ghetto, Koch,Pamoja.

*Source (List compiled from the review of literature in this study)*

## APPENDIX C

### GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PART TWO INTERVIEWS

**This first section explores research participants' understanding of community radio.**

- a) What do you understand community radio to be?
- b) What is its ideal social purpose?
- c) Who are the main beneficiaries of such radio supposed to be?
- d) How are these beneficiaries ideally supposed to benefit from such radio?
- e) How can such radio achieve its social purpose as you have explained to me? (In other words, what are good guidelines that community radio station should follow to achieve this purpose)?
- f) Where did these ideas you have about community radio come from?
- g) How did you first learn about community radio?
- h) What were the sources of your learning?

**This second section focuses on how they interpret the history of community radio in Kenya.**

- a) To your knowledge, when did discussions of the idea of community radio first take root in the Kenyan context?
- b) Where and how did these ideas first circulate?
- c) Who was involved in these discussions and how?
- d) When did people begin to put these ideas into practice? How? Who was involved? What happened?
- e) What, in your view, were key moments in the further development of community radio in this country?
- f) Which stations, in your view, are important examples of community radio in the Kenyan context? Why?

**This third section lays emphasis on the role they have played in the history of community radio in Kenya.**

- a) How have you been involved in this history?
- b) What contributions have you tried to make, and how? In what context?
- c) What challenges did you face?

**This last section is more evaluative and analytical. The questions that are added here are more open.**

- a) To what extent would you say the history of community radio in Kenya has been a success story?
- b) How well do stations – and the community radio sector as a whole – match up to the ideas that you believe in with regards to what community radio should be?
- c) Why would you say this is the case?
- d) What factors impacted on the way community radio took shape in this country?

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

#### TOM MBOYA

1. Understanding of the concept of community radio

*What do you understand community radio to be?*

By putting it in a very basic and plain language, community radio is a radio by the community and for the community. It is a voice of the people within a particular geographic location and it is a tool that is used by such people within that particular geographic region. We can also define it based on community of interest. Community of interest can be in terms of a geographic location or can just be an issue based. So, a medium that propagates people's voices within these two contexts is community radio. We describe it as a voice for the people and by the people within a certain locality.

*What is its ideal social purpose?*

Well, community radio is meant to mobilize community members to action. This action is an action that is geared towards realizing social change. Community radios are geared towards realizing social change because they are formed out of a need. Clearly, if community radios were not formed out of a need, you would realize that many of them would end up competing with mainstream media wanting to be like commercial radios. They would compete because they were not formed out of a need. This need is people's common position. You see when people start to talk about their issues, there is a possibility that they may end up meeting at a common position. But then individually, we can speak here with you and it just ends here. But with radio as a tool, we are guaranteed of reaching the whole community where it becomes possible for people to talk, converse and find solutions to whatever social problems that afflict them. This is basically what a community radio station sets to achieve.

*Who are these main beneficiaries that benefit from this community radio?*

Overall, the main beneficiaries of this radio are the community members. When talking about community, we mean people who reside within a particular geographic location or people who share a common interest. For instance, if community radio is for the pastoralists or for farmers, it is the pastoralists and the farmers who are the primary beneficiaries of this radio respectively. If community radio targets a particular geographic region, let's take the instance of Koch FM whose target area is Korogocho, it's the Korogocho community that benefit from it. In this case, we are talking about a geographic community not a community of interest. Because when we talk of a community of interest, we're talking of specific people with a

specific interest like that of pastoralism or farming. We can also talk of transgender groups who may be keen on having their own radio to be able to talk about their issues. Now this is a specific group of people with a common interest. But I wouldn't want to say that all communities of interest groups are privileged. Some of them are marginalised. You know, to some extent, community radios are in most cases designed for those people who are disadvantaged. Because you see, those who are not marginalized can easily get other platforms. Other platforms like the mainstream radio for instance. Unfortunately, those who are disadvantaged or feel oppressed will always struggle to find a way of bringing that which is in them out. You see? So, most of these people, the minorities and the indigenous people will always have a feeling that their voices are not being heard. It is such communities that will always find a way and maybe find themselves having some form of community radio because they want to be heard and they want their issues to be addressed. They want to have a common position around the issues they want, and so community radio acts a tool that brings all of these people together. For instance, if we had our radio station here, people would call. The person in the station and who is the presenter would just act as a facilitator to ensure that people arrive at a particular conclusion in terms of how they want to move forward regarding those issues that affect them.

*How can such radio achieve its social purpose as you have explained to me?*

Community radio should be regulated. Here in Kenya, the regulator known as the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK) has a list of guidelines that should be adhered to. These set of guidelines are meant for community radio broadcasting and for commercial broadcasting. Therefore, all community radios must first and foremost meet these guidelines that have been set by the regulator. It is important because if these stations fail to follow the guidelines, they will not get a license and without a license, they will simply not broadcast. But again, community radio ought to confine itself within the principles of a community radio. These principles are universally accepted as principles of community radio. For instance this radio must be non-partisan, it must be independent and must be community driven in terms of content and what they want to broadcast because it's not about feeding the people with information, but providing them with a platform to contribute and have a solution for their problems. This is unlike what we have in the mainstream media, where it's all about giving information. It does not matter because at the end of the day 'tutakutana wapi'? (Where will we meet?) And I'm at Kiss FM (Mainstream media) there as a presenter. I just do my things and leave but if it was a community radio, when I'm off air, I will meet with my friends in a social place and they will ask me, "Mboya, what is it that you were saying on

radio?" And the conversation will still go on. I will further say that almost all community radios in the world are run based on the volunteerism model. Volunteerism is one of the values that help drive the agenda of community radios. The question of volunteerism depends with a station's volunteerism policy which determines the kind of people that work in the volunteer team. Because one, there are those stations where volunteerism is working perfectly well because someone will always come. For instance, we may have one member of a local community who is an expert in agricultural issues offering an hour or so on a particular day to talk to people at the station. This expert does this in the realisation that the station belongs to the local community and that he/she is part of that community. So this expert will identify a day (say on Fridays for instance) where he is not very busy and commits himself to the station. So he goes to the station once a week to educate people on issues of agriculture and farming and all that. After that program, he leaves. So you see what happens is that the other days of the week he is busy doing other things to earn a living. We will also have other people who will willingly offer themselves on days there are not busy maybe Monday, Tuesday and so forth. There are those who will say, "No I will only get two hours on Sunday or three hours." So if there is such kind of a team of volunteers, then volunteerism model will work perfectly. For instance, in Koch Fm, we have an individual who has a paid job with Xinhua News the Chinese TV and newspaper but still visits the station on Fridays and Saturdays to purely work as a volunteer. We also have another individual who has sacrificed his two hours, 10-12 every Saturday to be on the station. This kind of volunteerism would work best for any station. However, in some cases, we have young people who will always want to depend on the radio for a living. This becomes a bit difficult because such people are not consistent. You'll find that on a particular day, this person is not on the station because he has gone to look for employment elsewhere. So he's not there, and worse he gave no notice. At the back of your mind, you thought that someone would be in the studio in the morning but then no one came. Such issues happen in a number of community radio stations. It can be challenging if the station only depends on such people. There is also this issue of community radio being run as a non-profit venture. However, I would say that this does not mean that community radio cannot make money. What it means is that the money community radio generates do not go to the shareholders or community members directly. But whatever is generated is ploughed back to the community in terms of doing community projects and maybe paying for school fees and all that. The biggest challenge however is that community radios are now coming to an already flooded market where commercial radio stations have already taken over everything. So they are struggling to see how to penetrate that market



because this market is the same. But again, it is very hard to penetrate this market which is already overcrowded and this is part of the reason as to why many community radios may not have funds. This then brings about reliance on donors for support even when the stations are being established and all that, but then, some donors have a tendency of withdrawing their funding because donor funding in most cases is time bound. For instance, some of these donors may work in a given area for five years and leave thereafter leaving community radios stranded. This is one of the biggest challenges with donor dependence. Because of such problems that come with donor funding, community radios have already started to deal with the question of marketing so that they can penetrate the media market and get some money. Of course this money will help with their sustainability. Remember they have bills to pay like rent for instance. They also have to maintain their equipment, pay electricity bills and so forth.

## 2. Learning about community radio

*How did you first learn about community radio?*

I first learnt about community radio when Koch FM was being formed in 2006. The idea then was to do a documentary about Korogocho because we were coming from a background where the whole of Korogocho community was kind of traumatized by the negative incidences that were happening there and the negative publicity it was getting from the mainstream media. You know the mainstream media would only come to Korogocho when bad things had happened like rape for instance. Those were news to them. So Korogocho was painted in a very negative way and people were even afraid of visiting Korogocho. It was so serious to a point Korogocho Primary school had to be renamed because people from other regions did not want their children to be associated with children from Korogocho. When a child said he/she was in Korogocho primary, they were already profiled as bad children and that they would spoil the other children. The school's board of management decided to change the school's name to protect their children. So this is how terrible things were. Now people of Korogocho started to think of means they could use to portray the positive side of Korogocho to the general public. They wanted a platform that would show the general public that people in Korogocho were already addressing the bad things that were happening in their community such as rape, insecurity, domestic violence and violence against women. The young people had now started to see the need of addressing these vices. This was now happening after some form of community awareness and trainings had been done by an institution known as 'Kituo cha Sheria'. Now people saw the need of defending the rights of everyone in the community. They became human rights defenders. As we were now

grappling with ways of showing all the positive things that were happening in Korogocho, we thought of doing a documentary and probably share it with people from other regions outside of Korogocho. The main objective was to bring out the positive side of Korogocho and the efforts the community members were putting to address the negative things that were happening. I remember it was during this time when Richard Sweeney, a sound engineer and his wife, a photojournalist visited Korogocho. They were on a holiday during that visit. So what happened is that when they came, we had a discussion about these things in Korogocho and what we were planning to do. During that discussion they asked a question, "Why don't you try radio?" We thought this was not achievable but they told us it was by saying, "No. It's achievable. What you need is just a small transmitter, a computer, a mixer and you're on air." Then we said, "Let's try it." That's when we started pursuing this idea of community radio. But then we had problems (especially financial) of trying to put this idea of community radio into practice. So Richard Sweeney offered to help. He introduced us to the Norwegian embassy saying that we were people from Korogocho, and that we were doing a good thing in terms of public awareness, and that we could do much more if we had a radio. The embassy agreed and decided to help. They linked us to a Norwegian church aid agency, a Non-Governmental Organisation which was getting money from the government of Norway. The Norwegian church aid supported us at the initial stages in starting the radio. So this is how I first engaged with the idea of community radio by setting up one. But then again, later, some of our team members also went to one of the radios in Brazil to learn more about community radio. They went there for like one week then came back. With time, I would attend all these trainings and I even joined community radio's support networks in Kenya and outside Kenya. I finally became a member of the board of Africa World Organization of Community Radio and Broadcast.

*What were the sources of your learning?*

When we were starting Koch Fm, there is this one guy i keep on forgetting his name who used to come every Saturday afternoon to teach us about radio broadcasting and radio programming. In our team, there was only one lady who was doing a diploma in communication. The rest of us had no background in media and communications. So this guy, who was from the Royal media services, would come every Saturday at 2pm to teach us basic things about radio including radio ethics. Later, the Media Council of Kenya also came to teach us about ethical standards. So this is how I learnt. I also remember learning through the job and even through the many workshops we attended. I also got some materials from my online reading and from the local support networks. I remember learning more about

community radio from UNESCO whenever it carried out capacity trainings. UNESCO organized much training which brought on board many people that were working in community radios.

### 3. Description of history of CR

*To your knowledge when did discussions of the idea of the community radio first take root in Kenya?*

From some of the literature that I have read, I remember of what was referred to as community radio station that existed sometimes back in Homabay. I think that was the time when initial discussion of the idea of community radio in Kenya started. However, I am not sure whether this radio upon its establishment really embraced the ideals of a community radio or it was just a low powered radio station. In my opinion, I think it was just a low power radio station because it was not an Fm station. It was run as an experiment and was managed by the then government. If I'm not wrong, I think the discussions of the idea of community radio started to gain momentum after the establishment of Mangelete in 2004. I'm not quite sure whether this is the time when Mangelete was established though. Therefore, I would not give you the exact dates because am a bit confused as to the exact time when the discussions gathered momentum because I remember when we were applying for a license; the regulator told us they did not have a policy that guided community radio stations. They said their hands were tied and they could not give us a license. We refused to leave and even camped at the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) now Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK). We stayed there for the whole day. We told them we would not leave because the Ministry had already given us a go ahead. We just wanted the CCK to allocate us a frequency and we were good to go. After seeing how adamant we were, they said they would convene a board meeting for further directions. You know we did not understand this since Mang'elele was already on air because they had been issued with a license yet on the other hand; the Communications Authority did not want to give us a license saying that they did not have a policy framework that guided the registration of community radio stations. At the back of our minds we knew how challenging this process could be because we knew of a station known as Pamoja FM which had applied for its license in 1999 and was yet to get it nine years later. Their application was still with the CCK and nothing seemed to be happening. We were determined to get our license and so we came up with a strategy. You see, there was a briefing by the government's spokesperson every Thursday about the nation's state of affairs. So every Thursday when there was a briefing by the government spokesperson, Dr. Alfred Mutua at KICC, we would send someone there to go and ask one question only. "When are

you giving Koch FM a license?" I think the government spokesperson became tired with this question because it would always pop up during his press briefing. Now this was one strategy of pressurizing the government. We also came up with another strategy. We decided to launch our station without a license. The story about the launch of Koch Fm, a new station in Korogocho trended. Many media houses covered this story including international media like the BBC, Radio Netherlands and Radio Favela of Brazil. They had come to witness the launch of one of the stations in the slums of Nairobi. After this story went on air as covered by two of the country's leading media houses, NTV and KTN, people from the Communications Authority of Kenya came to visit the next day. They wanted to see the people who had launched this radio in Korogocho. They wanted to see the people who were running this station without a license. We told them that we just launched our program but had not gone on air. So this team from the Communications Authority of Kenya did their test on our equipment and after this test, they promised to work on our license immediately. Finally, the pressure paid off as we were finally issued with a license. The discourse then shifted to Pamoja and Ghetto, other radio stations in the slums of Nairobi. They were issued with their licenses shortly thereafter. Afterwards, together with the Kenya Community Media Network, we engaged the regulator on the need of structuring a policy framework that would guide the registration of community radios going forward. This is how the discussions of community radio gathered momentum going forward.

*Who were involved in these discussions?*

The Kenya Community Media Network was there at the centre of these discussions. Of course under KCOMNET we had a representation of individuals who had started to champion the establishment of community radio within their communities. For those stations whose implementation was going on, we had representatives of the stations' management joining in the discussion. Most of those that formed part of the discussions were the community radio managers. Community members also formed part of such discussions but at a different level. I will give an example to illustrate this point. There was an instance when Koch FM was locked. An additional padlock was found added on the normal one and this led to an uproar from the members of the local community. Infact some members took it upon themselves to go to the administration offices to complain. There were about seventy individuals from Korogocho who went to complain that their radio had been closed. So this was another level pointing to how community members participated in discussions about community radio. Then we had other levels where such discussions involved the regulator. In

such discussions, we had representatives of the stations and in some cases we had representatives from Non-Governmental Organisations attending.

*What, in your view, were key moments in the further development of community radio in this country?*

For me, one of the key moments was when Koch FM got its license because that opened doors for other radio stations to get their licenses as well. Remember we really lobbied hard for this station to get its license. Those who were behind the formation of Koch Fm were mostly young people from Korogocho. These young people had somehow become strong activists and human rights defenders after undergoing the training I had spoken to you about earlier. So they knew how to lobby or advocate for anything good for the community. After their rigorous advocacy, Koch Fm finally got its license even before Pamoja Fm which had already applied for its license nine years earlier. Pamoja Fm ended up getting its license after Koch had been issued with one. Therefore, I would say that this serious lobbying which culminated with Koch getting its license was one of the biggest moments. It opened the way for other community radios to get their licenses. As we speak today, the 23<sup>rd</sup> community radio station was registered late last year in November. Because of our efforts, now there is more room for community radios to come up and the regulator said that they have reserved more frequencies for community radios. For me, the licensing of Koch Fm signifies the greatest moment in terms of the development of other community radios in Kenya.

*Which stations in your view are important examples of community radio in the Kenyan context?*

In the Kenyan context I would say Koch FM stands out. I would say Koch Fm because we have mentored many community radio stations. Some have even come here to benchmark with us and I remember Reuben Kigame, the founder of Fish Fm, came here to learn when they were thinking about establishing their own. In fact our team from Koch Fm went there to help them start and mentored them until they were able to stand on their own feet. You know Koch Fm addresses the issues that affect the people of Korogocho. You know if community radio does not address issues that affect its community, it becomes irrelevant. You'll become irrelevant; the community will not even care about the station. The station will be forced to switch off because it will not manage to compete with the mainstream media. We knew that we did not have the capacity to compete with commercial stations so we made sure that we gave our people content that spoke to their needs. Therefore, community radio's content must be different from the mainstream media and it must be local content. That's the only way you can still maintain and capture your audience. I would also say that our station stands out

because it tries to meet the ideals of community radio. However, at first it was a challenge. There is a time when there was a challenge because when we were starting, the concept of community radio was not deeply entrenched in Kenya. In fact the founding team thought we were starting some form of business. It was not until later when we started to learn what community radio really was. So we came up with structures of a community radio station and introduced our members to these structures. You know initially there was that conflict of founder's syndrome saying this is ours and that is yours and so on. But they were told that community radio was not about business. We told them that it was not about generating money for anyone. We told them it was about having structures that would help address issues of the community. So they finally understood that Koch Fm was a community radio and appreciated the ideals the radio had to stick to. So it was about volunteerism, it was about community, and it was about having the voices of the community within the content. Everybody now appreciates the way the station functions. It is working. Other stations that stand out are Kwale Ranet in Kwale and Ekialo Kiona in Mfangano Island. I think these stations stand out because even with the challenges of volunteerism and all that, they have remained on air and are operating for six hours a day. I think in Mfangano Island, Ekialo Kiona is the only radio which is on air. Unbelievably, even the state broadcaster (KBC) does not reach there.

#### 4. Personal involvement in history

*How have you been involved in this history?*

I have been involved in different ways. At Koch Fm, I started as a radio presenter. I was presenting the morning show but then I later moved from presenting to the community outreach department. Now I started dealing with issues dealing with community organization and outreach programs. I later left this department to become Koch FM's station manager. I started to mentor and help other community radios that were coming up. I joined efforts with some of my colleagues to support these stations by forming local support networks and one of the networks I participated in its formation was CRAK (Community Radio Association of Kenya). I was also a member of KCOMNET at the time CRAK was being formed. I remember while still a member at the Kenya Community Media Network, I got an opportunity to represent the Kenyan Community radios in the World Association Community Forum which was held in Accra, Ghana. It is at this meeting that I was elected a board member of the Africa World Organization of Community Radio and Broadcast. Overall, in terms of my contribution, I would say that my involvement in the Kenyan community radio's history was in terms of managing Koch Fm and also helping in building capacity of other

radio stations given the experience I had. I would also say I played a role within the support networks of structuring policy frameworks that would guide the regulator in registering community radios. Remember I mentioned that the regulator did not have a policy framework for use in the registration of community radios. Now when drafting that policy, I remember a clause which allowed community radios to advertise was removed by the regulator. I think the regulator removed it deliberately. Now, during one of the consultation forums, we engaged them after we realized what they had done. They asked us to draft it the way we would like it to be and we just re-introduced that clause on advertisement. They accepted it after the re-introduction. But i don't really know why the regulator removed this clause in the first place. I think the regulator at that time did not understand how community broadcasting was supposed to operate. We thought they knew that community broadcasting was purely a voluntarily service. But I also suspect there was a hand from the mainstream media. I'm saying so because the mainstream media saw that the emergence of community radios was a threat in the media market. They thought community radios would bring some sort of competition in terms of getting advertisements. So, they wanted to block community radio completely out of the market. I think this was one of the main reasons that made the regulator remove that clause because when we asked them why they did that they said, "But you're not supposed to make profit." Then we said, "Making money is not necessarily making profit." You know if they say we cannot make money, then how do they expect us to pay bills? How do they expect us to pay the fee that they ask us to pay every year, annually? So where do they want to get this money?

*What challenges did you face?*

I think one of the major challenges that community radios faced in Kenya was unsustainability. You know within the media market, we have the so called media buying agencies. Unfortunately, these media buying agencies have not understood community radio well in the sense that they think community radio stations are vernacular Fm stations. But you know vernacular FM stations are commercial stations. So these media buying agencies go for vernacular stations leaving community radios to struggle. Another challenge is the question of reach. You know when you go to market your radio; the media buying agencies will ask you how far your radio reaches in terms of frequency coverage. They seem surprised and disinterested when you tell them that Koch Fm covers a three kilometer radius for instance. But what they fail to understand is that a three kilometer radius has almost a quarter of the population. That's what they don't understand. We are struggling to make them understand the concept of community radio and I'm happy that this year we got some work courtesy of

some of the media buying agencies. They gave us some work from Safaricom. They also gave Pamoja Fm the same work. So the biggest challenge has been getting these buying agencies to understand community radio. But we are slowly getting them to understand. You know, initially, people were not going out to market community radio or to talk about community radio. We are now trying to reach out to those networks by using any available platform to make sure that we tell them what community radio is. Because this radio is quite different and so they need to understand where community radios are coming from and what they are capable of doing. Another challenge is the money community radios are charged for licensing. In fact I think instead of charging the stations money, the government should instead give community radios money. They should fund them every year. They should do what is done in the UK where community radios are funded every year but they account for that money. You know I'm told that here in Kenya there is a fund that the regulator sits on. I'm told that mainstream media have been contributing to that fund. Up to today, the regulator has not used this fund and it seems they don't know how to use it. I think it can be a good idea if they used part of that fund every year on community radios to boost their capacity because generally, community stations are for community service. Just like the way the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) has a budget from government, is the same way community radios can benefit from that fund. They can help in that way. This partnership can even become a bigger thing in the sense that the government can work closely with community stations to advance their development agenda. I remember this day when someone called the Kenya Community and Media Networks. She called and said, "Oh, we want to work with the community radios and we want to create awareness to the people about the Jubilee government's agenda four. Then we asked her, "Okay. What are you offering?" she said, "Nothing, community radio are supposed to be free." Then we told her, "Take it to the mainstream media." This shows you that kind of partnership is not so much developed and I think it could work perfectly well. You know we have been thinking of approaching county governments where community radio stations are founded. I think these county governments can have some budget for community radio within their area, so that the county can use these stations for developmental purposes. Initially the county governments wanted to have their own radio stations but the move was challenged by the Communications Authority of Kenya. They were told to use KBC instead. So why not boost the capacity of community radio stations and use them instead? We are thinking of approaching counties with this idea. You know this radio can assist the county governments achieve their developmental goals. For instance, we may have groups of women in a county who do



farming. It becomes a great idea if the field officer working for the county government can create time to go to the station and use it as a platform to talk to these women groups. Probably a program in agriculture can be included in the station's programme once a week where such experts can visit the station to empower farmers with new ideas and technologies. They then give these stations money every year. This kind of partnership can really work. I remember we took this discussion to Makueni County where we were lucky to meet with the governor's representatives. They all agreed it was a brilliant idea however; they were a bit reluctant as to whether this could work given some of the problems they had seen with Mang'elete in terms of its administration and management issues. However, I believe Makueni County can become the first county to do this because their governor has proven to be very aggressive. The governor, Professor Kivutha Kibwana is very friendly too. I think he is somehow easier to work with too. In fact he had already accepted the idea but then there were problems of leadership at Mangelete which made him say, "Sort your house first."

##### 5. Reflection on historical overview

*To what extent would you say the history of community radio in Kenya has been a success story?*

The history of community radio in Kenya has been a success story for a number of reasons. One, this history has been a success because there has been an increase in the number of community radios. After Koch FM got its license and went on air in 2006, many community radios have emerged and we are now talking of 23 stations today. This is a number that has been documented by KCOMNET. That in itself tells you that there has been an immense growth and the regulator now recognizes the beneficial value of community radio. Secondly, during the post-election violence of 2007-2008, BBC media Action and BBC media Trust did a research about the role of community radios in this violence. They found out that community radio stations played an even greater role of ensuring that this violence came to a stop by preaching peace. The report indicated that those community radios that were established in areas that were hardest hit by this violence helped in the restoration of peace. In addition, we have stations that are managed by meteorological department which have played a crucial role in averting disastrous results that could have resulted from natural calamities. These stations play a greater role in terms of giving community members early warnings about huge rainfall that always result in floods. People have always been urged to move to safer grounds before these floods happen. Many lives have been saved because of community radios. Therefore, in this sense, even though community radios could be

struggling with the question of sustainability, these examples point to the fact that community radios are doing a great job.

*How well do stations – and the community radio sector as a whole – match up to the ideas that you believe in with regards to what community radio should be?*

I would say it is a bit challenging. I'm saying this informed by the capacity building training that we did some time back with KCOMNET for nine community radios. When we got there, we realized that majority of these stations were only started by individuals. Community members did not take part in the establishment of these stations. So these individuals started these radios as business ventures. So they decided to register their stations as community radios to evade paying higher fees that are usually charged for commercial stations. They also settled for community radio because the equipment was cheaper and easier to obtain. So I remember these people would even place adverts when seeking to recruit people to work in the stations. So, they did not have a structure that could allow community members to voluntarily go and work in those stations. They carried out interviews when recruiting the stations' workers. Therefore, during these trainings we were carrying out, we realized that we needed to do more in terms of making people understand the concept of community radio. So, we introduced the concept of community radio and taught people what the ideals of such radio were. We have so far managed to visit 15 radio stations as a way of building their capacity through trainings and driving in the ideals that community radio stands for. However we realized that people change every day. There is a high turnover rate of people working in these stations. For instance, half of the volunteers who were in Baliti Fm a year ago are all gone. They are gone because many of them are young people who are still in colleges while others are looking for employment or seeking to further their education. Therefore, due to such challenges, there is need for conducting continuous training, continuous sensitization and continuous networking in terms of making sure that every day those new people who come in also understand the concept of community radio. But I think many people do not understand the concept of community radio because there is a missing link in education. I think our institutions of higher learning that offer mass communication courses have failed by not laying emphasis on community radio as a learning unit. I feel that these institutions just focus on mainstream media and how one can make a good radio journalist and leave it at that. So, you will find that when students visit community radio stations they find themselves in more of a strange environment. You know these students come here sometimes for their internships and it is possible to tell that they know little or nothing at all about community radio. So we teach them but it often takes sometimes before they can fully grasp how this

radio functions. I would however not blame these institutions too much because community radio is relatively a new concept in Kenya but it is slowly starting to pick up. But we need to do something by even involving and engaging all stakeholders who are in the media industry to help with developing a curriculum on community broadcasting. This may be important so that when these students even go for internships on media platforms that are not community based they are taught about the basics of community broadcasting. This may be important so that when they come to volunteer here, they already understand what community radio is and what is expected of them.

*What factors impacted on the way community radio took shape in this country?*

In my opinion, the fact that commercial media choose to ignore many issues that affect community members has given community media an opportunity to grow and become better. For instance, if you come to Korogocho now, you will see that the content which is being broadcasted by the mainstream media does not resonate with the needs of the people of this area. This has given Koch Fm a chance to capitalize and focus on the needs of the people of Korogocho. The other thing that has impacted on the way community radio has taken shape in Kenya is the role that the local support networks have played. If these networks were inexistent, I do not think there would have been community radio today. The networks played a bigger role in policy formulation and lobbying the regulator to register community radios. These networks tried to address the issues that were affecting community radios. The networks also offered a platform where people could share ideas and experiences all meant towards driving the sector forward. In addition to offering people with a platform to share ideas, Kenya Community Media Network through their program radio for peace, has worked with all community radio stations in Kenya to ensure that there is peace in this region. This network has also extended this partnership with Catholic radio stations. We have several low power radio stations which are run by the Catholic Church. In fact there is a whatsapp platform that was created for all these people to interact, share and exchange ideas. Lastly, UNESCO has in its own way played a bigger part in the development of community radios. It mainly committed itself to supporting this sector by boosting the capacity of four stations through training.

## **GRACE GITHAIGA**

### 1. Understanding the concept of CR

*What do you understand community radio to be?*

Community radio is a radio that is managed by the people for the people, just like democracy. It is a radio that allows people to determine the sort of programming they want and the content they want. Basically, this is a radio that serves people who reside within a certain locality.

*What is its ideal purpose?*

Community radio is mainly meant for development purposes. They say information is power but unfortunately, many rural people have often been segregated by the other tiers of broadcasting. Even though they may have access to these other tiers of broadcasting, their content is in most cases generalized and may not speak to the development needs of these people. But when it comes to community radio, you will realize that most of its content is meant to serve the needs of people residing within a particular locality. For instance, in an area where fishing is the main activity that takes place, community radio will provide the residents there with information on how to get enough fish, how to get market for their fish and probably the nutritional benefits that fish provides. You will realize that such information may differ with areas that are predominantly known for agriculture. In such areas, community radio may provide useful information on agricultural activities such as better farming techniques, the best time for planting and probably the best planting methods. Community radio also provides a platform where residents can exchange ideas regarding such topics and identify what works for them best.

*Who are the main beneficiaries of such radio supposed to be?*

There are elements of power in a community. In a community, we have the influencers who sort of sway the way things go. I wouldn't say this radio is meant to benefit such people. This radio is therefore predominantly for the marginalised group of individuals because these people do not benefit from the other tiers of broadcasting. Therefore, to a large extent, community radio is for the marginalised and the marginalised in this sense may include women or certain ignored communities from far-flung areas like North Eastern, Turkana or Rusinga Islands. These communities maybe considered marginalised because being farmers for instance, the information they need on farming techniques is not given to them by the mainstream media.

*How do these beneficiaries benefit from community radio?*

I think they benefit more in terms of getting the relevant information that speak to their needs. But also, to some extent, some of them benefit in terms of being given an opportunity to work in the stations. These people may be hired to collect news and work as broadcasters therefore gaining some status in the community. The stations therefore provide them with an opportunity to hone their skills and even stand a greater chance of being hired by other well-paying commercial stations. In this sense, community radios serve as a springboard by making it possible for such people to be gainfully employed in commercial stations and in the process creating an opportunity for other members within the community to come in and serve in community stations. This is beneficial in a way. I remember once when we were setting up community stations, four to be precise. After establishing them, one of these big commercial stations came and literally poached all of the people that were working in these community stations. Of course we were very upset but I also thought that this was beneficial to those that were working in these stations because they were going to benefit in terms of making more money. Their leaving also created a platform for other members from those communities to come in and gain some skills. This is therefore another form of empowerment apart from that of empowering them with information that is vital in making them become better people. In addition, I think there is another form of empowerment that is hardly mentioned. For instance there are these small businesses like salons but no one (Community radio) really goes to them for support. I think it is great when one goes to a salon for instance and just ask the people working there to support the station with a little money and be able to broadcast information they have like for instance how to process hair, how to take good care of it and so on. The people giving this information feel much empowered in the sense that they can actually contribute good information and even put money into the radio. This is another form of empowerment. Empowerment is on different levels and at different, various stages.

*How can such radio achieve its social purpose as you have explained to me?*

I think there is need for some thinking through about what you want your radio to be as a community radio. The Communication's Authority of Kenya has clear guidelines regarding how and who is supposed to get a license for community broadcasting. It gives a clear definition of community radio as a radio that must be served from the community and as a radio that must get advertisements from the community. However, i think one of the main things that community stations must define is the issue of content. I'm saying this because content generation has proven to be such a challenge given the many commercial stations that have sprung up in different places. With the emergence of these commercial stations, there

has been a tendency of community stations losing focus and wanting to compete with these stations. You will therefore find them trying to run their radio for 24 hours yet they don't have content to sustain them for that long. Some of them therefore end up behaving like commercial stations that play music for 24 hours. Mark you, some of this music may not even be relevant to the communities they serve. For example they will create a reggae programme because this particular commercial station has such programme. This is just one way of competing with that particular station. Therefore, I strongly believe that there is need for community radio and those that manage it to be very clear on the issue of content and the number of hours this radio should be on air. There is no need for this radio to be on air for 24 hours because this may make it unsustainable. So, they can actually decide to be on air for four hours a day, say from around four to eight in the evening. This can be a perfect time since many community members are back from work and may be listening. Therefore, for such radio to achieve its purpose, the founders should always remind themselves why those stations were established in the first place.

*Probing, clearly these are community stations but why would they want to compete with commercial stations?*

Community radio stations tend to compete with commercial stations because some of their founders forget why they established these stations. In addition, they become excited along the way and think of expanding their reach to cover the entire country. They actually forget the details of their license and the reasons for forming these stations by thinking of competing with commercial stations for audiences. Of course they do this as a way of gaining traffic into their station. I think it is just important for such people to decide what they really want from the outset.

*Probing, But why gain traffic yet there is a notion that community radio is not for profit making?*

I think there is a confusion regarding this notion that community radios are not supposed to make profits. I think there is a confusion here and am not sure if it is there on the license, maybe you will need to find out with the regulator. However, in my understanding, community radios can make money but that money should be ploughed back into the stations to assist with the running of their day to day activities. However, it becomes commercial when these stations start making a lot of money to a point where the tax man thinks it is necessary for them to start paying tax. Of course it is normal, you know we have tax limits and even you when you start making enough money then you need to start paying tax. But I'm also thinking these stations can attain this limit but still don't have to pay tax, maybe they

plough all the money back to evade paying. But now when you make so much money and you even start declaring dividends at the end of the year then you really need to start paying taxes and I think this is where the confusion I was talking about comes in.

*Probing, wouldn't their licenses be revoked when it gets to a point where they may be seen to be getting commercial?*

Yes, their licenses will be revoked because the license conditions are very clear. But am also saying, it does not mean that community radios cannot make money, they can. They should however use this money in ways that do not contravene the tax regulations of the country. Making money is good for their sustainability because that money can be ploughed back into the stations.

*Probing, you mentioned earlier that community radios should not run for 24 hours because of content challenges, why say this yet communities can participate in content generation?*

Ideally community members are expected to participate in generating community radio's content. However, in some cases, it is good to note that we are dealing with community members who have never met radio before and have probably never made any programmes. In this case, how do you expect them to come and participate in those programmes? Therefore, it is important to have a group, or a lead, that can determine the kind of programmes that community members can take part in. A group that understands some of the issues which members of a community can comfortably participate in. I will give an example of one of the radios we supported. This radio known as Mang'etele, which was a women's radio, had one of the programs that these women participated in. This women's programme would run for an hour. Now, there were thirty women groups that were spread out in different places. We gave them recorders to record themselves every week when they would meet to discuss a topic. The content of the recordings would then be edited and played in the station. As a way of encouraging them to meet and discuss important issues, we would always give those women groups that had contributed the more presents. From this example, what I'm saying is that you cannot expect those people from the villages to just get into the station and start making programmes. It is important to have a lead group that identifies the pressing issues that need to be addressed. Of course this group should be creative in establishing how people from the villages can contribute in addressing those pressing needs. But of course people can also learn but I must also reiterate that content generation in community radios has its own challenges.

*Are you then saying that volunteerism model does not help with content generation?*

In Africa, the volunteerism model may not work like it does in the West. You cannot bring the volunteerism model of the west into an African country. Infact we can use Kenya as an example to show why this volunteerism model is challenging. We will take an example of Mang'elele community radio as a description. Within that community the radio serves, we have people who are looking for jobs and most of these people have just cleared school. Some of them did a radio related course and are searching for jobs that fit that description. Now, how do you tell such a person to volunteer? You cannot tell them to volunteer. Remember these people may need bus fare to get to the station and food to eat. Now if they do not have income, it will be difficult to expect them to give the station their time. Therefore, I strongly believe that Africa needs a different model of volunteerism. A model which recognizes that these people need money to survive. These people need the basics at least to remain committed to the stations or else they leave. Alternatively, they may use the stations as springboards for greener pastures. Unfortunately this is not good for the stations because they will consistently be in the habit of training new people who will eventually leave after sharpening their skills. This is a very big challenge.

*(Probe) What if these volunteers are people who are employed elsewhere and they come to the stations on weekends only, or in the evenings after work? Or those in retirement?*

Maybe that is what should be tried here. That's the reason I'm telling you we need a different model that may work for us. But again, let's take this example of Nairobi now and Koch Fm which is within the city. Given that Nairobi has insane traffic in the evening because everyone is rushing home. How many people can make it to this station in the evening after work? Let's say they beat this traffic, are they willing to go and put in another hour yet they are tired from the day's work? Many people would prefer to go home early to relax. We really need a different model although this could be one of the recommendations.

## 2. Learning about community radio

*Where did these ideas you have about community radio come from?*

Now this is a very long process. I remember it all started with the coming together of some of the members of the Kenya Association of journalists. Some of these members who basically came from the broadcasting sector included me, Nguri Matu, Muthoni Wanyeki who later worked as the regional director for Amnesty International, Patrick Onyango of Ujamaa centre in Mombasa and Wango Mwangi who later left for the Netherlands. I remember there was an opportunity that opened up for broadcasters across the world to attend a meeting in Montreal for World Community radio broadcasters. Two of our colleagues travelled to attend this meeting. So our colleagues returned and they told our broadcast group to sit down and



discuss how we could go about community broadcasting. We did not understand a single thing about community broadcasting given our background in mainstream broadcasting. Now, lucky enough, our colleagues who had attended this meeting at Montreal had already established contacts with individuals from other countries like South Africa. So we decided to organise a meeting in Kenya and invited all those Africans who had attended the meeting in Montreal to come and speak about community broadcasting. So, we were just there listening and not understanding anything regarding community broadcasting. Given that most of us were not contributing anything substantial, it was decided from that meeting that Kenya had to do something. We were therefore asked to meet and decide what needed to be done. So, in the course of this conference, we as the Kenyan caucus met during one of the evenings and decided to harness our efforts through a network. That is how the Kenya Community Media Network came into existence. After brainstorming and coming up with the name of this network, it was decided that serious lobbying, advocacy and training were urgently needed. Of course training people on things like participatory methodologies was very important. After deliberating on how to go about all these things, it was concluded that we needed to have our own series of meetings as a start. The members chose me to spearhead and coordinate these meetings. This is how I found myself active in this sector. We concluded that evening meeting at that point and went back to report our decisions in the main meeting. Now, after the main meeting came to a close, I remember one of my friends who later moved to the States, but a lecturer at Moi University then, telling me that I had an enormous task ahead. She reminded me that I had been made a coordinator and that I was supposed to come up with a concept. In all honesty i did not know how to do a concept but this friend of mine did it for me. Our own series of meetings started and members chose their areas of interest. I remember in the area of advocacy we had the four of us. I remember Nguri was the head of training. Clearly, we were the pioneers and I remember there was a lot of trial and error at the start and along the way. But we always read books about community broadcasting. I also remember how active we became because we always requested to be invited for seminars to learn. Given that I was also mandated to support the establishment of pilot community stations in East Africa, I found myself learning about community radio practically as well. I came to realize then that some of these theoretical concepts were not applicable in real practice. There were simple not the same (Theoretical and practical). I'm saying so because I realized it was more theoretical when you read and listened to people talking about community radio. However, i realized that it became entirely different when one started to practice it. Because of my practice, I learnt different things. Infact, most of these journal

articles and books I did were inspired by my practical experience with community stations. Especially on issues touching on the management of community radios and the new models of volunteerism given what I had seen happening.

*What were the sources of your learning?*

My sources of learning were majorly books that I got from the libraries. I remember I started reading these books in Mid 1990s, maybe 1997 to be specific. Most of these books were from the World Association of community radios. Although scanty, most of the information I got was about the establishment of community radio in Latin America, Canada and Australia. We borrowed a lot of information from these contexts and tried them on our very own. We borrowed what was or rather had worked for them because the scholarship about community radio in the Kenyan context was simply inexistent. Therefore, our sources of learning were materials from the outside scholarship. So we read and borrowed what could work for us here. I remember even when lobbying the government, we told them that we had clearly looked at the Canadian, the South African and the Australian models of community broadcasting and were able to pick what could work for us based on our needs.

*(Probes) But all these models you mention here are from developed contexts how could they possibly work for us?*

Well, we had South Africa there, and they had their own struggles but were still managing. We learnt from their experiences. Hey, I forgot very important information. Kenya was actually the first experiment of community radio in Africa through the Homabay community station. Unfortunately, it was considered to have become so powerful that it had to be closed down by the then government. So I would say that we also used this example of Homabay radio to lobby for the establishment of community radio sector. You will realize that many people used this model to start their community radio stations. Still in Africa, there were many community radio stations in Mali but unfortunately there were no written materials about them during that early period. These stations were operating freely meaning they lacked clear guidelines on how to operate. I would therefore say that South Africa was way ahead and I think this also had to do with the fact that they already had a law recognizing community broadcasting.

### 3. Description of CR history in Kenya

*To your knowledge, when did discussions of the idea of community radio first take root in the Kenyan context?*

I would say from 1996 – 1997.

*How did these ideas circulate?*

Actually, I will tell you that whenever we heard of a seminar or a meeting on any media related issue; we would always take our agenda of community radio there. We had put in place a very aggressive strategy and a spirited effort on lobbying and advocacy. Infact, I remember in 1999, we took our agenda of community broadcasting to the World Press Freedom Day. We requested the organizers for time to talk about community radio during that event. I will however say that our greatest lobbying strategy involved our engagement with the government. For example, I remember of a taskforce which had been constituted by the government and whose chair was one of the media guys by the name Horris Awori. We approached Horris and told him that we wanted to have a meeting session with the taskforce. This signaled the start of our breakthrough. I remember how organised we were before meeting with the taskforce. We had a well thought out and researched paper detailing what community radio was all about. We had anticipated having a people friendly brief with a very simplified version of what community radio was all about and how this radio could be beneficial to the country. Indeed, after listening to us, Horris and the taskforce were very impressed with the idea. Infact we had initially thought that we were just going to have a small working session with them just to explain but it turned out to be a very big thing. The taskforce went further and invited the Attorney General to the meeting. The Attorney came to the meeting and keenly listened to us. After listening, we were advised on what we had to do like for example making very specific recommendations. This was the point we decided to engage lawyers to assist in coming up with a proper report and a nice framework on community broadcasting. Of course, after having that successful meeting with the taskforce, we never stopped lobbying. We continued with our series of lobbying and this time we targeted the regulator. I remember doing a lot of writing to the regulator requesting for a meeting to talk about community radio. The real breakthrough came in 2003. Before that time, some of the Ugandan radios had already gone on air where their president (Museveni) commissioned them. Tanzanian ones had also gone on air after being commissioned by their Prime minister. So in East Africa, it was only the Kenyan ones which had not started. This was despite having everything in place. The equipment was there but we were not moving. Something had to be done quickly and we kept on trying to reach the regulator. We decided that the only way to get to the regulator was through the then minister for information the late Michuki. I was lucky to meet him in Geneva while attending a World Summit on Information and society. We had a tent/stand and while there, I saw Michuki walking by accompanied with two gentlemen. So when he got near our stand, i got up, walked towards him and stopped right in front of him and introduced myself as a Kenyan and welcomed him to our

stand. I explained what we were doing there then told him that i wanted to see him because of some challenges we were facing. He asked me to call him when we got back to the country so that we could talk. Once I got back to Kenya, I did that, i called him. Michuki was very good by the way; he was not in the office. He had gone to state house for a meeting and so he did not return my call that day. However, the following day, he returned my call very early in the morning. I think it was like six in the morning. He said that I should be in his office by 7:30. So i was there by seven thirty, in his simple office. I was actually surprised that he didn't even have a posh office; his office was just a small and an ordinary one. So we just sat there the two of us as i explained to him some of the challenges we were facing in trying to lift community radio off the ground. I could tell that he did not understand because he kept on wondering why we wanted to start community stations that broadcast in local languages yet KBC, the state broadcaster was already doing that. I tried to explain to him that KBC was not about communities. So after listening, Michuki encouraged me to also talk to a man called Sammy Kirui who was the then Director of Communications Authority of Kenya (regulator). While in Geneva, Michuki had already suggested that i talk to the regulator. So, after our small meeting, and when I was done explaining to him, he reiterated that I should speak with Sammy Kirui. In my honest opinion, Kirui must go down in history as a man who made community broadcasting a reality in Kenya. I'm saying this because this man listened and understood. He was very welcoming and I remember him telling me that his office had an open door policy. So on our first meeting I told him that the frequency fees were too high and that it was unfair to charge community radios the same as commercial ones. So he asked me how much I wanted to pay and i suggested half the amount. He told me that they did not have a law in place that regulated that but he promised that he would speak to his board. He asked me to go and put my request in writing before their next board meeting which was taking place in two weeks' time. I did that and made sure that everything we touched in our conversation was covered in form of a letter. After the board meeting was over, Kirui got back to me and said that the board had approved my request. We were now allowed to pay half the amount of what we were initially supposed to pay. From then on we became very good friends with Kirui and whenever Communications Authority of Kenya had a meeting they would always invite me. In fact, whenever there was an activity or a workshop they had organised, they would always give me an opportunity to speak about community radio. Of course, many people did not understand but i would still go and speak. We really developed a cordial relationship with the regulator. I remember going back to Kirui again asking for a further cut of the frequency fees. Apparently, the amount I had requested initially was still a

little bit too high. I remember telling him that this 65,000/= was too much and we wanted to do half of it. He laughed and he just told me that I knew the drill. I knew what he meant so I wrote a letter to the board and the board slashed the amount by half again. So before Kirui, the Director General of Communications Authority of Kenya left, i thought that community radios should be fully exempted from paying frequency fees. So I looked for him and met him in one of the many meeting. You know whenever we bumped into each other during such meetings he would always joke that I was only there to talk about my agenda of community stations. I would always ask him, what else would bring me here? So on that day, i told him that we did not want to pay anything because we did not have the money. He laughed and told me that I knew the drill. I failed to write the letter immediately assuming that Kirui was always there. Unfortunately, the former president Kibaki appointed him as a Permanent Secretary and he left the Communications Authority of Kenya. I was now left to negotiate with the new director general. I think his name was Waweru. He was not as open as Kirui was and so we were unable to make any progress on the money. However, we were able to negotiate on the duration that community broadcasters should be given before they could renew their license. I was a common figure in all of these meetings and in fact, even today, some people are still not able to distinguish me from community radio despite leaving in 2009.

*When did people begin to put these ideas into practice?*

I think people started to put these ideas about community radio into practice from 2003 onwards. This is the period we started to receive many applications. Infact, by 2005, we had about six to eight stations and the trend has continued. After the rigorous lobbying we did with the regulator, the regulator ended up recognizing us for our efforts and they always invited us for public participation whenever there was a law they wanted passed. They always looked forward to our contributions. We always contributed and that is how we played a vital role in all processes of law amendments and passage. In this regard, i think we were the people who were greatly involved in putting these ideas about community radio into practice. It was just the Four of us including one legal practitioner by the name Lawrence Mute. This was a very small group which did not comprise of media practitioners alone but also the civil society. International agents were also critical players whose main help came in form of donor funding. You know we needed money to pay some of these legal experts (like Lawrence Mute) who were helping with the drafting of community radio's policy framework. In other cases we also needed money to fund our many meetings. So these external agents like UNESCO and the Ford foundation were of great assistance. Overall, as internal agents,

we were very proactive and I remember we would always ask the regulator to invite us for meetings and include us in their programmes. This was in most cases when other industry players had been invited for meetings and we had not. This was an aggressive lobbying. We were never discouraged.

*What in your view were key moments in the further development of community radio in this country?*

I think one of the key moments was in 1997 when the discussions about the idea of community radio started. The next key moment was in 2002 when our efforts paid with Mangelete going on air. The next moment was in 2005 when we already had five to six community stations on air. This was a great moment because the regulator had started to recognize us. The next defining moment was in 2010 when many of our demands were included in the broadcast regulations of 2010. The other was on the review of the section on community broadcasting and the reduction of the annual frequency fees. Generally, I think this radio's defining moment was in the 2000s.

*Which stations are important examples of community radio in the Kenyan context?*

Community radios in Kenya have had many challenges but Mangelete and Koch Fm have tried. I'm not saying that these two have not faced challenges they have but they stand out among the rest. Many stations start very well but people think there is money involved and they start fighting over this to a point of even closing down these stations sometimes. There are many challenges but the fact that some of these stations are still surviving despite the challenges is a good thing. It's even great that some are surviving without donor funding. These two stations, Mang'elele and Koch, stand out because they have remained on air even with the challenges. These stations have been able to mobilize their own resources locally. Infact many people see them as very useful tools. For example, the fact that politicians have in some instances shown interest of owning Mangelete tell you that this radio is recognized. Mang'elele has been an important tool and I even remember at one point the county government wanted the station to be the county radio, the county voice. That tells you how important this radio has been. On the other hand, Koch Fm stands out because of its mechanism that allows community members to participate in the management of the station. Mangelete has the same mechanism as well. But one of the biggest problems for Mangelete for instance is having unskilled people run the stations. It is very important for these people to be empowered with those skills, and especially as we were saying, people who are not going to move away from the community. In this case, we are talking about the old people, people who live there permanently or people with other jobs like teachers. So, overall, we

still have challenges, we still have many rivers to cross, but it is great that these stations have managed to remain on the airwaves for long.

4. Personal involvement in this history

*How have you been involved in this history?*

As mentioned earlier, I have been involved in lobbying for community radio's recognition and trying to get the regulator and the legislators to understand what such radio entails. I remember going to parliament many times to lobby the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) committee to pass laws that favor community broadcasting. I also lobbied the regulator as I have told you. I have also contributed in the written body of works and I made sure that the story of community radio was included whenever there was any media related story. I think what stands out for me is my contribution and negotiation for price reduction of community radios' frequency fees. This is one major thing I did. Even now some people still call me to get them donors yet I left the sector long ago.

*What challenges did you face?*

One of the challenges I faced was the lack of understanding about the concept of community radio by community members. Most of these community members thought of money whenever they thought of these stations. I think there was a misconception because they would see some of the community workers riding in big four wheel cars. They were also attending many meetings. I even remember I was able to negotiate for some of them to attend meetings internationally. Every other time we had people going to South Africa to Denmark to Sweden to Canada for training and so forth. I remember we would also do some fundraising within the local communities and so forth. I think this raised the status of these community workers among the locals to a point where these locals thought there was money involved in this concept of community radio. Another challenge was the issue of sustainability and sustainability was not just about funding. It was also about these funders asking for a sustainability plan every now and then. I mean community stations do not operate like other projects; it is a long arduous process. Then of course there was another challenge of content sustainability and especially when community stations were just starting to operate. There was a tendency for these stations to compete with FM stations. So in a way, these community stations kind of lost focus and forgot what their objectives were. Another challenge involved retaining workers given we were not paying them any salary. Some of these workers were very skillful by the way and it was just a matter of time before these big commercial stations started poaching them. Initially we had also encountered a bit of a challenge from the then government with regards to a very slow process of licensing

community stations. Eeeh we did a lot of work. We recommended in our lobbying the need for having a kind of a one-stop shop in 1997 just to hasten the licensing process. This one-stop shop would help in the sense that after doing your application there you get your frequency there and then. Initially getting a license from the ministry would take eternity. I must commend Tuju because when he was a minister, he listened to us when we said we wanted a one stop shop. He actually listened to us and I remember he got us two consultants who came to help us deliberate on this idea. Tuju also listened to us when we recommended the need for having a forty percent local content across our media platforms. I remember Tuju calling us to a meeting and we explained how it could be achieved. Of course this issue had elicited debates across the country with some people arguing how it was not achievable given its high cost. We explained to Tuju how this forty percent could be achieved arguing that we could always collaborate with other content providers. We assured him that some of these content providers did not actually need money but rather a platform to just air their content. I'm so glad because this is what is being implemented now as we speak.

#### 5. Reflection on historical overview

*To what extent would you say the history of community radio in Kenya has been a success story?*

I think it has been a success story in the sense that some stations are still operating way after the donors have pulled out. That is successful. Secondly it is a success story in the sense that a number of communities are still establishing community radio stations because this idea is still alive. Even with the technological convergence, we still have people who are putting in requests to establish community radios.

*How well do stations match with the ideals of community radio?*

I would say that they have tried. I will not say they are at a hundred percent because it is a journey.

*Why not a hundred percent? Why would you say that is the case?*

I think it is because of those challenges that i have mentioned earlier. I'm saying it is a journey partly because of those challenges. Let's face it even main broadcasting stations cannot survive if they don't get funding from the government or from advertisers. You see, unfortunately our community radios are restricted, they are not allowed to get advertisements from big companies like coca cola for example yet such companies provide huge revenues. Secondly, there is a misconception; there is confusion between community stations and vernacular ones because some people conclude that since a certain radio is serving a



particular community in its native language then it is a community station. I think there is need for a proper awareness because vernacular stations are by all means commercial.

*What factors impacted on the way community radio took shape in this country?*

The interest and zeal of the media advocates who really pushed this idea about community radio, helped in fundraising for it, and also making sure that there was awareness creation. You know I was surprised one time to see that I had been listed as the owner of Mangelete radio. There is a big file with many letters I did for them in pushing for their license. Therefore as media advocates, we were not discouraged and we understood that advocacy was a process. Sometimes this process was so frustrating but we focused on the bigger picture. I think the other group was the funders who believed in this idea and supported it. Then we have those communities that were interested in taking this idea because without them then the idea would not have taken root. I also think the regulator played a vital role in ensuring that community broadcasting was recognized by law. Of course this law would not have been passed without the help of a few members of parliament who listened to us and supported the idea.

## NGURI MATU

### 1. Understanding of concept of CR

*What do you understand community radio to be?*

I view community radio as a tool that is conceptualized within the context of the approach to development that is called participative development. Initially, when people were thinking of how to look at development after postcolonial experiences, they realized that governments had failed and probably could not deliver poor people from poverty. It came to their realisation that people were the only ones who could deliver themselves from poverty. Arguably people cannot be liberated; it's people who liberate themselves. And people liberate themselves from ideas that are internalized, that are in them. So in that discussion then, you will find that communication comes at the center of it. How will people start sharing constructive ideas amongst themselves and digest what is coming from elsewhere? So I believe that community radio was conceived from this position. So, therefore, my understanding of community radio is that it is a tool that is conceived at the community level, at the society level. It is a tool which is a great catalyst that allows my ideas to go out to other people. And when I hear other people and they also hear me then we are constructing. It is in itself enabling. It makes me larger as a person. Of course we have the classical definitions of community radio where we say community of interest. In Kenya, we struggled to understand whether community of interest included all these things I have mentioned or whether we had to stick with the geographical one. And indeed I'd say, surely if you say community of interest and you have dispersed people everywhere in the context of Africa, how will they manage to talk to each other? How are they communicating to you? We wanted a community radio that would allow people to walk in and walk out of the studios or the many units of production that are in each facility. That are nearby. Now if we think of community of interest, how do you talk of management of such community radios? Given that people could be miles and miles away? So in Kenya we were saying, perhaps even as we talked of community of interest, we had to talk of a limited geographical area where people knew each other and where their concerns and interests were relatively similar. So that when these people look at the horizon, in one voice they are able to decide where they want to go and probably are in a position to discuss the constraints that they face.

*What is its ideal social purpose?*

I will start by saying that Africa needs change. If you go to any African country, let me use Kenya as an example because it's Kenyans that I know. If you approach any Kenyan and strike a conversation, you will notice that many people are frustrated. Others are desperate

because deep inside they are yearning for change. Change in their own lives, those of their family members and the community that they live in. Therefore, as I mentioned earlier, community radio is supposed to be one of the enablers for such change. With the passage of the new constitution in 2010, devolution became a reality in Kenya. This new concept of devolution as provided by the new constitution was meant to allow people at the grassroots level to come up with their own ideas regarding where to go and the kind of development they wanted for themselves. But of course, it is possible to see that the concept of devolution has remained theoretical because what has happened in practice is that there are no structures for communication. There are no structures for discussions that even the constitution elaborates. So devolution has not actually worked. It has not materialized from that point of view yet community radio can do that effectively.

*Who are the main beneficiaries of this radio supposed to be?*

I think everyone would pass as the main beneficiaries of community radio. I'm talking about everyone in the community. Well, I think it's become a cliché that knowledge determines what people can become or what people can do. In many communities, you find that people stop at formal education quite early. So, community radio is a facility that can be used to convey knowledge as it comes. While remaining close to what people experience as knowledge, community radio becomes a facility that enables people to share each other's experiences and conveys what comes from the body of written works (research). Everyone within a community is part of the global human race and so they are entitled to benefit from community radio. So I think everyone needs to be able to benefit from this radio. And I mean both the poor and the influential. Of course there are those people who are influential, people who move the agendas. They too would find community radio to be a facility that makes their work much easier.

*How are these beneficiaries ideally supposed to benefit from this radio?*

Of course they benefit from gaining knowledge and information. Beyond knowledge and information, they benefit from hearing each other discuss policies that impact their lives. You know they can even discuss bills that go to parliament to be passed into laws. Of course such laws may ultimately end up having a huge impact on their lives. But again, they are not only supposed to discuss them, but to also see where and how they can improve these bills before they are passed into laws. Of course, I was just talking about the influential people just now, these people are much updated and do have clarity on such changes. These people can also visit community radio stations and take part in sharing ideas with community members. The

members of a community can then reflect on these ideas and take part in articulating and constructing some with these influential people or spearheads.

*How can such radio achieve its social purpose as you have explained to me?*

For example, if we are talking of the pastoral communities, communities that are known for livestock keeping, would they have the same objectives as those other communities that do not keep livestock? Therefore, community radio should focus on the relevant content of information. Perhaps it is good to be clear about what they want in their content. But there are other underlying principles of a community radio station as well. Where we are made to know that participation should be well elevated in order for this radio to achieve its purpose. When talking about participation, we are talking of the different groups in the community being equally represented in terms of say for example, women, men, and youth. Probably some of these people within the given communities do horticulture while others do a different kind of cash crop. So they all need a platform to exchange ideas and community radio should provide them with one. With such platform they can explain to others how to venture into such viable projects and probably explain what some of the challenges along the way are and also delve on some of the opportunities that these activities bring. So participation is very important. Management of these stations is even a bigger concept of participation. And the emphasis again, is picking networks within the community so that the strong ones are in it; the weak ones are in it as well. By the way when I say networks I'm talking about representation. Management of these stations should be representative of the entire community. For instance, if I'm in a coffee growing area and the community radio is in that area, I would expect then that the association of coffee farmers has a member of the board in there. So in other words, when the community has people that are old and then people that are young, all of them should be represented in the management of community radio. And they are not coming as individuals; they're coming as a community. Funding is also important for this radio to achieve its purpose. Unfortunately, funding has been a problem. So there must be ways that articulate how this station is going to survive, how this station is going to be self-sustainable. It needs to be self-sustainable otherwise it would never break through. You know funding as a concept for community radios has always been problematic, controversial and sensitive as well. You'll find that even globally, when they talked of community radio stations, there were certain adverts they would not take. For instance adverts on alcohol and cigarettes. They did this because they were looking out for the good of the community. When this was said to be dangerous, they would not touch it. This was actually a good thing, but saying that community radios should not make revenue is wrong. That is completely

fallacious because then you make them become dependent and that is not the intention. So the money that these stations make should be ploughed back to the stations. To help with the running of the station. They can also come up with a structure in that community so that the management can decide, "Why don't we help this school? Why don't we help this health centre with this?" So, in short, no dividends should be shared. This money can also be used on the staff. For instance hiring and retaining the staff members. Actually, one of the biggest problems bedeviling community radios is the high turnover rate of staff because of low payment or working without pay. How can this work? How can people offer themselves for free yet people are poor? This may work if I'm a retired civil servant who was being paid very well, I can volunteer to work in the radio station for free. But majority of the people cannot volunteer to work freely like that. But I think community radios need a staff that is permanent. A staff that is technical, that is professional to work in the community stations. A professional staff that can for instance assist women groups in recording themselves from where they are and even helping them participate in productions. It is a joy for them to do that. And also they feel they are sharing what they are good at. It's a joy. But you find that normally in these stations, there are those people who come because they have nowhere else to go until they get somewhere else to go. They are volunteers. However, for me, it's really painful because their parents are very poor; they struggled to take them to school. And they finished school. But here they are, volunteering. Therefore, if a station can be able to give them even an allowance, why not?

## 2. Learning about CR

*Where did these ideas that you have about community radio come from?*

Well, let me say that as an African, I developed that sense that we had been a disadvantaged continent. And that we also disadvantaged ourselves. I felt there was need for us to exert pressure on ourselves to change our situation. And that is why I started by saying that there was a sense in the population that our situation was not good. There was that sense. And so the question was, how can we change it? How will it ever change? What should be done for it to change? I realized that community radio could help change this situation through the training I got in journalism. I remember encountering ideas about this radio when we were talking about development and development communication. These issues were captured here. I also remember that these ideas about community radio came to me via conversations that had just started in Kenya. Most of these conversations were being facilitated by Econews. Econews organised a number of seminars that made us to start talking about these things. I remember that was the time we started lobbying for community radio.

*How did you first learn about community radio?*

I got to learn about community radio from the seminars that had been organised by Econews. I remember this was the time when I started to interact with the ideas about community radio at a much deeper level. Initially, although subtle, I learnt about community radio from the training I got outside Kenya. I did a postgraduate diploma at the University of Jawan Delhi in India and this is where they were talking about development and communication.

*What were the sources of your learning?*

My learning materials included scholarship that I obtained from outside the country, not locally. That was in 1980. We had not even started talking about community radio here. That was long ago. So I got these books from the lecturers in India of course. Their scholarship was quite developed. So the professors there had written books. Infact, there was a continuous journal in communication. Such scholarship was not available in Kenya at the time.

### 3. Description of history

*To your knowledge, when did discussions of the idea of community radio first take root in the Kenyan context?*

I would say in the 1980s and 90s courtesy of Econews. Let me start by saying that Econews was formed by some three girls who had just cleared their university education from the School of Journalism at the University of Nairobi. These girls formed Econews in order to advocate for the conservation of the environment. Now, having formed this organisation, they were invited to the Rio de Janeiro conference on development. It was a famous conference. I think it was in 1982, you can check the year to be absolutely certain. So they came back to Kenya immediately after this conference and I think that was when it hit them that all these ideas about development could really happen. But structures were needed for such development to occur. So when they came back, they thought of how to apply communication practically at the community level. They now started with organizing different women groups to listen to tapes and to develop tapes that could also be listened to by other groups. These are the initial ideas that came to build today's community radio in Kenya. So I would say that these three girls played a key role of bringing discussions of the idea of community radio to Kenya in the 1980s and early 90s.

*Where and how did these ideas first circulate?*

These ideas about community radio started to circulate in the early 1990s when Econews, with the help of a Swedish institution, started to organise workshops where people would

meet to engage each other by way of sharing ideas. These people who attended the workshops were selected by Econews.

*Who was involved in these discussions and how?*

Econews was one of the players that were involved in these discussions of course by organizing for workshops and inviting people to attend. So at the initial level, Econews was a key player. Then Kcomnet came after and this organisation was formed after one of the seminars that had been organised by Econews. So, Kcomnet took it from Econews afterwards and started having its own workshops. We were funded differently.

*When did people begin to put these ideas into practice?*

I would say that after the freeing of the airwaves in the early 1990s, even when the government was licensing everyone else, community radio stayed for more than a decade before they became recognized legally. This was despite Mangelete applying in the early 1990s. And they were not given a license until 2000, I think 2002 or something. So, given the challenges of putting these ideas about community radio into practice for all that time, we lobbied actively. It's very interesting that for a long time, even when KCOMNET was alive, when I was really actively participating in it, the only radio station that was operating then was that one in Mangelete, and without a license. And of course, rigorous lobbying was taking place. I would want to say that the networks were the ones that actively participated in the lobbying process. Econews was still part of that and KCOMNET was quite strong on it as well. As part of our lobbying we targeted the media council of Kenya. In fact, I was one of the commissioners for the first media council through the KCOMNET. So they bought into the idea and also started lobbying. And I want to say that part of the lobbying also targeted the parliamentarians. We held many meetings with the parliamentary committee responsible for communication and broadcasting. We even targeted other parliamentarians who were not on these committees. And very interestingly, while we were lobbying them to make laws that recognized community radio, they forced the government to recognize community radio and even became the first ones to apply for licenses within their own communities. The politicians moved in very quickly to register community radio stations from their areas. So that was another layer to it. Apart from these politicians, development organisations also came in and started putting the ideas about community radio into practice. They started saying that they needed to do this. Clearly, after our lobbying process, this radio was finally recognized legally. After this, people started to know more about this radio and started working towards having their stations.

*What, in your view, were key moments in the further development of community radio in this country?*

I think one of the key moments was the licensing of the first community radio station in 2002. The other moment was in the 1990s where serious lobbying for this radio took place. It was a crucial moment. We met almost anyone we could meet. We involved lawyers, and involved even the international jurists. We moved with them. We got them interested and got them to start seeing what kind of law would be beneficial for this radio. We got them to help shape the narrative and the law.

*Which stations in your view are important examples of community radio in the Kenyan context?*

I think Mangelete stands out as the best when compared with other stations. First, I would say Mangelete because the idea for its establishment originated from the local community. I also find it interesting that this idea came through an organisation. That for me was great because it guaranteed its sustainability in the long run. It guaranteed its sustainability because it meant that groups in the community were actually getting involved and not individuals. I like the fact that groups bought into the idea even as it was being conceived and it starts running. Secondly, Mangelete stands out because members of the local community participated in the management of the station. Mangelete has also tried in the sense that people from the local community go and participate in programme production. They would always come to the stations. But it also had another way where audio recorders were given to groups in their different areas. And they stayed with the recorders then the producers would go and collect what had been recorded. They would then go and refine it in the studios. I would have also said Koch Fm but you know what I found in Koch in Nairobi was a bit different. You know one of the challenges for Koch is that Koch is situated in an area where the informal settlement organizes many meetings. The administrative meetings, political meetings and so forth are brought there. It's like an arena. But it's also where the administration has offices. So for them, they gather most of their material from these meetings and they do not really have the citizens producing the content themselves. So, most of the issues do not touch on the needs of the people as much as it would if the people were the ones actually putting up the programs. And radio is not really complicated. It isn't. If people are guided, it's not complicated. But generally, I would say that all stations need to be commended. All of them are really trying even though the concept of community radio is still a relatively new idea in Kenya.

#### 4. Personal involvement



*How have you been involved in this history?*

Well, maybe I would I have been involved in a little way. Two immediate things that I have done come to mind. One, I remember there was a time Mangelete had a problem. And the problem was in terms of management. As you know, Mangelete was formed by 33 women groups that had come together. And later they were advised that it was good also to have a group of men. So they talked of 33 plus 1. So, men's group was formed. But you know men can be cunning sometimes. It happened that all of a sudden, they took over the management of the station. And women were not happy about this. And so, there was a bit of some violence and the station was closed down by the government. So I remember going there to resolve the crisis. I went there as part of the KCOMNET. The other thing I have done is lobbying for community radio. And with lobbying you see i would also present papers for that. I remember getting some funding from a Swedish institution to do some evaluation of different things. For example, I did a study on how stations were taking up technologies and the use of ICTs. Mangelete was one of my case studies and other stations in Tanzania and Uganda. After the study's completion, I shared my findings with the stations and the donor. So I would say that I have also been an active player in the scholarly perspective by writing articles and presenting some in conferences. Teaching is also another contribution I have done. Part of the teaching included training the community. Part of what KCOMNET was doing was picking people who were in the community and training them some journalistic skills. And we ran them through a curriculum. We came up with a specific curriculum for them that dealt with writing, doing features, presenting news and so forth. So we would have workshops for a week to do a quite bit of training.

*What contributions have you tried to make and how?*

As already mentioned, I lobbied, I wrote scholarly articles and did some training. And being a lecturer, I also teach at undergraduate level and when teaching radio, I bring the one on community as a sub-unit. So everyone who goes through the curriculum here would understand what community radio is and the role that this radio plays.

*What challenges did you face?*

One of the greatest challenges was the slow process of licensing community radios by the government. You know, from the outset, the government had always wanted to control radio because it knew that people listened to radio. It knew that people had access to radio. You would see that even after the liberalization of the airwaves, private media were given licenses but the government withheld requests for community radio. I strongly believe it was because of the very word, community. You know when we said that this community radio would be a

radio that would be next to the people, the government understood what that meant. Remember this was an African government. It had seen what was happening in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, where if a government was overthrown, one could just walk into a radio station and announce what had happened. I just told you that Mangelete was the first community radio station. But the government had tried to set up a community radio with UNESCO earlier, much earlier. But the government closed it down after the attempted military coup that took place in 1982. So the government was using that as a reference point. You know the government used that as a reference point because the coup leaders/plotters allegedly came from where this community radio was located. So it was an association that the people even who would celebrate, would celebrate it in that station. I remember the director whom I was working with at KBC (KBC was involved in Homabay community radio. It was involved in it but it was supposed to be an example of community stations through UNESCO) coming to us when Homabay station was closed and saying, "This cannot be. It cannot. These are the tools that anti-government people are using." So in a nutshell, the government became a little bit reluctant later because they probably thought that community broadcasting threatened their being in power. So it was a bit difficult for the government to come to a recognition that community broadcasting was only meant to address the needs of the people. So for them they thought it was threatening their power. And you see, power is threatened even when people themselves are talking. If you've given people a platform to talk, you've given them part of power.

##### 5. Reflection on history

*To what extent would you say that the history of community radio in Kenya has been a success story?*

I have not looked at it for some years now. I left in the late 2000s. But for me, the fact that community radio has already started in this context is good. It will definitely evolve with time. Even you look at yourself, you are interested in this, people will become interested and start making contributions that will really shape this sector and make it a vibrant one. So for me, it is all good. Going back to the period I was present, from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s, I would say that this radio grew tremendously. I'm saying so because even the technical goal of people that were working in community stations was tremendous. The support and understanding of the donors was overwhelming. For example, I know the first person who was managing Mangelete was a woman. She was called Chairlady because she was the chair of 33 women groups. This lady did a lot of work and she used her own money and donors' money to support the station. Of course there were challenges during this period

as well. There was a bit of a challenge when it came to the real understanding of what community radio was. There was a bit of a misconception among individuals between community radio and vernacular stations. But the good thing was that the networks that were there were very active and they were the ones who tried to clear the air. Even in different forums saying, "No, no, that is not a community radio. That's a vernacular station. It's commercial vernacular. The only difference is that it is using vernacular language. Not English. Not Kiswahili. Community radio is a different animal altogether." So we needed these networks. You needed the advocates too. Unfortunately, that misconception remained for a long time. And you would still hear of it occasionally, even in meetings. I would also say that another challenge was the duration it took for this radio to be recognized by law. Initially we were talking about the government's hesitation to allow, license and give community radios' frequencies. Of course it is now legal but much more needs to be done on its legal frameworks. You know law is an instrument of enablement and an instrument of future, growing things. So there is need for community radio to be relooked at and see how it can be supported going forward. I would say especially on the issue of the radio's sustainability. You see, at the beginning, community radio stations were being charged by the regulator the same amount as the commercial stations but lobbying helped to bring it down. And later on, I think it has again gone up. So you see, we still have a problem revolving around finances. You know we can say that external funders should come in and help with the stations' sustainability but you see, many donors work with what is current in their own country and globally. So these community radio stations may no longer be an interesting thing for them. So how do you tie the lives of people to something like that? One of the things would be perhaps, getting government funding. Why not? What are we waiting for? You know my main worry is that the donors that support community radio can leave the radio stranded when their interest go to something else. By the way this happened to many stations here. Some of the donors just decided to terminate their funding. So it is important for mechanisms that support community radio's sustainability to be put in place and government funding could be one of them. Stations should also be innovative and find ways of being self-sustainable. For example, there is a community in the far west of Uganda which is doing very well. The community has a huge chunk of land which they use for growing bananas and other cash crops. They also have factories and they use these economic units to support their community radio. The community wanted to improve the healthcare of its people and the station has been a great asset in the realisation of this objective.

*How well do stations – and the community radio as a whole - match up to the ideals that you believe in with regards to what community radio should be?*

Overall, I would say that we are evolving. In other words we have not reached there yet. I would say that in every industry, in every discipline, there is need for a continuous training. As I was saying, there is a high turnover rate of staff in these stations. So there are many challenges and every time it's like you are moving back and forth. I think it boils down to how even the first ones (Community radio) came up apart from Mangelete. The other ones came through the help of politicians and it was a bit difficult to separate their interests from those of community members. The third layer of applicants now started to be genuine even in their need for community radio. So this sector is very young and still growing. But I would also say that the sector fails to match up with some of these ideals because the networks like KCOMNET and others have not been strong. They did not grow and become strong after the first generation including me and some of my colleagues left.

*What factors impacted on the way community radio took shape in this country?*

One of them must be the government's reluctance or hesitation to issue licenses and frequencies to community radios. You know, as I have mentioned, at the beginning, community radio and commercial stations were being charged the same amount by the regulator. We really lobbied to have it brought down. However I heard that it went up again. The other factor was the challenge of understanding the concept of community radio and how it really should run.

## **NJUKI GITHETHWA**

### **1. Understanding of concept**

*What do you understand community radio to be?*

Of course there is a lot of confusion when it comes to defining community radio. There are misunderstandings about community radio and various definitions of such radio that you can find in various terrains. Of course you will find community radio's definition from its registration in different social contexts like Kenya, South Africa and so on. You will also find its definition from different networks or organisations such as AMARC. All of these definitions point to different ways of understanding community radio. But for me, the definition that makes sense is the one which describes community radio as a form of broadcasting that is run by the community, for and by the community. This is a radio which ascribes to the pillars of community broadcasting which include community ownership and control, community participation, community service, nonprofit and independence. These pillars are commonly known. Therefore, any radio that is community radio must fit within these pillars. In addition, it is important to say that community radios are established to pursue the felt needs of a community. These felt needs drive the community radio forever.

*What is its ideal social purpose?*

The community radio of course is mostly a low-broadcast radio. This radio's audience is very limited, and the audience is either defined by geography or defined by interest. Now, when you define an audience by geography, you mean that geographic community has got issues that trouble it, and those are the issues which community radio must be able to highlight. If we compare it to that of interest, it is the interest of that community or of that people. For instance, it could be the albinos or the marginalised gay people. So, such groups of people and many others that I have not mentioned are community of interest groups which can be able to set up their own means of communication.

*Who are the main beneficiaries of such radio supposed to be?*

The beneficiaries of this radio must be the target community. The target community is the first and the foremost beneficiary of community radio. Community radio must always go back to its target community and ask themselves critical questions like, are we still on track? Why was this radio established? And so on. You know today, there are issues such as climate change, insecurity, poverty, and marginalization. So the stations must always have an evaluation of self to be able to tell how they are addressing such issues. If community radio sticks to these issues, then it is sticking to the mission and foundations of such radio. By sticking on its mission, such radio is then able to benefit its target audience. I would say that

from the historical identity of community radio today, and its practice which is still carried forward by people like me, community radio must be an instrument for the struggle of the poor, the weak, the exploited and the marginalised. Community radio is not a tool for the ruling class nor is it a tool for the middle class. Community radio is a tool for the underclass. So, there is need for community radio to invest heavily on its infrastructure as a way of ensuring that the voice of the underclass comes out. This voice is the voice of the people which obviously merges well with that of the community as a whole.

*What are good guidelines that community radio should follow to achieve its purpose?*

I don't like talking of guidelines that border excessively on legal rules and details. I would not want to make community radio sound more legalistic by referring to the Kenyan laws. Now, given that I don't want to gravitate towards this legal context, I would like you to keep in mind the five internationally agreed principles of community radio that I mentioned above. So I would say that this radio must adhere to the principles of community participation, community ownership, community service, non-profit model and independence to be able to achieve its purpose.

## 2. Learning about community radio

*Where did these ideas you have about community radio come from?*

I would start by saying that there is something which I don't like and I really try to avoid it whenever I am answering these types of questions. You will find that we tend to answer such questions from the external centric kind of history where ideas came to Africa from outside. That Africa just adopted these ideas. This perspective then means that Africa does not produce anything (its own ideas). I would like to start from the African centric by saying that these ideas about community radio came to me after seeing the need for amplifying the voice of the African people who were going through different struggles such as marginalization, lack of expression and struggle for entry into the mainstream media. This perspective then finds congruence with the community radio movement globally. You see that changes now. I will not say that radio came looking for us, it is us who went looking for radio because already we had our own means of voicing our concerns. It was not radio. We had horns and drums that were a form of community radio. They were just amplified by technology. But it is not technology which came looking for Africa, it is us. This is the way I would like us to look at history. We look at it from the African centered point of view. I don't like this philosophy where it is us who borrowed from the Latin America or Bolivia. Of course once you're looking for a person's voice, you try to look for other partners, for other strong community voices globally who could be aligned to your voice. Now let me describe to you

my entry in community broadcasting. You know as a development worker, I am more into the field of development studies. I am not the media person per say, so what did I do? I was pursuing issues to do with campaigns for development in Kenya. I was looking for social justice in this country. So I found out that these issues could be amplified by community radio. This is how I managed then to establish and draw the link of where such movements of social change came from like the Bolivian mine workers, the South African struggle for community radio and so on. Before I could even go to that direction, I first learnt about community radio in general terms as a tool that could be used to express these issues. I think this is the position that is shared by many people and even the community activists who later gravitate towards community radio. They do not start from the academia, or learn from the academia, they start from a concern. This concern could be an issue that is troubling a particular community which really needs to be sorted out. So, one of the platforms that this issue could be addressed from may be through public rallies or public 'barazas'. The public barazas may now be amplified more by a community radio.

### 3. Description of history

*To your knowledge, when did discussions of the idea of community radio first take root in the Kenyan context?*

I think it started in the early 1990s. I think this is the period we can say that real discussions of the idea of community radio started. We will not include here the Homabay radio which was founded in 1982 because this was an experimental radio which was started by UNESCO in partnership with the then government. I think this radio lasted for two or three months before it was shut down. The main reason the government gave for shutting this radio was its promotion of ethnic language (Dholuo) at the expense of the national language (Swahili). It was easier for the government to shut down Homabay radio because this radio was state-controlled. Soon after this radio was closed, the campaigns for community radio did not pick up well. It only picked up when a number of activists developed this feeling that Kenyans were being left behind when they compared our local context to those of South Africa and West Africa. Community radio stations were being established in these contexts. This was in the 1990s when Kenyans did not have any registered community radio. So, campaigns driven by the civil society began in earnest in the early 1990s.

*Where and how did these ideas first circulate?*

After Mangelete went on air, it took long for other community radios to receive their frequencies because the legal framework for community radio was not yet in place. If this legal framework was clear at the time, I believe many community radios would have been

given frequencies like low power stations. Given that this framework was not there, a number of local support networks like Econews and KCOMNET started to lobby for a legal framework which would recognize community radio as a third tier of broadcasting. Now, after this framework was finally formulated, a number of community radios emerged and were registered. Some of them included Mugambo Jwetu, Baliti and others. However, even though community radio was now recognized legally, there was still one problem. Frequencies in this country were very limited and they were being issued on market basis. It was a market driven process. We did not have reserved frequencies for community radios. Even though we had laws that recognized community radio as a third tier, there were no frequencies available. So the law is there, one can do anything but there is no frequency available. So, what the regulator did was to free some of the existing airwaves and give them to some specific community radios. For example, all community radios in Nairobi were given one frequency to share. The only frequency which was available in Nairobi was 99.9 and this was the one that was to be shared by Pamoja, Koch and the others. This was the only frequency which was available at the time since the other ones had been taken by the market driven forces.

*Who was involved in these discussions and how?*

The local support networks such as Econews, KCOMNET and ICJ were all involved in these discussions. However, KCOMNET took the central role as an active participant. We also had international agencies being part of these discussions and UNESCO comes to mind. Even now, UNESCO is still here and it is still playing a central role. The government of Kenya also played a role of offering platforms for these discussions to take place. I remember some of these discussions would take place at Multimedia University for example. So the government offered venues which acted as platforms for such discussions to occur. Of course the regulator (CAK) played a central role in such discussions. One of the major things they did was to listen to the different voices, take notes and act. I remember during such discussions, there was a partnership that was developing. This partnership was in form of collaboration between the international bodies, the Kenya civil society and of course the government agencies that were concerned.

*When did people begin to put these ideas into practice?*

I would say that many people started to put these ideas about community radio into practice after KCOMNET was established in 1995 and registered in 1996. But this network was registered at a time when Econews was already there. It is fair to acknowledge that Econews had already played a big role of piloting the first truly set of community radio stations in East



Africa, precisely in Uganda and Kenya. In Kenya, I am talking of Mang'elete radio. So, the establishment and registration of KCOMNET took over by helping people put these ideas of community radio into practice. This network was able to do this by making communities understand the concept of community radio by training them. I don't like the word training that much, maybe I should just use the word engagement. The network engaged communities as a way of making them understand community radio at a basic level. The idea was to ensure that the idea about community radio was rooted deeply in people within the local communities. It was important for them to know some of the avenues they could explore in terms of letting their voices out. I think it should be very clear that these trainings/engagements did not target media based guys or individuals who had a background training in media. The trainings simply targeted the young people who were interested in media issues. So many workshops and we are talking of about forty to fifty were organised for this sole purpose, training. It was important to tell these people, most of whom had a lot of interest on issues of the community, that community radio could be used as a tool for addressing such issues. These people came from within local communities and they were children of these communities. So, they were interested on issues that were affecting them and that were affecting their parents. Therefore we gave these people basic training. So we would plan to have a meeting for a week, three or four days with these people for example in a community social hall. So, experts from KCOMNET, Econews and other networks would attend such sessions to train people how to operate radio's equipment, how to produce programmes and how to present them. They would also be taught how to interview people, how to market the station and so on. This model of training was vital because it ensured that there was always a continuous pool of people going to work at the station. In the event that others left, others could come in to take over. Now, after training the whole community, we would tell them that since all of them could not work in radio at a go, there were need for them to decide on a few members who would represent them in the running of the station. So possibly a team of ten people could be settled on to run the radio. So from this team, the board would choose the station's manager, the programme producer and so on. The rest of the community members would now become radio correspondents. The board had a mandate of doing this because the people elected to the board or selected to the board represent a vast interest in the community. However, the nightmare has always been the way or how these people are inducted into the board? Is it through selection? Is it through elections? I think we might be biting too hard in terms of looking forward to a democratic based governance of community radio simply because of the challenges that always come with this system. For

example, radio Mangelete which has got a democratic process of electing its board members has always had this board swept away from leadership after every two or three years paving way for another one to come. So, there is a lack of continuity, there is no transfer of skills, and there is no strong memory. The board of management is just swept away in the AGM meetings and another one comes. So it is one bunch after the other. You will find that other stations have adopted a different model that is of a consistent board. So, this board is not subjected to frequent changes of its members. This is the kind of a model than can work best in terms of its sustainability.

*What in your view were key moments in the further development of community radio in this country?*

The key moment in the development of community radio in Kenya started with the lobbying of this radio. This was a practice that recognized community radio as a distinct sector of broadcast. So the big break came in 2006 or 2007 when community radio was legally recognized as a distinct sector of broadcasting. This was a big pass for us because it opened the way for people to apply for frequencies for community broadcasting. I think another moment was when the regulator (CAK) came up with a policy framework in 2009 that was meant to regulate the practice of community broadcasting. I think you also know that in terms of the legal registration of community radio in Kenya, there are two categories that community radio fall into. We have the campus based stations and the ones which are done by the Community Based Organisations (CBOs). These laws were therefore able to set those parameters. But as I said earlier, the practice of community radio should not be based on legalistic tendencies alone. Of course, legal frameworks help with supporting community radios but they can also be limiting. For example if they say you don't advertise in community radios, how will these radios survive? If they say that they will only recognize community radios that are set up by the CBOs and the higher institutions of learning, what of other community radios which are set up by other agencies? Who have established a radio platform to offer community members a voice? For us in KCOMNET, we work with all groups that have established stations which have a real structure of a community radio station. One of the main groups that we work with is the CBOs which are set primarily for community radio. The other group is government agencies like the meteorological department which has established a number of stations in Kenya. Even though these stations called the Ranet radios are owned by the government, they have been given to communities to operate. The communities are in charge of their management and operations. The third group is any interested group like the faith based organizations who establish stations and

give them to the community. For example we have the Catholic radios which were registered as low power frequencies and were given to local communities for their management.

*Which stations, in your view, are important examples of community radio in Kenya?*

I've got much respect for a radio like Koch FM. I am saying Koch FM because this is one station that is run by the local community's activists. In fact, many of them do not come from the level of media, they are just activists. This radio stands out for me because it has remained true to its humble origin and mission. This station has also remained in operation despite being managed within an extremely hostile environment. For instance, when a presenter broadcasts anything that offends the local community, he or she will be targeted and beaten out there by other members of the community. Some community members are very hostile. We've even had cases where some get killed. Another radio that I have a lot of respect for is a radio which is called Serian Fm in Samburu. I have a lot of respect for this radio simply because it is a radio of choice among the Samburu community. It is the only radio that you will find in the Samburu community. This radio has given the Samburu people a platform to have a voice, the dignity and the pride to belong to a particular community. I like the fact that community members have been involved in all aspects regarding the station. For example, the land which this radio is situated was donated by the local community, the building that houses the station was simply done by the community members, the DJs come from the community, broadcasting is done by the community and the board of management comes from the community. I have a lot of respect for this radio and much more because it is run by the pastoralist women. I know Mangelete is also widely mentioned as a success story but for me, this radio could have been another model but it is having challenges and it is now closed. That's why I don't want to mention it. It used to be a radio of choice for all us. It is disappointing now. It's closed now actually. It's not airing as we directly speak. Actually there is an article that I want to write, I don't know how to start it, but I think I'll get some time and write it. I want to write an article exactly looking at what the donors did to this radio. I need to write it. You know donors crashed the entire project. Radio Mangelete was our darling simply because it was a women's radio. But I think the attraction and the infusion of the donors brought it down completely. There is also another station that has really tried. This radio which is situated in Suba is known as Ekialo Kiona. This radio portrays the ability for having at least four or five principles that we talked about earlier in terms of ownership and community service.

#### 4. Personal involvement

*How have you been involved in this history?*

I would say that part of my contributions has always been through team works and one of the greatest team was at KCOMNET. As a team, we played a role of clarifying the distinct identity of community radio in Kenya. We passed awareness about its distinct nature by way of writing articles and speaking to people. Within this team, I was able to play a role in safeguarding the identity of community radio by drafting its legal framework. We also ensured that whatever we had gained through the drafting and the passage of this legal framework was not lost. It was important that we expanded on what we had already received. I remember during the time of drafting the legal framework for community radio, there was a section that allowed community radio to advertise. Community radios were allowed to advertise in their catchment areas. These adverts were supposed to be relevant to their catchment areas. Now, unfortunately, this clause was removed during the revision of community radio's legal framework. It was suggested that community radios ought to survive through grants and sponsorships only. When we realised that this clause on advertisement had been removed, we lobbied strongly with my team at KCOMNET and this clause was reinserted. Therefore, my work has always been to make sure that nothing is taken away from what is already given but to expand on what is already given. Another thing and which I am afraid that I have not been able to achieve much and this is a little bit frustrating is retaining the uniqueness of community radio in terms of content. For instance, when you listen to community radio, you can tell that such radio is not really different from others like the commercial ones for example. Unfortunately, you will realize that today, many community radios are operating like commercial stations. They have the same talk shows and the same music. This trend has continued because we have no legal capacity and mandate to enforce the content that community radio should disseminate.

*What challenges did you face?*

One of the biggest setbacks has always been the media players. These media players have not been supportive of the concept of community radio. Either they do not understand it, or they do understand it but are against the idea altogether. They could be against this concept of community radio because they are not ready for the idea of freeing the frequencies for community radios. I also think like a country, we have not had a supportive terrain for community radio. I also think some of us have contributed because we have not agitated strongly for this terrain to be expanded. Another challenge has been the lack of a legal team at KCOMNET to be able to enforce the ethics and principles of community broadcasting.

##### 5. Reflections on history

*To what extent would you say the history of community radio in Kenya has been a success story?*

I can say it is a success story. All history whether negative or positive, is successful. The history of community radio in Kenya has been successful in terms of lessons learnt. I think we have learnt a lot, we are still learning more and we shall try the best we can to continue.

*How well do stations – and the community radio as a whole – match up to the ideas that you believe in with regards to what community radio should be?*

Very few stations match up to these ideas. These stations are the ones that I have offered as examples earlier in this discussion. These stations are trying their best to match up to the five pillars that we talked about earlier. I know for a fact that not all of the stations match up to them. For example there are others who fail in terms of independence by experiencing external interference. Other stations have failed to embrace the nonprofit model. I think if you find a community radio station that matches up to these five pillars/ideals, then you have found an ideal community radio. There are a number of stations that are really trying to embrace these pillars and of course KCOMNET is now focused on driving them towards that direction. It's a little bit difficult, but we are trying.

*Why would you say this is the case?*

Generally I think these radios in some cases fail to embrace the ideals of community radio purely for survival. For instance, being a low scale radio, you will find that they do not get enough money through advertisements to help them run. You will find that volunteers want to survive, they want to eat and so they need money. Now, in the event they do not get money, they leave. So this is the reason why we have a high turnover rate of staff members in community radios. You will then find that community radios act as a training ground for commercial stations. Since commercial stations provide financial support, you will find that many of those that worked in community radios leave for commercial stations. Somehow, I try to understand the nightmare or the challenges they are going through for them to be able to make that decision of going to commercial stations. As human beings, they want to survive and that is the main reason why they decide to leave.

*What factors impacted on the way community radio took shape in this country?*

Firstly, there is this African centric kind of thinking that I mentioned at the start of this interview. This reasoning pointed to the understanding that members of particular local communities had now started developing a keen interest on having a platform that could give them a voice. These individuals were thinking of this platform because of problems that were accompanied with marginalization, poverty and deprivation. Secondly, there was this

realisation that the global community radio movement was quickly taking shape. Part of this global community radio movement was taking shape in places like South Africa and West Africa. It was possible to identify that huge progress was being realized in these African contexts. Therefore, activists in Kenya decided to do something because East Africa was lagging behind when compared to their counterparts in South Africa and West Africa. The other factor was the introduction of multiparty democracy which forced the day's government to lessen the restrictions it had placed on the media airwaves. The liberalization of the media airwaves encouraged the establishment of many media platforms and it was during this period when the articulation of ideas about community radio started. So, the establishment of community radios can be traced to this period of multiparty democracy. One of the best examples is Mang'elete radio which came immediately after the realisation of multiparty democracy. The last factor was the realisation that many commercial stations which were broadcasting were not offering members of local communities' space. Even with the multiplicity of commercial media platforms in this country, local communities felt that they still had no voice. This realisation made the local community members to think of establishing an own platform to have a voice. This platform was community radio.

## **DOREEN RUKARIA**

### 1. Understanding of concept of CR

*What do you understand community radio to be?*

I will stick to the universal definition of this radio by describing it as a media platform that is for the people and by the people.

*What is its ideal social purpose?*

Generally, this radio is meant to serve people's developmental needs. It is a platform that seeks to address advocacy issues on development within a particular community. But this radio faces challenges towards achieving this purpose when mainstream media comes in especially in Kenya where we have mainstream commercial media that have many radio stations that broadcast in literally almost every local dialect.

*Who are the main beneficiaries of such radio supposed to be?*

The main beneficiary of this radio is the local 'mwanainchi' (common ordinary person). You see, we have people at the grassroots level who want a media platform that talks about them. We need a vibrant media in Kenya which should be able to talk about such people. I usually give an example of one radio station in Samburu which talks about the people there and the issues that these people face every day like illiteracy levels which are quite high. This station is known as Serian Fm and people from the local community listen to it a lot. You see, Serian is a station that talks about the local community (Maasai people) and the problems they face. The station does not address their issues broadly but it narrows down to their specific needs. So, in other words, I would say that this radio benefits people who are disadvantaged in a way. Maybe in terms of language and also lack of interest from other tiers of broadcasting. You know some of these mainstream media will only report some of these people's issues broadly and stop at that. No follow ups. But with Serian, you will find that people who work in this station do some follow ups on certain issues; they ask questions and look for solutions. Usually the solutions come from the people themselves.

*How can such radio achieve its social purpose as you have explained to me?*

This radio can achieve its purpose when all community members are involved. I think it is very important to involve all community members for community radio to be able to move on with its agenda because one, you are not commercial so you are not seeking for commercial interests. So, if the issues of a particular community are to be addressed properly, there is need to talk with them and to be able to talk with them, you need to involve them with the programming of the station. This then means that community members can participate in decision making processes touching on the affairs of the station and looking for solutions to

some of the community's glaring problems. You just don't give them your own solutions, you let them discuss amongst themselves and these solutions will come from them. You know we formed CRAK (Community Radio Association of Kenya) in 2010 to help communities understand the purpose of a community radio station. In a community we have influential people and some of these people could be interested in initiating development projects within a community. We wanted them to understand that they could use community radios to initiate such projects. We wanted them to know that this radio could be used to address a particular community's felt needs. Therefore we told them that they needed to support this radio. When it comes to the issue of content generation, I strongly believe that community members should be part of it. When community members are involved in the programming of the stations, the listenership goes up. The audience increases. Now, given that the listenership goes up, advertisers develop some interest of advertising on this platform because they are guaranteed of reaching a bigger market audience. Of course this can be beneficial to the radio because it brings in revenue which can be used to run the station.

## 2. Learning about CR

*Where did these ideas you have about community radio come from?*

Now mine is a very long story. I remember it all started in 1989-1990 when I was with an International Cooperation Media that was working on a project in partnership with the Ministry of Planning. We were doing a lot of advocacy programmes within the local communities. One of these programs was Population Education Promotion Project (PEPP). We were educating people about the need for adopting family planning methods. You know during those days, there were many myths surrounding family planning methods within the local communities. So we had an outside broadcasting unit where we organized for meetings to educate people and urge them to do away with the myths. Afterwards, after these people had been given the facts and ended up using some of these family planning methods, we would bring them together to share their experiences. You see those experiences made us know more about these myths on family planning. We also came to know of other myths surrounding HIV and AIDS. By knowing these myths, we decided to devise some ways of countering them. So we asked ourselves critical questions like; how do we counter these myths? How do we make people understand better? So we decided to broadcast this through radio. We did radio programs and documentaries. We would thereafter bring people together to show them these documentaries. By the way we did many documentaries given that this program lasted for 10 years. I remember this was the time when my interest for community



media developed. This interest grew from seeing the thirst of information that the local people had. They were suffering from a lack of information.

*How did you first learn about community radio?*

You know the broadcasting scene started to expand rapidly just after the restriction of the airwaves by the government had been lessened. The broadcasting scene was expanding because many influential people were now establishing their own media platforms. Now given my initial interaction with community members as a development worker, I was always imagining how great it would be if local communities had their own media too. I was having these thoughts at a time when KCOMNET had just been formed. KCOMNET was generally advocating for community media as a whole. Some of these advocacy programmes that KCOMNET were doing included holding discussions about community media. You know community radio, drama, puppetry and all these platforms that could be used to reach out to local communities were classified under community media. I would therefore say that these discussions that were organised by KCOMNET exposed me to community radio. This was how I got to learn about community radio at a deeper level.

*What were your sources of learning?*

Of course I learnt about community radio from books. You know, after developing a keen interest on community radio, I enrolled for a few courses on community media where I was able to get some of these books. But then again I was a member of KCOMNET and was also a member of AMARC. AMARC had a lot of reading materials and we were able to exchange these materials with people from South Africa, West Africa and even Latin America. These were the sources of my learning. Based on reading these materials and even interacting with people from these other social contexts, I realized that we were all having the same issues.

### 3. Description of history

*To your knowledge, when did discussions of the idea of community radio first take root in the Kenyan context?*

I think it was in the mid-1990s, probably around 1994.

*Where and how did these ideas first circulate?*

These ideas about community radio started to circulate when we actively started the lobbying process. It was not easy because this concept was not even understood in the first place. It was very difficult introducing this idea in the country. But we tried our best as KCOMNET by planning for workshops and seminars. During these seminars, we tried to involve all stakeholders but most importantly we targeted the law makers themselves because we needed their intervention in legislation. We also had people from the Ministry of Information

coming, but like I said, we involved legislators from the communication committee in parliament a lot.

*When did people begin to put these ideas into practice?*

Apart from the Homabay station, I would say that people started implementing this idea about community radio around 2004. I would give an example of Mangelete which was initially started by Econews as a project. We also have Serian. These are some of the stations that communities played a bigger role in their establishment. I would attribute this to the rigorous lobbying we did. This was a pointer that the idea was received positively but we had to work harder in making people understand how to run the concept. It required many workshops which KCOMNET played a bigger role in.

*What, in your view, were key moments in the further development of community radio in this country?*

The biggest moment was in 2004 when Mangelete radio station finally received its license. For us it was a big milestone, particularly because of the work that women had done to ensure this radio was still up despite the challenges. You know Mangelete was formed by women groups who had many income generating activities. This radio station was just one of their many other projects. I would generally say that the passage of favorable regulatory frameworks in the 2000s provided a conducive environment for many community radios to emerge. However, I still think that there is a vacuum which has not really helped much with the proper articulation of community radio. The concept of community radio is still misunderstood. Infact, many people view it as an income generating tool. This is where we have really lost it and we are still grappling with this even now. You know there was and even now there is a lot of focus on donor funding. I think some people are just interested with the concept of community media because of donor money. People don't know that donor dependence can be fatal. Infact I have seen it mess up a number of small projects that some communities had. Some of these communities had to even fundraise to get some of these stalled projects moving.

*Which stations, in your view, are important examples of community radio in the Kenyan context? Why?*

The radio that has really stood out for me by embracing the ideals of community radio is Serian. This radio which is still on the airwaves was established in 2012. However, the initial discussions for its implementation, which involved 'Maa' women (women from the local community), started in 2009-2010. Given my own small survey, which I did in 2013 and 2014, Serian stands out as one of the stations that focus on the issues of the local community.

The radio came at a time when the local community really needed a media platform that could highlight their issues. So this radio was established just at the right time. It was established when there was a need. The radio's programmes have since brought about many positive changes even among the 'Morans'. Initially, many 'Morans' saw no value of going to school but this radio has changed their perspective and many of them are going to school now. They now understand that education is important. This radio has also exposed and discouraged other negative cultural practices such as FGM and early marriage. You know girls are very vulnerable. There have been cases where 'Morans' just pick random girls and impregnate them. This has led to many of these girls even dropping out of schools. Infact, on the extreme, I found out from my study in 2014 that some of these girls undergo inhumane treatment upon becoming pregnant. Their babies are killed inside their bodies while they are still pregnant. This is a very dangerous practice that can even cost these girls' lives. Yet it is a practice that was accepted by the community. Unfortunately, no one was speaking against this vice and many others. But this radio has since managed to highlight some of these issues which are now being addressed. Morans have been made to understand that violence against women is wrong and that these girls they are violating are just like their sisters and mothers. They have been encouraged to focus on the positive aspects of their culture. In addition, they have been taught and encouraged to practice safe sex as a way of reducing the spread of HIV and AIDS.

#### 4. Personal involvement

*How have you been involved in this history?*

In 2008, I became the coordinator at KCOMNET. Of course as a coordinator, I foresaw many of this network's projects. Obviously, most of them had to do with lobbying for community radio. Perhaps I should say that before I became the coordinator, I had been a member of KCOMNET from 2001 and I participated in all of its activities as a volunteer. I played a role in planning for workshops and seminars and inviting different stakeholders to attend them. I remember I would interact with journalists and those that were working in different individual stations. They would tell me the problems they were facing in those stations and I would always try to help where I could. I also wrote many articles and I remember doing one of my studies when I was a coordinator at KCOMNET. I remember doing another study with the Open Society Foundation. Although this has not been published yet, it has some good material.

*What contributions have you tried to make, and how?*

As I had mentioned earlier, after leaving KCOMNET I went on to form another association of community radios known as CRAK. With this body, we have been able to do a lot. For instance we have organised for trainings where people that work in community radio stations have benefited. In addition, we have created a platform where these workers can interact with others. They have been able to build networks and this exposure has enabled them to grow and become better even in what they do. By the way, these networks have seen some of these people working in community radios land better and well-paying jobs in mainstream media houses and vernacular stations. Even as some of these people left for these big media houses, we had mentorship programmes where we would encourage them to pass over skills to the ones who were coming. We have also acted as a link between community radios and government agencies where we get for them free programmes from these government agencies. Some of these programmes include voter education, health campaigns such as vaccinating children against polio, and some content on agriculture. You know the beauty with such programmes is that once you've created awareness, it becomes a continuous topic for discussion and it can even get donors to come in and continue with the program. I think I should also say that at the initial stages, another contribution as already mentioned included lobbying for community radio. Together with my colleagues at KCOMNET, we consistently pushed the law makers and other policy makers to draft a bill that would eventually recognize community media as the third tier of broadcasting in Kenya. Inasmuch as we made little progress on this regard, we did not achieve much as we would have wanted. I think part of the problem was the proliferation of vernacular stations that were broadcasting in local languages. This brought about more competition and confusion. You know some of the ideals of community radio were kind of shared with vernacular stations and the rise of these stations camouflaged the concept of community radio. We lost the main concept along the way. You know I come from Meru. Now in Meru, you would find that we have about five vernacular stations and only one community radio station. It is not wrong to have vernacular stations but you will find that with vernacular stations on air, the interest on community radio fades a bit. The community radio/broadcaster struggles. In fact the only community radio in Meru was really struggling and there was another problem of interference from politicians. It was even shut down for a while because of this interference. Therefore, I think a lot of work need to be done where it becomes clear that members of a community own these stations and that proper management structures are set up to prevent interference from politicians. The board of management should always be representative of the community and should always be subject to an election.

*What challenges did you face?*

The main challenge has always been suspicion that we are only doing some of these things to make money. Even though these projects are meant to uplift the standards of community members and improve their livelihoods, we have always been accused for using this as an excuse for making money. It will even surprise you that in some cases we don't even get or use donor funding in some of these projects. So it is just a misconception.

5. Reflection on history

*To what extent would you say the history of community radio in Kenya has been a success story?*

I think it can be described as a success story in the context of community broadcasting eventually being recognized by law as the third tier of broadcasting in Kenya. This finally came to pass after our rigorous lobbying. Clearly, the recognition of this radio by law was a big milestone. However, even after the gains that have been made by this recognition, I feel that there have been no follow ups in terms of trying to amend or improve the sector's legal structure or framework. I think the Communications Authority of Kenya has not really done much in terms of following this up. Besides, nothing much has been done to create a proper understanding of community radio and we continuously see politicians starting their own vernacular stations and even describing them as community radio. This trend kind of punctures this sector's success.

*How well do stations - and the community radio sector as a whole - match up with the ideas that you believe in with regards with what community radio should be?*

I think we have not reached there yet. There are many challenges. For instance, you'll find that in one station, people are constantly fighting to take over the radio's management. This infighting stems from lack of proper structures to guide the running of such radio. Sometimes you will find that the manager is the one who chooses the board of management. Sometimes the manager is the only one who deals with the radio's finances. The running of the station should be a community affair and not an individual's. There is need for a transparent board that is representative of the entire community. This board should be transparent even with the handling of money that comes in. This transparency, which in some cases is lacking, will reduce the cases of infighting among the founders of the stations. I feel we still have a long way. For me, as the pioneers of this radio, I think we left the journey a bit too soon. Community radio is really misunderstood even today. It starts with community radio's ownership which has not been taken up well. The ownership of this radio should be clearly articulated and should clearly involve all communities at the lower level.

*What factors impacted on the way community radio took shape in this country?*

I guess you understand our Kenyan history and the one party system of leadership. This system was oppressive to say the least. There was a lot of suppression and many people suffered under this regime. Information was filtered and people would only consume what was approved by the state. These oppressive tactics led to the struggle which involved an agitation for a free and an independent media. This informed our struggle for an independent media. Therefore, the lessening on the restriction of the airwaves that came soon after is one of the factors. The other factor is the passage of favorable legal framework for community radio. The passage of the media bill of 2008 was a huge achievement.

## **CAROLINE MENGICH**

### 1. Understanding of concept of CR

*What do you understand community radio to be?*

According to the broadcasting services, given that we have radio and television, community radio is a broadcast service that is set up purely for the purposes of serving a specific community. So for example, we can say that a community broadcast service shall reflect the needs of the people in a given community. We can also say that it shall deal specifically with the community issues which are not normally dealt with by other broadcast services. In addition, it shall be informational, educational and provide a distinct service that highlights the issues of a community.

*Who are the main beneficiaries of such radio supposed to be?*

Of course the people who stand to benefit from this radio are members of the local communities. They benefit from the radio's content which is meant to highlight their issues.

*How are they (beneficiaries) ideally supposed to benefit from such radio?*

Like I said earlier, community radio should touch on the issues that affect a particular community. So for example, if an entity comes to apply for a license, we will consider them only if they meet the following requirements. So, they will be required to have a business plan, a description of the service they want to offer and how they intend to address the issues of the local community members. So for example, if they say their community is affected by problems brought about by drug abuse, alcohol or environmental challenges, then this will tell us that their content will indeed focus on highlighting the issues that affect that particular community. This will be an indication that by means of using community radio, the entities will try to help the community get out of that plight. So for example, the content can touch on those specific issues directly and also educate the community on how to improve their situation.

*What are good guidelines that community radio station should follow to achieve its social purpose?*

When entities that are interested with establishing community radio come for a license, there are certain requirements that they are supposed to meet. At the point of bringing their application, they are supposed to give us information on the service for which the community broadcasting license is sought for. Also because it is a community effort, they should give us minutes of meetings where local community members resolved to pursue this license. In many instances, you will realize or find that community licenses are being sought for by community based organizations, self-help groups or NGOs. These groups are therefore

expected to bring with them proper documentation that clearly shows that community members were in agreement that this should be pursued because many a times they get sponsorship from the community members themselves. They should also have a proof of their source of funding and their sustainability mechanisms because unlike their compatriots in the commercial service, community radios are not really supposed to air advertisements for revenue because their purpose is not to generate revenue. Therefore, when seeking for a license, they should have a mechanism that shows the way they will sustain themselves though the term of their license. This is important because as already mentioned; community radios main objective does not entail making revenue. Of course there are reasons why community radio should not be used as tool for making revenue. First of all, we have subsidized their fees. Their fees are much lower both for the frequency resource and also for the service license itself. Therefore, given these subsidies, we have that obligation of defining the parameters under which community radios should operate. Clearly, we do not treat them like the way we treat commercial radio service. Lastly, apart from the issue of revenue, we also need to know the kind of programs community radios are going to air because they should be for a specific purpose as I mentioned earlier.

## 2. Learning about community radio

*Where did these ideas you have about community radio come from?*

Well, of course, first and foremost, we're guided by the Act, the Kenya Commission and Communication Act. That is where we draw all of our regulatory tools and framework. We have the regulations that come from the Act then we have license conditions that we have set to guide us on how to regulate the community broadcasting service. Apart from that, we have benchmarked with other countries and learnt how their sector operates. For example, I remember we benchmarked with Tanzania when we were developing our license conditions. We sought to establish how their framework and those of other countries was accomplishing the task of regulating their community broadcasting services.

*How did you first learn about community radio?*

After benchmarking with other countries where i managed to interact with the idea of community radio, I started to read widely because I wanted to know more about this radio as we continued to regulate it. I read more about the way other countries' community broadcasting sectors had grown. I wanted to establish how these sectors from other jurisdictions compared to ours in terms of performance and licensing. I wanted to find out whether our legal framework was working or not. I wanted to know what needed to be improved and ways of improving it. At the end of the day, this was necessary since as the



Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK), we wanted to have a better and a sustainable community broadcast service. Therefore, whenever we saw any challenges bedeviling them, we would invite our community broadcasters for meetings as a way of finding ways of addressing those challenges. We wanted to facilitate growth because at the end of the day it boiled down to growing the sector and having an environment that enables them to progress.

*What were the sources of your learning?*

Most of them came from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). This is an organization that draws members from different countries. So this was one of my major sources of information because it had a huge research database that dealt with the way the ICT sector is performing.

### 3. Description of history

*To your knowledge, when did discussions of the idea of community radio first take root in the Kenyan context?*

I would say in the 1990s because it was possible to see some little progress at that time given the fact that some community broadcasters had already been issued with permits from the Ministry of Information. It should be noted that initially, community broadcasters would only get permits to operate a radio station. These permits meant that they had been given a frequency that they could use to broadcast. This however changed when CAK (Communications Authority of Kenya) was formed. The communications authority of Kenya started to formalize the operations of the broadcast services by assigning official frequencies to community broadcasters and giving them licenses thereafter. So this discussion started in the 1990s and continued for the next two decades. So it's been quite a number of years. I believe these discussions started because you know there was need for content that could address the needs of community members. This was vital because the other media platforms were focusing more on national issues and revenue generation.

*Who was involved in these discussions and how?*

Well I cannot speak of the initial discussions to be honest. Maybe I should just say that the discussions took place between communities and officers in the ministry of information. The discussions were revolving around the issuance of permits to allow communities to proceed with radio's operations. At that point it was maybe just the designated officers within the ministry who would issue that authorization. But as for the earlier discussions I cannot speak to that. Maybe I can refer you to my colleagues.

*Which stations, in your view, are important examples of community radio in the Kenyan context?*

Let me try to think of a few that stands out. Of course we also have institutions of higher learning that have radios that are classified as community radios because they target a specific audience as a way of dealing with this audience's issues. I have to say that most of the universities are doing well with their community radio especially when it comes to teaching their students about media and communication related issues. In this sense, these stations are really fulfilling their mandate. Some of these radios are founded in Daystar, Egerton, Maseno, and Masinde Muliro universities. We also have community radios that were founded by the Kenya Meteorological department. These community radio stations stand out because they are executing their mandate very well. Their mandate includes updating their surrounding communities on the changing weather patterns and how they should be prepared for them.

#### 4. Personal involvement

*How have you been involved in this history?*

Well, we only started licensing community radios officially in 2016. This was the period when the ministry of information issued a gazette notice for all permit holders to come and get official licenses. So, this was a huge mark for us as a regulator because initially, all broadcasters were only operating with a permit which was just a simple letter showing that they had been given a frequency. But now, with the licensing, the community broadcasters were given the conditions under which they should operate. Even though it may be argued that the Act and the regulations that provided the parameters under which community broadcasters were to operate under were already there, community broadcasters were not tied to any legal document per say. However, given that we have been able to give all community broadcasters licenses and license conditions, they are now expected to be accountable in the way they operate. So, most of them have so far been able to stay within the stipulated guidelines of operation.

*What challenges did you face?*

First of all, it is probably good to note that an interest for community radio has been growing tremendously. Unfortunately, this progress has been impeded by the scarcity of frequencies. You know frequencies have proven to be a scarce resource and it is being depleted. As a result, we are unable to meet the demand because of course it is beyond our control. Therefore this is one of the biggest challenges we are facing. Another challenge is the unsustainability of community radio stations. Many community radios are facing financial difficulties which make it hard for them to operate. During our regular inspections, we have found that many community radio stations are not operating under the best conditions. When

we ask them they say that their problems have to do with financial constraint. You are now asking why we still charge them for license fees despite their financial problems. Well, of course we cannot make it free because we cannot. You know frequency cannot be free because it is a limited resource. We cannot exempt community radios because our hands are tied by law. It is a resource that is supposed to benefit the country and one of the major ways of course is to return revenue.

5. Reflection on history

*To what extent would you say the history of community radio in Kenya has been a success story?*

Yes, I would say that the history of community radio in Kenya has been a success story. This history has been a success because to this day, there has been an increase in the number of community radio stations. I would say that awareness is growing and that people are now getting to know more about community radio which has led to the growing demand for community services. For example, today, we have community radios that are founded in areas where this service was inexistent before. For example, we have one at the Mfangano Islands in Nyanza. This community radio station is serving the Abasuba community, which is one of the communities that are on the verge of becoming extinct. So, we have community radio stations in places where we had none initially. The coverage is really growing.

*How well do stations - and the community radio sector as a whole - match up to the ideas that we believe in with regards to what community radio should be?*

I think to a large extent, community radio stations are meeting what is required on paper. I am saying this because like I mentioned, we visit community radio stations on a regular basis to monitor them. As a regulator, we are always interested in monitoring stations to establish the kind of content they disseminate. From these visits, it is possible to see that these stations are broadcasting what they actually intended to air when they came seeking for a frequency. It is also possible to see that their content has a huge and a positive impact on community members given that they speak to their very specific needs. Indeed there has been some change in some of the communities. In addition, it is possible to see community members' contribution to the stations by participating in their operations. These are actually people from the local communities. We have actually established that the volunteers and other employees of some of these stations come from the communities under which the service is operating. We have further established that these stations are not used as tools for making profits. Of course they know that we will act swiftly if we find out that they are running as

business enterprises. We always inform them to stick within the stipulated guidelines to remain on air. So far, most of them are operating under the required guidelines.

*Why would you say this is the case?*

I think they match up to the ideals of community radio because as a regulator, we have always tried to inform them of how they should operate. We have developed tools that they need for example; we have the programming code for free to air broadcasters which touches on both commercial and community radio stations. So this code guides them on the way they should operate. We also organise regular stakeholder forums where we invite community broadcasters to attend so that they get to know what is expected of them, what their obligations are, their rights and also the rights of their consumer. We always remind them on the need of knowing the rights of their consumers so that they become aware of what the consumers expect from them.

*What factors impacted on the way community radio took shape in this country?*

Well like I said, there is information out there about community radio regarding the way it should behave and operate. Community broadcasters have been made aware about the expectation of their listeners. Therefore, they try as much as they can to address the needs of community members because these members know that this station is our station and it ought to address our issues. Therefore, listeners know what to expect from this service. Of course, this awareness results from the many stakeholder forums that we frequently organise as the regulator. One of such forums is called 'Kikao Kikuu'. So, we organise these forums in different parts of the country where we try our best to reach out to the whole region. So, we go out there, set up a camp and mobilize people to come. Actually we do advertise in advance just to inform people that we are coming for a certain forum that will last for a given period of time. We inform them that we would like to meet them, both the operators and the consumers. Generally, these forums are meant to offer a platform for the regulator, community broadcasters and consumers to share and exchange ideas. As a regulator, we get to hear their ideas and their complaints as well. We get to interact. I should be quick to add that we do not only invite local community members to these forums but we also invite government officials. For instance, if we go to a county, we invite the governor of that particular county and a number of officials working for that county government. We also invite different stakeholder organizations within that region to attend. We also have in attendance our various partners that we work together towards growing the sector. Therefore, all these groups play a part in our organised forums.

## **LAWRENCE MUTE**

### 1. Understanding of the concept of CR

*What do you understand community radio to be?*

I will describe community radio by doing a contrast. Community radio is a radio station that is not managed by the State or by people who are interested in making money through advertisements. Community radio is a radio which is made by people usually locally and which focuses on people's felt needs. Actually the way you determine people's felt needs is by telling them that they are the ones who are going to make the radio station's programs. So, for example, they can do a programme about agriculture if it is an agricultural setting or talk about pastoralism if it's a pastoral setting. In my own understanding, community radio is radio that is genuinely run by the community and whose aim is to serve rather than to make money or do propaganda on behalf of government.

*What is its ideal social purpose?*

Well I mean ideally, and I think it's important to stress ideally. Ideally, community radio is meant to facilitate development in a very genuine way. Because it discusses as I said the felt needs of the community. For instance, we may give an example of mothers who may want to know about what they should do when their children become ill. So, community radio should be able to give them that sort of information. On the other hand, children may want to hear bedtime stories. So they should also be able to get that from community radio. I remember one of the things I used to speak to during conversations about community radio was the geographic community and the community of interest. So for instance, if speaking about a community of interest, if one may not be in a position to read any current print book of their choice, then he/she may want a radio which at the end of the day, he/she can listen to so that it reads for him that current print book. This may also be extended to newspaper headlines and things like those.

*Who are the main beneficiaries of such radio supposed to be?*

The assumption is that the beneficiaries of community radio would be the community. So again, to come back to geography, it might be people of a particular region. We can give an example of Korogocho. People of Korogocho are the ones who stand to benefit from a radio station that is founded in that area. We can perhaps talk of children in Korogocho who like doing rap music or speaking in sheng. So this is an example of a geographic community that benefits from community radio. If it's a community of interest, we can talk of women who like doing a certain thing. So yes, the beneficiaries of community radio are the community members.

*How can such radio achieve its social purpose as you have explained to me?*

I think that there are certain guidelines which community radio should adhere to. For example, we have the whole question of accessibility which is very important. To what extent is the media which is being used accessible by all its users? When you speak about accessibility you might also relate it with inclusiveness. So actually, if you're saying that it's for a particular community, then you cannot be exclusive. I think it's important that programming is as far as possible generated locally. Of course it does not mean that you do not appreciate the expertise. Expertise still becomes important, but it's the community which is supposed to figure out when and where they need an expert to come in and help. In addition, I think in the end it's not about making money. Clearly, you have to have people who perhaps volunteer their time or who are able to do whatever needs to be done as part of the work which they usually do. But again, I cannot over emphasize the point that it was one thing writing a law and another figuring the practice of that law. For example, I am sure if you're speaking about dynamism of a radio, I am sure that a community radio station in Australia would be very different from a community radio station in Kenya. Perhaps actually some of those stations might actually be able to have professionals and actually pay salary the way an NGO works for example.

## 2. Learning about CR

*Where did these ideas you have about community radio come from?*

I think it has to do more with what I did rather than where these ideas may or might not have come from. I suppose for some reason, I became interested in this sort of work fairly earlier on when I started working within the NGO sector dealing specifically with human rights issues. One of the main human rights issues that concerned me then was the freedom of expression. You know, in the 1990s, it was a bit difficult to discuss or deal with such issues because of the state-owned media which was uncomfortable with such topics. These discussions therefore took place privately. One of the other reasons why such discussions took place privately was because our media was very limited. This was the point that signified the beginning of my working relationship with KCOMNET and other people including the Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ) in drafting media policies that supported community media. At that point, we were generally interested in media legislation. I think it became apparent over time that while people understood public and private media, many did not understand community media. In fact, even when community media began finding its way in policy documents, you'd usually find one sentence or two that was not very clear about this form of media. This brought about doubts as to whether those who were drafting

the policy documents really understood what they were talking about. So, this is the context in which I became interested in some of these ideas about community radio and followed through with it.

*What were the sources of your learning?*

I suppose one of my sources of learning was basically my practice with some of my colleagues who were working in the sector. I am sure I must have also referred to books.

### 3. Description of CR history

*To your knowledge, when did discussions of the idea of community radio first take root in the Kenyan context?*

I think in the 1990s where we would hear of radio stations mentioned in far off places like in Taita Hills or wherever. We would hear people mentioning stations like Mangelete for example. But more often than not, we would hear of a miss categorization. For instance, many people in some cases assumed that community radio meant vernacular radio (local language radio). So they would refer to stations like Kameme Fm which was a commercial station that was broadcasting in Agikuyu (local language) as community. Of course this was not necessarily the case.

*Where and how did these ideas first circulate?*

First and foremost, these ideas about community radio circulated within a very small and dedicated cabal of NGO-type acolytes. In my opinion, this is where a lot of these discussions were happening. These peoples' discussions were centred on the basis of what they were doing in the grassroots. This is where i first encountered these ideas about community radio.

*Who was involved in these discussions?*

The most prominent of them all was the Kenya Community Media Network. I also mentioned Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ), but I think to some extent, Kenya Union of Journalists leaned more towards the mainstream media. So, I would say KCOMNET was involved in a big way because it was more about community media as a distinct form of media.

*When did people begin to put these ideas into practice?*

I think for me, the question is, was there a high point of people using Community Media? To be honest I cannot answer this question. I cannot answer this question because what I know is that we wrestled with the formulation of policies for many years. The policies were not exactly in a comfortable place where we could say that everything was now in place and that we could now proceed. We continued having radio stations which were or purported to be community radio stations yet they were not. To be honest, at some point, I stopped following the KCOMNET story. I suspect they may have continued holding meetings where lots of

people within the community media sector would attend. So, I cannot answer your question in terms of how it all developed at a practical level.

*What, in your view, were key moments in the further development of community radio in this country?*

I think that would have been in the mid-1990s, maybe 1996 or 1997 when I encountered KCOMNET for the first time. This was obviously one of the key moments given it was a period that signaled the start of advocacy work and drafting of policy frameworks. This was a crucial moment that eventually led to community radio's recognition by law. The other important moment was during the NARC regime in the early 2000s when a new policy was put in place. Unfortunately, I cannot remember what the name of this policy was. I think it was one of Tuju's policies when he was Minister for Information. I cannot cite more recent years because as I told you, I sort of moved on. I think I should also mention that in the development of community radio in this country, one of the major talking points was the issue of frequencies. We used to hear this justification about frequencies being a limited resource. That was an important talking point. We used to hear that frequencies were a national resource and that they were very limited. In my opinion, I thought and I still hold that frequencies should not be given only to people who make money. There needs to be a way of ensuring that even people who are not making money, but who may require them get them for free. However, with the advent of technology in this digital era, there is a possibility that this discussion about frequencies being a limited resource might change. Perhaps this is one of the areas that should be explored. To what extent does this whole digital change over change the storyline on frequencies? If I may want to open a theoretical discussion now, I would have more possibility of communicating than if I opened it 10 years ago because 10 years ago, the resource was limited, a situation that might have changed now.

*Which stations, in your view, are important examples of community radio in the Kenyan context?*

Actually, that's a good question. In fact, the question should be whether I ever listened to any community radio station in the first place. The answer is no. I am saying no because which radio stations did I have access to here in Nairobi? It should have been KBC (State Broadcaster), Capital Fm or perhaps Kiss Fm (Commercial/mainstream). It should have been those stations. As I just said earlier, the fact that a station uses a local language does not make it a community station. Now the question you would ask is, when I went home did I encounter any community radio stations? The answer is no.

#### 4. Personal involvement



*How have you been involved in this history?*

Just like I said before, I basically participated in preparing some of the legal texts and a bit of advocacy.

*What challenges did you face?*

The main challenge was the fact that people who mattered found it difficult to understand the concept of community radio. They were literally unable to figure out what we were talking about. For me that was the biggest challenge. I think we should have had a substantive statute that focuses just on community media but unfortunately, we were not able to do that. We did not do this because no one at the time saw the importance of it. No one understood its significance.

5. Reflection on history

*What factors impacted on the way community radio took shape in this country?*

I think one of them must have been community radio's recognition by law. I remember we were coming out of this one party system where many of our proposals would not have been supported then. For me, I think the key thing was the fact that we came out of the one-party system of governance in the early 1990s. The 1990s was a good time for the growth of community radio. This was a good time for community radio because we also had many professionals who tried to push it as an agenda. Many of these relatively younger professionals were full of energy and were actually very excited to do certain interesting stuff. They were motivated to do that sort of work and it's easy to be nostalgic. During those days, I think there was some sense of camaraderie among these young professionals which we may have lost today. I think many younger people actually no longer have any experience of the political difficulties the country was in. Therefore today we atomize into all these horrible things. And I'm not saying that did not happen in the 1990s, I'm sure people still thought ethnically and all that, but I think it was possible to actually work extremely hard with a fellow professional and not really worry or have to keep thinking whether they were going to move away from you or change. I am speaking about the younger professionals.

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