

**PUTTING PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION INTO PRACTICE THROUGH
COMMUNITY RADIO: A CASE STUDY OF HOW POLICIES ON PROGRAMMING AND
PRODUCTION ARE FORMULATED AND IMPLEMENTED AT
RADIO GRAAFF-REINET**

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ABSTRACT

In the South African (SA) model of community radio, listeners are expected to be in charge of the management and programming operations of stations. This study tests the SA model against the actual conditions at an existing station. For this purpose, the study focuses on Radio Graaff-Reinet, a community radio station in the Eastern Cape. Emphasis is on examining the extent to which members of the station's target community are involved in its operations.

The study first assesses the nature of this involvement, keeping in mind the principles of, 'community ownership' and 'participatory programming' on which the SA model of community radio is based. It is argued that the station does provide a valuable 'public sphere' for its listeners. The potential of this sphere remains limited, however, due to the impact of ongoing power struggles around the ownership of the station. The lack of proper systems for managing these struggles has contributed to the fact that the station continues to be in a constant state of flux, with a high turnover of staff and regular changes in its policies and strategies. The study argues that, until such systems are put in place, the principles of community ownership will not be fully realizable. Areas in which the struggle over ownership plays itself out can be identified in the relationship between the station's Board of Directors and its managing staff, between one particular station manager and her staff and between the station and its target community. These struggles often take place in context of a debate about the financial sustainability of the station versus its developmental aims. It is argued that this opposition needs to be questioned since, until the station is financially stable, it will remain vulnerable to interference by powerful individuals and groups in its attempts to establish such developmental aims.

The study then goes on to identify key weaknesses in the station's approach to community ownership and participation. In particular, it is pointed out that various stakeholders in the station have contradictory understandings of what is meant by 'community', using the term to include or exclude sections of the Graaff-Reinet society in very different ways. There are also very different understandings at play about the concept of community radio itself. These contradictions have an impact on the station's ability to implement participatory programming. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that the station does not have a consistent forum in which shared decision-making can take place. Consequently, the station also remains unable to draw effectively on its own volunteer staff and on its community as resources for programming content.

Finally, the study explores the broader significance of the weaknesses that exist in the case of Graaff-Reinet, arguing that these are problems that repeat themselves throughout the South African community radio sector. Possible strategies for addressing these problems are suggested, including approaches to monitoring and research, training, organizational development and advocacy.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Details of Interviewees

Appendix 2: Interview Guides

Appendix 3: Radio Graaff-Reinet Programme Schedule (May-July 2001)

Appendix 4: Interview Transcripts

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
Abstract.....	(ii)
Acknowledgements.....	(iii)
List of Appendices.....	(iv)
Table of contents.....	(v)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Context of the study.....	2
1.2 Statement of the problem and objectives of the study.....	3
1.3 Interest and significance of the study.....	3
1.4 Methods of the study.....	4
1.5 Structure of the thesis.....	4
1.6 Assumptions of the study.....	4

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction.....	6
2.1 Critique of the media.....	6
2.1.1 Radio as a medium.....	8
2.1.2 Radio and media reform.....	10
2.2 Global rise of community radio.....	12
2.2.1 Community.....	15
2.2.2 Elements of community radio.....	17
2.3 The rise of community radio in South Africa.....	21

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction.....	25
3.1 The case for qualitative research methodology.....	25
3.2 Research Methods.....	27
3.3 Research procedure and the approach to data analysis.....	30
3.4 Research ethics.....	32

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction.....	35
4.1.0 Context of Radio Graaff-Reinet.....	35
4.1.1 Financial Sustainability at Radio Graaff-Reinet.....	42
4.1.2 The Community of Radio Graaff-Reinet.....	46
4.2.0 Avenues for participation and community ownership.....	50
4.2.1 Observations on participation and ownership.....	50
4.2.2 Formal structures of involvement: the board.....	53
4.2.3 Staffing and Volunteerism.....	56
4.2.4 Meetings, Participation and Ownership.....	59
4.2.5 Participation in programming.....	63
4.2.5.1 Presenters and listeners on participatory programming.....	67
4.2.6 Program production and content.....	71

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Introduction.....	78
5.1 Conclusion and remarks on implications.....	78

BIBLIOGRAPHY	84
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.....	90
Appendix 2.....	91
Appendix 3.....	94
Appendix 4.....	96

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

This study is intended to test theory against practice by focusing on the ideal of ‘participatory communication’¹ through community radio. Emphasis is on examining the extent to which ‘community’² members are involved in the operations of Radio Graaff-Reinet, a community radio³ station in South Africa (SA). By examining programming, the study makes broader observations about community ownership, participation⁴ and control at the station.

The study takes into consideration various elements of the South African community radio sector: policy-making, advisory and advocacy organisations, practitioners, academics, and the context of Graaff-Reinet. It treats these elements as being important factors in understanding the context of this case study, and as such treats all of them as a single case study on Radio Graaff-Reinet. I aim to show that, due to a range of social, economic and cultural phenomena, Radio Graaff Reinet does not have in place the necessary mechanisms for realising the South African model of community radio. At the same time, I will argue that this station is still an active and important public sphere to its community because of the societal contributions that are made by this broadcasting service.

This chapter introduces the general background to the thesis as a whole. To contextualize the study, I begin by presenting the history of and current trends in community radio both globally and locally in SA. This will be followed by, a statement of the problem; the objectives and significance of the study; the research methods that were employed; and a general guide to the

¹A communication strategy characterised by its capacity to involve the agents of social change in the process of communication (Dagron 2001:34; see p.24 for detailed explanations).

²Often characterized by a common geographical area, common ties, values and bonds, and social interaction to pursue individual needs and group goals (see Bell and Newby 1971; see pp.15-16 for usage in this thesis and on definitions)

³A problematic term the use of which varies from place to place, but used here to refer to an alternative means of radio broadcasting characterised by community participation in the ownership and control of the broadcasting service (AMARC 2001:2; see Chapter Two for in-depth definitions and variations in application).

⁴Used in this thesis, to refer to the activities of people as dynamic agents of social change who are actively involved and participating in the determination of their own future through a process of democratic dialogue (see Dagron 2001:34-35 and pp 19-20 in Chapter Two).

structure of the thesis. Lastly, this chapter identifies the assumptions that informed the planning of this research.

1.1 Context of the study

Globally, community radio has grown out of a continued concern about people's access to media in an era where the state, public bodies, and advertisers are using their commercial power to control media content in their own interests at the cost of democracy (McChesney 1998:3-6; Negrine 2001:110-112). Community radio, usually strives to be local in context, participatory, and owned and controlled by the communities they target. Today, it is increasingly being regarded by policy makers, advocacy organisations and academics as a viable alternative to mainstream media in that it can be used to give a voice to the marginalized in society that is those citizens whose viewpoints are not catered for by commercial and public media (Lush 2001; McChesney 1998).

In Africa, radio, which is the most readily available and affordable communication tool, is for many practitioners and academics the main form of communication for social change on the continent (Mytton 1983; Iboudo 2000). The drive for development and democratisation across Africa has led to the recognition of community radio in particular as a medium that can be used to speed up transformation by raising awareness of important issues (Mensah 2000:167; Lush 2001:11).

In South Africa, community radio grew out of the grassroots politics of resistance in the 1980s. Community media voiced the concerns of the marginalized and the oppressed by informing and mobilising local communities against Apartheid (Tomaselli 2000:4). In Chapter Two, I point out that these processes of resistance contributed to the establishment of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) as the regulatory body for broadcasting⁵. Through the IBA, the SA broadcasting sector was broken into a three-tier system of public service, commercial and community broadcasting (IBA 1993). It is against this background that the SA community radio sector has continued to develop over the past ten years.

⁵ The principles and policies pertaining to community radio as, laid out by the IBA Act and the Broadcasting Act of 1999 are today overseen by a new regulatory body known as the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA). ICASA replaced the IBA in July 2000. Today, ICASA is the regulator for both broadcasting and telecommunications (OSF 2000:78). See Chapter Two s2.3 for details on the Broadcasting Act.

1.2 Statement of the problem and the objectives of study

This study aims to investigate the role of Radio Graaff-Reinet as a source force for social change, development and democratisation. The community radio policies and the ideals of community ownership, control and participation stipulated by the Broadcasting Act of 1999 as well as by advocacy organisations such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) are to be tested against the reality of Radio Graaff-Reinet.

In particular, the study aims to test these ideals by focusing on participation in programming at the station. It explores the ways in which the diverse community of Graaff-Reinet participates in the process of programming at their community radio station. To fully explore these aims and concerns, the study looks at the ways in which community ownership is practised across all the structures of operation that exist at the station.

1.3 Interest and significance of the study

My interest in this study area was prompted by the opportunity to test theory against practice, to measure the ideals and policies of community radio against the actual conditions on the ground. This interest stems from the fact that SA is one of a handful of African countries that have successfully managed and set up an active community radio sector. Despite the contextual differences, studies of this kind could, I believe, provide insight into the realities of establishing community radio for enthusiasts in the rest of Africa. I also believe that the field of community radio merits further study because SA requires a broadcast sector that is continuously geared towards involving people at grassroots level so as to enhance the democratisation process in this country. For this to happen, present developments in the sector have to be rigorously investigated and criticized.

The question of audience involvement in programming at Radio Graaff-Reinet is worth researching, since it can provide practitioners and academics with insight into the operation of community radio as an aid for social change. For stakeholder bodies such as the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) and MISA, such research provides an opportunity to make comparisons between the challenges at particular stations and within the sector as a whole. Such

comparisons may help to map out a plan of action for this new and evolving sector. For the staff and listeners of Radio Graaff-Reinet, this research offers an opportunity for self-evaluation of the quality of their participation at the station.

Case studies such as this one can, in other words, enable us to make sense of how relevant the ideal models are to the specific contexts of community radio in SA. This helps us to identify strengths and weaknesses within these models and make recommendations about the way they need to be adapted.

1.4 Methods of the study

This study is qualitative in its approach to research. In particular, I found it necessary to employ the research methods of document analysis, in-depth interviews and focus group interviews. These methods grew out of the needs of the objectives of this study.

The documents analysed include the programme schedule of Radio Graaff-Reinet, reports produced by MISA, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), NCRF, the IBA, the Broadcasting Act of 1999 and the IBA Act of 1993. In-depth interviews were carried out with four respondents. Focus group interviews were carried out using three groups. One group was made up of station staff (volunteers at the station) whilst the other two were made up of interviewees from the wider community. Other interviews included telephone and email correspondence with key community radio practitioners. Finally, on the basis of personal eyewitness accounts of activities at the station, I was also able to take note of daily processes and events. This multiplicity of research methods has I believe enabled me to develop a rounded in-depth account that is evident in this thesis.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Including this first chapter, the thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter Two deals with the theoretical underpinnings of the study. Chapter Three outlines the methods of research, analysis and data collection. In Chapter Four, the research results are discussed in light of the research problem. Lastly, in Chapter Five, I present the conclusions and implications of the study.

1.6. Assumptions

In designing my research plan, I made certain assumptions concerning the situation existing at Radio Graaff-Reinet. On the basis of noted patterns within the SA community radio sector, I worked from the assumption that there is a growing tendency for community radio to divert away from its mandate as a radical alternative to mainstream media (see Lush 2001). Similarly, I assumed right from the start of the study that there was a lack of knowledge amongst communities about their right to the ownership and control of community radio stations (see IBA 1999:2). It is with this in mind that I attempt, in the following chapters, to provide a critical analysis of this particular station in a way that will hopefully throw light on what is happening within the sector as a whole.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines what are regarded in this thesis as the key theoretical considerations concerning community radio. Emphasis is placed on the principles of participatory community radio broadcasting.

The chapter first explores current critiques of the media's assumed failure to inform and engage the public. This is followed by an examination of the characteristics of radio as a medium with a potential for media reform and social change. I then go on to discuss global trends in the growth of community radio as an alternative to mainstream media and then briefly explore the links between community radio, development and democracy. The first part of the chapter ends by setting out what is meant by community radio through an exploration of terms such as 'community', 'community ownership', 'participation' and 'access', which inform this type of broadcasting. These concepts are then discussed within the context of the rise of community radio in SA, with particular attention being paid to the role of such communication in processes of and for social change.

In this chapter, I present the argument that the key words in community radio are 'access' and 'participation', indicating a focus on control and ownership by the community (see Mensah 2000). I also emphasise that, given its participatory ideals, community radio is about the drive to engage and involve members of the community as citizens in dialogue and not simply as private consumers.

2.1 Critique of the media

Today, one of the most cited criticisms against the contemporary mass media is that they have failed to fulfil their responsibilities to society; that is to inform the public as citizens due to the pressures of commercialisation (see McQuail 2000:159). To better understand such critiques of the media, it is relevant to look at some of the theories that have been put forward on the role of the media in society.

According to what is generally referred to as the liberal tradition in media criticism, the main role of the media is to act as a public ‘watchdog’ exposing abuses of official authority (Curran 2000:121). Within this tradition, the media is also often seen as an agency for information and debate, a function that facilitates democracy in as far as the media are a public forum for communication between the government and the governed. Furthermore, the media are seen as the voice of the people (Curran 2000:127). The mass media are expected to help secure rights of citizenship by disseminating information and a pluralism of views through which open debate can be facilitated (Neve 2000:3). Through the free market, the media are expected to facilitate expression, information and participation in debates for the functioning of democratic society (Curran 2000:127). This stance can be contrasted to that of the 1940s Marxist Frankfurt School. The Frankfurt School saw the media as an escapist obscenity to social reality and social change in society⁶ (McQuail 1994:34-35; Hall 1982:63-64). Cultural studies theorists such as Stuart Hall (1982) have continued to argue that the mass media are a powerful influence for preventing fundamental change in society (Hall 1982:63-64; and cited in McQuail 2000:96). Within cultural studies the media are seen to be constructing and reproducing those meanings, ideology and values that are offered by the ruling elite power bloc (Schudson 1997:7; Hall 1978:53). Today, critical political economists such as McChesney (1998), Golding and Murdock (2000) insist that the contemporary media system is oriented towards the needs of capital, the result of which is an increase in consumer-oriented and entertainment based forms of journalism (McChesney 1998:1). Within the context of this research and based on the findings in Chapter Four, this thesis rather identifies itself with the positions of the cultural studies and critical political economy.

Opposition towards the current state of the media is often based on the notion of the ‘public sphere’. This notion of the ‘public sphere’ is originally taken from ‘*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*’ 1962 / 1989 in which Jurgen Habermas (1989) uses the term to refer to ‘the sphere of private people come together as a public’ (1989:27). For Habermas (cited in Goldsmiths Media Group (GMG) 2000:39), the media should be judged on their ability to facilitate democratic participation in society through such a public sphere. The ideal public sphere is seen as being a free, unbiased space within society, characterised by freedom from both state and corporate control. It is through the media that people may participate freely, on an equal

⁶ This position is rather similar to that of the 19th century literary theorists who argued that the media was detrimental to the moral order.

basis, in discussions relevant to the 'public good' (Curran 2000:135; McQuail 2000:158). According to this model, an informed, participating citizenry depends on media that play a public service function (McChesney 1998:1).

McChesney (cited in Negrine 2001:110-112) argues that we are living in an age of declining democracy. For him, there is a richness of media within the contemporary global information landscape, although it is not empowering citizens to exercise control over the running of society. The media landscape is characterised by conglomeration, monopolisation, globalisation, media systems that are answerable primarily to the needs of capital and profit. As such, the ideals of the public sphere and democracy are under threat. McQuail (2000:159) argues, similarly, that without the spirit of democracy, journalists are reduced to propagandists or entertainers. For him, journalism without a democratic role is almost as bad as the complete absence of journalism.

The above analyses assume that media should, in an ideal situation be, resource for information, an open forum for debate and discussion and a watchdog on behalf of the public. The argument is that these roles are not being realised in contemporary society. One may conclude that there is need for a movement in media that consciously resists powerful influences, such as commercial pressures, so as to enable it fulfil its democratic responsibility to the public. In the next two subsections I look at the characteristics of radio that have, for our purposes, enhanced the medium's potential as an avenue through which such a movement can be achieved. The focus is on radio's place as an alternative radical medium.

2.1.1 Radio as a medium

According to Bennet (1982:30), the all inclusive phrase 'mass media' is often used in reference to the traditional media of the press, radio and television (TV) as forms of communication. This has created the impression that there is a unified 'mass media' that sets out to target a passive 'mass' audience, with both the media and the audience being seen as devoid of differences (Bennet 1982:30). A close examination of radio as a medium throws doubt on this understanding of media and audience and this is evident when one looks at the qualities of radio (see Hendy 2000).

Radio is often referred to as a 'blind' or 'invisible' medium because unlike TV, print and the Internet, its messages cannot be seen (Crisell 1994:3; Lewis and Booth 1989). It has been argued

that this 'blindness' has led to the de-prioritisation of radio as a field of study, because it is not sufficiently visual in a world that is characterised by an emphasis on visual images (Lewis 2000:163). This lack of critical discussion has often led radio to be seen as a 'transparent' and unproblematic medium, not just by the academic world, but also by practitioners, advocates and consumers of radio (Tacchi 2001:290).

However, the same 'invisibility' of radio can also be seen as one of the medium's main strengths. Recent works by Shingler and Wieiringa (1998:1), and Crook (1999:62) have maintained that radio's 'blindness' should not be seen as a handicap whereby listeners are disadvantaged because they cannot 'see', since they can 'listen in' by using their aural skills. Crisell (2001:246) insists that radio's 'blindness' can actually enable listeners to visualize what they hear through the use of their imaginations even when they cannot see. For Crisell (2001:146), 'blindness' is in fact the prerequisite of the imaginative powers of radio, given that imagination operates at different levels than in any other medium. Imagination more than makes up for the absence of sight, in that it offers insight (also see Crisell 1994:9). This has led radio theorists to agree that radio's 'blindness' actually demands more audience participation. The solitary listener is often aware of being part of a community of other listeners, in a discursive space where people's voices meet for debate through 'talk backs' and 'phone-ins', thereby enhancing its emancipatory potential (Crisell 2001:248 also see Shingler and Wieringa 1998; Hendy 2000:2).

Another feature of radio is that it is a 'secondary' medium, and, possibly because of this, a flexible medium that can be consumed by the listener as s/he carries out other activities. This is in contrast to TV that is often watched with full attention within the environment of the home (Crisell 1994:13; Hendy 2000:2). The argument is that, with radio, we can tune in as we drive, cook, jog, shop or read. It is therefore an ever-present medium that is connected to our daily life activities much more than TV or print (Crisell 1994:13-14). However, radio's 'flexibility' also means that listeners do not always give radio their full attention, thereby possibly detracting from the potential power of its messages (Crisell 1994:13-14).

Radio's power as a 'lived experience' makes it a strong purveyor of immediate news and information, particularly within the context of the local community. National broadcasters do not often cover local news items and yet they are crucial to small communities. It is through local

radio and its listeners that these items can be publicized much more quickly and cheaply than through the press and or TV (Crisell 1994: 13-14). Radio's appeal is also often narrowed down to the view that it is a cheaper and far more portable medium, particularly in situations where poverty, illiteracy and the absence of electric power prevent people's access to TV and the press (Hendy 2000:2). Given that it is a medium that is oral in nature, radio manages also to bypass the question of literacy for many developing countries (Hendy 2000:2).

Today, there are thousands of radio stations in Latin America, Asia, Africa and Australasia. In sum, there are over 40,000 radio stations worldwide. This number is much higher than that for TV stations. There are also far more radio receivers in Africa and Asia than there are television sets (Hendy 2000:2). Hendy (2000) argues that radio is the world's most ubiquitous medium, certainly the one with the widest reach and greatest penetration (2000:2). These features have continued to map out radio as the ideal local medium.

Consciousness of these characteristics of radio will inform my discussions of the findings in Chapter Four. Radio's accessibility, its secondary nature and its appeal to the local, has made it the most convenient avenue for participatory communication and development for the past five decades (Dagron 2001: 14). It is the communication tool most widely spread throughout the world and has always been the ideal medium for change (Dagron 2001:14). As a medium, radio has the potential to address questions of mass media reform. It can be used to operate as an alternative public sphere through which its listeners could be involved as citizens and not simply as consumers. I would like now to turn attention to radio's place as a radical alternative media.

2.1.2 Radio and media reform

Research of current developments within the radio sector in a variety of different countries shows that the contemporary liberalisation of radio broadcasting has tended to lead to an increase in foreign content, due to the high costs of local productions and the new distribution systems that outstrip the supply of local programmes by a considerable margin (McChesney 1999). According to Carver (1995:6), liberalisation has led to an increase in the number of private radio stations however, these stations are dependent on advertising revenue and are for the most part therefore not able to cater for the public's informational needs. These stations certainly often face intra structural constraints such as for example, the high cost of investing in expensive equipment

needed to cover an entire country, or the cost of having to employ sufficient staff to reach a multiplicity of language groups.

As for public service broadcasting (PSB), which has long been established as the ideal application of the ‘public sphere’⁷, is today globally faced with the challenge of having to compete with private radio for commercial revenue and for audiences in order to sustain public broadcasts (Blumler 1992:204). PSB is often required by law to carry programmes that may not be of interest to the majority but are still essential for an informed citizenry (Blumler 1992:204). Against a background of liberalisation and privatisation, public radio is often not able to meet its public service functions.

Murdock (1992:21) argues that to fulfil the rights of citizens, the media has to be both diverse and open. The point here is that the voices of the ‘economically marginalized’ and all the ‘invisible experiences’ of those publics at the periphery of political power must be brought out into the light. There must be both diversity and plurality in the ownership of the media industry, and crucially, in the content of the media so as to enhance the participation of the public in a representative communication system (Golding and Murdock 2000:77; Murdock 1992:36).

It is against this background that advocates of media reform have put forth the need for non-commercial radio. This type of reform calls for ‘community radio’ as advocated for by McQuail (2000), Lush (2001) and McChesney (1999). McChesney (cited in Negrine 2001:110-112) also argues that media reform should be part of the bigger broader political vision if it is to be effective. This includes the establishment of a viable non-profit and non-commercial media sector, particularly a non-profit sector of broadcasting.

In the United States, media reform is often based on a push for ‘civic’ or ‘public’ journalism with the aim of involving the public in debates concerning the day’s news (McQuail 2000:159-160). In Europe, ideas concerning media reform have been directed at the improvement of the public

⁷ It is a system of broadcasting that is publicly funded and operated in a non-profit way, and required by law to meet the various informational needs of all citizens (McQuail 2000:505). As such, public radio is expected to carry programmes that tend to be neglected in commercial systems since they are unprofitable (see McQuail 2000 for more on this).

service media and other non-commercial media (McQuail 2000:160). However, within a developing context, McQuail (2000:160) calls for a 'democratic participant' reform process that calls for alternative grass roots media that represent and express the needs of citizens. This theory found support in the developing world in the 1960s and 1970s with a call for local and community radio. It opposed the prevalence of centralized, commercialised, state controlled and even professionalized media. The favoured media for the application of this theory were small scale, non-commercial and advocacy oriented. Participation and interaction are key concepts within this reform process (McQuail 2000:160). The essential characteristics of this theory are in line with the ethos of community radio.

Globally, various initiatives have been designed to help establish community radio as an avenue for public discourse. In the next section I will look briefly at the global growth of community radio as a forum for participatory communication and social change. This will be followed by an analysis of exactly what is meant by community radio through an assessment of the characteristics, qualities and ideals that are attached to this kind of broadcasting. Lastly, I will describe the rise and context of community radio in South Africa.

2.2. Global rise of community radio

The roots of contemporary community radio are often traced back to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)'s 'farm forums' in the 1940s through which farmers met to listen to broadcasts, study pamphlets and discuss problems with a view to co-operative action in solving them (Lewis and Booth 1990:167-168). By the 1970s this system had been adopted in India, Ghana, Malawi, Zambia and Nigeria. Francophone Africa similarly went on to adapt the 'radio clubs' format that was based on involving members in listener feedback (Lewis and Booth 1990:168). In Africa, 'farm forums' and 'radio clubs' gave rise to 'rural radio' that tended to serve as an alternative media (Fokwang and Eben 2000:37). With a history of over three decades, rural radio is now well established as a platform for alternative media in Africa. It is known as the voice of the people. Through radio forums and radio listening clubs, villagers or farmers meet to listen to a programme and then discuss problems with a view to finding solutions. Discussions are recorded and programmes are made out of them (Ilboudo 2000:43; Mensah 2000).

In Latin America, the famous Radio Sutatenza of Colombia, which was also inspired by the

CBC's 'farm forums', is today one of the most powerful educational stations in the region. With the aid of local administrators, farmers from the community received training on how to improve their yields with the aid of radio in a process of non-formal education. By 1983, 'radio schools' had mushroomed across Latin America, with 42 affiliated to a regional association in 17 of the 21 countries in the region (Lewis and Booth 1990:168). As a result of radio's appeal to those involved in social change, the farm forums went on to adapt a more inclusive framework of operation due to the work of Paulo Freire who insisted on the recognition and use of media as tools for advocacy (cited in Lewis and Booth 1990: 174; Mody 1991:27).

The 'democratic participant' theory is, for instance based on Freire's proposed pedagogy of the oppressed in which the teacher (or media producer), is no longer the authority, but a learner-cum-teacher. That is, someone who both learns and teaches in dialogue with fellow learners-teachers in a context of community involvement (Mody 1991: 27). Freire's approach encouraged peasant participation in the radio schools, thereby replacing the hierarchical system of local administrators with a mechanism through which they would act as facilitators of 'campesino' radio school programmes rather than as mediators of cultural messages from distant political or educational centres (Lewis and Booth 1990: 174).

This switching of the roles between the media producer and the recipient of media content in radio has led Downing (2001:181-182) to insist that local radio offers radical alternatives to mainstream media, particularly at the grassroots levels in nations with substantial illiteracy, including major nations such as India and Brazil. The establishment of local radio has repeatedly contributed to movements of social change in the Algerian revolutions, in the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa and in Italy. According to Downing (2001:181-182), such projects are more pronounced in situations where the state jealously guarded its monopolistic control over broadcasting

In the developed world, community radio is only one small actor on the wide media landscape. It is primarily used as a means of self-expression for groups who may not have access to the mass media (Radio Netherlands (RN) 2001:1). On the other hand, in countries with autocratic or totalitarian governments, as demonstrated by Downing (2001), community radio is often an important voice of opposition as it can be used as a platform for resistance (RN 2001:1). In

developing countries, community radio is also seen as a powerful tool for conflict management and resolution. It is a potential agent for social change, and an engine for democratization (RN 2001:1).

Democracy and development are in themselves not possible without a vibrant communications media that allows for a plurality and diversity of views (Kupe 2001:4). To illustrate how community radio can be used to work towards these processes I use a recent example. In Senegal, young people in the poor suburb of Pikine in Dakar fought hard to get a radio frequency for their station Oxy-Jeunes in June 1999. For three years the people of Pikine, an area known for its rich community life, fought Senegalese bureaucracy with the aid of AMARC in an attempt to 'make themselves heard on the airwaves' since the various national, commercial and international stations were not meeting their needs (Yayoba 2000:1-2). Today, Oxy-Jeunes is well known for its programming efforts that are aimed towards self-expression, development and raising civic awareness (Yayoba 2000:2).

Kupe (2001) argues that the quest to establish community radio is part of the struggle for the right to communicate, a struggle for democratic communication and participation (2001:4). This right is based on the principles of rights to access, participation and self-management in media communications and a notion of media as consisting of avenues for social groups to reproduce their cultural identity, to voice their social and economic demands and to create new social relations (RN 2001:2). The focus on the right to communicate has gained support amongst advocates of media reform in the past three decades as the shortcomings of state and commercial services became increasingly evident (RN 2001:2). Development, which is also a participatory process of social change that is intended to bring about social and material advancement, relies heavily on people's access to media which, for most developing countries, is radio (Maleke 1996:25).

My attempt here has been to provide background to the rise and contemporary situation of global community radio initiatives. In the next subsections the aim is to tackle the question 'What is community radio?' To some advocates and theorists not all of the above examples of 'farm forums' and 'rural radio' can be categorised as community radio. The criteria for community radio vary from place to place and this will be evident when I go on to look at the situation in SA.

However, there are certain key ideals along which community radio is constructed. But, before going on to look at these criteria, I will examine the term 'community' as this will go along way in helping to identify the core characteristics of community radio.

2.2.1 Community

According to Downing (2001), radical media and media which attempts to provide democratic alternatives to media monopolies are often categorized as community media. However, 'community' is a potentially 'fuzzy' word that needs definition and critique (2001:38-39). The word 'community' is, today, often used to refer to a supposedly homogenous group of people for whom the binding factor could be religion, race, class, and opinions. It is in this sense a catchall phrase (Downing 2001:39). More often than not, it is used in reference to a territorial area, a complex of institutions within an area, and a sense of belonging (Bell and Newby 1971:15-16). The usage of the term 'community' is as general as it is specific.

Within sociological theory, the term 'community' is often defined and accounted for against that of 'non-community'. This dichotomous approach to community can be found in the works of Comte, Tonnies, Marx and Durkheim with 'degree of involvement of the human being' as the key-binding factor within a community (Bell and Newby 1971: 15-16). However, if there is a founding father of theory on community, the label best suits Ferdinand Tonnies whose '*Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft*' (1887) (that is 'community and society') narrowed down the essence of community to the intimacy of human relationships (Bell and Newby 1971:23-24). In 'Gemeinschaft', human relationships are intimate, enduring and based on an understanding of where each person stands in society. The culture of the community must be relatively homogenous if roles are not to conflict or human relations to lose their intimacy. Opposed to this is 'Gesellschaft' (society or association) which means everything that community is not (Bell and Newby 1971 24-25). It refers to the large scale, impersonal and contractual ties that were seen by the nineteenth century sociologists to be on the increase at the expense of community (Bell and Newby 1971: 24-25). Tonnies' dichotomy has continued to be the central idea that runs through most academic community studies in that social change is conceptualized as a continuum between two poles of community and society (Bell and Newby 1971:25). This continuum will be noticed in the accounts of respondents on the community of Graaff-Reinet in Chapter Four.

In his '*Community Journalism*' (1995), Jock Lauterer refers to 'community' in community media within the strict traditional sense of small, rural towns separated geographically from the large urban cities (1995:11). However, he also argues that, due to changing demographics, an enlarged vision of the word is required by sociologists. As such, broadly interpreted, 'community' is now used to refer to any group bound by shared values, be it philosophical, political or whatever as in the cases of the gay community, black community, or immigrant community (Lauterer 1995:11). To an extent, it is in such terms that, section 1 of South Africa's IBA Act defines a community as including a geographically founded community or any group of persons or sector of the public having a specific ascertainable, common interest (cited in Langa 2000:1).

The sociologist Zygmunt Baumann (1990) asserts that a community is a group in which factors that unite people are stronger and more important than anything that may divide it, in that the differences between members are minor or secondary in comparison to their essential overwhelming similarities. In a sense, community is thought of as a natural, spiritual unity that takes place as a result of some inherent forces (1990:72-73). In contrast to this natural unity is the case of communities that are created purposefully. It is in terms of the purpose, or of a task to be performed, that the discipline and commitment of members is claimed (Bauman 1990:77). Rather similarly, based on the structure and history of Graaff-Reinet, it will be argued that the community of Graaff-Reinet was artificially created for the purposes of Apartheid.

It is crucial to bear in mind that ideally communities tend to assume the freedom of their members in that coming together is admittedly a voluntary act, at least in the sense that it can be revoked given that membership is voluntary (Bauman 1990:86). All of the above concepts of community are in fact built on the basis of community involvement, that is, the element of 'participation' (Baumann 1990:73-74). This presence of participation can also be found in Carpentier et al.'s (2001:4-5) understanding of community, whereby the defining feature of community is the direct and frequent contact between the members and the feeling of belonging and sharing. In their definitions, they assert that it is through this contact that community members are able to construct their own understanding and identity of community.

Based on the above, it is evident that definitions of community vary from context to context and from academic to academic depending on the purposes of usage. This will be highlighted in my

findings when considering the community of Graaff-Reinet. However, it is also noticeable that most of the above definitions of community recognise the following elements: a geographical area, common ties, values and bonds, and social interaction to pursue individual needs and group goals (see Bell and Newby 1971).

In the next subsection, the point is to investigate what is meant by participatory community radio.

2.2.2 Elements of community radio

‘Community radio’ is a highly contested phrase as it means different things to different people. As hinted at before, this form of broadcasting varies from one continent to another and from one region and country to another. Each community broadcaster is different in terms of their areas of interest, audiences, programming, and the resources available (MISA 1998:2). Attempts to define the phrase tend to take both the commercial and public radio models as their point of reference. A whole range of interpretations concerning this distinctive form of broadcasting, are then ‘framed’ around a set of core themes of for example, ‘community ownership’, ‘not for profit’ and ‘access’. For most advocates of community radio, the ideals of a ‘participatory’ and ‘accessible’ form of broadcasting are the *sine qua non* of this form of broadcasting (Mensah 2000).

In the developing world, rural radio with its ‘farm forums’ and ‘radio clubs’ has for a long time been referred to as a form of community radio. However, critics have been quick to argue that rural radio initiatives do not necessarily meet the ideals of community radio. Kasoma (cited in Mensah 2000:166-167) asserts that rural radio in Africa does not fully represent the views of the people, as it is not ‘owned’ by the people, it is government controlled and it lacks resources to ensure sustainability. Lewis and Booth (1990) argue similarly that the first station that could be referred to as a community radio station in Africa was the Homa Bay Community Radio (HBCR) set up in 1982 in Kenya, where there was a clear cut presence of locally controlled radio production⁸ (1990:171). At HBCR, cultural, religious and educational strands of programming were all developed in the local languages of Luo and Swahili (Lewis and Booth 1990:171). The approach of HBCR was sociological and anthropological rather than simply being journalistic (Lewis and Booth 1990:171).

⁸ Quantitatively, the community radio landscape in Africa has transformed since then with Southern Africa accounting for the most number of stations being owned by local communities (see Mensah 2000).

Fokwang and Eben (2000) point out that community radio is different from rural radio in terms of interest and location. They maintain that while community radio represents and serves the needs and aspirations of groups such as women, cultural groups and minorities, rural radio, particularly serves a people of a given locality (2000:37). Another key issue of difference, for them, is the composition of the audience. While the local community station audience is transient or prone to fluctuations, given the possibilities of social mobility, rural audiences are more or less homogenous and, as such, less likely to fluctuate (2000:37). So, while the concept of community radio may transcend geographical spaces, 'rural' rather implies a given and particular geographical space or location (2000: 37). But as will be noted below, with regard to the rise and situation of community radio in SA, the questions of geographical location and interest depend on the local context of each region and country.

For the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), community radio is characterized by its approach to ownership, programming and the provision of a service to a geographical area. The structure should allow membership and management by the members of the community at large (CRTC 1999:1). Programming should be based on community access and should reflect the 'special interests' of the listeners it is licensed to serve (CRTC 1999:1). Although the CRTC considers their definition to be holistic, the aspect relating to the special interests of the listeners was, in 1999, modified to the provision of 'a variety of services to the community'. The reason for this change was that it was not sufficiently realistic to expect a community radio station to reflect all the interests of its community (CRTC 1999:1).

The picture that emerges from the above arguments is that most models of community radio are based on the belief that stations should be structured in such a way as to enable the audience to take control of the management and programming operations in a fashion that state and commercial stations never can or will (see RN 2001:2). The aim is to put the management of the station into the hands of those who use and listen to the station. This model of community broadcasting challenges the traditional division between broadcasters on one side and listeners on the other side. Here, the consumer becomes a broadcaster (RN, 2001:2), not only in the sense that s/he gains access to the airwaves but, more importantly, because of the opportunity to get involved in the production and management of communication systems and in the ownership and

control of the means of production. This, for most advocates of community radio, is exactly what is meant by participatory broadcasting, whereby the receiver gets involved whilst also maintaining control 'access' of the broadcasting operation (also see Berger 1996:7).

According to Crissell (1998), local community radio is able to carry out a 'public service' duty by providing its listeners with a diverse set of informed interpretations of contemporary topics and events that are relevant to their immediate local context (1998:33). With the aid of studio discussions amongst other formats, debates and phone-ins, presenters from within the community are able to locate reactions and responses to news and current affairs (Crisell 1998:34). The presenters act as 'brokers' between the news and 'the community', in the form of studio guests, listeners, letter writers, phone callers etc. Ideally, this is what is meant by radio fostering community debate (Crisell 1998:34). On the other hand, there are pitfalls in the choices that can be made with regard to the formats. For instance, the phone-in and the discussion can be seen as an easy way of filling airtime. The former can be expensive and exclusionary, as one requires access to a telephone in order to participate. But, their contribution to local community current affairs on the radio is seen as being valuable and original in as far as it offers the listeners an opportunity for them to participate in public discourse (Mody 1991; Crisell 1998).

Crissell (1998) asserts that the dynamic interaction between the news and the responses to it by the community can itself become newsworthy. The notion of 'the news' is, therefore, extended from news as mere relaying of information to news as a matter of dialogue or debate (Crisell 1998:34). As such, Crisell maintains that the strength of community radio projects lies in their ability to focus on those issues and events that are not regarded by the agenda setters as relevant to the national, public, provincial and regional media. Such events are then often reported as practical information of direct relevance for listeners in the form of local market prices, local appeals for social and economic advancement, local weather and travel updates, all of which engage listeners (Crisell 1998:33). The aim is to focus on the provision of local content, news and culture.

The definition of community radio is clearly a contested issue, given that it varies in its contextual application. An exact definition of community radio is elusive, since there are many different models of community broadcasting (RN 2001:1). Without taking on a relativist stand-

point it could be argued that attempts towards a unifying definition of ‘community radio’, are in themselves flawed given that it is a form of participatory broadcasting that is based on the spontaneity of human agents in a specific differentiated local context (see Kiely 1995:153-165 on relativism and social change). Nevertheless, AMARC argues that there are certain key issues that are evident in most community radio. These include: a participatory form of broadcasting in which access to the medium is key; a focus on programming content that addresses the concerns of the local community; and the view that it is often used as a tool for democracy and social development (AMARC 2001:1-5).

I argue in this thesis that the concepts that are crucial to the understanding of community radio are ‘participation’ and ‘access’. As suggested above, advocates of media reform are increasingly recognizing the relevance of participation and access in participatory communication. However, there is still a lack of an accurate definition of these two terms. Similar to the terms ‘community’ and ‘community radio’, the use and application of ‘participation’ and ‘access’, also largely depends on the context in which they are used (Dagron 2001:8). In this thesis, I use ‘participation’ to refer to the activities of people who are acting as dynamic agents of social change that is people who are actively involved and participating in the determination of their own future through a process of democratic dialogue (Dagron 2001:34-35).

Dagron (2001) argues that participatory communication processes are not defined easily because they cannot be considered in terms of a unified model of communication. He goes on to caution against the eagerness for labels and definitions, in that these labels could very well ‘freeze’ a communication movement that is still shaping itself and that may be more valuable precisely because of its variety and looseness. Dagron (2001:8) explains that ‘the word ‘participation’ is kaleidoscopic, it changes its colour and shape at the will of the hands in which it is held’. As hinted at before, ‘access’ is often used to refer to the means through which the community can get to control and own its own means of communication. Access means that the community has got the power to actively participate in the scheduling and content of the station and have a say in the scheduling and content of programmes (AMARC 2001:2-4; also see Berger 1996).

I would argue that the terms ‘participation’ and ‘access’, when used in relation to community radio, should refer to community involvement in the structures and processes of a station that is

owned and controlled by the same participating community. Note, however, that such participation can vary from total ownership and control of a radio station to restricted audience involvement in programming and management. This indicates that for community radio to be effective, participation and control have both got to be in place. Also note, that there are some problems attached to placing participation at the centre of community radio and this will be evident in my findings.

2.3 The rise of community radio in South Africa

Until the 1990s' the democratic movement in South Africa had largely ignored broadcasting as a site of resistance. However, there were a few exceptions such as Radio Freedom the African National Congress (ANC) owned station broadcasting from exile and Cassette Education Trust (CASET), in Cape Town which, distributed audiocassettes as a training ground for future community radio (Gorfinkel 2001:1). The years of struggle were of course a time of widespread criticism of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), because of its role as a mouthpiece for the Apartheid government (Gorfinkel 2001:1). Organisations such as the South African Students' Press Unions (SASPU), Congress of the South African Trade Union (COSATU) and many more played a part in the reformulation of broadcast policy in the late 1980s' and early 1990s' (Tomaselli 2000). These phenomena led to changes in 1991 when the Council for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), was formed. Broadcasting was then placed high on the agenda of all major political players and organisations (Gorfinkel 2001:1). 1991 was also the year of another key event in the struggle to redefine broadcasting, the 'Jabulani-Freedom of the Airwaves' conference held in Holland by Radio Freedom and the Dutch group 'Omroep voor Radio Freedom' (African European Institute (AEI) 1991; Tomaselli 2000:4). These events contributed to the conceptualisation of the Independent Broadcasting Association (IBA), which was set up by means of the IBA Act No 153 of 1993. The IBA was to regulate broadcasting in the interest of the public ensuring fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing South African society (cited in Tomaselli 2000:4; Open Society Foundation of South Africa (OSF) 2000)

Through the IBA Act, South Africa's broadcasting sector was re-organised according to a three-tier system of public service, commercial and community broadcasting. This was part of an attempt to foster public access to the broadcast media, whilst also enhancing the diversity of

views represented within the broadcasting sector (IBA 1997). Today, the NCRF is made up of 120 stations (this figure includes on-air stations and off air stations), with a listener ship of over 1.6 million people in rural, urban, and peri-urban areas (M. Monareng personal communication, October 17, 2002; Nell and Shapiro 2001:1).

The links between movements for social change and alternative media have led Downing (2001) to insist that alternative media are indeed the chief standard bearers of a democratic communication structure (2001:43). Radical alternative media, as in the SA experience, do illustrate that they can be used to expand the range of information, reflection and exchange from the often narrow, hegemonic limits of mainstream media content. They are often in the lead in addressing issues that only later get noticed by mainstream media and activist media organisations (Downing 2001:44).

The IBA Act makes provision for two kinds of community radio stations: those that cater for a geographic community and those that target a community of interest. The geographic stations broadcast to a community whose commonality is determined by their residing in a particular geographic area. Community of interest stations define their target audience in terms of a specific ascertainable common interest. This interest can be in the form of a common culture, religion, or an institution such as a university (Tomaselli 2000:5).

Section 1 of the IBA Act defines a community broadcasting service as one which is ‘fully controlled by a non-profit entity’ and is carried on for ‘non-profitable purposes’, serves a particular community and encourages members of the community served by it to participate in the selection and provision of programmes (cited in Langa 2000:1). The Act recognises the stations as ‘not for profit’ organisations the legal status of which can be defined either as a, Trust, Voluntary Association or Section 21 Company⁹. The organisations may be funded by donations, grants, sponsorships, advertising, membership fees, or by any combination of the aforementioned. Any profits collected are to be put back into the operations and activities of the stations (IBA 1993; OSF 2000; Tomaselli 2000:4-5).

⁹ These are the legal categories available for non-profit organisations. The distinction between them is not really great enough to be of relevance to this thesis.

In SA, community radio stations are by law through the Broadcasting Act of 1999 and by general understanding between the state, ICASA, NCRF, and various civil society organisations, expected to provide programming that reflects the needs of the people in the community. The programming expected to be representation in terms of language, culture, and religion (Broadcasting Act 1999). The programming should emphasise community issues not normally dealt with by other broadcasting services. Programming emphasis is also expected to be on the entertainment, informational, and educational needs of the community (Broadcasting Act 1999:20-21; OSF 2000:84). Crucially too, the stations are to be operated by volunteers, which, according to MISA, helps to bring ordinary people closer to the medium. This helps to provide people with a medium through which they can be informed about their rights (MISA 1998:1-6).

The SA model aims for a multi dimensional process of communication in which views from various perspectives within the community are exchanged using the medium of radio (Mensah 2000:165-166; Lush 2001). Ideally, the producers and the listeners should be interchangeable (Mensah 2000:165-166). It is a case of broadcasting from the community to the community and by the community in an interactive and participatory framework of constant feedback (MISA 1998:2; Mensah 2000:165-166). The community is expected to be in control of the ownership, management, programming and general control of the radio station (MISA 1998; IBA 1993; Tomaselli 2000).

Tomaselli (2000) in her study titled '*Who is the community in community radio? A case study of community radios in Durban, Natal*', focuses on a range of comparative analyses of governance, institutional organisation, programming production and community participation and funding. For Tomaselli, participation is a key ingredient at all levels of structure within successful community radio (2000:2-17). In SA, participation in community radio relies on the use of volunteers from the community as the managers, presenters, producers and technicians that are operating the station (2000:16-17). She also argues that quality participation in programming is an important criterion for assessing the relationship between the community and the station serving that community (2000:16-17).

On the whole, Mensah (2000) argues that, with regard to the context of Southern Africa, the twin

towers of community radio are ‘access’ and ‘participation’ (2000:165). She insists that the key point about community radio stations in SA is not whether people have access to them or whether there are volunteers participating in programming production. What really counts is the institutional organisation of the radio station. For her, the main issues are to make sure that there is community control in the operations of the station and that there are mechanisms in place to make the station accountable to those it serves (Mensah 2000:165). The point, here, is that community radio is not simply about participation but also about community control. These are very pertinent debates with regard to community radio and their relevance will be made evident in my discussions of the findings in Chapter Four.

Finally, Lush (2001) asserts that community radio in SA should not be seen as the ‘third sector’, a label that, for him, underplays its potential (2000:11). Community radio is not simply a tier within the broadcasting sector as is the case of public and private radio. Rather, it is part of a movement that aims to diversify the media in terms of ownership, content, and audience appeal. Community radio should, be understood to as a radical alternative to mainstream media, be it in terms of philosophy, governance, genre, content or style (Lush 2001:11). I end my discussion on the SA understandings of community radio with these views from Lush, on how community should be interpreted. In Chapter Four on the findings I aim to show how community radio is understood at Radio Graaff-Reinet.

In the next chapter, I present the research methods that I used during my study of Radio Graaff-Reinet.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe the methodology used to carry out this study. It outlines the choice of methodology used, the research methods employed, the research procedure and the approaches to data collection and analysis. Lastly, the chapter deals with questions of research ethics. Throughout, the methodological framework is discussed with reference to the overall goals and aims of this study.

3.1. The case for qualitative research methodology

My use of a qualitative methodology was driven by the research question of this study. The problem of research, aims, purposes and goals, eventually determine the research methods that are to be employed (Bryman 1988:5) during the research process.

My study of Radio Graaff-Reinet deals with processes taking place at this community radio station and individual's understandings of these processes. In this way, I attempt to make sense of how the station is seen through the eyes of its members. The importance of prioritising the perceptions of those already involved with the station should not be underestimated. In so many cases, community radio stations are based on models imported from other countries¹⁰. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relevance of these models with regard to Radio Graaff-Reinet. Furthermore, this study, as will be showed in s3.3 and 3.4 below, also took into consideration the relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:4).

To pursue a study of this nature, quantitative methods of research such as surveys with their focus on measurements of data in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or even frequency would limit my ability to examine the views of respondents (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:4). Quantitative studies tend to insist on the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not

¹⁰ For more accounts on the failure of development projects due to vertical planning without involving beneficiaries from the beginning, see Dagron 2001:8-11 and Kiely 1995.

processes (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:4). In dealing with questions of participatory processes of programming and how the participants are involved, quantitative analysis would not be an ideal research technique. On the other hand, qualitative methodology with its focus on processes and meanings, would be the relevant approach for examining the 'how' and 'why' questions that are raised by this study (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:4).

The use of qualitative methods and the examination of the processes and relationships at Radio Graaff Reinet allowed me to specify the relationship between communication and community. I was able to explore the links between the community and participation at Radio Graaff-Reinet (see Jensen and Jankowski 1991:163). Through an examination of these links, I was able to make assertions about the level of community involvement in the activities of the station. As will also be noticed in my findings, by exploring the feelings of specified members of the community, a qualitative methodology allows research to be participatory in the sense that it can avail both the researcher and the community to enter into a dialogue based on checks and balances (Jensen and Jankowski 1991:166). This helps to reduce the imposition of the researcher's ideas onto the views of the respondents. Qualitative research is underpinned by the interpretive tradition of inquiry, which is characterized by a focus on the interpretation of meanings that people give to their own actions (Bryman 1988:50; Jensen and Jankowski 1991:51-52). Emphasis is on seeing the world from the point of view of the respondents. To do this, it is necessary to employ methods that avail the researcher with a detailed and descriptive 'inside view' (Bryman 1988:61-62). This could include the use of methods such as group interviews, participant observation and the analysis of documents which are often rich in depth, detail and descriptive in their analyses (Bryman 1988:103-104; Wimmer and Dominick 1991:151).

To summarise, the methodology used here emphasizes the value of analysis of relationships and processes existing between participants (Jensen and Jankowski 1991:167), in a way that allows one to see the relevance of ideals to the local context. In fact, this kind of work is evident in the publications that are produced by advocates for community radio in the SA context. In its most recent audience research project, volunteers at Radio Zibonele of Khayelitsha, in the Western Cape were able to produce an in-depth report of the community's perceptions, opinions, views and experiences of their station due to a presence of a qualitative component in their overall quantitative survey audience research (Radio Zibonele, 2000:5). AMARC and the NCRF

encourage community radio researchers to use such qualitative research given that its participatory nature is in line with the philosophy and ethos of the community radio sector (Scheepers 2001:3; Jensen and Jankowski 1991:167).

Hopefully, the research in this thesis will make a similar contribution, adding to the pool of information available about what is happening on the ground in SA community radio stations.

3.2 Research methods

Given the goals of research described in this thesis, I found it essential to approach this study within the format of a case study, making use of document analysis, in-depth interviews and first hand on the spot observations. A case study tends to use as many data sources as possible to investigate systematically a group, organization, or event (Wimmer and Dominick 1991:150). It is ideal for studying practical real life problems and situations (Wimmer and Dominick 1991:150; also see Yin 1989). As such, it is suited to the investigation of ideals and models within a real life context as in the case of my investigations on the phenomena of community participation and control at Radio Graaff-Reinet.

Merriam (1988) lists the following as four essential characteristics of case study research:

- that it is particularistic in its focus of the findings,
- that it is descriptive in its results of phenomena,
- that it is heuristic, by providing new insights and interpretations on phenomena being studied, and
- inductive in that new theory, generalizations and principles all emanate from the data being examined (1988; 150).

It is these characteristics that lead me to argue that the case study is an appropriate method of research for generating data that descriptive data that could be of use to the SA community radio context. Concrete details about one station could allow insight by comparison, to what is happening generally in the sector. As such, this could help to build up a picture against which to measure models of community radio.

This study deals with the analysis of policies on programming at Radio Graaff-Reinet. This includes in-house policies at the station and sectoral policies at the national level. Through

document analysis, official reports and written policies on community radio were scrutinized for relevant data on programming within the sector. This analysis included documents from ICASA, the NCRF, and in house documents at Radio Graaff-Reinet such as programme schedules. These sources of data helped to crosscheck the picture that emerged from the interviews conducted with station staff and listeners (Deacon et al 1999:38).

In-depth interviews were used with regard to two station managers, a board member, programming managers¹¹, and an official of the OSF¹². These were the respondents that I had identified early on, as being essential to the operations of the station. During these interviews, I provided minimal guidance on their flow. As such, the interviewees were able to provide detailed information concerning their views, opinions, experiences and feelings on the involvement of people in programming at the station (Bryman 1988:46; Wimmer and Dominick 1991:148) thereby helping to reduce the potential of my own subjectivities onto their feelings.

Focus group interviews were carried out with the aid of three groups, one of which consisted of the staff at the station whilst the other two were made up of community members who listen to the station. I am aware that my choice of three groups may not be ideal given that media researchers have often argued that where focus groups are employed as part of the research process of a study, it would be difficult to justify fewer than ‘six groups’ (Hansen et al 1998:268). However, in other cases, as in the case of my study, where focus groups are not the central methods of research, where they are actually being used to generate ideas for and or to double check ideas from other research methods, Hansen et al (1998) argue that as little as two, three to four groups may actually be used (1998:283).

Ideally, the choice of groups and number of participants to be included in each group is an issue that will depend on the aims of the research and the number of available resources (see Bryman 1988). As will be noted in my discussion of the findings, the data generated by the three focus

¹¹ Between April and July 2001, Radio Graaff Reinet had two station managers both of whom were on different occasions also acting as the programming. I will explain this turnover in the next chapter on the history of the station.

¹² This interview was not conducted as part of the specific case study of Radio Graaff-Reinet. As will be shown in this chapter, Chapter Four on the findings and in Chapter Five on the implications of this case study, the

groups was substantive enough for the purposes of this study. In other words, my limit to the choice of three groups was partly based on the view that additional groups would not ‘produce’ any new ideas that would be fundamentally different from those that had been already collected from the three target groups (see Hansen 1998:268-269 on replication in focus groups). To elaborate, I had noticed early on during the course of each given focus group interview that a lot of the ‘individual’ group findings were highlighting dynamics that had been highlighted by the other interviews. I did not strongly feel that more focus groups would generate totally new and different ideas on the relationship between the station and the community of Graaff-Reinet. The point here is that, the objectives of this research were in my view clearly accounted for by the three focus groups. It is also important to note that constraints in terms of costs and resources also had a role to play in my choice of the groups and their selection.

With these focus group interviews the aim was to find out how and whether group members participated in making decisions concerning programming at their community radio station. Group interviews are ideal for exploring the group dynamics that are shared by people as they exchange opinions through conversations with each other (Hansen et al 1998:283). These dynamics are described in my discussion of the findings whereby the views and interpretations of interviewees are constantly contrasted with one another. As such, the focus group interviews helped to elicit, stimulate and expand on interpretations offered by interviewees (Hansen et al 1998:283).

I carried out two other interviews with respondents that are actively involved in the SA community radio sector. One of these interviews was carried out using a telephone whilst the other was an email interview. Their views were able to allow for comparisons and contrasts between Radio Graaff-Reinet and the community radio sector.

I also kept a detailed record of the general observations that I made during each visit to the station. This was part of my attempt to gain a rounded in-depth account of the daily operations of the station (Bryman 1988:45). Bryman (1988) insists that unstructured interviewing is often used

aim of this interview and two other interviews with practitioners in the sector was to come up with views that would allow for comparisons and contrasts between the situation of Radio Graaff-Reinet and the sector as a whole.

as an adjunct to first hand observation¹³. He argues that it is important for qualitative researchers to counter check the inferences that are gathered from various data sources (Bryman 1988:47). It is with this in mind that this study has been based on multiple research methods, thus ensuring the rounded, in-depth account presented in Chapter Four on the findings.

3.3 Research procedure and the approach to data analysis

An initial visit to the radio station took place between 4th and 7th of April 2001. A go-ahead to carry out the research had in fact already been granted by the management of the station well before this visit, thanks to ongoing communication that I had been conducting with them. Arrangements had also already been made to carry out relevant interviews. During this visit, I formalized and officially introduced the concerns, aims, goals, and benefits of my research to the station and its listeners. Officially, permission to carry out research at the station was granted during this visit. However, by the time of my second visit from the 17th to the 21st of July, the station had in place a new station manager and one new board member. I therefore found it necessary to re-establish a working relationship with the new management reaffirming the aims and goals of my research. This was done through a series of phone calls and official letters between June and July informing them about my research and its progress at the station.

The formal research process was preceded by a literature search for references about the station. This included information on Graaff-Reinet in terms of its cultural, social, and economic context. During the April visit to the station, attempts were made to acquire access to press releases, programme schedules, previous research and audience research reports about the station. In some instances, station staff, were able to provide me with the necessary data. During the July visit I also went to the local municipal offices in Graaff-Reinet to collect data concerning the socio-economic outlook of the region. This data was later on backed up by more recent information that was gained through email communications with the local government office of the Eastern Cape.

Prior to each visit, appointments and arrangements were made with the station manager to establish times for interviews. The station staff arranged times for me to interview the focus groups. The recruitment and selection of interviewees was based on their willingness and ability

¹³ Bryman is referring here to participant observation. I was not conducting participant observation in any rigorous sense. What I did was to make note of some observations during the visits.

to provide the desired information. Their selection was based on the fact that they were part of an already existing network of people- volunteers, members of a football project, and Radio Graaff-Reinet enthusiasts. My interest in each of these groups was based on the hope that the group dynamics that would occur through discussions would throw light on the relationship that exists within the station more generally.

I made sure that the community members I interviewed were all listeners to the station, and that they were also representative of Graaff-Reinet in terms of language, race and sex. This was not only important because they needed to be able to comment on programming in terms of say the languages being broadcast, but it was also part of an attempt on my part to reflect the wider population of Graaff-Reinet in these groups. The first group of community members was made up of individuals that were actively interested in the activities of the station. The second group consisted of listeners with ties to local community projects (see Appendix 1 for details on the group participants). These interviews were held at a neutral setting (the bed and breakfast where I happened to be staying) where both the interviewees and the researcher felt comfortable. The focus group for staff members consisted of volunteers that are actively involved with the station on a weekly basis. This interview was held at the station.

All the focus groups consisted of four participants and interviews were kept within a target of 40 to 45 minutes¹⁴. The in-depth interviews were kept within the range of 35 and 40 minutes. Efforts were made to probe further in cases where the interviewees had misunderstood the question, or appeared to be diverting away from the research question at hand. Prior to the start of each interview, respondents were fully briefed about the aims and purpose of the study. Their consent to be interviewed was acquired in each case. Interviews were carried out with the aid of a tape recorder and an interview guide, which was used to keep the discussions within focus of the key themes (see Appendix 2 for the relevant interview guides). Where relevant, brief notes were taken to capture and observations and gestures on the part of respondents.

¹⁴ With regard to the staff, the four participants accounted for 25% and 33% of the total staff numbers in April and July respectively. As for the listeners a representative number of four participants was the manageable size for the purposes of this mini thesis. The quality of data collected and the related findings appear to confirm the relevance of the group sizes.

The goal with these interviews was to acquire an insider's perspective with regard to participation at the station. This meant that I had to be as methodical as possible during the process of analysis. Since the aim was not to simply select readily available quotes, close to 60 pages of single spaced material were eventually transcribed. After reading through the transcripts, I went on to code and group the responses in accordance to the main categories that I had focused on during the interviews (Hansen et al 278-280). These headings were:

- community ownership (access, control and participation),
- participatory programming,
- management and staffing.

Repeated readings of the material led to the development of other categories such as 'financial sustainability', 'commercialization' and 'monitoring'. These categories were selected keeping in mind the needs of this study and the problem of research¹⁵.

3.4 Research ethics.

According to Maurice Punch (1994), the process of research is permeated by 'politics' both at the micro level in terms of personal relationships up to the more structural of gaining access to research settings (1994:84-85). The argument is that, whether it is a question of funding, a problem of gaining the trust of gatekeepers, the relationship between the researcher and the researched or the decisions of dissertation committees, the research process is a political power struggle characterized by negotiations that are constantly at play (Cameron et al 1993:81). These nuances and struggles do not only influence research design, but also the research findings. I soon discovered that to navigate these struggles I would have to take on a professional code of ethics so as not to compromise the quality of this research. As a result, from the beginning of my research, I aimed to:

- exercise confidentiality, anonymity and privacy so as to safe guard the interviewees,
- avoid deception in the process of my research,
- be honest and trustworthy about my aims, goals and procedures in research (see Punch 1994:88-94 on ethical considerations).

As a result of these ethical considerations, I have used pseudonyms to hide the identities of respondents in Graaff-Reinet, as part of an attempt to safe guard them from any harm or

¹⁵ See the interview guides and the transcripts in Appendices 2 and 4 on the development of categories.

embarrassment as a consequence of this study¹⁶. In the same vein, certain names of places and easily recognizable landmarks in Graaff-Reinet have also been excluded and changed. On the whole, these strategies were adopted in an attempt to arrive at a study that would be acceptable and valid.

However, it soon became apparent to me that, regardless of preparation, dilemmas in fieldwork are inevitable. I found myself having to constantly reassure and persuade the board, in particular, that I was not there to write a journalistic expose (Punch 1994:95). On other occasions, I was denied access to data such as the station's original license application documents. Apart from ethical considerations, there were also some logistical problems that I had to deal with; for instance, I had to fax official letters on university letterhead followed by phone calls, each time that I had a query to make with the board.

Throughout, I was constantly negotiating and renewing my commitment to ethical considerations mainly through discussions with my supervisor and my peers. I had to be reflexive about myself as a researcher; that is, to be self-conscious about my role and my own subjectivity. Similarly, I had to maintain the sensitivity, will and commitment to act appropriately with regard to ethical dilemmas (see Morphet 1994 on reflexivity).

For example, from the start, I was aware that I was going into the research setting with a range of subjectivities both about myself and the object of research. For most of my respondents I was a graduate research student from a university doing a study on community radio. On other occasions, particularly when it came to talking about local popular culture and or when it came to translating well known phrases from Afrikaans and Xhosa into English for my benefit, it was apparent that I was the outsider, being given a lesson on the intricacies of popular culture in SA¹⁷. These power struggles were constantly shifting and so was the relationship between the object of research and myself (see Cameron et al 1993:90).

¹⁶ Note that this use of use of pseudonyms does not apply to Tracey Naughton of MISA, Noma Rangana of the OSF and Andrew Ntsele an independent radio trainer, all of whom are referred to in Chapters Four and Five. As advocates, researchers and stakeholders of community radio in SA (and beyond), their assertions on the sector have appeared before in the public media and in academic publications. Some of the issues that they raise in this thesis are updated versions of views that they have expressed before. These updates are the result of their constant experiences with stations across the country. See Appendix 1 on details of the interviewees.

¹⁷ An outsider to Graaff Reinet and to South Africa since I am from Uganda.

It became evident, particularly towards the end of the research process that, ultimately, I would have the power to determine the way in which I would represent the views of the interviewees in my thesis (Cameron et al 1993:141). In navigating that political line between researcher and researched, I have ended up representing their feelings and views through selected quotes that I am now using as my findings. The point, here, is that qualitative research descriptions are not neutral per se. Although they offer an inside view, they are also descriptions that are permeated by my interpretations and subjectivities. For me to realize all of the above nuances, I have had to be honest and explicit about my role as a researcher with the power to represent someone else's views. However, I still had to bear in mind that the relationship, between the researched, and myself was constantly shifting (Cameron et al 1993:141). My efforts to uphold the above ethical rules and considerations was also driven by my attempt to produce knowledge that would be useful both to the community of Graaff-Reinet and beyond.

In the next chapter I present a discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction

In this chapter I present my description and analysis of the study at Radio Graaff-Reinet. As has been explained already, my discussion of these findings focuses on the extent to which the ideals of community radio are realised through the establishment of avenues for participation in the ownership, management and programming operations at Radio Graaff-Reinet. I will show, firstly, that the station is in a transition that is characterised by power struggles and tensions. I will argue, however, that despite the presence of these struggles, coupled by an absence of clearly defined mechanisms for participation, the station is nevertheless fulfilling some of the prescribed ideals. It will become clear that community members are, in varying degrees, involved in the ownership, management and programming of the station. My key argument remains, however, that there is a lack of management systems to implement the desired goals of community radio. Stakeholders at the station lack a shared understanding and strategy through which they can implement the ideals of community radio. The station does not have well-structured mechanisms through which the community of Graaff-Reinet can gain access to the station. As such, there is a gap between the ideals and the reality and this has to be addressed if Radio Graaff-Reinet is to meet the challenges of an alternative medium for public discourse and social change.

I start the discussion by describing the origins and context of the station. As part of this contextual discussion, I will also present an analysis of the struggle for financial viability at the station. This will be followed by an analysis of the way in which the community of Graaff-Reinet comprehends and appropriates the term ‘community’, which is a key aspect of community radio. Then I look at the avenues for community ownership and participation at the station with an extended assessment of the various opportunities for participation in programming and production, a discussion that is partly based on the requirements of local content and representative language programming.

4.1.0. Context of Radio Graaff-Reinet

Graaff-Reinet is situated in the Eastern Cape province, in the Karoo, a vast region dependent mainly on pastoral agriculture and tourism as the key sources of income (Media Connection

2001). The area forms part of the Camdeboo Municipality, which also includes other towns such as Aberdeen and Nieu Bethesda (Local Government 2001: 86). Recent census data shows that Graaff-Reinet has a population of about 39 000 of which 52 are Asian, 8 867 black, 24 385 coloureds and 5 059 whites (Local Government, 2001:T215). The majority of the population is in the 10 to 14 age bracket with 18 690 males and 19 849 females respectively (M. Kali personal communication, April 19, 2002). The predominant language of communication is Afrikaans, followed by isiXhosa, the second largest language group, and lastly English (Langa 2000; Media Connection 2001).

Bear in mind that the Eastern Cape has the highest unemployment rate in the country with almost half of its people not formally employed (Local Government 2001: 15). Graaff-Reinet has a low literacy rate, and a low average household income. In June 2001, the effects of abject poverty and the high rate of unemployment led the community of Graaff-Reinet to call for an increase in pension grants from the department of Roads and Public Works. This was a result of the increased dependence of the community on pensions as the only source of income available to cater for family needs (Fekisi 2001:1). There are two hospitals, four clinics, six professional nurses, two health inspectors and six pre-primary schools (Local Government 2001: T228-T234). For a population of 39 000 educational and health facilities are scarce. This is the context within which Radio Graaff-Reinet was established and continues to operate until today.

For the rest of this subsection my focus is specifically on the history of the station up to the time of this research. Through this historical background, I will be able to show that there were power struggles right from the establishment of the station by the various stakeholders. These tensions cannot be divorced from the above social conditions of Graaff-Reinet. Indeed, these struggles are reflections of the challenges faced by people in their daily struggles to survive. This account includes individuals, groups and organizations that have been influential in the operations of the station. These include: Max de Wet (founder of the station); Ntombi Nolitha (an ex-station manageress); Deborah Lotter (the station manageress by the time of the second visit); Jan Goosen¹⁸ (a board member, CEO and financier to the station); voluntary presenters at the station and community members who listen to the station.

¹⁸ On introducing the full name of a respondent, I then go on to use only their first name for the remainder of the discussion.

Radio Graaff-Reinet was set up in 1999 by Max, whose efforts to promote the station went as far as lending funds to the project whilst his father provided free rental on the premises it occupied. Max, who is Afrikaans, and a successful businessman in the community set up the station with the support of various non-governmental agencies, businesses and government departments in the community. Initial grants for equipment at the station were provided by the OSF, one of the major sources of funding and support for the NCRF and other community stations in SA. In an interview, Noma Rangana, Media Projects Officer of the OSF, stated that her organization prioritizes its funding for stations such as Radio Graaff-Reinet because they consider such stations to be ‘...important as they encompass larger areas than the community of interest per se’. The station started on a one-year license from ICASA with the intent of catering for the interests of their Afrikaans, Xhosa and English language speakers. The station mission statement identifies the goal of building closer relations between the diverse peoples of Graaff-Reinet by producing educational and informative programmes (Media Connection 2001). These sentiments are the product of the ideals of the South African community radio movement as presented in Chapter Two. In other words, in identifying the criteria necessary to gain a license the station was aware of these ideals and guidelines.

In 2000, Radio Graaff-Reinet was required to re-apply for its license to ICASA. According to an ICASA document on the hearings, the station submitted 22 letters and about 775 signatures, all in favor of the radio station. The letters came from community organizations, schools and individuals (Langa 2000:29). In their submission, the station included proof that they had held meetings with the community to ensure participation at all levels of operation. This was supplemented by evidence showing that programming committees had been set up to assist the community in the selection and provision of programmes (Langa 2000:29). This submission included written contracts governing the loans from the station manager and the free rental of the premises from his father (Langa 2000:30). It was also noted that the applicant's studio would occupy a central position in the town of Graaff-Reinet and would thus be easily accessible to the community. In its application the station went on to argue that there was ‘...a need and demand for the service (community radio) as it would be the only one of its kind to serve the needs of this mostly rural community’ (Langa 2000:29).

During the hearings, ICASA looked for evidence of community participation, community involvement in programming, community meetings, representative programming, local content in the program output, financial viability, technical maintenance and overall sustainability of the station (Langa 2000:29-30). The Authority noted that the management of the station consisted of two full time salaried employees and that other members of staff would all participate on a voluntary or part time basis. The Authority also received evidence that there would be equal gender representation on management (Langa 2000:29-30).

It is useful to look at ICASA application requirements and the way the station responds to them in as far as it represents a good example through which one can see how a group of stakeholders are attempting to realize the ideals of a community radio. ICASA monitors and evaluates these requirements as part of the decision making process in granting a license. The onus is on the station to prove that the requirements are being met.

ICASA had some problems with the initial financial projections of the station in that they appeared to be unrealistic (Langa 2000:31). However, following a commitment from the OSF, the station was able to submit new, more realistic projections after the hearing (Langa 2000:31). Radio Graaff-Reinet, had already secured a commitment of funding from the OSF should they get licensed, and, by the time of the hearings, the station had already received production equipment from them (Langa 2000:30-31). Another concern related to the applicant's founding documents, in particular the clauses regarding the quorum for meetings and the mandate to apply for a broadcasting license. However, the relevant clauses were amended and the applicant issued an undertaking to ICASA saying that it would forward them to the Registrar of Companies for official amendment (Langa 2000:29).

The Authority went on to raise concerns about the possibility of a conflict of interest with regard to the loans from Max and the free rental of premises from his father. Through its documentation of these agreements the station managed to show that the contributions were unconditional and that the station was safe- guarded from external interference at this level (Langa 2000:30).

ICASA, as the final decision maker on licenses, decided to grant Radio Graaff-Reinet a community sound-broadcasting license. They concluded that the station had met the necessary

community radio broadcasting requirements and that it was financially viable:

The Authority was satisfied that Radio Graaff Reinet...had taken adequate measures to ensure representation of the community to be served in its policy-making, operational, programming and other structures. The board was found to be representative of the community...The Authority was satisfied that the programming proposed by Radio Graaff-Reinet would...reflect the needs of its community, as it would address low literacy rates, unemployment and poor health conditions. The Authority also found that the applicant was committed to ...promoting local content and promoting the use of different languages on air (Langa 2000:31).

As such, in July 2000, the station received its four-year license, which also guarantees the legal status of the station as community radio broadcaster as is granted by ICASA. By awarding the station a license, ICASA recognized that the station is a non-profit organization, mandated by law to direct profit surpluses into activities that are of benefit to the community. The same license requires the station to operate as a geographic community radio station that serves the geographical area of Graaff-Reinet.

Radio Graaff-Reinet broadcasts for eighteen hours per day from studios along Church Street, a key access route in the center of town on 90.2 MHz FM stereo. The area of coverage includes Graaff-Reinet, Aberdeen, Murray and the surrounding areas of King Williams Town, Fort Beaufort, Bisho and Adelaide (Langa 2000; Media Connection 2001). Ntombi (the ex station manageress) confirms that, although data about reception varies, indications are clear that the station has a substantial footprint:

But sometimes people will call us and say 'we pick you up 70 kms outside of town' some people will say 'we pick you up 30kms outside of town'. Myself, as I am travelling I could pick us up 30kms out of town.

The radio audience measurement survey (RAMS) data for July 2000 to June 2001 indicates that the station has an actual seven day audience of 19 000 although the data for July 1999 to June 2000 registers a seven day audience of 16 000¹⁹ (Media Connection 2001). The target audience is made up of the Living Standards Measurement (LSM) group of 5-7, aged between 18 and 50 with an income from R800.00 per month. The programming is aimed at the diverse people of the area with talk accounting for 55% and music 45% (Media Connection 2001). Their plan included news, interviews, religious and cultural programmes (see the programme schedule in Appendix 3).

¹⁹ I am using RAMS for 2000-2001 due to their relevance for my period of research.

The first station manager at Radio Graaff Reinet in 1999 was Max, who was followed by Ntombi in 2000. Prior to this, Ntombi who is fluent in Afrikaans and English had spent the last few months volunteering at schools and at the station. She held the position until June 2001 when the position was taken over by Deborah. Deborah, an Afrikaans speaker and experienced radio journalist who had previously worked with the SABC, was brought in by Jan as the new CEO of the station. Jan, an Afrikaans speaker, is a local businessman and owner of clothes store in town. In an interview, Ntombi pointed out that the station came close to going off air in early 2001 due to financial constraints but Jan had stepped in to save them from going under. As such, by the time of the July visit, Jan was planning to steer the station towards financial sustainability based on profits and advertising.

The transition from Deborah who is not a resident of Graaff-Reinet, to Ntombi split the station between old staff and new staff and between black and white. On the appointment of Deborah, Ntombi was asked to join a new board made up of two old members, with Jan as the third new member. She declined and resigned as she felt that joining the board would have taken her off the air and away from the daily activities of the station. Having spent so many years at the station as a presenter and as a manager, she felt that joining the board would have been a waste, as she felt that she still had a lot to offer as on air presenter and manager (Ntombi2).

When Deborah stepped into the position of manager all staff were asked to reapply for their positions. Ntombi and Oscar Gacula, a former presenter and programming manager, were both advised to reapply for their posts with the rest of the presenters and freelancers such as Ntatho Ngesi, Patience Vermaak, Radebe Mbuli and Anton Gray. By July, Ntombi, Oscar and Ntatho were no longer at the station. Oscar and Ntombi had both resigned whilst Ntatho had simply not re-applied for her post.

In a July interview that took place after the restructuring at the station, Ntombi pointed out that some community members were threatening to demonstrate against the changes at the station. According to two informants, the fact that Deborah was not from Graaff-Reinet yet she had been made station manager was not appreciated by some of the station staff and community members. During my July visit, the town Mayor was in the process of trying to renegotiate Ntombi's position with the new management at the station. Ntombi was also threatening to take the case to

ICASA. A particular bone of contention in this dispute appears to be the fact that Deborah was receiving a salary. Ntombi and Oscar are the two ‘full time employees’ (as mentioned in the ICASA hearings) that were supposed to be receiving salaries. However, they had both not been paid for some months. In her second interview, it was apparent that Ntombi personally found the fact that Deborah was getting paid to be a form of discrimination.

In an interview, Deborah pointed out that she was aware of the tensions, but felt that the station had to become ‘professional’ so as to ensure its sustainability. She expressed the opinion that most people were uncomfortable with change, that they prefer to play it safe by doing what they are used to and that ‘it takes a bit of energy’ for people to broaden themselves. In the same interview, Deborah asserted that what she found at the station was an organization lacking structure. According to her, there were new people walking into the station on a daily basis. As far as she was concerned the whole place needed a complete overhaul. Crucially too, she felt that at this level, she simply could not give in to the demands and wishes of everyone:

There must be one captain on the ship and there must be a crew and then you have your passengers and the passengers can’t tell the captain what to do, because then we will land for sure on the rocks. The captain yes, he will talk to his crew he will listen to them but sometimes he must take the decision by himself and that’s my whole philosophy.

According to Deborah, her main task as directed by the board was to make the operations of the station more ‘professional’ and efficient by using four key anchors to cater for the programming and managerial responsibilities at the station. One of the biggest challenges that she faced had to do with continuity in the programming. As such, she was in the process of introducing what she referred to as a ‘horizontal approach’ to programming with set shows throughout the week consisting of, hour-long blocks. This was part of an attempt to make the programming ‘catchy’ for the audience. Her focus was on working towards ‘quality programmes’ through ‘quality broadcasting’ with the aid of ‘quality presenters’. According to her, to achieve this ‘professional sound’, she had to cut down the number of volunteers participating in the daily programming at the station. For her, to achieve ‘good radio’ and efficiency in programming, the number of volunteers presenting on air had to be reduced to four key anchors. These efforts to restructure were met with resistance by staff at the station.

The situation at the station during the period of this research was characterized by a transition

involving various influential external and internal players. The station's response to this situation is indicative of what often happens at grassroots community projects that are not well integrated into their communities. In an interview, Tracey Naughton of MISA comments on the situation at Radio Graaff-Reinet:

Let us not kid ourselves, the set up of stations is normally suggested by an external source and not an idea that suddenly, out of the blue occurs to a community overnight.

It is evident that, despite the principles set out in the licensing conditions of the station, the actual establishment and operation of the project has been powerfully influenced by top down implementation, and a reliance on powerful individuals and organizations. The community was not fully brought on board during the establishment of the station and this exclusion has continued right up to the period of this research. I would argue, in fact, that the station does not have adequate checks in place to ensure that community members and organizations are consulted with regard to making key decisions at the station. As a result, influential individual players are able to walk into the station and make drastic changes without due consultation with community members. This is in direct contrast to the model of community radio put forward by ICASA, in which stations are expected to rely on participation in decision-making by the community in the establishment, planning and implementation of the station. I would argue that this is the reason why Radio Graaff-Reinet is characterized by tensions and power struggles between individuals that are striving to gain control of the station. In the absence of checks to ensure community involvement there is no way of coming up with a shared understanding on how to operate the station as a community radio broadcaster. At a broader level, these tensions are illustrative of the power struggle between the private and the public (personal agendas against public interest), the struggle to control community radio and the struggle for the right to communicate. They are, thus, indicative of the fight to gain access to the right of expression and communication not as consumers but as citizens.

In the next subsection, I examine the context of Radio Graaff-Reinet in terms of its struggle to remain financially sustainable without compromising its mandate as a community radio station.

4.1.1. Financial sustainability at Radio Graaff-Reinet

We saw in Chapter Two that the SA community radio sector is operated on a not for profit basis. Stations are nevertheless expected to make profits, since ICASA guidelines encourage

sponsorships and innovation in trying to attract advertising at stations, on the basis that accrued profits are invested into the operations and activities of the station. Finances have certainly been a factor in the history of Radio Graaff-Reinet. I mentioned in the previous sub-section that ICASA had some problems with the financial projections of the station during the hearings process and that in 2001, Jan had stepped in to save the station from going off air due to financial constraints. Note that, Jan has continued to influence decision making at the station.

The various sources of funding at Radio Graaff Reinet include the OSF, donations from community organisations and individuals and advertisements. However, in early 2001, all these sources were not sufficient to keep the station afloat. One of the reasons for this is that advertising at the station has not been consistent. In an interview, Ntombi pointed out that airtime was, at one point, being sold for as little as R10 or R15 per minute in order to attract advertisers. Although local businesses appeared keen to buy airtime for advertising purposes, there was no well-established advertising strategy at the station. It was against this background that Jan stressed, that the only way a radio station can make a profit is through selling its airtime. He felt that, unless the station was in the position to offer ‘professional advertising’, it was unlikely that airtime would be sold. In the interview he went on to point out that businesses should not be expected to ‘put money’ into a radio station that is of no value to a community in terms of programming and presenting formats. ‘Professionalism within community radio’, he argues ‘is not a need, it is a necessity’.

It should by now be evident that this emphasis on ‘professionalism’ is inferred by the need to attract advertising, and make the station more ‘business minded’ and financially sustainable. Note that, on taking over as CEO, Jan’s goal was to see the station ‘...grow from a community station, to a regional station, from a regional to a national station’ so as to make its presence felt throughout the whole area. For him, this goal was unlikely to be achieved without significant improvement given that the world of commercial radio did not have room for ‘inadequate’ stations²⁰.

This is where Deborah comes into the picture, with her focus on ‘professionalism’ and ‘good

²⁰ This ambitious goal of expanding community radio stations into regional or national ‘commercial’ type ones has been noted at other stations in the sector.

radio'. In an interview, Deborah maintained that she has '...a problem with not having a high standard of broadcasting', the absence of which can lead to what she refers to as 'grunge radio'. '(If) you want advertisers to advertise on your station' she explains, 'you must have quality programming'. In the interview insists that, 'advertising' is the only way to 'keep the dog at the door from barking at us if we don't have money'. Deborah goes on to point out that if funding could be secured from other sources, then this would not lead her to insist on advertising at the station but since such funding was not forthcoming, a reliance on advertising was a necessity.

Some of the presenters ²¹ were aware that they needed to 'go professional' in order to ensure financial sustainability. John Rodgers, expressed a preference for the use of four anchors:

The expansion of the station is a positive thing (and that) may be the former management was more representative but the station was going down...(the reality is)...to survive we have had to adapt a business edge, our near closure was due to financial constraints.

Radebe, another presenter, responded to John by pointing out that the NCRF had been consulted regarding the way the link between business and community radio could be navigated. Guidance was not forthcoming, however, because of the failure of the NCRF representative to communicate the request.

In the July interview, Ntombi also stated that a 'professional' orientation was required at the station, given that funding was 'in dire straits'. She argued that the changes brought in by Deborah were required but the problem was the way in which the new management had gone about the restructuring without involving the community.

Listeners such as Jack Richter appeared to be aware of the struggles concerning finances at the station. He felt that the ongoing search for advertisers and sponsors would, in the long run, exclude the poorer sections of the community, as the station would start paying more attention to the needs of advertisers. For him this meant that those people who did not have money to offer to the station for adverts would not be in position to say anything about the station. Jack went on to make the point that, above all, the radio station existed for the benefit of the community, a role that could be jeopardized by financial concerns.

In response to some of the above comments, Deborah maintained that she did not think that the

station was being run in what she referred to as a 'privatized fashion'. According to Deborah, attempts to meet the demands of producing 'good quality radio' meant that principles of ownership and participation by the community were being prioritized.

According to Rangana of the OSF, commercialization in community radio leads to what is regarded as professional sounding radio and that such values, if unchecked, could end up compromising the 'core values of community radio' particularly with regard to programming content. She insists that ICASA and the NCRF should be more vigilant and active on this issue. Like Radebe, she feels that the key problem is how to reconcile 'business sense and...core community radio values'. For her, these can be reconciled.

Rangana argues that, on the whole, organizations such as COSATU, Media Connection and the South African Community Radio Information Network (SACRIN) need to be brought on board so as to 'work closer to protect section 21 organizations' which are not expected to 'go into business issues' given that they are not investment corporations or business organizations. 'It is not', she insists, 'for the NCRF to do business'.

As hinted at by Rangana, this lack of financial sustainability is a challenge that cuts across the SA community radio sector. It is evident that, with regard to Radio Graaff-Reinet, partly due to its financial vulnerability, the interests of the less powerful at the station are already marginalized and paid lip service. Andrew Ntsele, an independent radio producer and trainer reminds us that, within community radio, '...there are people with different interests and goals, the medium' he explains, 'gets caught up in these internal dynamics'²². I would suggest that a strong business ethic is bound to enhance the close affinity of the station to powerful individuals, public officials, and young men at the cost of other groups in the community. Crucially too, within such a context of power struggles, a strong commercial ethic would perhaps lead to further tension along the fault lines of race, class and gender.

The point, here, is that Radio Graaff-Reinet should not simply focus on a commercial orientation.

²¹ Also, referred to as staff in later sections. In both cases, the binding consideration is that they are volunteers.

²² In 2001, Ntsele oversaw a series of training sessions on radio production with staff from Radio Graaff-Reinet and other community radio stations in the Eastern Cape.

This is not to say that community radio should ignore financial sustainability and the kind of radio that attracts advertisers. With regard to Radio Graaff-Reinet, I would argue that some of the tensions and struggles grew out of its financial insecurity, making it prone to the influence of powerful individuals such as Jan. It was this financial vulnerability that in fact gave him the power to save the station from closure and then bring in a new manager. It is essential for a station to be financially viable in order to protect it from such interference. The challenge for the station is to find a balance between business principles and the ideals of community radio.

In the absence of worthwhile community representation and strategies for improving community relations²³ it is perhaps not surprising that Radio Graaff-Reinet is caught up in a struggle between commercialization and the principles of community radio. This struggle is another phenomena that illustrates, the absence of a clearly defined management strategy through which the need for financial sustainability, and community involvement can be balanced against each other at the station.

In the next section, I examine the ways in which staff and listeners at the station use and comprehend the term 'community'. This investigation will enable me to better explain the struggles and tensions I have described.

4.1.2. The Community of Radio Graaff-Reinet

In Chapter Two, I showed that the definition and use of the term 'community' varies depending on who is using the term, for what purposes and with what intentions. In this sub-section, it will become evident that respondents use race, class, gender, and geography as the basis for their understandings on the concept of 'community'.

When asked about the way she views the relationship between her staff and the community in terms of programming, Deborah says:

The most important thing is to liase with the community. I tell them (my staff), this is like having two attorneys in a law firm, like people working together. We must work towards them (community) but they must also work towards us (station). It must be a linked responsibility...their must be a relationship between us and them and them and us that is so important.

²³ Including the exploration of opportunities for advertising with businesses and organization in the community of Graaff-Reinet.

Deborah clearly views programming as an activity that should involve both the staff and the community as active participants. This understanding falls in line with the accepted view that participatory broadcasting is 'for and by' the community and that the station should be dialogue with its community. However, this is contradicted by her binary opposition of 'them' and 'us' with the station staff and the rest of the community treated as two separate entities. There is a silent suggestion that, it is 'us' the experts who have a relationship with 'them', the uninformed listeners. This is in contradiction to the community radio ideal of encouraging people to get involved in community radio broadcasting by breaking down the powerful hierarchy of 'them' the professionals and 'us' the listeners.

For Jack Richter, a listener to the station, 'community' is permeated by differences. Referring to a meeting to be held at the station, Jack says:

...there is a meeting tonight...it is held without the community...by people (presenters) who run the radio station so that they can express themselves and tell them (management) how we want it to be run.

Jack's use of 'community', suggests that, he is aware that the presenters are, the representatives of the community given that he expects them to 'tell' the management how the community wants the station to be operated. The point here is that for Jack, the presenters and the management are at best not part of the greater community. For him, staff at the radio station, are radio professionals that are not part and parcel of the greater community of non-radio experts. It is apparent that Jack makes assumptions about experts and listeners similar to those made by Deborah. In an interview, Jack followed up on his assertions by pointing out that when it comes to '...addressing the community...especially the black community, the management is not so deeply involved'. In this case, the 'black community' is treated as a group that is part of a bigger community made of different racial groups. The 'black community' is for him the community that is not focused on by management. In consideration of Jack's follow up reference to community, it is evident that when Jack was earlier on referring to 'the community' in the first instance, he was most probably exclusively referring to the 'black community'. This rather goes to show that community is a complex term whose understanding varies according to the context in which it is being used. In this case, race is being used as a point of inclusion and exclusion into 'the community'.

On being confronted with these tensions regarding 'community', Radebe, a presenter, also went

on to point out racial differences in the collective of community by saying that:

Members of the community are having, to make an appointment to come in and see the studio...while whites are shown around without appointments.

This exclusion of the white population from his 'members of the community' rather suggests that, for Radebe, the community is the Black African, Colored and Asian populations of Graaff-Reinet. He does not use 'community' in a collective fashion (although he groups the rest together) and he clearly does not see a collective community.

In the interview, Radebe's comments were quickly cut off by John another presenter and producer, who expressed his surprise at Radebe's. For John, community should be about inclusion and not differences. 'We should not focus too much on race and sectional issues', he argued 'because we shall end up getting caught up in that'. John is aware of the racial differences within the community of Graaff-Reinet but he is willing to look beyond them for the benefit of the station since an emphasis on difference will inhibit progressive work at the station and in the community. He believes in the ideal of the community participating collectively, although he also sees that the reality does not meet this ideal. In the same interview, John pointed out that announcements for attending the meetings were in fact only made to the town community. Here, the community is split into two groups, this time more closely within the classic sense of 'town's people' (urban) and the people in the townships (rural). Geographical location is in this case the defining point of inclusion and exclusions into 'community'.

With regard to the accountability of the station, Sibongile Namhla, another listener, says:

I think the station is accountable to a certain section...may be like the Departments of Health but when it comes to the community...community groups, it is not so accountable.

In this case, Sibongile insinuates that the station seeks to gain acceptance from powerful institutions of government, which are not part of 'the community'. Her understanding of community is in this case focused on schools and community groups. The opposition here is between official government organizations and community groups.

Another way in which respondents drew boundaries for defining who they included in the concept of community can also be found along the fault line of class. This is evident in Jack's feelings

about advertising at the station. On finding out that, advertisements and sponsorships²⁴, were being accepted by the station for those individuals and organizations that were in position to pay for them, Jack says:

But it is a bad thing that they do. It probably means that we people who do not have money to put in there (pay for the ads) can't say anything about the radio station. Meanwhile, when they are referring to it as a community radio station they include us.

Jack is suggesting here that there should be equal access to all in terms of advertising and not a system of special airtime to those with purchasing power.

What we have, here, is a lack of a shared understanding and acknowledgement of differences about community. Binary oppositions in terms of race, class, radio skills and expertise, and geographical location are being used to define and interpreter the concept of community of Graaff-Reinet. These fault lines are basis for including and excluding individuals, groups and organisations into the community.

There is an inability to address these differences and to build bridges across them. This is partly due to the absence of strategies that could be used to address these issues. In light of this situation, I argue that, stakeholders at the station need to identify strategies for nurturing community partnerships, not only with regard to the station but also throughout the entire community of Graaff-Reinet. It is also evident that the Apartheid structure of community organisation is still apparent in Graaff-Reinet. This is an example of a community that was perhaps created purposefully in the absence of natural unity. The factors that differentiate people appear to be more predominant than the similarities. The role of Radio Graaff-Reinet within such a context is to negotiate these differences by establishing strategies for building bridges within the community²⁵.

In the next section, I look at the various ways in which community members are taking part in the overall operations of the station. As in previous sections, I highlight the presence of power

²⁴ Advertisements are often taken on so as to sell a product whilst sponsorships do not necessarily follow this format in that they can be used support the idea or principle behind the programme (for indepth details on these distinctions see Throne 1998:226). Note that, Jack does not make this dictinction clear in his views.

²⁵ Bear in mind that, the SA community radio sector grew out of the struggles against Apartheid and then went on to be established in a context that is still in the process of building bridges not only within 'community' but also across communities.

struggles and oppositions.

4.2.0 Avenues for participation and community ownership

In this section, I examine the various mechanisms in place at Radio Graaff-Reinet to ensure that people participate in the ownership, management and programming of the station. The avenues for participation that are examined here include organisational bodies such as the board of trustees, the management and the station staff, all of which are part of the organisational structure of the station. In addition to this, I also examine processes and strategies at the station, and related partnerships between the station and its target audience of listeners. Some of these processes include, meetings, volunteerism, participatory programming formats, support from organisations and individuals, and the related roles played by the station in the local activities of the community. I focus on the extent to which the organisational structure of the station enables participation and access in programming and production. However, prior to this, I offer a brief account on life at the station based on observations that will help to frame my assessment of these structures, processes and strategies.

4.2.1 Observations on participation and ownership

The observations in this subsection point out some of the relationships that exist between the community and the station. I have already noted that, gatekeepers, powerful individuals and organisations have influenced the station. Now let us look at the inferences of these processes, on the general accessibility, availability and accountability of the station to the community.

As mentioned before, the station is located along Church Street, which is a key access route to the business heartland of Graaff-Reinet. Given the station's central location it was not surprising that on the countless number of times that I asked people in various areas of Graaff-Reinet for directions to the station, the majority of my respondents had a fairly good idea as to where it was located. However, the station is still a good walking distance away from the main residential areas, including the surrounding townships.

On one particular morning, Ntombi was on air presenting the Breakfast Show (see Appendix 3 on the programme schedule) at the other end of the desk was Patience, a high school student who was being trained on how to present on air. Inside the station's main studio, presenters have a

clear view of the street outside by looking through a large double glazed window. It is not unusual to see a presenter wave to passers by along the street as s/he carries on presenting on air.

In another smaller studio, there is a production facility including a computer equipped with the latest audio editing software. However, the desk had not been used in a long time, as most of the editing tools were now mal-functional. The two technical members of staff know how to use the desk but are not skilled enough to repair it. The station was in the process of looking for funds to bring in a professional to carry out the repairs. Radio Graaff-Reinet has got one telephone line that has often been cut off due to defaults in payment of accumulated bills. Since there is no fax machine at the station, the fax number belonging to the neighbouring store is used. Because of this, faxed messages tend to get lost. The station has got a well-established studio with the necessary equipment for radio production and broadcasting and this could be seen as an encouragement for volunteers to come in and make use of this technology however, note that the equipment is on occasion not functional.

There are no bathroom facilities at the station's premises. On one occasion, halfway through one of her morning shows, Ntombi was forced to run across the street to use the bathroom facilities at the 'BP' garage. On her way back, she used this opportunity to pick up the day's newspapers that are offered to the station for free by the 'Lucky 7' café, which is next to the garage. Meanwhile, she had left the studio desk unattended, but she had left on air a long enough music play list that would not end until she got back.

Outside the station, the glass window is usually full of fingerprints and hand marks that are left by people who are constantly stopping by to peer at the world inside the studio. With the aid of some easily recognizable sign language, presenters are able to hold conversations with people out on the street, many of whom are quick to make requests for songs and 'shout outs' to friends and family. Based on such observations, it could be argued that the station has got in place a fruitful physical relationship with its target community.

In other instances, there are strategic initiatives that have been established between the station and community members and organisations. Individuals and groups from within the community have been known to support the station and its staff in a variety of ways. For instance, given that

funding is a key problem, the station also encourages donations from the local community, including business people such as Jan, who provided R2000.00 for their NCRF membership. In addition, according to Ntombi, the taxi operators have been known to offer free transport to station staff given that they are not in a position to make financial donations. With the aid of efforts made by Deborah, the station has also managed to renew its relationship with the local newspaper. According to Deborah, by the time she took over, the relationship between the paper and the station had been broken off for some time. She therefore took it upon herself to renew it:

I always work towards people. I went to the local newspaper and made an appointment with them. I told them, I want to come and talk to you because this is a small town we can't work against each other. We have to work towards each other. So, I connected with them, but that was not done for the last six or eight months.

As a result, by June 2001 the station and the paper had renewed their relationship. The benefits for Radio Graaff-Reinet were obvious given that the station would now receive reduced rates for advertisements in the paper. In addition, the paper was going to provide sponsorship for events and programmes at the station. This led Deborah to claim that, '...we are now working closely with them (the paper) again and it is wonderful'.

On the face of it, Radio Graaff- Reinet appears to prove the point that not only radio experts with years of experience in broadcasting are capable of sitting behind a mixing desk to produce a program. It would seem, that it is indeed possible for a community to take control of the production process of a radio station. Presumably, by seeing their neighbors, children, and friends on air community members can, feel, a sense of ownership the station.

In other instances, as in the reaction of the town's response to events at the station could indicate ownership and claims of ownership. In an interview, Ntombi asserted that, following her resignation, people were approaching her daily and asking, '...what's happened, through letters, the Reverend at the church, teachers, kids, and even the elderly'. This type of concern could be seen as a positive indicator of community members attempting to gain some form of accountability and consultation from the station.

Despite these positive signs, power relations are still a threat to the ideals of community radio at the station. The power imbalances in the relationship between community members and the station are highlighted when one considers those situations in which some individuals at the

station have taken on the role of gatekeepers. In an interview, Ntombi pointed out that everyone appears to know who is involved with the station. 'People see me in the street and they say hi', she adds. Ntombi appears to enjoy this celebrity treatment. She felt that she had gained respect for keeping a watchful eye on what goes on in Graaff-Reinet by commenting on whatever displeased her about the community on radio. She notes, in fact, that people are cautious not to say anything abusive or improper when she is around, because they know that she will attack them on air.

There appears to be a cordial relationship between the station and some community members and organizations. There are various indicators of a sense of community ownership that can be noted from the above observations. Whether it is a free taxi ride, a large donation, or letters of concern, these phenomena could be read as signs that there is a recognised sense of responsibility to the station by various sections of the community. In return for this informal support there is an expectation of reciprocity that the station should be accountable to the community. This type of involvement and support is not easily identified, as it is not a part of station policy per se.

I argue that the above cordial and informal relationships between the station and targeted individuals and community groups should be instituted into policy at the station. There should be well thought out strategies that are orientated to making links with organisations in the community of Graaff-Reinet. The station appears to be relying on haphazard individual staff efforts to build relationships with community members. The station needs to come up with a set of indicators that they can use to identify potential relationships with the community.

4.2.2 Formal structures of involvement: the board

In this subsection I assess formal organisational structures that are put in place to realise principles of community ownership and participation. I start by looking at the board as an established body through which the community of Graaff-Reinet can become included in the operation of the station.

Officially, the board of directors (BOD) of Radio Graaff-Reinet is the highest decision making body of the station. The community of Graaff-Reinet elects the board, which then goes on to appoint the management. In an interview, Ntombi confirmed that the board is elected bi annually at the annual general meeting (AGM). In turn, the board then goes on to select the management of

the station²⁶. Ntombi herself started out as a presenter who was ‘democratically’ elected by the board to take on the positions of station manager and gender and training manager. The board is undoubtedly the highest decision making body at the station, due to the power allotted to it by the community through the AGM. Ideally, through the board, which governs the station in the interests of the community, the community is able to make decisions concerning the operations of the station (see Langa 2000). Consequently, the board is expected to be representative of the community at large in terms of race, gender, class, religion and interests. Ntombi who, as noted before made the inclusion of women at the station her personal mission was keen to point out in April that out of the seven board members ‘...(there were) now three ladies’. She considered this to be an improvement since, in the past the board had consisted mainly of men. The women are from within the community of Graaff-Reinet; one works for the newspaper ‘The Advertiser’, another is a teacher and the other is the head of a school. This kind of representation complies with the ICASA requirements in as far as the board is expected to be broadly representative of the community (Langa 2000).

The board and the management at Radio Graaff-Reinet have on various occasions been involved in struggles over power, some of which are the result of misinterpretations and varied expectations that the board and the management team have of each other. On taking over as manager, Ntombi experienced a lack of interest on the part of the board:

(There were) a lot of problems inside the station and people wouldn’t tell me why. I was being thrown into the deep. Then I found that the board were, not interested enough nor involved enough. And to me that was a big problem because I can’t see how a community radio station can operate without the directors.

As far as Ntombi is concerned, the board as the elected representatives of the community at the station are supposed to know what is going on at the station on a daily basis. The board didn’t live up to her expectations as a result she spoke to the managerial members and told them that as far as she was concerned the board had to go. She called for a public meeting, the result of which led to the institution of two meetings per year, both with the status of an AGM. This, she argued, would not only help to keep the board on their toes, but it would also give people the opportunity to elect the board more regularly if required. This highlights a point that I have reiterated since the start of

²⁶ There are various portfolios relating to the daily management of resources, staff and infrastructure. These include a station manager, discipline manager, programme manager, library manager for music, a religious desk, gender and training manager, news manager, and a deejays (DJs) and presenters representative.

this chapter that there is need for a coherent and shared understanding on how to manage and operate the station. Two ‘AGMs’ per year could potentially mean that there is a new board in place every six months. This is clearly not enough time for a board to establish itself or implement its plans effectively. In as much as processes and management systems may be in need of change, they also have to be given time for implementation.

By June 2001 and following the changes in management, the board was being led by Jan who was referring to himself as the new ‘Managing Director’ or ‘Chief Executive Officer’ of the station. The new board had been in operation for over two weeks with only two of its members drawn from the old board. Out of the seven available seats on the board, only four had been filled. Of the four, two were white, one coloured and one black. In an interview, Deborah asserted that they were now in the process of looking for a fifth person, preferably a woman. Note that individual members on the board and the management team were now already in the process of personally selecting potential board members without consulting the community. Remember that, ideally, the community is meant to elect the board.

Jan was aware of the role that a board should be playing at the station. He correctly stresses the importance of having in place a board that is active and interested in governing the station. In an interview he insisted that ‘...you have to have a dedicated board’ and cited the dedication of the four members that he was working with at that time as an example. He went on to point out that:

When I took over as CEO I did my best to attract people who are willing to give their time, which, is more than often very limited. You see; other people haven’t got their own businesses, so they are limited by the time they can give. It requires dedication it requires interest, which is insurmountable. I cannot have on my board people who are unable or unwilling to attend board meetings...to discuss problems because when problems arise they need to be sorted out straight away.

On the other hand, he also appears to treat the board as if it was a personal initiative that he was solely responsible for without having to get the community involved. In the same interview, Jan insisted that the main reason for the board to exist is to make the ‘radio station sustainable’. He adds that, ‘the board is there to see to the financial progress of the station’ and this includes supporting the station in its growth with the aim of making it ‘run as a business’. Jan saw his role as that of a financier to the station, a powerful individual that is in position to run the station as a commercial entity, a business. This is in direct contrast to the mandate of community radio in SA as highlighted in Chapter Two. It could be argued that, this emphasis on a dedicated board is also

based on the fact that he was planning to expand the station to include the Camdeboo area. As such, the effective participation of the board could be used to pursue Jan's own expansion plans.

Jan felt that, in the past, too many things had been left to the attention of an over stretched management that was failing to make key decisions. As such, at the time of my July visit to the station, he was in the process of extending the board's responsibilities to those of management. This is another example of how the board and the management seem to have varied expectations and misinterpretations about each other's role. For a board to start taking on managerial responsibilities rather than those of governance is an indication of a poor understanding of the responsibilities of each of these structures in community radio. In addition, the station does not have in place lines of communication between its internal structures of operation. As such, there are power struggles between the BOD and the management. In relation to this, there are no initiatives in place for communication and consultation between the board, management and community members. For instance, Deborah was made station manager without due consultation with staff and community members and note that, she was brought in by a board of only two elected members. In addition the remainder of the seats on the board are going to be filled by people that are to be handpicked by Jan and the board. Clearly, the community has had little say in making key decisions at the station. What we have in place is a struggle for participation and an absence of consultation at the community level. It is this state of affairs that has led Radebe, a volunteer at the station, to insist that changes at the station had raised '...issues of transparency, participation, consultation, discipline, and professionalism' all of which are required but seemingly lacking.

Based on the above, one could argue that Radio Graaff-Reinet is struggling to meet the SA model of community radio. The station is experiencing practical difficulties with the model. There are no shared strategies or understandings on how to come up with coherent systems through which the station can implement desired goals of community radio. What we have in place are various powerful individuals each with their own agendas, interests and understandings on how to operate the station. There is need for mechanisms of communication and community consultation.

4.2.3 Staffing and volunteerism

I now turn attention to the role played by volunteers at Radio Graaff-Reinet and how volunteerism

is managed. In the SA model of community radio volunteerism is a recognised strategy through which community members can participate and exercise control over the operations of the station. The commitment of the people involved in community radio, from the board through to the management and staff are in most, cases that of volunteers. Radio Graaff-Reinet was built on this basis right from the start. By April 2001, the station had 27 staff members and, according to Ntombi, none of the staff was getting paid, although she and Oscar (who was by then a programming manager) were entitled to a wage, as was pointed out by ICASA at the hearings. Neither had received salaries in a long while. As far as Ntombi was concerned, everyone at the station was a volunteer.

By July 2001, during the period of the transition being led by Deborah, the management and the entire staff were going through personnel changes. Deborah had, for instance brought in two new people, Eliza and Ria, who were to oversee the record library. Deborah commented:

Eliza is the record librarian and another lady helps her in the afternoon, her name is Ria, these two ladies are the record librarians and now the reason for that again is those two ladies...were available for the times that I needed them during the morning for an hour and during late afternoon for an hour. They are available everyday from Monday to Friday, which is why they are there.

Eliza and Ria are both from Graaff-Reinet. This is a good example of the way in which local people give up their time to participate voluntarily in the operations of the station. In addition to this, Deborah also brought in a 'technical guy', as there were was no one in charge of technical responsibilities when she took over. By '...asking in the community' for a person with technical skills, Deborah was able to find someone to assist with the studio desk.

Radio Graaff-Reinet has a good history of volunteerism. With the exception of Deborah, volunteers from the community (many of whom have no previous experience in radio) operate the station. The station is staffed by the people it serves and, they come from all walks of life, including students, public officials, teachers, young unemployed people, NGO staffers, music enthusiasts, entertainers, librarians, and technicians all from within the community. However, there are, at times, difficulties in implementing volunteerism, particularly with regard to making sure that the volunteers are truly representative of the community of Graaff-Reinet. For instance, most of the volunteers at the station were initially male. As noted earlier, Ntombi acted quickly to change this situation. In an interview, she insisted that males have '...had a hard time' listening to her as a woman in a managerial position. In relation to this, they have also been known to make

sexually abusive remarks to female staff. According to her, with the help of the board, this situation had been brought under control. For the purposes of this thesis, gender considerations at the station are quite crucial in as far they indicate the inclusion, representation and participation of women as a recognised group within the community. Crucially too, this examination on the participation of women as volunteers also indicates that, for volunteerism to work, the station has had to put in place some effective systems for dealing with relationships and conflict management at the station.

In as much as women were not well integrated into the station, ‘black women’ in particular appeared to be the group that was absent at the station. In fact, according to Ntombi, black women were at one time the least represented group at the station. Once again, she had made it her responsibility to change this. In an interview, Ntombi claimed that:

...now I have managed to bring in different views. And now we are very proud to know that (there are) five female black presenters.

As a black woman herself, she found that there were ‘...certain things happening’ which she could only narrow down to race. For instance, in terms of amenities such as transport to travel on station matters she noticed that there was no stipend for her but when it came to people of ‘another color’ she found that things were ‘...working easier for them’. On the whole, she felt that it was a ‘...strain for black people to get into radio’.

The station seems to have some strategies in place for dealing with internal conflicts at the station. In cases of sexual harassment and possible discrimination, staff is encouraged to take their complaints to the disciplinary committee, which deals with most cases of this nature with the assistance of the board. This is the same format that is used to deal with complaints, queries, proposals and comments to the station, that are brought in by community members in the form of letters which are deposited in a ‘big box’ at the entrance to the station. Complaints and concerns are dealt with on a monthly basis by the station. According to Ntombi, however, the board as the key decision making body, ultimately decides on how to respond to ‘...the issues raised usually through the station manager’, may be by replying in writing. These are all initiatives through which, station staff are able to get the community and fellow volunteers to make their voices heard with regard to the operations of their station. Individuals at the station, such as Ntombi, seem to be aware of these initiatives but basing on the struggles and tensions in the previous sub-

sections and indeed in the upcoming sub-sections it would appear to be the case that by July, these strategies were not being appropriately applied and for the most part volunteers and listeners were for the not aware of them. There is need for well thought out strategies of communication and consultation internally between the staff and externally with the target community.

4.2.4 Meetings, participation and ownership

One of the main issues explored in the last few subsections has been the extent to which the community is involved in the running of the station through organizational structures. The station has in place a board and a management team, and arena of staff that is made up of volunteers from the community. It is through these groups that the community is able to participate and gain some control over the station. However, as we have seen, avenues for consultation and communication with the community need to be improved. Attention is now turned to the staff and community meetings, which are a recognised arena for involving and consulting the community in the making and implementation of decisions at Radio Graaff-Reinet, including the annual general meetings (AGMs). Note that, at the 2000 license application hearings, ICASA raised concerns about the clause in the station's constitution dealing with quorums for public meetings. The minimum number of people suggested by the station as representing a quorum for holding meetings was too low, according to the ICASA standards²⁷. In fact, this battle over meetings has been one of the on going problems at Radio Graaff-Reinet since its establishment. Let us see how this has worked itself out at the station. Through my analysis of the staff and listeners perceptions of meetings, I was able to identify important insights that exist within these groups about the overall management and level of participation at the station.

On the whole, most listeners and staff at the station found the meetings to be a good resource for community involvement. For instance, Williams Stewart a listener to the station attends the meetings so as to, '...learn about what they (the station) are planning for us' a community. In the interview, he added, '...the meetings allow the community to hear about what (the station is doing for them)...this is one way through which they inform us'. For Sibongile also, the meetings are an indication that the station is to some extent accountable to the community. Bangile Yanga, another

²⁷ The ICASA document does not give a specific number to the minimum number of people required for a quorum at the station. Also snote that, the station refused to share its constitution hence I was unable to find out the minimum number suggested.

listener (before he started presenting in July)²⁸ felt that the AGM was a good way of getting people to make key decisions whilst also offering them the chance to liaise with their staff. For Bangile, however, the problem was bigger than the question of being informed about the AGMs. Ignorance about the meetings was for him linked, in his mind, to a broader ignorance about the station.

The above assertions from the listeners indicate that they recognize meetings as an arena for enhancing community ownership. On the other hand, there are some problems with regard to meetings that have been continuously in play at the station. These include, inconsistent attendance, poor staff commitment, poor management and application of meetings and related expenses in terms of informing the concerned stakeholders. In an interview, Ntombi intimated that not all staff shows up for meetings due to their other commitments and that on the whole most meetings are held when there is a crisis situation. Once again, this is a reminder of what it means to have a station operated by volunteer staff offering their time out of their own will. In such a situation it is difficult to discipline staff.

The situation is not improved in respect of the AGM, the most important meeting of all. Ntombi pointed out that attendance at this meeting differed from one year to another. Ideally, the AGM represents the formal space in which the community gets to elect their representatives on the board. It is an avenue for access, communication and participation. According to Ntombi, adverts concerning the meetings are often published in the local newspaper and also through the radio station. She adds:

We also issue some flyers, they are issued to every home in the town, so we believe, that the message (gets to everyone)...we had about one hundred fifty seven people present for the first AGM.

Ntombi's assertions with regard to the announcement of meetings were met with criticism from staff and listeners. Many of them did not accept the view that 'every home' gets to know about the meetings. Also, note that Ntombi's 'everyone' consists of those who receive flyers, that is to say the town community. In an interview, John points out that meetings were advertised in the newspaper, which reached the town community in the main and did not reach those living in the township. In the same interview, Radebe argues that this was because people in the local

²⁸ I first interviewed him as a listener / community member. By July, he was on a weekend slot with Radebe. He volunteers at the station now and then when he has the time.

township of Umasizakane could not afford newspapers. He went on to add:

Not all of us have the money to buy papers... Some of them are not interested in buying papers, some do not want to read the papers others cannot even read the papers...most people do not work in companies whereby they may have spare money for papers.

The main issue with regard to the AGMs for most informants was the way in which the station went about informing them about the meetings. Thabo Mbuso, a listener to the station, pointed out that the management of meetings was a demanding task and that the station management should know how:

To deal with a situation whereby you want people to attend meetings...they've got to write posters...that's the only way to get people to a meeting. With radio and papers you won't get that many people...it is hard, it is expensive.

In an interview, Jack argued that participation at meetings could be improved with the aid of three separate meetings: one in the town to accommodate the 'whites', one in the township to accommodate 'blacks' and one in the 'coloured' area to accommodate 'others'. This way, he argued, the station would be able to gather feedback from all the various groups. This rather highlights a key theme that runs through this chapter, and that is to say the absence of a shared understanding of the 'community' and 'community radio' ideals. Jack's views clearly indicate that the community is far from unified. It is a struggle for the station to implement public meetings in the absence of a 'community' that is united in its support for the station. The separate meetings may be able to work but there would be no dialogue between the three groups and this may end up simply becoming a path to another complexity and difficulty for the station. The presence of differences, was further highlighted by Radebe a presenter at the station, when he followed up on his views about the use of the newspaper for advertisements about meetings by pointing out that:

In fact, members of the community are having, to make an appointment to come in and see the studio...whites are shown around without appointments.

The issues raised by staff and listeners with regard to the meetings clearly links back to the already mentioned assumptions and differences about staff and listeners understandings of community in which differences are used to exclude and include groups within the concept of community. The views expressed by John and Radebe about the differences in 'town' and 'township' access to information about the meetings is symptomatic of the legacies of Apartheid. One could argue here that what we have here is a model of community radio that is rather impractical to the context of Graaff-Reinet.

As a reaction to some of the above phenomena, John said that, ‘...the community does not own the station, they are not in control as such (and they are) not fully aware of what’s happening’. In the same interview, Bangile pointed out that people were, ‘... (generally) not interested in the station, they know nothing about the radio station, only few know about it’. However, he went on to caution that attention should not be focused on race and sectional issues ‘...because we shall end up getting caught up in that.’ Jack, a listener, felt that the staff were right in their views regarding the absence of community ownership and control at the station. He felt that the radio announcements for the meetings were also ineffective given that few people actually listened to the station, as it did ‘...not address their interests’. He went on to argue that, the community did not own the station because there were no worthwhile attempts to involve them in the activities of the station. In the interview he asserted that, ‘we feel like they own the station, those people who are working there, the management thinks they own the station’.

The reality of community radio at Radio Graaff-Reinet shows that a lot of the management systems that are required for the successful operation of such a station are either absent or they are not properly implemented. For instance, who are the meetings meant for if they are mainly advertised in a newspaper that most cannot afford? There is, need for systems through which this population of 39, 000 can get to be involved and accounted for in meetings and the related operations of the station. Hutchison (1999) argues that ‘establishing the link between the general and the specific in public discourse is a constant challenge in modern democracies’ (1999: 2). This challenge is playing itself out at Radio Graaff-Reinet in as far as the struggle for participation at meetings is a struggle to participate in a public forum. At a broader level the challenge for the station is to find a mechanism through which stakeholders can get to address their differences about ‘community’ and ‘community radio’. Crucially too, the above phenomena on meetings also indicates that Radio Graaff-Reinet is struggling to meet the current model of community radio in South Africa. The model is struggling to deal with the cultural differences and legacies of Apartheid in Graaff-Reinet. In particular, the challenge for the station is on how to implement the meetings in such a way that is effective, inclusive and representative of the greater community. In addition, the highlighted power struggles taking place at the station with regard to meetings are part of the struggle for the right to communicate in a public sphere. There is need for a strategy through which the majority can get to participate in the operations of the station however this strategy will have to address the differences in place at the station.

4.2.5 Participation in programming

I now turn attention to participation and decision making at the level of programming. In their submission to ICASA, the station pointed out that they had in place a programming committee made up of community members to assist the community in the selection and provision of programming. During my research there was no evidence to back this up. In fact, as will soon become clear, there was no coherent programming vision and strategy at the station. To illustrate this point I will first describe the mechanisms for participatory programming that exist at the station. This is followed by an exploration of the way in which the station addresses the related ICASA requirements and community radio ideals on language and local content, both of which are worthwhile indicators of participation in programming. I will show that there were problems to do with the station's mission to participatory programming and that is why and that is partly why a new manager was able to walk in and make sweeping changes.

This is not to say that there have been no attempts at community involvement in programming at Radio Graaff-Reinet. According to Ntombi, there has always been an emphasis on 'phones ins' and the 'big box' for letters from listeners and community groups both of which are recognised avenues through which people have been voicing their views on programming. The station is also known for having outdoor broadcasts involving various community groups. In the past, these broadcasts have been conducted during school visits, at local sports events, during concerts and other important meetings. On the whole, it was also apparent that some presenters at the station are committed to involving the community with the aid of participatory programming formats. John, a presenter who works at the education government department, insists that he always tries to use 'programming methods' that can get people to participate in his shows. These include, 'phone-ins' especially for the Sunday gospel show, 'live interviews', pre-recorded programmes, 'telephone interviews' and 'outside broadcasts' mainly for the 'School Campus' show which has now been amalgamated into the 'Teenager Program' (see programme schedule in Appendix 2). During the 'Youth Musical Hour', Patience²⁹ argues that the station would get a chance to engage with the community by discussing issues of local concern. In other cases as with the 'Youth

²⁹ By the time of her training in April, Patience was responsible for the 'Call 911' show, from three to four pm on Tuesdays. On Wednesdays she had the 'Youth Musical Hour' from four to five pm. By July, following the arrival of Deborah, these programmes had also been slotted into the 'Teenager Program' (see Appendix 2). On occasion she would join Ntombi for the 'Current Affairs' show, which used to run from six to seven pm.

Musical Hour', they got students on air to talk about issues concerning their welfare:

Weekly letters are sent to all schools in the neighbouring areas, the Principals and Headmasters select students to represent the school at the show. We inform them of the topics of discussion for that week, in turn, the students at the show get feedback from their parents, teachers, peers, and the whole community on the issues discussed...on the show. That way we get feedback from the community and we get the community involved.

On her part, Ntombi insists that it is through the program formats of 'talk shows' and 'call in programmes' that they really get confirmation of the view that the community is participating.

Furthermore, participation in programming can be noticed in the station's guidelines on religious programming. Every day, the station starts and ends its programming with a devotion broadcast from one of the churches. This is continued right through to Sunday, when they broadcast a church service from the different churches in the community (see programme schedule). Deborah points out that, for those churches that don't have the necessary telephone lines for carrying out live broadcasts, they 'try to bring them in on a Sunday night from seven till ten'. In addition to this, the Sunday presenters are encouraged to bring in ministers and representatives from the various churches that are not in position to carry out live broadcasts.

On other occasions, the station has been known to 'link up' with more than one community in its programming. For instance, during the 'Youth Day' celebrations the station linked up with KC Radio, Radio Atlantis and also with Bush Radio, all community radio stations. This 'link up', which lasted for the whole day, brought people from these different communities together.

Through participatory programming the station is also able to make use of opportunities to engage with the public leaders. For instance, as in the case of a June visit from Mr. Stofile the Premier of the Eastern Cape, the station interviewed all the heads of the different departments in a special nightly program with opportunities for listeners to phone in and query their public representatives about their concerns as citizens and publics.

Jan, who felt that there was a need for better integration of government public departments in the programming activities of the station, also called for more efforts that are oriented towards community involvement. For instance, he asserted that the station was looking to bring in the Department of Welfare for a weekly program that would focus on the provision of information

relevant to the community such as the location of pension payouts points. For Jan, this also represented a good opportunity for the Department to come and answer the various questions that 'are being placed to them by queues of people who spend their whole day at the department waiting to see somebody'. Jan felt that most problems presented by community members were general in their nature and so, with the aid of the station, the Welfare Department would be able to address most of the basic queries that are fielded by the community.

These strategies are geared towards enabling the community members to express themselves, to discuss issues of concern through their radio station. But, note that, although some listeners with access to telephones, may be able to phone in whilst others are included as participants at a live broadcast, this does not necessarily mean that they are in control of programming. On the other hand, it is also evident that not everyone is able to gain access to the station. As we saw, the churches without telephone lines have to send their Pastors into the station on Sundays so as to carry out their broadcasts. The challenge here, is for the station to not only maintain the existing participatory framework for programming but to also innovatively come up with programming strategies and management systems that could be used to improve participatory programming at the station³⁰.

As part of her drive to 'professionalism', Deborah had some good ideas about participation in programming. She made it clear to all the presenters that she wanted the involvement of community members in all their programmes by way of research and production. In her own programmes, such as the 'Breakfast Show', 'Women's Issues' and the 'Current Affairs' show (see programme schedule Appendix 3), she made sure that 'people from the community, authorities on the subject of the day' came in and gave their advice whenever it is necessary. She maintains:

I told these youngsters now, if they present a program on HIV/AIDS, they must this week go and tell the principle at the school to announce that, for next week they are going to do a program on HIV/AIDS. They must make sure that all the children in the school know what is going to happen next week with their program and that is an ongoing basis not only once, every week they must inform, their schools through their school master what is going to happen and what subject are they going to discuss on the 'Teenager program' for instance.

Bear in mind that, one of the reasons for the appointment of Deborah was to 'sort out' the

³⁰ However, also bear in mind that at a broader level, people's access to community radio as a worthwhile alternative public sphere, within the current SA socio-economic context is to some extent going to depend on people's access to the basic information and communication technologies.

programming at the station by making it more ‘streamlined’ and ‘professional’. Her intention was to create consistent and continuous ‘good radio’ with the aid of four efficient anchors. This perhaps was what she means by ‘professionalism’ in radio. With programming being catered for by four anchors, the rest of the presenters (about 15 by this time) were to operate as freelancers who would still get time to go on air as co-presenters with the aid of an anchor. By July, the majority of the presenters had been relegated to the weekends (see the programme schedule in Appendix 3 for the number of weekend programmes that are left to the presenters’ choice). In her interview, Deborah argued that changes were required given that she found in place a programming team that did not really know how radio works. She pointed out that she needed to make the station sound more ‘professional’, ‘I told them (that) am strict, I don’t take nonsense...you can’t take nonsense at a radio station...every second counts’.

This new in-house policy on programming caused resentment from the staff. As we shall soon see, this policy turned out to be one of the more controversial guidelines to be instituted by Deborah. Most of the staff I interviewed had problems with the policy given that neither they nor the general community had been consulted. In as much this may be the case, it is also evident that Deborah was able to walk in carry out these changes because there was no coherent programming strategy in place at the station.

One could argue here that, by insisting on ‘professionalism’, the station is rather at risk of downplaying some of the ideals of the SA community radio model. For instance, the reliance on only four key anchors for programming could reduce the diversity and plurality of voices on air. Some advocates of community radio argue that the absence of clear-cut professionalism in the structure of community radio is what one should probably expect and appreciate about the sector (see Lush 2001). I am not saying, here that improvements should not be made at Radio Graaff-Reinet: indeed, as will soon be noted, listeners to the station have been known to switch off due to the poor quality of programming on air. Good quality radio is therefore key to community radio. My point here is that a strong focus on ‘professionalism’ in the absence of checks and balances for the ethos participation and access could widen the gap between expert producer and the recipient listener. This could end up discouraging community members from joining the station, given that the standards may be too high for them. The overriding tension here is between ‘professionalism’ and the community radio ethos of participation, access and ownership. The

station requires a programming strategy that allows for good quality broadcasting that is based on the concept of diversity and representative voices on air.

In the interview, Deborah explained that the rewards of her emphasis on quality broadcasting were beginning to show. She found that when she talked to the presenters about something, which turned out to work effectively, ‘...their little faces and their eyes lit up (to say) thank you we didn’t know that, nobody told us’. For Deborah, this was one of the biggest rewards of being at the station. The condescending tone of this remark does, however, suggest that her notion of ‘professionalism’ is tied up with the view that volunteers are inexperienced non-professionals. This kind of attitude is bound to widen the gap between the ‘expert’ senders and the ‘unskilled’ listeners.

To start with, the station could explore the opportunity of re-establishing a representative programming committee made up of community members through which various community members, groups and organizations could be consulted and involved in programming. There is clearly a need for a coherent management systems for participatory programming backed by a shared vision, mission and commitment from staff and listeners. It also becomes apparent here that Radio Graaff-Reinet has got to come up with effective lines of communication between staff and also between the station and its target community.

4.2.5.1 Presenters and listeners on participatory programming

Now let us see how this lack of management systems impacted on the listeners and presenters at the station. Once again, we will see that the absence of a coherent and shared vision of participatory programming leads to haphazard and short lived efforts towards the involvement of the listeners in the programming operations of the station. The presenters have the knowledge and skills that are required for the successful operation of a participatory broadcasting service, however, there is no forum for them to share this knowledge. They are well versed in the rhetoric of participation in community radio but the challenge is on how to draw on their understandings, and use them as proper resources. In the SA model of community radio the presenters and the listeners should be interchangeable. However, at Radio Graaff-Reinet they are at the interface of that relationship between ‘them’ and ‘us’ as described by Deborah earlier on. Not surprisingly, the station has also failed to use the listeners as a proper resource for participatory programming.

Patience, a presenter and one of the four proposed key anchors, agreed that restructuring was, '...necessary (at the station) since not all departments were working well'. Some listeners such as Jack were also keen to echo Deborah and Jan's emphasis on good radio:

You know, as you listen to the radio you get to know that after this presenter it is supposed to be another particular one. But, when you listen in, you hear that another (presenter) is on air and they do not even apologise to explain the changes.

Thabo another listener similarly complained that too much airtime was being allowed for dedications. He suggested that the station perhaps start thinking about having '...a certain time for dedications because this deejay comes in he takes a dedication, the next one comes in he takes dedications'. He was aware of the participatory potential of these dedications but he argued that they were not well used especially when they interrupt a song. As such, he feels that there should be a specific time slot for these dedications. On the whole, Jack and Thabo felt that the quality of broadcasting at the station had to be improved.

Anton, who works with the local Sports Department at the Municipality, is a sports presenter and producer of sports programming. He uses his access to sporting information to cover the local and national sporting events. For him, one of the main setbacks to community participation in programming is the absence of teamwork in programming at the station. In an interview, he insisted that the programming team lacks unity and that there is disjointed organisation, all of which negatively affects the way in which people can get involved in the programming operations of the station. It is primarily because for these reasons that Anton felt that Deborah was making the station more 'user friendly' and was hopeful that they as a result would be able to bring in more local people to discuss sports issues on air.

In as much as some staff and listeners were aware of the need for improvements in programming, many of the staff felt that there had been no communication and consultation with regard to Deborah's changes in programming. For instance, Patience had to deal with some changes to her schedule as programmes got moved from one slot to another. She felt that '...making last minute adjustments without consulting anyone' particularly with regard to the programming schedule was not acceptable given that this was a community radio station in which 'accountability' and 'consultation' were key issues of operation. In reaction to some of the programming changes,

Patience said that:

This is undermining me and my listeners we are not informed of the changes it is actually, not professional at all.

Both John and Radebe felt that the exclusion of the community in the making of decisions on programming was a key flaw on the station's part. According to Radebe, the four main anchors were also meant to cater for the community in terms of management and presenting. However he questioned whether this is what was meant by community radio by pointing out that:

Bush radio has over seventy-eight presenters on a rotation basis each one comes in at least once a month. That is what is meant by community participation.

Radebe felt that all the questions arising out of this new policy would eventually raise, '...issues of transparency, participation, consultation, discipline, and professionalism' all of which are required in community radio.

Bangile, a listener to the station, narrowed the problem of participatory programming down to the fact that there were no opportunities for community members to express themselves about the programming operations of the station. His views indicate that there is a need for developing strategies for communicating with target community groups on issues of programming. For instance, the language of 'professionalism' and 'good radio' with the aid of four key anchors with all the rest having to work on a rotational basis may be necessary at the station especially since one could argue that it could end up being a more inclusive system given that the rotation allows each of the large number of presenters an opportunity to go on air. However, its benefits have not been sold to the stakeholders, there is an absence of communication and, as far as the presenters are concerned, this new policy is at the risk of denying wider and more worthwhile community involvement.

The above concerns of the respondents at the station rather highlight the concerns of Mensah (2000) discussed in Chapter Two, with regard to putting systems in place to guarantee community control even if there is a presence of participation through volunteerism. Although volunteers participate as researchers, producers and presenters at Radio Graaff-Reinet, they and the listeners are not consulted when key programming decisions are made. There is lack of good management systems to implement participatory programming.

In addition to the above, listeners such as Jack also felt that community involvement in programming was mainly targeted towards certain departments at the cost of other important ones:

(If we can have) the involvement of the Police, the Department of Health and NAPO, which caters for people living with AIDS, if we can have these people talking on air at the station, may be then we can have more listeners getting to decide on programming.

What Jack is suggesting here is that the participation of key services and community groups will encourage others to become involved the programming activities of the station. He found the staff at the station to be inconsistent in their efforts to bring on board the 'Department of Welfare' and the 'Department of Education' to find out about their plans for the year in order to keep the community abreast of what was happening in these key fields. Jack's views on the involvement of essential community stakeholders in programming, mirrors earlier comments made by Jan on efforts to set up a welfare programme led by the Department of Welfare. By insisting on the involvement of the Police, the Welfare and Health Departments, Jack is suggesting that in this way the community would be able to gain access to information that can be applied in their daily-lived experiences. This would especially be the case with regard to the question of AIDS. This shows that, with the right managed principles and strategies, community radio has got the potential to be used as an aid to social change and advocacy particularly contexts where there are large sections of the population that are marginalized by poverty and illiteracy.

The internal and external lines of communication at the station are still haphazard and not collectively co-ordinated, there is no teamwork in programming. Some of the initiatives for participatory programming that are in place such as phone-ins or live broadcasts seem to be in operation more out of personal dedication from individual presenters. Community organizations are not well integrated into the programming operations of the station. Based on Anton's views, I would like to insist that the station could possibly start addressing the issue of community involvement in decision making on programming, by establishing an active and representative programming committee made up of community members. It is also evident that the station needs a management strategy for addressing the lack of unity with regard to its programming team. In relation to this consideration, Ntsele, a radio trainer and producer within the sector, insisted in an interview that in community radio it is necessary to have (internal) production teams and that stations should apply this as a mandate. The aim, according to Ntsele, is that such a team should help to see to it that community groups are consulted on programming issues. He argued that

production teams could go along way in helping stations to identify with their audiences the result of which could lead to the generation of programming ideas from the audiences.

In the next subsection, I continue to address the question of participation and the control of programming this time though, through the requirements of local content and language.

4.2.6 Program production and content

We have seen that the Radio Graaff-Reinet lacks systems for managing relationships within the community. It is also evident that the station does not sufficiently draw on its own resources and those of its target listeners. In this sub-section, I therefore go on to examine what of the ramifications of these challenges for local content and representative language programming, both of which are ICASA requirements. Programme schedules are often used as a check against these two requirements. Note that the schedule has to be more than a document showing the lay out of programmes at the station. As we shall see, Radio Graaff-Reinet does not implement this document well enough. With the aid of particularly useful examples on the presence or absence of local content and language considerations in the program output of the station, I make further comments about the involvement of community members in programming at the station.

Most of the listeners interviewed were appreciative of the local program content that they heard on Radio Graaff-Reinet. Sibongile says that she enjoys community news, which, for her, ‘...deals with the concerns of the community’. All of which is content, ‘...presented to them by people from here’. She found this local news to be a lot more relevant than news from other media sources since it dealt with issues that were much closer to her environment. Nkosi, another listener, felt that the music programmes, sport updates and talk shows with guests from the community actually getting involved in their production as researchers, was a good example of community involvement in the implementation of participatory broadcasting and program production. In another interview, Williams pointed out that, by focusing on local events and functions in the news and music programmes, the station was not only involving community members in programming, but it was also being accountable to them. Thomas Booysen, another listener, found the overall programming output to be ‘acceptable’ but nevertheless he still felt that there was room for improvement in terms of the variety of local content. Thabo expressed the desire for more emphasis to be placed on local content. However, he also pointed out that he

considers himself to be a regular listener who often looks forward to the ‘...the mid-day shows of reggae and jazz’ and in particular the ‘...Sunday shows (such as) the religious one. It’s because I am a believer and it inspires me when am weak’.

Some of the staff is personally committed to local content and representative language programming. On some shows, there is an emphasis on using all three languages in the programming. The primary way that this is done is by using presenters that are representative of the three different language groups of Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. For instance, Deborah maintains that during the ‘Teenager Program’ (see Appendix 3) they use, ‘...a black or a coloured presenter with a white presenter’. The ‘black’ presenter would be expected to broadcast in Xhosa whilst the ‘coloured’ and ‘white’ presenters would cater for the Afrikaans and English-speaking listeners.

As suggested before, most of the listeners were appreciative of the content. The question of language and representative programming was nevertheless raised as an issue of concern both by the listeners and the staff. Most interviewees discussed this issue in light of the already mentioned tensions along the lines of race. They went on to suggest that certain groups of people in the community were well integrated into the program concerns of the station, at the cost of other groups. What will be noticed here is that the station is faced with the challenge of meeting the ideals of a participatory and representative form of community radio.

In general, with regard to local content, Ntombi confessed that the station had for a while been struggling to meet the 20% quota required by ICASA. In an interview, she explained that it was hard for the station to gain access to local content, particularly local music. She found that as a community they had to rely on ‘international music’ and went on to say that this was a particularly ‘big problem for community radio stations’ in general. A good number of stations in the sector are today faced with the challenges of financial sustainability. They do not necessarily have the funds to invest in the relevant audio equipment such as recorders that is essential to the production of local content. In addition, local music is often hard to access given that it is not often easily marketed and distributed at the national and international levels.

Radebe felt that Deborah was not properly addressing the question of representative language

broadcasting. Since May 2001 he had noticed that the most popular show the 'Breakfast Show', was now mainly broadcast only in Afrikaans whereas previously English had mainly been used with some airtime allowed for other languages. Radebe notes that his mother no longer listens to the station, 'she says there's too much Afrikaans and she doesn't understand it'. In the interview he went on to query as to how the station could claim to be working towards participation, consultation and transparency yet they were not involving the majority of the population.

Radebe also offered the opinion that the 'Current Affairs' show previously presented by Ntombi represented an attempt on the part of the station to be as representative as possible as it was broadcast in all three languages. He went on to point out that even this show did not feature a great deal of local news, since presenters focused on news which had appeared in newspapers such as the '*Eastern Province Herald*' and '*Die Beeld*'. For Radebe this meant that presenters were not paying attention to the local issues of Graaff-Reinet. He appeared to be particularly disturbed by the continued use of the weekend's papers during the 'Current Affairs' show on a Monday, insisting that by Monday, those events and stories of the weekend were technically 'no longer interesting'. The challenge here is on how to link the national issues to the local. This is another challenge that is rather common to the sector as a whole. Stations have got to be innovative about explaining and presenting national issues in a way that relates to the local lives of the listeners, But, in the absence of teamwork, programming committees and management strategies for programming it is hard to see how Radio Graaff-Reinet is going to achieve this.

By the time the July interviews were conducted, Radebe and Bangile had both been producing and presenting a sport oriented show at the weekends covering upcoming sporting events in the township³¹. In an interview, Anton, the staff member responsible for sports production, expressed surprise at Radebe and Bangile's programme since he was not aware that there was another sports show on air. For Radebe, however, the need for another programme sprang from the fact that, soccer was, '...not well catered for in the sports programming'. He went on to add that there was, '...no show that fully' covered all the sporting interests of Graaff-Reinet.

In the interview, Anton explained his surprise at hearing that another sports show existed by explaining that presenters, '...come in, see each other but never get a chance to work as a

³¹ This show had been running for 2-3 weeks and it was up to Radebe and Bangile to find a weekend slot.

programming unit...we do not know each other'. John agreed with this perspective by pointing out that presenters tended to focus on their own time slots. He called for an outlook that fosters teamwork particularly with regard to collecting local news. Once again, what we have here is another respondent clearly implying that what is missing at the station is communication, consultation and to this one could add the absence of management principles for realising the ideals of community radio.

In the same interview, Patience insisted that programming was not representative of the entire community since 'there's Afrikaans from morning to evening...Xhosa, has been pushed to the gospel shows on Sunday'. Ntombi also confessed that programming had never succeeded in 'reflecting the diversity of the population' and that people in the townships were no longer listening since Radio Graaff-Reinet had the reputation of being a 'town station'.

With regard to the listeners, Ntatho, a former presenter felt, that on most occasions they had been relying on only two languages, Afrikaans and English without much consideration for the older Xhosa speaking people in the 'location'. In spite of her appreciation of the local content offered by the station, Sibongile noted that programmes at the station were generally not well focused on the interests of the community of Graaff-Reinet. The interests of the entire people are not covered particularly with regard to music.

According to Jack, through the collection of local news, the station would be in a better position to account for and represent the interests of its community members in its programming and in its content. Since crime was an issue in the community, '...there should be a programme on crime...because there is a lot of crime going on'. In the township, he has seen cases whereby known criminals are picked up by the police only to be let back into the community two days later. 'And then you ask yourself what's s going on, how is the police dealing with this'. Related to crime as a community issue is the abuse of alcohol:

Really it's painful we are having small children getting drunk in the township and I think there's something that radio can do about it by getting community leaders to address these issues.

Thabo confirmed that discussion of issues such as: crime; alcohol abuse; drugs and rape would be of benefit to the community. However, his biggest concern was theft in the community. He pointed out that, on one occasion, 'one of the stores, DISKOM, had to be closed' because of

members of the community were constantly shoplifting from the store. The importance of crime as a community issue was underlined by Jack, who commented that, ‘...by closing down the store some of our brothers lose jobs’.

The above feelings of staff and listeners to the station, clearly demonstrate that there is room for the station to take up an approach that is oriented towards representative program output. A quick content analysis of the programme schedule in Appendix 3 also shows that programming is not representative of the interests of the listeners, particularly with regard to Xhosa language considerations. As such, the programme schedule is not being implemented as was suggested by the station to ICASA. In addition, both parties are also aware that there is a need for more local content in terms of sports, crime, news and music. In this case, one could argue once again that the establishment of a programming committee and a production team could go along way in enabling community members to select and provide content for programming. Radio Graaff-Reinet does not have in place a coherent strategy for implementing the goal of participatory programming.

Only a handful of presenters, such as Radebe, were cited as having consistently invited the community by going into ‘the community (township)...asking about what is happening concerning the sport.’ Williams agreed with Jack by asserting that most of the other presenters tend to show less interest in going out to find out what’s happening in their community. Thabo, in turn, pointed out that the absence of local news from Graaff-Reinet impacted on the status of the station as a ‘community’ radio:

There is no news from the location...secondly the little news that is on Graaff-Reinet...is news of things that happen in Johannesburg (so) we do not know what’s happening in our own town.

Interviewees went on to point out that much of the news aired at the station was obtained through a link up with another news station that was based out of Graaff-Reinet. This point led Jack to observe that although he listened to the station until ‘late into the night’ on a regular basis, but, as soon as they switched to the link up station, he switched off. It was pointed out that the absence of local news was surprising given that most of the presenters were from the community.

Naughton of MISA insists that local content, as a requirement, is perhaps the best understood principle in community radio, with most stations being strong on local content. She cautions however, that this is often by default rather than a determined effort that is conceptually developed

or followed through, in terms of program development and content. The point here is that, there is an absence of a well thought out commitment to not only local content and representative language programming but also to strategies for the management of participatory programming at stations. To illustrate this point, by July Deborah had introduced a Xhosa learning program on air. In the mornings when they have a programme in Afrikaans from nine to ten ('Health Hour' see Appendix 3) she had managed to slot in a Xhosa lesson for fifteen minutes from Monday to Friday. Nomvete, a Xhosa speaking translator who is at times aided by an Afrikaans-speaking presenter, conducts the lesson. For Deborah, teaching Xhosa over the air represents an attempt at community integration. Despite the good intentions of this strategy, the creation of this time slot is another example of the absence of well thought collective strategies to implement the ideals of participatory programming. Deborah is assuming here that her main target audience is Afrikaans or English speaking and therefore needs to be taught Xhosa. The Xhosa programme was partly put in place by Deborah as a quick fix reaction to growing pressures with regard to the place of Xhosa at the station. As indicated above Xhosa was not well represented in the programme output of the station.

The discontent concerning local content and language considerations particularly with regard to the listeners went on to expose a sense of alienation between the listeners and the station. For instance, in an interview with some of the listeners Jack insisted that:

Overall we are not connected to the radio station...How can I put it, we are not allowed to express ourselves you know, to talk about the radio station and tell them how we feel about say the programming.

When this group of listeners were asked how the fact that people such as Radebe, Ntombi, Anton, Patience and Oscar were all involved in the station related to the claim made by Jack, it was pointed out that these people were all employees who were participating simply because they had to given that they were all working there. In the interview, Jack insisted that, '...we are not invited to come. For them, they have a responsibility to be there because they work there as part of their job they have to be there'. He then went on to suggest that what was missing was a system through which they could be invited to go into the station and give their input on programmes.

The station does not have in place well established systems for managing the requirements of local content and representative language programming. This situation is not helped by the absence of a broader commitment and mission that is orientated to participatory programming.

Staff and listeners do not have a forum through which they can get to make decisions. For the most part, the station is therefore not able to use its own volunteer staff and its target community as resources for programming content. Furthermore, I would like to add that my focus on local content and language as barometers of representative programming, does not only highlight the need for active participation in programming but crucially too, it also exposes, the trouble with placing participation at the centre of community radio. The mere fact that there are community members volunteering at a station as presenters and producers is in itself not enough. Because Radio Graaff-Reinet is a community radio station this does necessarily mean that it is inherently developmental or focused on programming for social change as is so common in some rhetoric on community radio (media) and development. Beyond volunteerism, the station has got to have in place management systems in place through which to achieve the ideals of the SA model of community radio. Such systems would for the most part have to be backed by a shared understanding on how to operate the station with the community of Graaff-Reinet. The evidence here suggests that, if community stakeholders are not involved in an active and representative fashion, efforts towards community radio for social change will not be realised. For this to be fully realized community control and participation in programming and program production would have to be in place.

In the next chapter, I conclude this study with a sum up of the main points raised in this thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I summarise the argument I have developed in this thesis. In turn I also highlight the implications of the challenges at the station not only for Radio Graaff-Reinet but also at a broader level for the community radio sector in SA.

5.1. Conclusions and remarks on implications

In my introduction, I stated that this thesis would show that, due to a range of contextual phenomena, the reality of participatory broadcasting at Radio Graaff-Reinet does not meet the ‘ideal’ blueprint model of community radio in SA. Despite this, the station is still an important alternative public sphere to its community.

Chapter Two outlined a theoretical framework that would allow me to develop my overall thesis argument. I did so by presenting the emergence and situation of theories and principles on community radio, both globally and in SA, as an alternative public arena that can be used to address the public as citizens and not simply as consumers. I pointed out that academics and advocates of media reform insist that, within developing contexts such as SA, community radio is, in most cases, the ideal medium for an alternative public sphere. I then described how, within the SA context, community radio grew out of the grassroots politics of resistance in the 1980s. We saw that these processes of resistance contributed to the setting up of the IBA as the regulatory body for broadcasting. Through the IBA, the broadcasting sector was organized on the basis of a three-tier system of public service, commercial and community broadcasting. In SA community radio stations are to be local in context, participatory, and owned and controlled by the community. In principle, community members as listeners to the stations are meant to be in charge of broadcasting and programme production.

In Chapter Three I explained the research methods that I would use to evaluate the implementation of these principles. I pointed out that my study would employ qualitative research methods. I used a case study approach, which uses various sources of evidence to study practical, real life situations. The main methods employed included: document analysis, in-depth interviews

and focus group interviews. I also showed that, with regard to my study, qualitative research is not simply about going out there into the field and getting 'it' done. I pointed out that there were power struggles to be negotiated at each and every stage of the research process. Ethical considerations did not only help me to navigate some of these struggles, but they also guided me in my efforts to maintain the quality and validity of this research.

In Chapter Four, I presented my analysis of the situation existing at Radio Graaff-Reinet particularly in terms of community ownership, participation and control in the management and programming operations of Radio Graaff-Reinet. I started by showing that, right from its establishment the community of Graaff-Reinet was not well integrated into the operations of the stations. I also showed that, during the period of this research, the station was going through changes in terms of its governance and management and that this transition was being influenced by tensions across the race, class and gender fault lines of the community. I argued that, in the absence of a good overall organisational structure for operating the station, the SA ideals of community radio would not be realised despite the presence of participation by volunteers. On the whole, some of the main challenges at the station as identified in the findings included:

- that staff and listeners to the station do not have a shared understanding and acknowledgement of differences about community;
- the view that financial insecurity and the struggle for financial sustainability is making the station prone the influence of powerful individuals;
- that the station is on one hand caught up in power struggles and debates between 'business principles' and the ethos of community radio and on the other between 'professionalism' and the principles of community radio;
- the presence of contradictions and power struggles between, the board and the management, staff and management and between staff and listeners about the roles to be taken on by each of these groups in the operations of the station;
- the absence of a forum for addressing these contradictions and the lack of strategies for communication and consultation both internally within the station staff and externally with the listeners and other stakeholders;
- the absence of teamwork in programming and the lack of programming and management strategies that could be used to improve community participation in the selection and provision of program content;

I argued that for the most part these challenges are the result of an absence of effective organizational structures and management systems that can be employed to improve community access and participation. However, I also pointed out some possible solutions to some of these challenges, and these included:

- that the station could find a balance between the ‘business principles’ and the ‘community radio ethos’ with the aid of a strategic policy through which staff could build links with community relationships;
- the set up of a forum or lines of communication and consultation through which management, staff and listeners can get to address their differences and divergent view points;
- the set up of a well structured approach to continuous organizational development and coherent management systems and strategies for guiding the station towards its operation as community radio broadcaster that is representative of its target community;
- the establishment of a programming committee, a production unit and management systems that are directed towards the use of staff and listeners as resources for local content, representative programming and participatory programming.

Before going on to highlight the broader implications of the above phenomena, it is important to bear in mind that in as much as these challenges are unique to the situation of Radio Graaff-Reinet, they are also rather indicative of problems that are being experienced by stations within the sector as a whole. For instance the debate between ‘professionalism’ and the principles of community radio and the struggle for financial sustainability and the operation of stations as community radio broadcasters in the face of commercial pressures have both been identified by Fairbairn et al (1998), and Nell & Shapiro (2001) in their respective studies on community radio in SA. Tomaselli (2000) in her study on community radio in Durban highlights dynamics that are not too dissimilar to the ones observed here particularly with regard to ‘community’, participation and access.

With regard to Radio Graaff-Reinet’s struggle to achieve financial sustainability whilst maintaining the ethos of community radio, the implication is that the station has not only failed to establish links with the business community of Graaff-Reinet, but that it has also failed to be innovative about advertising. At a broader level, stations are for the most part struggling to

convince the business community that they are different and distinctive from commercial radio, and this point of view needs to be sold to advertisers. But for this to happen, the stations will have to show that, the communities backs them and that they are also playing a part in making positive changes in their communities. The logical step in this struggle is for stations to find a middle ground where there is a range of sources for funding without necessarily giving to rely on a single dominant one.

With regard to the broader significance of problems to do with programming, Ntsele, a radio trainer and producer within the sector, insisted in an interview that in community radio it is necessary to have production teams and that stations should apply this as a mandate. The aim here, according to Ntsele, is that the teams should help to see to it that community groups are consulted on programming issues. I would argue that this would have to go hand in hand with establishment of a representative community programming committee³². With regard to this study, the units and committees would have to be used to address the challenges of local content, inclusive language policies and teamwork at the station. The teams would also be expected to brainstorm on how to improve the programming schedule say with the aid of innovative programmes such as radio dramas, plays and stories that could be used to address some of the issues raised by the listeners.

It is here that training can be used to work towards an understanding of teamwork, and the establishment of management systems and strategies that could be used to address the above challenges. In fact, in an interview, Rangana argued that basing on her ‘...involvement with the sector’ there was a ‘need for training, in accounting and financial editing’ across the levels of operation at community radio stations such as Radio Graaff-Reinet. In a separate interview, Ntsele maintained that what may be required, here, is training that focuses on the various structures of community radio, that is, in terms of organisational development, governance, management and funding. In the interview, Ntsele went on to point out that station managers and programming managers do not always have the necessary skills for community radio, given that this type of broadcasting is radically different from mainstream radio and yet many of them

³² These reforms are to a large extent going to rely on meetings and as I have showed before, meetings at the station have failed due to a range of dynamics including race. This goes to show that, participatory community radio programming is a process. It is not simply about the presence of certain phenomena such as meetings (see MISA 1998).

receive their training from experts who are coming in from a professional background of mainstream radio. For him, this is also part of the reason as to why there is a narrow scope of programming formats in community radio, given that most of the training is done by trainers with a 'hard news background', without much experience in other formats. Ntsele insisted that, '...it is crucial to expand on other formats (so as to make) community radio, participatory and interesting'.

In another interview, Naughton cautioned that volunteers may be aware of the rhetoric of participation as in the case of staff at Radio Graaff-Reinet, but without training in practical skills this rhetoric would not be put in practice. She also felt that, training in general had tended to focus on skills and that, while this '...has included training on quality content' it has been at the cost of the practicalities of contributing to development through radio. As such, according to Naughton, the sector is in need of a 'sociological orientation that would more clearly' map out the 'differences between, community, commercial and public service broadcasting'. Training has got a key role to play in this, in that it could be used to remind all those involved in the sector about the specific requirements and ethos of community radio.

I would like to emphasise here that training across the structures of operation is a key requirement in community radio in SA. However, this training has to bear in mind the context, aims and structure of community radio. The trainees have to come from the local culture and context of the station and they have to bring their experiences with them so as to help facilitate the trainers. If anything, the trainees can use their experiences of community radio to direct the training towards the specific situation of the station. This focus on the training of volunteers, actually also implies that for the most part volunteers are expected to operate efficiently as professionals yet they do not get paid for their commitment and efforts. In fact, this is apparent in the situation of this study whereby there is a new focus on 'professionalism'. The sector as a whole might in the long run have to take on a semi-professional outlook given that the current expectations on volunteers are too high and not realistic enough with regard to the struggles of volunteers.

On the whole, the above challenges and implications clearly indicate that there is need for ongoing evaluation of community radio within the sector. The challenges imply that there is need for a mechanism of monitoring and impact assessment. Naughton pointed out that one of the

neglected aspects of community radio in SA is the absence of a system through which we can analyse and monitor the impact of and feedback on community radio. Such a project would require a research process that is oriented towards assessing the original rationale of community radio, that is, the mandate of development and social up-liftment of the communities that are served by the stations. In the interview, Naughton insisted that, ‘...we need to develop a system of affordable and achievable impact assessment and audience feedback’. However, she also felt that there were many impediments to this kind of research, one of which was the business of forcing community radio to compete with all other media for advertising, which in turn ‘forces any attention that is given to research’ to connect the numbers of consumers to advertisers. Advocacy and civil society such as COSATU, the NCRF and the OSF need to get involved in the sector at this stage so as to create arenas through which it can be protected. There is need for more attempts such those being initiated through the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) with plans to help sustain community radio using funds from public and commercial radio.

In another interview, Rangana suggested that a credible research tool for impact assessment could perhaps be achieved through ‘qualitative audience research’, which can be used to ascertain and involve, the local community in the process of programming. As indicated by Naughton, and based on my own experiences with this study one could argue that audience research as a tool for impact assessment as is as suggested by Rangana would, on the whole, require training on research procedure, funds and the willingness for the station to participate in the research process with the aim of acting upon the research results. This sort of initiative would have to take off with the involvement of all the necessary stakeholders, the concerned communities, the NCRF, the OSF, donor organizations and trainers. The point here is that there is need for a solution to affordable, achievable audience impact evaluation and feedback but for this to happen more coherently, advocacy and civil society organisations in SA would have to be involved. The struggle to maintain community radio as an alternative public sphere, is part of the broader process of democratisation in the country, as such advocacy bodies need to be involved in the operations of the community radio sector.

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APPENDIX 1 Details of Interviewees

The following respondents were interviewed with the aid of unstructured in-depth interviews:

Ntombi, Station Manager and Presenter, 5/4/01. Interviewed again on 19/7/01 after she had left the station.

Deborah, new Station Manager and Programming Manager 18/7/01

Jan, board member and Managing Director / Chief Executive Officer to the station 20/7/01

*Noma Rangana, Media Projects Officer for the Open Society Foundation of South Africa interview held on 26/6/01.

The first focus group of community members / listeners who were interviewed on 5/4/01 consisted of:

Thomas Booysen, male in his 20s,

Nkosi Zandile, male in his 20s,

Sibongile Namhla, female in her 40s and

Bangile Yanga, male in his 20s who went on to volunteer as a presenter at the station in July.

The second group interviewed on 20/7/01, consisted of:

Williams Stewart male in his 20s,

Thabo Mbuso, male in his 20s and

Jack Richter, male in his 30s. These three were all members of a project on how to use soccer to keep young people out of crime.

Ntatho Ngesi, a female in her 20s, she had been involved with the station as a volunteer until early June when she left post the changes at the station.

Lastly, was the group of voluntary presenters / freelancers working at the station who were interviewed on 19/7/01. This consisted of: Patience Vermaak, Radebe Mbuli, Anton Gray, and John Rodgers.

The email interview with *Tracey Naughton of the Media Institute of Southern Africa is dated 9/8/01 whilst the telephone interview with *Andrew Ntsele, an independent radio producer and trainer within the sector, was carried out on 2/10/01.

* Not a pseudonym

APPENDIX 2 Interview guides

In-depth Interviews

Station Manager

- 1.Introduction: name, gender
- 2.Role of the station manager- duties, responsibilities....
- 3.Description of the station:
- 4.Audience definition
- 5.Organogram (how representative)
- 6.Staffing (how representative, the use of people from the community)
- 7.Programming
- 8.The Board (Who is who? How selected/elected? Selection process? How representative)
- 9.Financing
- 10.The specific role of the board
- The selection process of the managerial team?
- 11.What are the key management principles/guidelines at the station? (Including those pertaining to programming department)
- 12.In what ways does the community participate in the generation of these principles?
- How is the community involved in decision making at the station?
- Ownership
- Funding
- Staffing
- Technical managerial issues
- 13.How do your management principles relate to the ICASA policies with regard to the operation of a community radio station?
- 14.Gender issues at the station and in the community
- Other issues of access to education, health, HIV/Aids, water and electricity, jobs and issues of unemployment
- 15.Main sources of funding
- 16.Problems, challenges, constraints and opportunities faced by the station.
- 17.Feedback systems concerning the operation of the station

Programming Manager

- 1.Introduction: name, gender,
- 2.Role of the programming manager within the programming section at the station?
- 3.What are the main guidelines/policies/principles concerning programming at the station?
- 4.How do these guidelines relate to the policies of ICASA concerning programming?
- Issues to be probed here include: audience definition, the various interests of the community bearing in mind its diversity (race, class, gender, language, religion) and their expression in programming, local content, participatory programming, community ownership of station....
- 5.In what ways does the community participate in program production?
- In what ways is the community involved in the generation of guidelines/principles/policies concerning programming?
- 6.How is the community involved in the implementation of these policies in the actual programming production process?
- 7.Feedback systems concerning programming?
- 8.Problems, constraints, and challenges faced in programming department vis-à-vis attempts to involve the community.
- More general problems faced by programming department?

10. Opportunities faced by programming department.

Board member/s

1. Introduction: name, gender...
2. Profiles of other board members and length of tenure?
3. Role of the board and major responsibilities (governance)? - Probe within context of management and programming.
4. On management and staffing (selection, roles and performance).
4. Community ownership and participation probe as in 3 and more.
5. Sources of funding and the sustainability of the station (financial)
6. Challenges and opportunities for RGR as a community radio (future)?

Focus Groups

Volunteers at the station (presenters, technical staff, researchers, producers)

Introduction: 5min

This research is about the participation of the community in the ownership, management and programming operations of Radio Graaff Reinet. Of key interest is the way in which you are involved in the making and implementation of policies and guidelines concerning programming and program production.

Group:

Size of Group:

Group Members:

Age:

Gender:

1. What are the main guidelines concerning programming? 5min
2. How do you participate in the formulation of these guidelines? 5min
3. What strategies are in place for you to involve the community in the generation of these guidelines? 5 min
4. In your role (or otherwise) at the station how do you see to it that these guidelines are practised/implemented in actual programming production process? 5min
5. What strategies are in place for you to involve the community in the implementation of these guidelines in the actual programming production process? 5min
6. Problems, constraints, challenges and opportunities. 5min
7. Feedback systems. 5min

Members of the community/ listeners to the station

Introduction:

This research is about the participation of the community in the ownership, management and programming operations of Radio Graaff Reinet. A key interest is the way community members like you, are involved in the making and implementation of policies and guidelines concerning programming.

Group:

Size of Group:

Group Members:

Age:

Gender:

Group Members:

- 1.How are you involved in the operations of the station / to what extent would you say that you the community are the owners of the station? 3min
- 2.What opportunities are in existence for you to voice your concerns and interests to the station? 5min
- 3.How would you describe the programming at the station? 3min
- 4.Does this programming reflect the needs of your community? 3min
Language, religion, local content (news, music, current affairs)...
- 5.What are some of the guidelines that are and or should be based upon in operations of the programming unit at the community radio station? 5min
- 6.How do you as a community get involved in the making of decisions concerning issues of programming? 5min
The board, volunteer friends at the station, phone-ins, drop in letters, meetings, AGM's,
- 7.How often do you actually get involved in the making of these decisions as a community? 5min
- 8.How do you as a community make sure that the decisions you have made, and or issues you have raised concerning programming are actually met in the production of programmes at the station? 5min
- 9.Problems and challenges faced in your associations with the station? 3min
- 10.Opportunities faced due to the presence of the station? 3min
(health issues, educational)

APPENDIX 3 Programme Schedule

APPENDIX 4 Selected Interview Transcripts

	APPENDIX 3						
	Programme Schedule for Radio Graaff Reinet, June-July 2001						
	E-English	A-Afrikaans	X-Xhosa				
Hr & Day	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Frid	Sat	Sun
6-8 am	BF Show						
	E / A mainly in A	BF Show	BF Show	BF Show	BF Show	BF Show	Gospel Music X
8-9am							
	Road Hour in A	Road Hour in A	Road Hour in A	Road Hour in A	Road Hour in A	BF Show	Gospel Music X
9-10am							
	Health Hour in A	Health Hour in A	Health Hour in A	Health Hour in A	Health Hour in A	Request Hr	Church Svcs Broadcast
							EAX
10-11am	Gender / Women's Issues in A	Gender / Women's Issues in A	Gender / Women's Issues in A	Gender / Women's Issues in A	Gender / Women's Issues in A	Phone in Show	Church Svcs Broadcast EAX
11-12pm							
	Current Aff. in A & E	Current Aff. in A & E	Current Aff. in A & E	Current Aff. in A & E	Current Aff. in A & E	Phone in Show	Presenter's Choice
12-1pm	Midday Show	Midday Sh	Midday Sh	Midday Sh	Midday Sh		
						Presenter's Choice	Presenter's Choice
	EAX	EAX	EAX	EAX	EAX		
1-2pm	Cultural Hour	Cultural Hr	Right tones	Right tones	Vibe Show		
						Right tones	Right tones
	EAX	EAX	EAX	EAX	EAX		

Hr & Day	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Frid	Sat	Sun
2-3pm	Refreshment	Refreshment	Right tones	Right tones	Vibe Show		
	Hr	Hr				Right tones	Right tones
	EAX	EAX	EAX	EAX	EAX		
3-4pm	Head to Toe	Teenager	Teenager	Teenager	Teenager	Presenter's	Presenter's
		Prog	Prog	Prog	Prog	Choice	Choice
	E&X	EAX	EAX	EAX	EAX		
4-5pm	Head to Toe	Teenager	Teenager	Teenager	Teenager		
	in E & X	Prog	Prog	Prog	Prog	Presenter's	Presenter's
		EAX	EAX	EAX	EAX	Choice	Choice
5-6pm	Road Show	Road Show	Road Show	Road Show	Road Show		
	Drive Time	Drive Time	Drive Time	Drive Time	Drive Time	Presenter's	Presenter's
	E& A	E& A	E& A	E& A	E& A	Choice	Choice
6-7pm							
	Music	Music	Sports Show	Music	Sports Show	Presenter's	Presenter's
			EAX		EAX	Choice	Choice
7-8pm			Sports Show	Sports Show		Presenter's	Religious
	Top 20	Jazz Show	EAX	Music	Music	Choice	Prog
8-10pm	International		Music	Story Time		Presenter's	Religious
	Music	60s, 70s,	Presenters	Rugby Radio}	Music	Choice	Prog
	Show	Oldies Show	Choice	Music			

APPENDIX 4 (Selected) Interview Transcripts

Telephone Interview with Andrew Ntsele, Producer and Trainer, 2 / Nov 2001.

Currently working for production company that is involved with the Department of Communication. Involved in consultancy and project management work within the community radio sector. A member of the curriculum advisory board of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA).

1. On ICASA stipulations and relevance of principles....

Licensing stations in communities, getting stations to broadcast in theory and practice...it does work well given the historical context of the country. People broadcast or talk about things that affect them locally. It is a mistake to think that everything affects them locally...this is not necessarily the case. The local has to make links to the regional, global, and provincial. Community radio does not preclude any broadcaster from introducing new things. But people are not resourceful enough... and more finances will be required if representative programming is to be achieved. People need variety in their lives...they are complex in terms of their needs for entertainment...they have human fantasies as well which must be addressed

Variety does not mean that you have given them something much more interesting, it's the width of the scope, training is required to address this.

Ownership

Community ownership as an ideal it is good, the audience has to see it as their own particularly in the context of the history of South Africa, the ideal works towards demystifying the medium,...and the ownership.

In communities there are people with different interests and goals, the medium gets caught up in the internal.

It is a political ideal, opening up the airwaves, have access to things you did not have in the past ...in order to transform peoples lives.

The problem experienced was... the capacity and resources to include all ideas for shows...ordinary people outside the medium do not understand the issues of scheduling and programming.

2. Participatory programming production

In radio you need to have production teams a station applies this as a mandate

..from a station point of view everyone should participate...it makes them unique...helps them identify with the audience through which they can develop programming ideas

You do have a station manager, programming manager, but they do not fully support the various production teams because they themselves do not have the necessary skills

..trainers contribute to this problem but because a trainer feels this particular community radio needs these particular skills they call for training over two days, three days, five days, and so on.

There are lots of trainers with their own little agendas

What is it that you can teach people in two to three days?. From a program making point of view, as you learn theory you need practice....most of the courses are the same anyway

News trainers are partly responsible for this, they do not know other formats...so, in the absence of news, presenters are left at a stand still, they just play music.

A lot of the trainers are coming in from a hard news background without much experience in

other formats

It is crucial to expand on other formats...to make community radio participatory and interesting. MISA, train people who are multi-skilled...these can play a positive role

Tracey Naughton, Regional Broadcast Program Manager 9/10/01 Email Interview
Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)

1(a) Given the ICASA stipulations and principles (of local content, participation, representative, local ownership) concerning programming for community radio, bearing in mind your experiences within the SA community radio sector, which of those principles would you say are most relevant and important to the SA community radio context?

All the principles are important and relevant. How effectively they are actually implemented or understood at community level is another question entirely. I will try to deal with both.

Local content is perhaps the best understood principle at community radio station though the term itself is not widely used. Community radio is strong in local content often by default more than a determined effort that would include a conceptual understanding that is followed through on, in terms of program development and content. The default aspect of local content on community radio happens because people on the stations are local and because South African music is popular...but all these terms need further unpacking in terms of quality, representivity and impact on community and social development.

Most community radio stations are run by young people and the majority of the young people are more often than not, male young people. All groupings of people have their own preferences and these preferences, in the absence of a deliberate and intended focus on diversity, will have a natural tendency to dominate. At the risk of generalising (though in my experience this is a reality) what this means is that the tastes and preferences of young men in community radio take precedence over the tastes and preferences of other groupings. Kwaito music, ego building, attracting women are dominant aspects of what one hears on community radio. Presenters are not actually presenters much of the time but DJ's who's main focus is the music that gets played in the time slot over and above the informational content that of course requires a great deal more preparation.

This may sound negative, but I believe that it needs to be addressed. If you read the original rationale behind the establishment of community radio it was clearly intended to be a tool that would contribute to development and upliftment of the communities that the stations served. They were not intended as toys on which to play radio for a bit while gaining some skills and moving on to a real job at the SABC or Radio 702. That is not to say that community radio should not be a training ground - it should be. Nor am I saying that entertainment is not a

legitimate and essential aspect of the media diet of any community. What I am saying is that we have a great opportunity to change the perspectives in all media as community radio people are deployed into other arenas, but they have to have been doing something different from commercial and national broadcasting in the first place, to make this difference as their career develops. The issue that I am raising here is that insufficient attention has been paid to the way in which community radio can make a difference in terms of the social improvement outcomes desired by each radio community.

Training has focused a lot on skills and while this has included training on quality content, it has paid little attention to the practicalities of contributing to development. For me the sector lacks a sociological orientation that would more clearly define the differences between community, commercial and public service broadcasting. For me it is not enough that the establishment of a community radio station and the local management and participation in it is an end in itself. Whilst this is in itself a worth while activity to include in the life and economy of a community it is an under-utilisation of the resource.

We have paid too little attention to research on the needs of communities and the role that the radio would play. Fine, we may have started without doing that but it's not too late to look at impact and feedback now. There are major impediments to this kind of research. One of them is skills, capacity and resources including volunteer time and transport funds. Another is that the business of forcing community radio to compete with all other media for advertising in turn forces any attention that is given to research, on research outcomes that will connect numbers of consumers to advertisers. In the current setting, devoid of any consistent state support for community radios (as proposed in the Media Development and Diversity Agency), it is crucial in survival terms that community radio engage in quantitative research as a basis for attracting advertisers to community radio stations. My concern here is that this kind of research is highly numerical, scientific, complex and is not ultimately aimed at amplifying the role of community radio as a development tool. Of course it can be argued that once the advertising industry comes on board, is less sceptical of community radio and more knowledgeable about consumer groups who fall into LSM groupings not of traditional interest to advertisers, that community radio, by being more sustainable will be better able to get on with the job of contributing to development within communities. My response is that this will take too long and that a parallel response to the crisis in social use fullness in community radio is called for.

What I call for though over and above anything else is that when a community decides to develop a community radio station (and lets not kid ourselves, this is normally suggested by an external source and not an idea that suddenly, out of the blue occurs to a community overnight) is that the training and orientation phase where the community is preparing to

manage their station includes training on practical community development and that representation is equitable and diverse.

I spend time in the villages in the area and the older people know me as someone who worked with the station over a period of years. Feedback on the station often comes up in conversations so I have a sense, albeit an unqualified sense, that has no research rigour at all, that the community would like to see a readjustment in program content. Diversity is called for.

What would it take to do a proper impact assessment and feedback gathering exercise in Moutse? As a project it would require training, it would require funds to cover transport and eating costs, it would require donor support, expertise support, it would require the station to actually want to gather such qualitative data and to be open to making changes based on feedback. It requires quite an initiative and so far no body has really taken this bull by the horns and developed a solution to affordable, achievable audience impact evaluation and feedback.

Participation - In South Africa the model of participation relies on volunteerism and I believe that for many community members this an unaffordable situation. I have already addressed this anecdotally (Moutse) but overall I find the model an exploitative one.

I know that the solutions to this quandry are not easy and that the economy would struggle to pay under utilised human resources a social wage, but I really do think that for community radio to really be participatory and representative that there does need to be some payment for air time produced.

2 (a) Basing on your experiences (as a researcher or else) with SA community radio stations, what would you say are the key production techniques required to facilitate a participatory programming and production process within the SA community radio sector? (generation of ideas, inclusive systems, phone ins, live radio, formatting...please give relevant examples)

Volunteers at community radio stations may know very well the rhetoric of participation but without training in practical skills, this is not real. Then one has to go beyond this into social reality - for example if you have a feedback forum once a month for community input what are the practicalities of that in terms of community participation. Sure some have phones and could phone in, some have cars and could attend...but the reality of life for most people is harsh and there needs to be a supported system to garner participation. In turn this can lead to accusations of dependency, only attending for the free lunch etc etc. It is possible in a smaller area such as Khayelitsha in Cape Town for people to walk to the station. In many other areas this is not an achievable solution. I don't have answers here, but I assert that we are not looking at these issues from the correct perspective that takes these issues and

realities into account.

(b) What are some of the ways through which we can analyse / assess the successes and or failures that are experienced by community radio stations in their attempts to implement these participatory programming techniques? (With actual examples from relevant community radio stations)

We need to develop a system of affordable and achievable impact assessment and audience feedback. The research instrument may be simple and widely applicable but the practicalities will vary from location to location.

In-depth Interview with Noma Rangana, Open Society Foundation (OSF). 26th June 2001.

“OSF-SA is funded by George Soros the target for South Africa is the attempt to bridge the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged in South Africa”

“Our role in South Africa focuses on: media that is the strength of radio specifically community radio, and we are now also moving towards ICTs’; education; local government in terms of training newly elected public administrators in government; human rights policy and the recognition that HIV / AIDS cuts across all these areas of focus”

“We find geographical location radio stations to be important as they encompass larger areas than the community of interest per se..”

“We look to stations with planned auditing schemes, systems that are accountable to the community...the quotations have to be justified”

“ Our involvement with the sector to date has shown that there’s a need for training on accounting and financial editing within the sector at the community radio station levels of operations...”

“Training should be beneficial to the community as a whole not simply the station, for instance, the technical persons at the station should be for the community as a whole...”

“...OSF recommends that repairs of equipment, equipment to be used...such as ICTs’ are on the whole meant to benefit, and to be used the general community and they can also help with programming for instance by getting Love Life to get involved in HIV / AIDS operations on or off air within the community...”

“Commercialisation in community radio effects on the outlook and programming at the stations, it has watered down the core values of community radio, ICASA and the NCRF should be more vigilant and active on this...”

“The business sense and the core community radio values can be probably, be reconciled but how? ICASA and NCRF need to step in at this stage”

“There are boards, management and staff that are not involved in and initiated in the background of community radio as a tool for development...particularly and the board and management level”

“A failure of and lack of communication all through the organisational structure, there’s a need for structured ways of dealing with feedback”

“ A need for research, audience research to ascertain and involve the local community in the process of programming”

“Currently we are brainstorming strategies on working with ICTs’ as it is one of our marked areas for social development...”

“Some stations tend to request for funds out of mismanagement, BTT in the Free State forgot to renew their licence, they took out equipment on lease and then they failed to pay, currently they are off air, they are not fully committed to the community radio sector and it’s values...their actions are not good for community radio”

“NCRF, NEC, CDC, COSATU, SACRIN, Media Connection, should work closer to protect Sec 21 organisations they are not to go into business issues, the investment arm of this is to be covered by business oriented persons and organisations, it is not for the NCRF (community radio sector) to do business”.

C.Interviews

Transcription of interview with RG Station manager Ntombi. 5/April 2001

Introduction.

Well my name is Ntombi, Ms of course I am a resident of Graaff Reinet, I was born and raised here. Currently working with RGR for the past four years. I started out as a presenter, then as time went on I marketed myself and was democratically elected to be on the management structure of the station- currently the Station manager and also the Gender and Training manager.

Profile and Background of the station.

The station started in Feb. 1999, it was a move started by Mr.Max the previous SM.

The station started with a one year licence from ICASA. In 2000 they received their 4 Year licence from ICASA. We broadcast in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. We do have a population of listeners of 42,000 plus, we believe that everyone listens to the station.

The station itself has got 27 staff members, most of them are male of course. But, since my appointment as station manager here I am fast making some changes. It is only me really for the past three and half years that has been a black female presenter at the station. Having of course more white female presenters. But now I have managed to bring in different views and now we are very proud to know that we have five female black presenters at RG.

Signal distribution is provided by Sentech.

We do have a board of directors, who are elected at the AGM bi-annually and from there we select the Station Management. We select the station manager, discipline manager, we have a programme manager, library manager for music, religious desk to see that religious matters are being addressed as well, we have a Djs forum for presenters because sometimes you will find that communication lines are not strong, basically the DJs representative, sits in on the management meetings and ensures that information flows from the management down through to the presenters. Then we have a women’s desk as well, gender and training. And also a News manager

All managerial positions are on the same structure. There is also a Marketing/Advertising Manager. The key decision makers are the board of directors, they make the decisions and then we implement them. The B.O.D is appointed by the community. There is an AGM for 2001 on Thursday 5/04/01 to elect the BOD But we have already had one this year. Attendance at the AGMs differs, but we make use of our local paper the Reinet Advertiser and the Radio of course. And then we also issue some flyers, they are issued to every home in the town, so we believe, that the message got to everyone. We had about 157 people present for the first AGM.

There are 7 board members, in the past they have been mostly men but now we have got three ladies onto the BOD- all local from within the community. The ladies: we have one working for the local newspaper, we have one who is a teacher and the other is a head school, so they are all from GR.

None of the members of staff is paid- we are all volunteers. NTOMBI describes her management style as: trust, reliability of staff, does not compromise, believes that justice should be done- they believe that I am very strict...but I believe that when it comes to doing work, you either do it the right way or the wrong way. There are meetings between the BOD and the Mgt. 6 months after my appointment I found that there were a lot of things that were not being done accordingly. There were a lot of problems inside the station and people wouldn't tell me why (staff). I was being thrown into the deep. Then when I found that the BOD were not interested enough/involved enough. And to me that was a big problem because I can't see how a community radio station can operate without the directors. So, I spoke to the management members and told that this is how I feel. They had to go, we called for a public meeting in which the community were involved and ever since that meeting we now have elections in April at which the community elects the board.

The BOD and the Mgt had a meeting in March already, they are also to see each other at the AGM. They also keep in touch over the phone. There is also a monthly meeting for the managerial staff which includes the rep for the Djs forum. All staff meetings are held when there is a crisis situation. NTOMBI also calls for staff meeting every month, Staff do show up but not all of them, they tell you that they have commitments. We are a very unique station by the way because we have white presenters, Afrikaans presenters, Coloured presenters and Xhosa presenters. But you find that the Xhosa presenters and or Djs of colour, they always show up for these meetings. You find that the white presenters don't. There's only one or two that will be here. So when you call for a general meeting these will always be the ones that show up. And this is also a problem in the making of decisions.

Everyone here is a volunteer But we do have anchor broadcasters and co-hosts. We do have salaries but they don't get paid. The station has a staff of 37 people. Skills is a real concern for community radio and for myself (as SM) we don't have really have lots of skilled people at the station we encourage our presenters to go on courses but, skills we don't really have anyone with good technical skills there is a technical person but lacks all relevant knowledge, some of the staff have been on courses concerning how to manage a station. But we do not really have a staff with good skills which is general in community radio.

Gender

The Station Manageress is a woman, and we do have a young lady here a high school student, she is on training, she is doing some English and Afrikaans broadcasting. On my appointment as SM I went to The Advertiser and spoke to them at length about my long term commitment to the station and I also invited women to come and be part of the station not to be afraid, but to take up some responsibility to be a housewife and also to be a broadcaster. And it was from this interview with the Advertiser that we got in touch with the women currently at the station. Males have a hard time listening to her as a female station manageress, not too keen to take orders from her, they don't want to listen to me... they are real dominating at times...they make funny remarks...which creates a feeling of them being sexual... with the help of the BOD they have managed to control the situation.

They have had one serious case of sexual harassment at the station but we dealt with it before it could escalate. One of the female presenters was being intimidated by the male presenters. We dealt with it at a disciplinary level. Most of the problems in terms of sexism, for NTOMBI tend to come from the lower levels of the station than at the management level.

Problems as SM

As a black female station manageress, the first- she finds that there are certain things happening which would not happen if it was a different person in her role- the phone is locked without consulting me...equipment has been used and not locked up, this is a real problem to me. ...in terms of amenities e.g. transport to travel on station matters theres nothing for me ...but..when it comes to people of another colour you find that things are working easier for them. It is a strain for black people to get into radio. At the management level, things seem to be working finewhen there is an issue we call for meetings. At staff level- presenters coming in late.

Local content...thats an issue they really put pressure on (ICASA)...an ICASA official had visited them on the 4th/04/01 this issue had been raised...theres really not much going on in RG...and also when it comes to get music ..local stuff..it is not easy to get it at times....so one has really no option but to rely on the international music...but this is a big problem...for community radio stations....we have one kwaito program so that people can listen in and get some kwaito...but it is not easy to access music from some of the local SA artists like say The Rockets. But... yeah we do meet the 20% local content. ICASA stipulation.

Funding / Financial Sustainability:

Sponsorship from programs, Open society foundation- apply through Jean Fairbairn get grants for the station. OSF also helps in terms of training and advice on how to run a station. Public and private donations from local businesses-furnisher shops, block buying of airtime-advertising. We sell a block for 10R..15R. Donations from local community...now and then when we call for it.

Jan, CEO / Director of Radio Graaff Reinet. 20 July 2001

Local businessman, owner of Goldworths in Graaff Reinet, on the board of directors at Radio Graaff Reinet.

Transcript.

Involvement with RGR / aims for RGR:

A...to actually uplift them to be able grow from a community station, to a regional station, from a regional to a national station and to be able to become a presence throughout that whole area. The difficult is ofcourse with your regional stations and national stations is that, the commercial world will not accept someone who is inadequate.

You have to be able to have people who are efficient, and who know what they are doing. The role of the community station is their to do that for their presenters. We in Graaff Reinet have grown now, and I think that we are at stage were we are now able to say that we can offer inhouse training which I can get feedback on. Where as I dont get the feedback back from the DMA (trainers).

I seat on the board of directors and infact chair the board, and I have said to my board members that the community radio station of Graaff Reinet, is obtaining no value at all from the DMA. We cannot see the difference of the training that has taken place....we cannot see that any

professionalism has come to the fore at this community radio station. Alright in the past it has been very difficult as I said because people went on training courses, this could change in the future only if I am assured by the DMA that we will get the necessary feedback, so that we can know what training has been undertaken, what curricula will be undertaken....we will then send the people that we feel it would do much better for the station if they went..

Professionalism within radio is not a need it is a necessity, we cannot go on a radio station and belittle somebody else over the air, we cannot go and say crude and rude things over the radio station, on air.....I am the chief executive officer or whatever you wanna call it...

The key role of the board is to make the station progress its finances, support it and make it grow, to run the station as a business. To ensure that the station is sustainable, no business is sustainable without funds. The only funds that a radio station can obtain is airtime- all they have to offer. But unless they are able to offer professional advertising they cannot sell the airtime, the standards with a community radio station are very limited, we have a very limited income for the market. In order to get the backing of the business people in a town...one has to offer something in return. One cannot expect businesses to put money into a radio station which is of no value to a community, the wrong type of program, the wrong attitudes, the wrong presenting, the views and that sort of thing

We must there and then be able to offer a service to the community...must be able to work with the various departments, be it labour, health, we must also bring the department of welfare so that people realise and know that by listening to the radio they can get to know where to go and collect their pension, what days are these...we are currently working on a program whereby someone from the department of welfare will come and talk about the various questions that are being placed to them by queues of people who sit their whole day...in order to see somebody. They don't have to wait to see somebody, we feel that as a radio station we can go on air and people can give their questions there...on individualised cases people can still go on to the welfare department. But in most cases all these questions are general and they have to answer each person over and over the very same thing so via the radio station they get to deal with this question only once.

But we have to have professionalism in order to do that, and we have to have a business backing to help with the maintenance of the telephone and soon....in order to do that again we need to be able to put forward a professional advertising program and for that reason the DMA could assist us greatly by offering a curricula to us, to be able to examine and in which we can then contribute and say, this is what we would like you to offer the presenters, this is what we think the presenters should have. It is all well and good that a person goes on a course on how to write a short story for radio and nothing happens with it...there are many cases in South Africa...of adult education where people are taught to sew for instance and as soon as they are trained they go home because they have no where to go (work) .

At the moment there are four of us and we are a section 21 company we are only allowed to have as many as seven as the maximum, we are the core within the board of directors at the moment. And when I took over as CEO I did my best to be able to attract people who are willing to give their time which is more than often very limited because as you see now even me other people haven't got their own businesses so they are limited by the time they can give during the day so in a lot of cases this requires after hours. But it requires dedication, it requires interest which is

insurmountable....I cannot have on my board people who are unable or unwilling to attend board meetings, unwilling to discuss and attend meetings to discuss problems because when problems arise they need to be sorted out straight away.

But in the past things were left to management to attend to and they were not attended to and that meant that the role taken by the board was also affected so the board had to take on management decisions...the actual reason as to why there is a board is that as a section 21 company we are required as board members to make the radio station sustainable, the board is there to see to the financial progress of the station whatever it may be, it may take the form of donations or trying to find sources of income for the radio station. In a case like a community radio station as a section 21 company we as the board of directors who are not only involved but are not paid for it, they have to find the time and that is not always easy.

You have to have a dedicated board in our case we now have four dedicated members, we are also expanding to include the Camdeboo area....so we now have to try to expand the radio to be able to include those areas..

Ntombi former Station Manageress at Radio Graaff Reinet
19th July 2001

Was keen to work with the consultant Deborah at the start Ashe was brought in by Jan however without due consultation....later, Deborah was announced as the station manager.

The board was re-elected there are two old members and 1 new and theres one more to come. LS was asked to join the board of directors but was not keen as she still wants to be on air. AI have acquired lots of training over the years...need to plough it back into the station.

NTOMBI resigned, Oscar the former programming manager resigned due to conflicts that arose with the changes at the station. Theres conflicts between the old staff and the new staff.

ARestructuring is required but the community was not consulted on changes. Jan (a local businessman within Graaff Reinet owner of Goldsworths) has got positive aims and ideals... funding is in dire straits the changes are required but the problem is the way it has gone about.

For years we wanted to have fixed telephone lines, fax machines...we pestered for them but they were not offered but the moment Dina walks in all is in place with equipment and so on.

AWhat does this mean, she is getting paid.

NTOMBI was not paid in her time as SM found this to be a form of discrimination on basis of colour.

Expressed interest in taking up the post during the early transitional stage given that I have been here for years. She was instead asked to join the board but she declined and resigned because joining the board would have taken her off the air and out of the day to day activities of the station.

Programmming is not reflecting the diversity of the population of GR people in the townships are no longer listening. Its a town station.

People are approaching me daily and asking whats happened through letters, the Reverend at the church, teachers, kids, and even the elderly.

Deborah Station Manager / Programming Manager for Radio Graaff Reinet 18th July 2001

Role of the Station Manager:

I was asked to come in and bring some professionalism...bring in some changes at the station. Two particular areas that were weak were advertising and funding.

The aim is to develop good broadcasters for community radio, they have talent but they need polishing up....they have good ideas wonderful but not good radio skills. The aim is to have a good quality presenters and good quality broadcasters.

Deborah has been at RGR since the 15th of May (2 months) there's been a lot to do I have recently got the library organised with each record under a specific genre, prior to this records were all over the place there was no organisation to the library. She has got two staffers (female) to re-organise the record library. The recordings are done in the studio using people from within the community.

There are 4 board members who were elected in March all male but we are currently looking for a lady. There is a transition at the station with a new programming format based on continuity and re-scheduling.

Change has not come easy, there are different personalities here and they did not know what to expect Deborah has previously been with the SABC for 4yrs and 2yrs at George community radio station. Many of the staffers do not know how radio really works. It is essential to have a strict disciplined structure

Transcript

Changes- programming, staffing....

DEBORAH: The most important thing to me as a broadcaster...what goes on air is the most important thing to me. I started by listening to all the people that are here already..that were here already...I started by listening to their way of broadcasting their way of presenting...and then I started to give them little tips, little bits of polishing that was with each one.

They made a tape of a programme and I listened to it, I haven't got time to listen to it together with them and that is the important thing to go and sit down listen to the tape together with them, and then you can tell them listen here if you can do this that way or this way it will work better it will sound better you see the most important thing is what goes out on air because the listeners are the important people..and that is why we are broadcasting we are broadcasting for the listeners and I want quality programmes, quality broadcasting, quality people and I said to them the first day that I came here and in the first week...

I must say that there is a lot of talent among the young people but they need a lot of polishing...they need us to elevate their knowledge of broadcasting..

the next thing that I started with was the programming, the programming was very...there wasn't enough continuity in the way that radio should work...so I had to start working on the continuity of programmes...you always work at the radio station on the basis of continuity...so I said to them everyday from 8 till 9 (am) this programme will be on air from Monday till Friday with that presenter from the next hour this presenter also for the whole week so...as part of continuity... I

had to start their because weve got freelance people and there was no one that knew radio when they started everybody comes with their own idea, wonderful but thats not good radio they come with an idea they start the programme and say well I want to do this and of course they started it and they did it but it wasnt good radio.

So what I am looking towards is good quality presenters and good quality programmes and then in the end a good radio

Programmming now

I have been here since the fifteenth of May...you can see for yourself they have done a good job I do not want to shoot them down and say you did nothing right, for people who did not know a thing about radio I mean they did a good job for the past five or six years but it wasnt good radio, it wasnt polished, it wasnt smooth, it wasnt running like I as an announcer or broadcaster know it should so which means the team lost time and I didnt only have to work on the broadcasting and on the programmes.....I worked on the record library we started there because it wasnt up to what I want it to be and I know it should be...so I started their with the music first of all to categorise every CD..is it mans voice, woman, instrumental...categorise according to the differenet genres, it wasnt done like that it was just numbers and I took that out, they never knew exactly where to get what they just used to take them out...it was a trial and error kind of thing...it wasnt organised so I started to organise the whole record library and let me tell you that takes so much time out of your day...I couldnt just put anybody in their, I had to spoon feed everybody...

...I had to start using their wonderful recording studio which they have and it wasnt used like it should so I started their with recordings and with interviews bring people in, bring guests in, bringing people that are master of their subjects...we use the people from the community the authorities on certain subjects, we use the whole community...

First of all there is a board with four members at the moment, and we are working towards a fifth member because we need a lady on the board...it is importan to also note that there are only two people from the previous board...so the board was actually re-elected, so they only started a month before I came so it also a new board...so thats why there is not another person yet I know that they are looking for a lady their, they are all male and at the moment they are looking for a lady and am sure they are in the process of doing that...

And I am the manager here...and at the moment I do the managing of the station as well as the program managing and theres a good reason for that,because we are in this transition period, its new programming...new scheduling. Its starting to get continuity...you cant have a program manager now, you must first of all get your things in place and then when everything is structured out and its running then you can say now we are ready for a programming manager and we will come to that point

Most people dont like change I think they are afraid of change....it is very safe to go the way you are used toand it takes abit of energy to broaden yourself and your views..not all people are ready for that immediately...because weve got different personality styles... In the beginning yes I think they were, they didnt know what to expect, you know they were told this lady is coming she worked with the SABC for eight years, she worked for two years with a community radio station...what are we going to expect..and because they dont know how radio really works that made them a lot more uncertain, what is she going to do, what is she going to take...but I think

after my first night the meeting...they knew exactly, I told them am strict, I dont take nonsense, because you cant take nonsese at a radio station, you must be strict, you must be disciplined, a radio station is not like an office where you can close the door take your files and do...

Eliza is the record librarian and another lady helps her in the afternoon her name is Ria, so these two ladies are the record librarians and now the reason for that again is those two ladies are the two ladies that were available for the times that I needed them during the morning for an hour... Theres a technical guy at the moment, I didnt have one when I got here, theres no technical person that can do the recordings and then I started again by asking in the community and now Ive got a person that can do the recordings...his name is Jack, so hes doing the recordings for me...so those are actually the key people at the moment

Programming

In the beginning that was in 1995 when they started... there were about forty odd people that cam in to do a programme or to do something at the radio station and when I came they were...more or less may be fifteen....so all the presenters knew that we were going to minimise them, I am in the process now and I think well be finished in the next two weeks time, well have strucutre, and well have four key anchor people through the day they will work four hour shifts, as we broadcast sixteen hours a day from six oclock in the morning until ten oclock at night, so those sixteen hours will be divided into four and each anchor presenter will have four hours each day from Monday to Friday...we will still use the other people for shorter slots in the four hours may be for half an hours programme or a quarter of an hours programme well still use some of the freelance people may be not all of them but a lot of them....

Content / Participatory programming

First of all,...to be sucessful in broadcasting you must educate, you must entertain and you must inform...those are the three words, a radio station revolves around those three words and in every program you must do at least all three or at least two of them almost all the time you do entertain by your music....then it all differs from one program to another whether you are going to entertain people or whether you are going to educate in your programme, so my whole view that I have is that if a presenter goes into that studio he mustnt only sit there and play musicfrom one minute to the other I mean that is senseless to me and we are working towards that and we are getting their very fast at the moment...even the young ones (presenters) they know I told them that from three to four in the afternoons from Monday to Friday they have got a teenager programand each of them has got a day to present and they know that they cant just sit here and play those bang bang music on air they must come and tell me what are they going to do with their programs, what issues are they going to concentrate on, what issues are they gong to talk about, how are they going to do it, how are they bringing in other teenagers, are they bringing in guests and thats what we work through the whole day.

And we always, we always integrate the peresenters and the community the whole time and we always integrate the languages because we are broadcasting in three languages English, Xhosa, and Afrikaans...there is always integration even with the languages...an example, in the mornings we have an Afrikaans program from nine to ten, and I organised that we do, fifteen minutes in the morning Monday to Friday we are teaching the Afrikaans and English speaking people in our community Xhosa, so we have a Xhosa speaking person and an Afrikaans speaking person, the presenter she is Afrikaans, Vusi is a Xhosa speaking person he comes in and they teach Xhosa over the air thats what I mean with integration

I tell them you must work towards your community, that I tell them everyday. I told these youngsters now, if they present a program on HIV/AIDS, they must this week go and tell the principle at the school to announce that for next week they are going to do a program on HIV/AIDS, they must make sure that all the children in the school know whats going to happen next week with their program.and that is an ongoing basis not only once, every week they must inform, their schools through their school master what is going to happen and what subject are they going to discuss on the teenager program for instance.

On involving business groups

The main source of funding is advertising...(the station being funded ideally by advertising) that is how it should work and that is how it is going to happen. Because that is the only way that we will get funding, I mean not only for our daily expenses...weve got wonderful equipment and that we are so thankful for but for the daily expenses you need money, this is a business, a radio station is a business you cant get away from it, I mean theres a telephone bill to pay, a fax machine to pay, you have postal expenses to pay for parcels sent...I mean we need money and were does it come from, we must we get it from advertising. We are rendering a service to the business people by advertising and for that we are asking the price for this service that is rendered to you, it is just like how any other business is run

Business + community

I dont think it is really a private sort of thing now, it is still a community radio station...I tell you all these things it is how involve our community, it is still a community station. The difference is that it is a community station involving the community on a basis of good quality radiostandards, high standards radio

I have got a problem with not having a high standard of broadcasting...I have a problem with it in the sense that later on it becomes grunge radio....and the other problem is that if you want advertisers to advertise on your station you must have quality programming, quality broadcasting otherwise people say no man I am not advertising their. So how will we keep the dog from the door, barking at us if we dont have money, if we could get money from somewhere we dont have to advertise oh my dear I would be so happy...but you know that is not possible, you have to run the station with money from somewhere and where do we get it from, out advertisers those are our only people.....

Interview with Freelancers/Volunteers at Radio Graaff Reinet 18th July 2001

Lastly, was the group of voluntary presenters / freelancers working at the station who were interviewed on 19/7/01. This consisted of: Patience Vermaak, Radebe Mbuli, Anton Gray, and John Rodgers.

Anton: Theres an absence of team work in programming

Responsible for the sports programming at the station . Attempts to link sporting issues at the national level to those at the local level this link also includes bringing in aspects at the international level of sports.

Programming team lacks unity and there is disjointed organisation

Working towards a user friendly station...expand the station

Uses access to information from the department on sports to cover the local sporting events within Graaff Reinet.

...would like other slots to fully cover local events and bring people in to discuss sporting issues. People from various backgrounds to discuss on sporting issues at Graaff Reinet. I would like to hear what the community has to say...not only to put the voices of sports officials from within town but also the ordinary people.

We come in see each other but never get a chance to work as a programming unit...we do not know each other

Patience: there's Afrikaans from morning to evening...Xhosa has been pushed to the gospel shows on Sunday...On the current affairs show we get to discuss local Graaff Reinet issues on air. On the Youth Show we actually get students on air to talk about issues concerning their welfare. Weekly letters are sent to all schools in the neighbouring areas, the principals and headmasters select students to represent the school at the show. We inform them of the topics of discussion for that week, in turn the students at the show get feedback from their parents, teachers, and peers, whole community on the issues discussed at on the show

That way we get feedback from the community and we get the community involved

Describes her shows as being based on Educational, informative and entertaining programming.

'On the call 911 we get feedback from the greater student community'

'There are not enough talk shows on Radio Graaff Reinet'

I live far away I have to be home by 7pm I do not like to come in for a 6pm to 7pm show and then be told that I can only go on air for 30 minutes or that my show has been cut to 15mins and then make the long journey back.... changes are necessary not all departments were working well but making last minute adjustments without consulting anyone is not fair...She is not happy with the impromptu changes in the shows. this is undermining me and my listeners. A We are not informed of the changes it is actually not professional at all...the programming is not representative.

Radebe, freelance presenter, Monday-Head to Toe musical, sports report driven show concerning upcoming events in the township particularly over the weekend. Tuesday-Musical hour 1200 to 1300hrs....Radebe my mother no longer listens says there's too much Afrikaans...she doesn't understand it....Radebe and Z (Bangile) are working on a sports oriented show but have never liaised with Anton (expression of surprise...raised eyebrows on finding out that there's a sports show on air concerning football).

For Radebe, soccer is not well catered for in the sports programming there's no show that fully covers all the sporting interests of Graaff Reinet. Soccer is never fully covered for the section of Umasizake it's all cricket and rugby...in the sports shows on Radio Graaff Reinet.

This variety of sports should give us an opportunity to work together - that is with Anton.

How can we work towards participation, consultation and transparency when we are not involving the majority of the population now.... involving mainly the Afrikaans community.

There have been no consultations to do with the programming changes, on one day you are meant to do 2 shows next day you are told that you are only doing one

The programming does not represent the township community

John: community does not own the station, they are not in control as such, not fully aware of what's happening

Programming techniques used on his shows: phone-ins, Outside broadcasts, live interviews, pre-recorded, telephone interviews.

The expansion of the station is a positive thing

May be the former management was more representative but the station was going down

To survive we have had to adapt a business edge, near closure was due to financial constraints

Either face closure due to financial constraints or revert to a business edge

Commercial orientation means working towards community radio with a business outlook

Should not focus too much on race / sectional issues because we shall end up getting caught up in that

Meetings for re-electing board members.

Township community was not addressed; changes were advertised in the local newspapers and meetings

Radebe: Umasizakane local people cannot afford newspapers.

The NCRF was consulted on giving guidelines to the link between business and community radio, about accountability issues during this time of changes. But the NCRF representative was not reporting our concerns he was actually fired for this

Radebe: Members of the community have to make an appointment to come in and see the studio...Whites are shown around without appointments

Interview with Listeners Focus Group 5 April 2001 and 20/7/2001.

FGs 1 and 2 (group according to categories)

Thomas Booysen, Nkosi Zandile, Sibongile Namhla, Bangile Yanga,
Williams Stewart, Thabo Mbuso, Jack Richter, Ntaho Ngesi,

'News and community participation'

'...Music programmes (sport updates) and talk shows'

'.... I like the news and the music'

'.....Community news'

'...Talk shows and gospel music'

'Poor quality of presenters use of different languages

'They use only two languages i.e. Afrikaans and English they don't think about older people'

'By means of telephone

'I like the meetings they make because it's nice to learn'

'By voicing out community news....'

'AGM but people are not interested they know nothing about the radio station, only few know about it'

'General programming is good....'

'Weakness is that there are few Xhosa oriented programmes'

'On Sundays I want to listen to the gospel music and the church they give to us'

'There are more music shows, more than any other programs (news)'

'There is more music- than to educate people and lots of dedications'

'The station meetings- to hear about what they say...'

'Suggestion box and to write letters if you want to motivate or make queries'.

'Well managed but the time of airplay should be extended...'

'I don't know the radio station well because I am only here for 5 months...'

'I don't know anything about the management system...'

'The way the station is being managed is very poor no co-operation nor communication between the management and the DJs...'

'I consider myself to be a regular listener...I usually look out for the mid-day shows...reggae and jazz.... I like the shows on air most of the time

In particular the Sunday shows.... the religious one

Its because I am a believer and it inspires me when am weak

After someone else within the FG had raised the fact that the station was in town and therefore far from the township as a problem, SS pointed after this point that:

What I like least about the radio station is not the way it is situated but the guys who are within...the DJs....because most of the DJs are from the male section there are few female DJs
Why is this an issue?

Its because like according to my perspective...Id like to go 50...50 its to do with gender sensitivity"

Participation?

As a people I don't think we are involved in the running of the station

We are not connected to the radio station

What do you mean not connected?

How can I put it...we are not allowed to express ourselves you know...to talk about the radio station and tell them how we feel about the programming

There is a meeting tonight...it is held without the community...by people (presenters) who run the radio station so that they can express themselves and tell them (management) how we want it to be run

There are no opportunities for us to express ourselves let alone get involved in the programming. But, DEBORAH, Anton, Patience, are all from the community and are involved in the station so how are you the community not involved?

So...in addressing the team, the community...especially the black community...the management is not so deeply involved...theres no deep involvement

Coming to that point were you say that people like Radebe and Patience are people who are there...its just one fact that they work there...

We are not invited to come...now they have a responsibility to be there because they work there...as part of their job they have to be there

When it comes to meetings...we are not involved, most of all we are not invited to come and give our input on how we would like the radio station to be run

And even the DJs...If I can remember it is only Radebe who is running the sports show.... its mainly he who is being responsible.... he goes into the community and asking about what is happening concerning the sport

But the other DJs they show less interest

Meetings are announced / newspapers / radio station.... advertisements were made?

The problem was, I remember one time when they announced those meetings on the radio station and the times were awkward...there was soccer playing of league matches and stuff like that and the meetings were at the same time.... so the times were clashing otherwise I think people would have come for the meetings

You know the other problem is that...some of the people do not listen much to the radio station

(RGR) and some don't buy newspapers.

Lots of people do not listen to the radio station especially in the township...buying papers? Not all of us have the money to buy papers...some of them are not interested in buying papers, some do not want to read the papers others cannot read the papers....

‘Most of the people do not work in companies whereby they may have spare money for papers...’

...They do not listen to the station because it does not address their interests...

They should know how to deal with a situation whereby you want people to attend meetings...they've got to write posters...that's the only way to get people to a meeting...and radio and papers...you won't get that many people...it is hard. it is expensive...

Maybe the other thing that can help to get people to the meetings is...to have someone going around to announce in a car in the township...

And the other thing is...maybe to have three different meetings...one in town to accommodate the whites...and the other one in the township to accommodate the blacks and one in the colored area to accommodate the others...so that all those who are involved in getting point from these three groups can try to find out what the people are trying to say...cos if I say that let's hold a meeting in the township, the people of color and the whites won't go to the township so maybe we should have these different meetings...

ICASA stipulations + programming

First of all I'd like to say that there isn't news...whereby say local news from Graaff Reinet...there is no news from the location. they don't do that...secondly the little news that is on Graaff Reinet...they give us news from Cosmo which is news of things that happen in Johannesburg...we do not know what's happening in our own town...

And the other thing is that most of the news we get is in Afrikaans

RGR tunes into Cosmo Radio after its own hours of operation.

The presenters are from the community...but during the time of their shows there is no time slot for local news and stuff like that.

The current affairs with Entomb was doing a bit...but the problem was that they never used to bring up the local news of Graaff Reinet...they used to read it from the papers like the Herald...Die Beeld...but they don't go through issues of Graaff Reinet like going out to the township to go and collect news of what's happening...especially like on Monday when we have the current affairs...now they get everything that the papers have done on the weekend...which is no longer interesting...

The problem is that you are given your own time slot...you know that it is your own programme and am just going to do it...but going out to help the other DJs (presenters) it is none of my business...it's their own problem...maybe if they can work together helping out to collect the news...

‘...Put the right people on the right time slots...’

I think the station is accountable to a certain section...maybe like the departments of health but when it comes to the community like say schools and various community groups, it is not so accountable...

...The last time that we were doing some of these talk shows...we would say let me go to this health department and ask them to come to the station... and they'd say now you are coming now you need us...all this time you've never come to ask us about our program for the whole year but now that you are in a problem you've come to find out some information so even on the other side in a bigger way we do not feel like we are accountable to them...

‘Especially you know if we can have the involvement of the police, the department of health, NAPO- people living with AIDS...if we can have those people talk on the station. Maybe we can

then attract more listeners to the station by getting them to decide on programming...

'Especially the presenters and the management of the station those are the people that should go in the first place to the department of welfare, the department of education to find out about the programme for the year...they are the people who are going to call them...to interview them to keep the community abreast with what's happening in their departments

We do not own the station because we are not involved in everything that they do...we feel like they own the station those people who are working their...the management thinks they own the station...

Raising concerns about problems / what is right and what is not right?

Yes I feel like am part of the station because, I am involved with it but the problem is that the more I talk too much, the more I'll find myself next to the door, closer and closer to the door...so I always have to obey to the rules. I can say something but I can't say so much...

The other thing is that as there are so many experienced people in radio at our radio station...the more you talk about the way you feel and what's supposed to happen on radio and some of the people will come and tell you that they have experience in radio...they will put you down as if you do not know anything about radio. they keep you as far away as they can.

Business acumen / adverts and ownership-local content

'But it is a bad thing that they do, when they are doing something like that it probably means that we people who do not have money to put in their can't say nothing about the radio station

Meanwhile when they are referring to it as a community radio station they include us in that but at the same time because of internal politics and the way they are running the radio station we cannot say anything about it...I mean the radio station is their to satisfy us

May be by involving these so-called business people in the radio station they can get to benefit from that...but actually think that if you want to succeed in life you must not separate...the community as a whole...because if we were involved may be by invitations in the operations of the radio station some of the other part of the community would take much interest in the running of the station.

Programming interests / issues to be covered

I would like to pick up crime, it should be addressed there should be a programme on crime...because there is a lot of crime going on and we people in the community we see..people..someone committing a murder and then getting caught but after two days he's back in the community again..and then you ask yourself what's going on, how is the police dealing with this..

'...then the abuse of alcohol really it's painful we are having small children getting drunk in the township and I think there's something that radio can do about it by getting community leaders to address these issues..

crime, alcohol abuse, drugs rape could all be discussed...

..and there's so much stealing going on it so happens that one of the stores had to be closed...DISKOM...because people were stealing so much from the shelves...

X :interjects A..by closing down the store some of our brothers lose jobs..

'...so radio could have been used to educate them about the benefits of having the store in our community...

Problems:

...the quick change of programmes and time slots anytime you come in you can find that you have been kicked out of that programme...and then this thing of the four key anchors and freelancers...there are people who have been working at the station for over four years and then

getting kicked out they find themselves without things to do...

...and the other thing is people not talking to each other...internal conflicts..not getting along with each other..

...I listen regularly till late into the night then when they switch to Cosmo I switch off...

one thing that I find as a problem is that you get a presenter who comes in like for an hour and then you get another one coming in for two hours now you have this person for a whole two hours speaking Afrikaans and yet the other one spoke for one hour in Xhosa..that is a problem you know, that is something that they have to look at in their programming...there is less Xhosa.. ..and the other thing is that you know as you listen to the radio you get to know that after this presenter it is supposed to be another particular one...and then you listen you hear that another person is on line...they do not even apologise to say why it is like that..

...another thing is the dedications they do, I think they should have a certain time for dedications because this DJ comes in he takes a dedication, the next one comes in he takes dedications and it goes on like that for the whole day and then they are playing a song, they switch off the song in the middle to take a dedication it is disturbing...they should have a specific time slot for these dedications...