

# COMMUNITY RADIO AND TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES

---

*Caroline Mitchell and Peter M. Lewis*

## INTRODUCTION

The area of the Transnational Radio Encounters (TRE) project that was concerned with minorities found its natural focus in community radio, an area in which the co-authors and editors of this section, both specialists in the field, collaborated. Although some minority programming can be found in the schedules of national broadcasters, community radio is the sector where the voices and opinions, for the most part ignored or misrepresented in the mainstream, can be expressed. (Mitchell 2011) Community radio, non-profit in aim, controlled by and representative of a community, can provide the space for the social, cultural and political discourses which are often echoed in, sometime deliberately linked to, places beyond national borders. Among minority ethnic groups – whether historically settled communities, or more recent refugee and migrant communities – radio encounters include connections with a homeland or with a diaspora in Europe and beyond.

Our research had to deal with a large, complex and varied field. A mapping exercise in 2012 by the Community Media Forum for Europe (CMFE) found 2237 community radio stations in Europe.<sup>1</sup> To explore the kinds of transnational connections likely to be found in a community radio station, we felt that, rather than quantitative surveys, depth research would more effectively provide a picture of experience in the sector. The plan was to focus on one or two case studies in contrasting regions of the UK, using Participatory Action Research (PAR) to explore what TRE's three cross-cutting themes (described below) meant at this level, and thereafter to sample experience in mainland Europe. There, time and resources were not available to go into such depth. Instead conferences, in consultation with the host organizations, were used as a vehicle to reach a wider

---

<sup>1</sup> | [http://cmfe.eu/wp-content/uploads/Overview\\_Communitymedia.pdf](http://cmfe.eu/wp-content/uploads/Overview_Communitymedia.pdf)

range of participants. In some cases, 'pre-conferences' overcame the difficulty of bringing activists and volunteer practitioners to academic conferences which usually last longer and cost more than these necessary participants can afford.<sup>2</sup> During the autumn of 2014, the MEDIANE exchange program<sup>3</sup> extended the research to Cyprus.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

At conferences and workshops, TRE's cross-cutting themes – *Aesthetics and territoriality, Infrastructures and Public Spheres and Archive and Cultural Memory* – were 'translated' to produce the following main research questions:

- What role did mainstream radio play through its representations (or mis-representations) in bringing your community to the point where you decided to speak for yourselves?
- What do radio programs made by and for different ethnic communities sound like (including use of different languages)?
- In making these programs what do you find helps or hinders your work – at the station level, and beyond
- Does your station/project hold archives that are evidence of the developing relationships between your community and mainstream media or the host community, and between yourselves and counterpart communities in mainland Europe?

We briefly summarize the response at this stage and deal below with some issues in greater depth. The response to the first question, a rejection of mainstream media, was very clear. By contrast, community ownership of a station

---

**2** | The following were the occasions for such workshops and presentations: June 2015, Perpignan, Conference *Les Frontières de la Radio*, organised by GRER (Groupe des Recherches et d'Études sur la Radio) and the University of Perpignan Via Domitia, workshop *Connecting minorities across borders: sharing community radio experience*; July 2015, Montreal, *Crossing Linguistic Borders: A participatory workshop with Third and Native language community broadcasters* at 3rd & Indigenous Language Communities on Air – IAMCR pre-conference in collaboration with the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC); October 2015, Madrid, ECREA Radio Research conference of ECREA with CMFE pre-conference, workshop *Crossing boundaries: social, cultural and ethnic minorities in community radio*; July 2016, Utrecht, pre-conference *Radio, Refugees and Migrants*, organised in collaboration with OLON (the Dutch Federation of local radio and television stations) before TRE Final conference.

**3** | MEDIANE (Media in Europe for Diversity Inclusiveness)'s European Exchanges of Media Practices (EEMPS) program which, under the heading 'Diversity in Community Radio', funded Lewis to exchange visits with Michalis Simonopoulos, Station Manager of MYCY Radio, Nicosia, Cyprus, 7-17 October 2014.

allows control of what topics are addressed and who can speak, while radio has a special role in reaching listeners in their own language.

In the area of language, the work of Naficy (2001) has been developed by Moylan in her book *Broadcasting Diversity* (2013) and here, in this volume, where she shows how community radio's informal presentation style, not confined within the routines of mainstream radio, and its close relationship to the community, allows 'ordinary' voices to be heard and conversation to flow.

Infrastructural issues ranging from failures in station management up to the national level – is community radio recognized as a separate sector? Is there sufficient funding? – were reported to us.

Where archives are concerned, digitalization has contributed to new forms of open access, online and collaborative. This has meant that there can be increased access to sonic pasts that can function to enable participation and creative engagement with these pasts through encouragement of active and "public" listening (Lacey 2013). We were able to explore archives and archiving practices of women's, feminist and LGBT radio (Mitchell 2015) and also identify how sound art has been archived and re-circulated through stations such as Resonance FM (London) and through the EU-funded CAPTCHA project.<sup>4</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

Community radio, above all else, is participatory: the community owns the station, is represented in its governance and actively involved in the production of programs and the training of volunteers. It therefore seemed appropriate, in researching community radio, to use a participatory method. 'Participatory action research' (PAR) was the approach used in our TRE work.

PAR has its origins in grass roots organizing and empowerment (Freire 1982), has been used in the fields of rural and community development, public health, youth work and education. In the field of community radio, PAR is based on the Ethnographic Action Research method (EAR) which was first developed with funding from the UK Department for International Development (DfID) and UNESCO support in early 2002 to develop an evaluation methodology for a community radio and internet project in Sri Lanka (Slater/Tacchi /Lewis 2002). It combines a holistic approach, looking at the whole social setting of a radio station or project and contextualizing it within the wider economy and government policies, while at the same time, as action research, encouraging

---

<sup>4</sup> | The CAPTCHA project worked in partnership with community radio stations and projects in Germany, Ireland, Austria and Hungary. <http://livingarchives.eu/> and <http://cmds.ceu.edu/sites/cmcs.ceu.hu/files/attachment/article/955/captchafinalreport.pdf>

projects to 'own' the research and its findings and to develop a research culture that allows them to monitor their own practice and develop research tools.

Our research focused on the transnational connections to be found in two contrasting English regions – Bristol in the South West and Tyne and Wear and Teesside in the North East. Both had in common a diversity of population (Bristol's Black, Asian and mixed race communities making up just over 15% of the population<sup>5</sup>) but in very different economic contexts: Bristol weathering the recession with relative success, Tyne and Wear and Teesside suffering from the loss of the traditional industries of mining and ship-building and with one of the highest levels of youth unemployment in the UK. In the two locations after extensive contact and consultation work with local community organizations and networks, 'sharing experience' workshops brought together community radio broadcasters and representatives of minority communities.

We shared our assumption that most transnational encounters take place among minority ethnic groups – whether historically settled communities, or more recent refugee and migrant communities. Encounters might include connections with a homeland outside Europe and/or with diasporic groups in Europe and beyond. By connections, we mean anything from listener groups to arrangements for exchanging or co-producing programming, or exchanges of staff/volunteers. We added that we were also including in our research the use of radio by other minorities such as LGBT communities, stations experimenting with art radio, and women's radio. We went on to 'translate' and list the questions to which we wanted answers. Ideas raised in the workshops resulted in follow-up activities which included interviews among workshop participants led by participants themselves and guided and mentored by us with a small amount of funding to help match other sources. Although it was difficult for these 'community researchers' to find time to follow up their ideas, they appreciated the patient monitoring they received. The plan for the next phase of the research – to act like a dating agency that would connect radios and projects having similar ideas – was a feature that we hoped would result from our interest in mapping. The Radio.Garden, discussed below and in the introduction to this volume, might yet be the platform to facilitate these kinds of connections.

## UK EXPERIENCE

At the Bristol workshop, the 'sharing of experience' was enriched by a presentation from former refugee Dan Cissokho the station manager of Peterborough Community Radio whose later contribution at the Utrecht pre-conference, *Radio, Refugee and Migrants* is reported by Judith Purkarthofer in this volume. The

---

5 | UK, 2011 census: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>.

discussions that followed his presentation, that of Katie Moylan (also in this volume), and our own explanations of the research were an illustration of community-based participatory research – testing the relevance of academic work against the insights and experience of people working in the field under study.

In the discussion that followed, one feature of the everyday experience of community radio was made very clear: the lack of time to look beyond the pressure of one's own work, program deadlines, the constant need to raise funding – tasks which account for the fact that the participants were aware of each other's existence and of the work they were doing but had not met before. Nevertheless the 'personal radio journeys' – stories that were told in the workshop – became one of the projects taken forward: participants interviewed each other, to tell and record a chain of stories about their transnational radio encounters. These interviews were then broadcast in a series on Bristol's community station, BCFM, introduced by one of the community researchers, Sangita Dewan.

After a second 'sharing experience' workshop in July 2014 at Bede's World, a museum in Jarrow, North East England, discussions included involving community radio in finding ways of recording dialect in the Teesdale community that may be soon lost, and an Iranian group, the Sepanta Cultural Foundation, regenerating an arts program. In subsequent follow-up activities, Hive Radio, a community internet station based in Jarrow took the lead in recording stories of transnational communication, co-operation and cultural differences. The station's logo is 'You tell the story, we broadcast to the world' and one stand out activity – webcasting live from a community festival – involved a 'Transnational Radio table' where people could map, record and listen to transnational experiences of students, refugees and mixed race families. This activity helped form early ideas that contributed to the development of radio.garden, where some of these stories appeared. Another follow-on project was a series of podcasts called "Culture Shock" made with refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>6</sup>

This relatively complex range of research activities: bringing people together for discussions and longer-term broadcast projects, was a key part of Participatory Action Research, working with and through community researchers over a two-year period. Hive Radio was one of the many stations whose subsequent appearance on radio.garden increased its reach and listenership.

In the final months of the TRE project 'Reporting back' workshops in both locations (Bristol in March, South Shields in May 2016) allowed participants to update the researchers on their follow-up activities and the researchers to compare the British experience to what they had heard at overseas events.

---

**6** | See <https://www.capne.org/hive-radio>.

## OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE

The Workshop at Perpignan, within a conference devoted to the “Borders of Radio,” focused on ‘endangered languages.’ Producers broadcasting in Basque, Catalan and Occitan played examples of their programming. Most Basque, Catalan and Occitan speakers also speak French. In the other direction, Basque is furthest from French, whereas most French speakers can follow Catalan and Occitan. So the radios are important for cultural identity and as a means to resist what they called the ‘normalization’ that mainstream media exert on these languages.

Montreal in July 2015 was the location of the annual conference of the International Association of Media and Communication Research<sup>7</sup> whose call for papers had asked, “How can communication contribute to the empowerment of individuals and groups in their local contexts?” The invitation to our workshop responded: *but can people at the margins make their voices heard and contribute to social debate and political change if they use only a minority language?* Held as part of AMARC’s meeting, *3rd & Indigenous Language Communities on Air* and as a IAMCR pre-conference, its participants included Indigenous language broadcasters (the Wawatay Radio Network) as well as producers of minority (‘third’) languages in urban radios. A Palestinian Canadian had claimed space to reach communities across the nation with syndicated shows, and organized in 2008 a Radio Marathon linking stations in the USA, Canada, Australia and Britain. A Montreal lawyer with experience in community radio had set up a center to help indigenous people “use community radio as a decolonizing tool.” Other participants contributed experience from Australia, Haiti and Taiwan.

In Madrid, we heard from CUAC-FM which broadcasts in Galician, a language forbidden in the Franco era and now the region’s common language – but never heard on mainstream Spanish radio. Other contributions were from Austria (the use of minority languages in rural areas), western Hungary where Slovenian, Croatian and German are minority languages, Ireland (Near FM’s alternation of English and Portuguese), Poland, Argentina (use of Guaraní in broadcasting with Paraguayan immigrants) and, in development radio in Afghanistan, broadcasts in Pashtun to try to build a bridge across the border with Pakistan.

## ARCHIVES

Archives are important for cultural memory and can be re-broadcast or available online to connect with new listeners. But the informal, often ephemeral, context of programming means that the actual record of a community’s broadcasting is often incomplete. As community radio has come of age, some ar-

---

7 | IAMCR (<http://iamcr.org/>).

ches of programming and station materials have been established so that documents and programs are stored for the future and the archive becomes both a repository and a *maker* of cultural memory (Prieto Blanco/Schuppert/Lange 2015). We found that many individual community broadcasters kept their own, often cherished, archives but within a station they are difficult for a volunteer workforce to maintain and thus re-circulate. Where these archives become more public, for example the Fem FM archive, in whose preservation in digital form Mitchell was involved, (<http://archives.bristol.gov.uk/Overview.aspx>) or the Radio CORAX's Cultural Broadcasting Archive (<https://cba.fro.at/stations>; see also Van Beek in this volume), it is a characteristic of the sector that these archives often aim from the outset to be participatory. For researchers, this is opening up new areas of study and, for a wider range of people and partnerships, new areas of co-production and participatory research.

Community radio producers have become archivists. One example was Amina Marix Evans<sup>8</sup> who talked about her radio work at the Bede's World workshop and was later interviewed in her archive:

*Interviewer: Biography, portraits, is that retrospective...?*

*Amina: Yeh, all sorts, Mohammed Ali, Maya Angelou...yes, we've got interviews ... the interview file might be up there if we can find it*

*Interviewer: Gosh - this is a serious record, this is more than most people would put together. Did you think when you were doing it that you were putting together an archive that is truly one of a kind or was it just a labor of love and something that you did?*

*Amina: It was something that you did*

*Interviewer: Were there any chunks that you've not got, any bits that were lost along the way?*

*Amina: I don't think so. At one point there was something that was lost and then they turned up at someone else's house... (Laughs) Now you've got me wanting to spend the rest of the year in here looking at what we have. There are all these wonderful tapes that haven't been labelled. It's always what you are going to label later, and now it's later and I still haven't...<sup>9</sup>*

---

<sup>8</sup> | Amina Marix Evans, pioneer free radio producer, Amsterdam and Leiden NL and Tyneside, UK. Amina's program, *A Love Supreme*, was on a free radio in Amsterdam for decades, a broadcast for justice and truth. Among the subjects she has focused on are treatment of immigrants, the death penalty in the U.S., and the rights of women. She is also a book publisher and founder of The Kittiwake Trust, Borderline Books and the Multilingual Library ([www.kittiwaketrust.org.uk](http://www.kittiwaketrust.org.uk)).

<sup>9</sup> | Interview with Amina Marix Evans by Bridget Hamilton, May 2016.

Amina's extensive home archiving is relatively common practice but making this archive accessible to a wider public is time consuming. One successful method of airing archives to a wider audience was 'on air ethnography': Slovenian station Radio Študent played archive tapes and discussed them with past and present community broadcasters as part of a regular program.<sup>10</sup>

## INFRASTRUCTURE

In the radio station, ongoing training in broadcasting and digital skills, access to airtime and time and funding to develop transnational relationships are all important components for people to participate in transnational radio. We found that infrastructural arrangements at national, local and micromanagement level influenced the way that communities could operate transnationally. In the UK community radio sector, the policy varies – an example of the way infrastructure affects the local public sphere. In Bristol, a Chinese programmer had to bargain to include 10-15 minutes in Mandarin or Cantonese ("any more would affect the ratings" said the station manager) in her English-language drive time show. Two Polish programmers at the same station experimented with different formats and ended up with one that they thought worked: one hour in English followed directly by an hour in Polish with similar guests and content but not exactly same style. The pair left when the station manager wanted them to translate from Polish to English every few minutes, evidence as they saw it of 'top down' multiculturalist station management policy rather than allowing minorities to define their own self-expression.

At the European level, the need for governments to encourage and support community radio has been noted by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe.<sup>11</sup> At the national level in the UK, pump-priming funding for the first 15 stations came from a £0.5m Community Radio Fund. The fund has not since been increased although there are now over 250 stations in operation, this despite the recommendation of the evaluator of the pilot Access Radio project (Everitt 2003: 139) that some £6m would be necessary to support the sector. An example of negative government attitude in Spain was revealed by members of CMFE at the CMFE/CREA pre-conference in Madrid 2016, quoting a government policy document leaked in *El Diario*. In the section 'TV and community radio' the underlined sentence translates as "Eliminate this audiovisual cat-

---

**10** | See/hear "30 years rolled by: Archiving physical archives of oldest European non-commercial student radio station Radio Študent Ljubljana" available at <https://cba.fro.at/290137>.

**11** | <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2008-0456&language=EN&ring=A6-2008-0263>.[https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805d1bd1](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805d1bd1)

egory" and, circled, "Reject extreme left parties. Justified in view of shortage of frequencies and possibilities [for alternative transmission via] internet and digital media." These two examples relating to underfunding and legislation for community radio's continuation are further evidence of difficulties the community sector has in supporting national and transnational initiatives relating to minority broadcasting.

## LANGUAGE

Community radio certainly crosses national borders in its use of the internet. We found several examples for instance of UK community programs with regular listeners overseas. But to describe the crossings as 'transnational' misses the particular character of encounters in this type of radio which we might rather describe as *translingual*. In minority ethnic broadcasting, language, the key vehicle of culture, is an important indicator, acting in different contexts as both a barrier and a bridge.

Since the late 1940s, Britain's colonial past has made it a prime destination for successive generations of immigrants whose right to claim citizenship has been of increasing concern to the conservative side of the political spectrum. With the expansion of the European Union, many newcomers are from Eastern Europe, enjoying the right to freedom of movement and employment, while refugees from war, discrimination and poverty in Africa and the Middle East have added to immigration numbers in Britain as in much of Western Europe.

Nowadays, in relatively settled communities, the concern of the older generations is to preserve their native language which is increasingly at risk of being forgotten by the younger generations. Here, radio is often cited as having an important role, especially for those who have never been taught to read and write their mother tongue. However, radio is only one means of cultural reinforcement available to a community which has had time to establish social, religious and educational networks, and in which the use of satellite TV from the homeland is common.

For more recent arrivals, community radio can provide a first haven in which to recover from the shock of entry into the UK. Naficy described the "trauma, rupture, and coercion" which characterizes the experience of exiles and refugees (Naficy 2001:14) and the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers by the British authorities continues to be notoriously harsh. The journeys made by the newcomers are, Naficy comments, "not just physical and territorial but are also deeply psychological and philosophical. Among the most important are journeys of identity, in the course of which old identities are sometimes shed and new ones refashioned." (Naficy 2001:6)

Focusing on language in this context, the Inter.Media handbook on inter-cultural media training remarks:

The terms migrant and non-migrant have [...] begun to lose their relevance in terms of language: migrants of the second and third generation frequently do not speak the language of their parents and grandparents as well as the language of the country where they live (Inter.Media 2007:50).

This is the kind of situation revealed in a project, funded in the first HERA wave, Investigating Discourses of Inheritance and Identity in Four Multilingual European Settings (IDII4MES). The UK team explored the cultural and social significance of language and literacy practices of multilingual young people in Birmingham (<http://heranet.info/idi4mes/index>). As their report succinctly puts it: "migration histories have shaped linguistic heritages and daily linguistic practices." Their young respondents said that moving flexibly between languages when speaking was quite usual: "you automatically, without even thinking, go into Panjabi, then come back into English."

Mitchell found this when she talked to the station manager of CVFM<sup>12</sup> in Middlesbrough, NE England. His program is bilingual

because my Urdu isn't very good so I tend to do some in Urdu, a bit of Panjabi and about 60% in English. A lot of people are bilingual. We tend to speak that way. You might use your mother tongue and then flip to English so people talk in a number of different languages -- this is how we normally communicate. You might get a caller whose command of the language isn't as good as his English so the presenter might speak to him in Urdu and he'll give his response in English. I do it quite often myself. There are certain things I can't express in my mother language (Panjabi). The listeners are used to having that approach.<sup>13</sup>

Who can cross the translingual borders? The answer is complex and depends on what is offered by the particular program: is it multilingual – that is combining two languages within one program – or monolingual? It depends also on the generation of the speaker. Younger people, as the Birmingham research shows, can 'flip' with ease between languages – 'translanguaging'. By contrast, Desi Radio, the subject of Nazan Haydari's chapter in this volume has a monolingual policy: the radio, one of the first in the UK to win a community radio license, broadcasts almost entirely in Panjabi.

In Nicosia, the schedule of MYCY radio, operating from the Buffer Zone with a mission to encourage dialogue between the north and south Cyprus, is mainly filled with programs in Greek, Turkish and English, but also includes

---

12 | [www.cvfm.org.uk](http://www.cvfm.org.uk)

13 | Interview by Caroline Mitchell, 2015.

French, Italian and Spanish and Persian. The producer of the Persian program, pressed on the question of whether he would include Greek or English alongside Persian, said that would lose him listeners. But within his Iranian audience he tried to make Kurdish- and Lori-speakers, as well as speakers of Azeri – his mother tongue – feel included with a few words of introduction in their language to the music that he chose that came from their culture.

The use of different languages within one program has been referred to as 'multilingual' programming, with the term 'polylingual' describing the existence of many programs, each in a different language, in one radio's schedule. The handbook *Intercultural Media Training in Europe* points out the advantages of multilingual programming: their preparation helps migrants overcome their "linguistic isolation", working with non-migrants can establish "situations based on an equal footing," while, as listeners to such programming,

members of the language majority in the broadcasting region are confronted with a situation that usually only migrants experience: finding it difficult or even impossible to understand parts of the program, not being able to join in the discussion, being 'outsiders'. Through the alternation of languages, however, they are repeatedly 'drawn back in'. This makes it easier to accept a foreign language both for non-migrants and for migrants. (Inter. Media 2007:50)

Music plays an important role in this situation. It has the capacity to cross every border while at the same time retaining a special, often nostalgic, appeal to specific groups and individuals. It can be the binding ingredient in multilingual broadcasting.

Hilary Banks has been broadcasting on community radio since 2009. *Fi Wi Sintin* is a weekly two-hour program, broadcast on Bristol community station BCFM<sup>14</sup> and available online. Hilary researches, engineers, produces and presents the show. It is aimed at the African Caribbean community all over the world. In Bristol:

It's an older Caribbean, mainly Jamaican audience. [...].

It's based on triggering memories and culture...and it uses music, stories, proverbs. All the things that are culture we'll use in order to actualize itself. It uses music quite heavily, music of an older generation. I'm literally taking you down memory lane, all pre-1995 – reggae, rock steady, calypso, back to 1900s, 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s. I use stories: in Caribbean culture stories are very potent ways of learning, transmitting messages, moral codes, conduct and so on.

---

14 | <http://bcfmradio.com/fiwiisintin>.

People are very keen on it ... One of the things that they are so keen on is this music that they haven't heard for a long time...It's doing something for people. It takes them back to – wherever, so that connection, that link is a really important part of the show. It takes *me* back as well. It connects me with culture and that's powerful and important. It also reconnects with younger audiences (who) listen so it works on that level as well. And that's quite powerful when young people say 'I listened to that'<sup>15</sup>

## CONCLUSION

As for transnational radio encounters in this sector, connections were mainly personal. There were few examples of radio programs circulating transnationally via community radio (a notable exception being Democracy Now<sup>16</sup> which is taken by many English and Spanish speaking stations worldwide). It was rare to find interaction between radio stations, which costs the time and money long taken for granted by mainstream broadcasting's national and international organizations. Since the recommendation ten years ago in Lewis's report for the Council of Europe that governments should be encouraged to support "program exchange within the European community media sector, and beyond with regions which are the homelands of diasporic communities" and "for exchange of staff and volunteers...between community media projects" (Lewis 2008:32), EU funding has been the occasional support for specific projects. In the 1990s AMARC-Europe was able to draw on this source. More recently, the Community Media Forum for Europe<sup>17</sup> has been the focus for campaigns to recognize the need to support community media.

For minorities, community radio continues to have a role in providing public space for a social and political voice, and, literally, for voices – and music – that are markers of a history and culture, asserting identity in a host-land and connecting with diasporas. Even at a time when social media has become omnipresent, access to the airwaves simply to speak is important in building self-confidence. Beyond that, learning how to attract and hold listeners with creative audio production is a skill that research has shown to be useful and transferable (see for instance COMAPP: <http://comapp-online.de/> and Lewis/Jones 2006). Sharing the experience of struggles to find this space and give effective voice was, we found, a valued part of our research method (PAR) in a sector where initiatives often begin in isolation. For us, too, Participatory Action Research taught us to translate academic perspectives into meaningful dialogue.

---

**15** | Interview with Hilary Banks by Caroline Mitchell, March 2016.

**16** | <https://www.democracynow.org/about>.

**17** | <http://cmfe.eu/>.

The social and political meaning of identity came sharply into focus in a period when our research was gathering evidence about the rich contribution Moylan's 'accented radio' was making to the mediascape. The role of media in relation to migration is complex. In a paper written in the first year of the project, we quoted Roger Silverstone's observation that

Migration, immigration ... is now a major concern in Europe... what such movements represent are a perceptible if not yet conclusive change in the nature of national cultures and their capacity to sustain traditional boundaries and identities (Silverstone 2007: 83).

Very soon the refugee crisis appeared to give added significance to Silverstone's prophecy, yet within the three years of TRE's duration the issue of immigration, on the ground and in public discourse, has added fuel to xenophobic and racist reactions and the rise of right-wing political parties across Europe whose aim is to restore the concept of national identity. Britain was a prime example: a large part of the motive for Brexit was the result of the exploitation by the right-wing press of fears about 'the other.' The tabloid press generated and encouraged stereotypes and did too little to combat xenophobia and racism. It is in the community radio sector that more recent migrant arrivals are likely to find an important resource that allows a language community to talk to itself and communicate with the host population. The self-organized Refugee Radio Network<sup>18</sup> is an example of this happening on a networked scale from Germany and there are other good examples of programming and support with refugee communities in different localities.<sup>19</sup>

We leave the last word to one of the community radio broadcasters about the meaning of her program's title:

The title *Fi Wi Sintin* is patois, meaning 'Our something'. "I use that phrase because I want it to have a cultural message. Those who hear it and understand it straight away will know that it is directed to you. Those who don't, I want it to start a conversation."<sup>20</sup>

**18** | <https://refugeeradionetwixsite.com/rran/about>.

**19** | See for instance in UK Spark Sunderland <http://www.jaysykesmedia.com/global-sunderland/> and Brighton <http://refugeeradio.org.uk/>; in Spain Radio Onda Color <http://www.ondacolor.org/> and Austria Frei Radio Orange, Vienna: <http://o94.at/>.

**20** | Interview with Hilary Banks by Caroline Mitchell March 2016.

## REFERENCES

Duxbury, Nancy/Garrett-Petts W.F./MacLennan David, eds. (2015): *Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry*, New York: Routledge.

Everitt, Anthony (2003): *New Voices: An Evaluation of 15 Access Radio Projects*. London: Radio Authority.

Freire, Paolo (1982): "Creating alternative research methods. Learning to do it by doing it." In: B. Hall/ A. Gillette/ R. Tandon (eds.) *Creating Knowledge: A Monopoly*, New Delhi: Society for Participatory Research in Asia, pp. 29-37.

Intercultural Media Training in Europe ([http://www.commit.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/intermedia-handbook-EN-monitor.pdf](http://www.commit.at/fileadmin/user_upload/intermedia-handbook-EN-monitor.pdf))

Lacey, Kate (2013): *Listening Publics: The Politics and Experience of Listening in the Media Age*. Cambridge: Polity.

Lewis, Peter/Jones, Susan (2006): *From the Margins to the Cutting Edge: Community Media and Empowerment*. Cresskill NJ: Hampton Press.

Lewis, Peter. M. (2008): *Promoting Social Cohesion: The Role of Community Media*. Report for the Council of Europe's Group of Specialists on Media Diversity. (<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680483b32>)

Mitchell, Caroline (2011): *Voicing the Community: Participation and Change in Black and Minority Ethnic Local UK Radio*, In: Brunt, R./Cere, R. (eds.) *Postcolonial Media Culture in Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mitchell, Caroline (2015): "Re-Sounding Feminist Radio: A Journey through Women's Community Radio Archives." In: *Feminist Media Histories Journal*, 1/4, pp. 126-143.

Moylan, Katie (2013): *Broadcasting Diversity*. Bristol: Intellect

Naficy, Hamid (2001): *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press

Prieto Blanco, Patricia/Schuppert, Mirjami/Lange, Jake (2015): *The Digital Progression of Community Archives, from Amateur Production to Artistic Practice. A Case Study of Belfast Exposed*. *Convergence* 21/1, pp. 58-77.

Slater, Don/Tacchi, Jo/Lewis, Peter M. (2002): *Ethnographic Monitoring and Evaluation of Community Multimedia Centres: A Study of Kothmale Community Radio Internet Project*, Sri Lanka, available at <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/8701/1/8701.pdf>