

Tuning In: Identity Formation in Community Radio for Social Change

BRIDGET BACKHAUS
Griffith University, Australia

Community radio is a powerful tool for self-expression, alternative discourse, and democratizing media access. What is less established, though, is the role of community radio in the construction and expression of a mediatized identity. Drawing on research conducted at 2 community radio stations in India, this article considers mediatized identity formation and expression as facets of social change, and explores the role of community radio in these processes. This research found that community radio facilitates the articulation and expression of both community identity and individual identity among producers and volunteers. These processes can have significant benefits from a social change perspective in terms of both local knowledge sharing and empowering women. There are, however, significant gaps and silences in terms of how marginalized groups are able to access the same benefits. Participation in community radio allows certain groups to express identity in an increasingly globalized and homogenous media landscape.

Keywords: identity, mediatization, community radio, voice, social change

In the contemporary media environment, there are numerous ways to perform identity. From curated social media profiles to the specific types of media outlets we engage with, each choice contributes to a performed, mediatized identity. To invoke Goffman (1978), the front stage no longer begins when we step outside of the house, it follows us everywhere, in our pockets, encroaching into backstage areas that were once free from the pressures and expectations of performance. As Marshall (2015) puts it, "Monitoring one's persona has become an essential experience of contemporary life where a constant ritual of editing, writing, connecting, and publicizing a public persona defines the sense of self" (p. 116). What we share is who we are.

The pervasiveness of mediatized identity in the age of digital media is a topic ripe with possibilities for research and discussion, but the focus of this article is distinctly more low tech. So how exactly do more traditional media fit into this equation? There are surely high-profile examples of highly mediatized identities performed on radio and television, but what about at a more grassroots level? Community radio has long been considered a "voice for the voiceless," but what does this mean for the formation and expression of mediatized identity? The situation is further complicated by a communication for social change agenda, where the importance of identity is overlooked in favor of more marketable, measurable change indicators.

Bridget Backhaus: b.backhaus@griffith.edu.au

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Nonetheless, this article argues that identity should represent a vital facet of social change efforts and that community radio represents an ideal medium for the formation and expression of mediated identity.

Identity as a Facet of Social Change

Community radio has long been associated with communication for social change. The appeal is clear: Community radio is pervasive, it is an oral medium that overcomes literacy barriers, it can facilitate interaction across different groups, and it provides space to deal with local issues in the appropriate language and cultural context (C. Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 2002; Girard, 2003). Community radio has been used as part of social change agendas all around the world in projects as diverse as postconflict reconciliation in Cyprus (Carpentier & Doudaki, 2014), listening clubs in Malawi (Manyozo, 2007), and supporting ecological activism in Latin America (Serafini, 2019), to name just a few. Given community radio's widespread use as a tool for social change, it is worth first problematizing and then expanding on what social change might mean in this context.

The history of development and social change is checkered, to say the least: rife with well-intentioned yet paternalistic interventions that involve top-down approaches to grassroots problems, and relying on outside, usually Western, "expertise" rather than local knowledge. Western development discourse has a tendency toward a narrow focus on economic growth and centering market logics with little regard for long-term solutions and broader social consequences (Tuftte, 2017). This is based on the overly simplistic assumption that economic development progresses along a linear path, with "developed" wealthy countries at one end and "underdeveloped" countries lagging behind at the other (Frank, 1969). Lister (2004) describes the "hegemony of the measurable" (p. 38) within poverty and development studies, in which empirical, usually quantitative measures, such as economic growth or GDP, dominate definitions and approaches to development. This measurability hegemony is symptomatic of the current state of the broader development and aid industry. As Ramalingam (2013) observes, every country in the world is involved in the aid system, whether as a donor or a beneficiary or, in some cases, as both. The pervasiveness of the industry has given rise to what Manyozo (2017) terms the "spectacle of development." The spectacle of development refers to the oppressive capitalist system of institutions that govern development thinking and the elaborate regime of arbitrary rules and regulations that keep it in place (Manyozo, 2017). The spectacle consists of co-opted methodologies, irrelevant strategies, disregard for local context, and the fallacy that because one was born into a country of peace and prosperity, one knows how to achieve this for others; all of which are inconsequential to the lives of the intended beneficiaries (Easterly, 2006; Manyozo, 2017). According to the spectacle of development, "developed" societies in the West came to be that way because of linear, cause-and-effect processes; therefore, "developing" countries simply need to follow these same processes. Easterly (2006) draws parallels between the colonialism of the past and the pervasive attitudes and approach to development now: "The West should learn from its colonial history when it indulges neo-imperialist fantasies. They didn't work before and they won't work now" (p. 305).

As imperialistic and simplistic as this sounds, critical development theorist Escobar (2011) argues that, despite various reiterations of approaches under different guises—"another development," "participatory development," and so forth—little has changed in development discourse since the 1950s. The rearticulation from communication for development toward communication for social change recognizes

the need to focus more on structural change rather than individual behaviors (Tacchi, 2020). But for this to be more than an exercise in branding, there needs to be an accompanying openness to a broader definition of what constitutes social change in a society.

A body of work supports such an expansion, most notably by Bengali economist and Nobel Prize-winner, Amartya Sen. Sen (1999) proposes thinking of "development as freedom" and employing what he terms a "capabilities approach." Rather than thinking in terms of wealth indicators and economic progress, Sen refers to what a person might value doing or being as "functionings," and those functionings that might be feasibly achieved as "capabilities" (A. K. Sen, 1999). The focus of development, then, is on increasing these capabilities or substantive freedoms (Jacobson, 2016; Kleine, 2009). As such, "expansion of freedom is viewed as both (1) the primary end and (2) the principal means of development" (A. K. Sen, 1999, p. 36). Wealth is factored into this interpretation, but primarily as a means to an end rather than the key indicator of poverty or development (Jacobson, 2016). This definition recognizes that what is valued in mainstream development discourses is not necessarily what people are struggling to achieve (McMichael & Morarji, 2010). The most obvious critique of a capabilities approach to development is its flexibility and broadness, which Sen himself defends, arguing that human preferences cannot be limited or restricted and that individuals alone can define these preferences (A. K. Sen, 1999). The articulation of these preferences is where communication and participation become essential to Sen's capabilities approach (Jacobson, 2016; A. K. Sen, 1999).

One's "functionings" and "capabilities" are clearly deeply personal and linked to a sense of what each individual has reason to value. Therein lies the importance of identity within a social change agenda. Identity can be understood as the ways in which individuals and groups define and give meaning to themselves in relation to others (Fornäs & Xinaris, 2013). In discussing the importance of identity and self-expression within a communication for social change agenda, Tacchi and Kiran (2008) invoke the concept of "voice poverty." Voice poverty is "the denial of the right of people to influence the decisions that affect their lives, and the right to participate in that decision making" (Tacchi & Kiran, 2008, p. 31). This concept draws from the aforementioned work of A. K. Sen (1999), in exploring aspects of social change more related to capabilities and freedoms, as well as Lister's (2004) work on poverty, and voice as human and citizenship rights. Voice is systematically denied to the large segments of the population who are not recognized by the market (Thomas & van de Fliert, 2015). In terms of media, voice poverty sees groups with negligible access to the mass media denied opportunities for political participation and self-expression (Malik, 2012). Access is linked closely to voice here, as voice poverty is the result of "systematic efforts to restrict access to modes of self-expression" (Pavarala, 2015, p. 15). Further, the presence of voice poverty is representative of a policy environment and media landscape where freedom of speech and expression through the media is confined to powerful groups (Malik, 2012; Pavarala, 2015). Clearly, community and alternative media could have a role to play here; indeed, Pavarala (2015) suggests that eliminating voice poverty by creating space for the articulation of marginalized voices and identities could see community radio contribute to a more democratic public sphere. Ideally, community media should function as the collective process for the "production, sustaining and enacting of collective voice" (Couldry, 2015, p. 51). Based on these discussions, it is clear that there is space within emerging definitions of social change for explorations of identity. Further, community media, with its emphasis on voice and self-expression, has significant potential to facilitate

identity formation and expression from within a communication for social change agenda. The following section will expand on how this might occur.

Community Radio and Identity

Having considered the role of identity within a social change agenda, the question then turns to the role of community radio therein. Identity is at the core of community media. Indeed, it is a key part of what differentiates community media from the largely homogeneous mainstream media. Vojvoda (2015), in conversation with Pavarala, suggests that marginalized groups find themselves without a voice in the "monolithic public sphere" and that community radio offers a space to forge "subaltern counterpublics" where alternative discourses can be created and circulated (N. Fraser, 1990). Participants in community media have the opportunity to have their voices heard and "take responsibility for distributing their own ideologies and representations" (Bailey, Cammaert, & Carpentier, 2007, p. 14). Through community media, underrepresented groups are able to speak for themselves, in their own idiom and language, about what matters to them (Howley, 2002). Thus, community media offer a unique site for exploring the process of identity formation and expression through media production. This represents what Atton (2001) calls "challenges to hegemony" (p. 19), referring not only to overt political goals but also the indirect challenges to dominant media approaches. Broadly, community media provide space for the mediatized expression of identities that may fall outside of mainstream media narratives.

On a more individual level, community radio can play a particularly important role in identity formation and expression. Fornäs and Xinaris (2013) argue that "people shape their tools of communication that then shape them" (p. 12), explaining that media plays a critical role in identity formation as it has such an impact on the way people understand and define themselves and others. Community radio does this through participation. Through participation in management, organization, and content production, community radio allows "ordinary people" and marginalized groups to have their voices heard and, in doing so, define, strengthen, and express their internal identities to the outside world (Malik, 2015; Pavarala & Malik, 2007). Fox (2019) observed this throughout her research, discussing the role of community radio practice can have on a practitioner's "identity, subjectivity, sense of self, and feeling of empowerment" (p. 61). Echoing radical democratic theory, Rodriguez (2001) argues that political action can involve any attempt by nonhegemonic groups to contest dominant discourses and redefine their identity in their own terms (p. 150). Thus, for those who are generally excluded from both media production and representation, identity formation and expression represent the political dimension of participation through the balancing of power relations. This quality of community radio represents an appealing attribute of the medium for social change purposes. Buckley (UNESCO, 2010) suggests that community media have both intrinsic value, facilitating communication as a basic human need, and instrumental value, relating to access to information and social and political influence. Social change impacts tend to focus on the more instrumental impacts of community media, whereas the intrinsic value of community media strengthens the capability to communicate, which is central to "self-identity and to recognition by others" (UNESCO, 2010, p. 113). Despite the lack of primacy granted to identity formation and expression as a function of community radio, particularly within social change agendas, there is evidence to support the value of community radio contributing in this capacity.

Methods/Methodology

This article draws on research conducted as part of a broader study on community radio and social change in India. Drawing on an interpretive framework of cognitive justice, this research took an ethnographic approach at two rural community radio stations in South India. The methods of data collection drew from those associated with traditional ethnography such as participant observation, interviews, and focus group discussions, as well as emerging methods including "go-alongs" and listener storytelling. Data collection took place in phases to contextualize the emergent findings and ongoing analysis. The first phase of data collection involved participant observation centered on the stations themselves. This helped to develop an understanding of the day-to-day activities of the station and the work of the broadcasters while also building relationships with the station staff. Following this initial period of participant observation, Kusenbach's (2003) go-alongs were employed to collect data. Described as a combination of participant observation and interviews, go-alongs requires the researcher to accompany research participants on their day-to-day activities and ask questions as the activities unfold. In the case of the radio stations, this involved accompanying radio staff members on their field visits to meet with listeners, stakeholders, and attend community events. This helped to further contextualize the work of the broadcasters within their communities as well as facilitated some initial interactions and relationship building with radio audience members, which was essential to the next phase of data collection. The final phase of data collection involved interviews. Several different types of interviews were used, beginning with focus group discussions with different groups of listeners. Several focus groups consisting of demographically similar audience members were conducted at each station. The recruitment for listening storytelling took place from these focus groups. Listener storytelling draws on the work of King (2015) to craft a method that creates space of participants to take control of the narrative without the interference or subtle guidance of an interviewer. Listeners were invited to share any story of their involvement or engagement with the radio stations. These stories yielded broad responses and offered invaluable insight into the different roles that the stations play in the lives of their listeners.

Following the audience interviews, group interviews with the radio station staff were conducted. In contrast with the more informal focus group discussion format, the staff group interviews had specific questions to be answered and actively sought the input and participation of all staff members. The final interviews that took place were one-on-one interviews with key informants who, at both stations, happened to be the station managers. Despite the leadership roles, the small size of the stations meant that the managers were intimately involved in all aspects of production and therefore were able to offer comprehensive insight into both the day-to-day activities of the stations as well as upper management. The role of key informants and the relationships that had been established throughout the course of the research also meant that these interviews were a valuable opportunity to test emerging theories and seek clarification for what had already been observed or recorded. The corpus of data collected included extensive field notes and transcripts from a total of 24 interviews. This data was analyzed using a combination of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), which recognizes that theory is constructed and not discovered, and narrative analysis.

Discussion

At this risk of adopting a technocentric, mediacentric perspective, this research recognizes that community radio represents just one part of the broader communicative ecology, among other modes of

identity formation and expression. Therefore, rather than making inferences based solely on observations, the following discussion focusses on the audience members' and broadcasters' expressions of their sense of identity. Identity, particularly mediated identity, represents a complex interplay of apparent opposites in that it represents both affiliations with others, in the sense of a community, as well as individuality and uniqueness from others (Fornäs & Xinari, 2013). Three aspects of mediatized identity will be discussed here. The first two were aspects of mediatized identity that could be clearly observed throughout the course of this research: community identity and individual identity. The final aspect is what was not observed—that is, the noticeable gaps and exclusions in terms of the groups that were unable to access community radio for the purposes of identity formation and expression.

Community and Identity

Community identity forms the foundation of community broadcasting and differentiates community media from their mainstream counterparts. "Community," however, is a term that must be problematized, particularly in the context of community media. This task is further complicated by contemporary reconceptualizations that take into account online communities, communities of practice, and interpretive communities, among others (Carpentier, Lie, & Servaes, 2007). The complexity of the term is further illustrated in the work of Price-Davies and Tacchi (2001). In their comparative report on community radio across six countries, they revealed that not one peak body or legislature offered a firm definition of what the "community" of a station might be. The Australian Broadcasting Authority states that community radio should "represent a community of interest" (p. 10); the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission outlines that community radio should provide programming "that reflects the needs and interests of the community served" (p. 21); French community radio must focus on "specific local programming" (p. 27); and South Africa's Broadcasting Act states that community radio stations should "serve a particular community" (p. 44). A single report reveals huge discrepancies across countries in terms of how guidelines and legislature interpret what "community" means in relation to community radio.

The definition of community employed within Indian community radio is that of a geographic community. According to the Bangalore Declaration on Radio, "a community radio station serves a defined geographical area of a village or groups of villages" (A. Sen, 2003, p. 2199). This approach is common within the region: in the community radio sectors in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, "community" refers to geographic community rather than a community of interest (Arora, Ramakrishnan, & Fernandez, 2015). A geographic community should be specific and well defined to ensure that "the primary accountability of the CR [community radio] stations should be to their territorial or geographical community" (Malik, 2015, p. 6). Even the seemingly simple concept of a geographically bounded community is fraught. Bailey and colleagues (2007) remind us that geographic proximity is not "a necessary condition for, or quality of, community" (p. 9). The very idea of a clearly defined and demarcated community is a result of the discursive domain of the colonial period, before which communities were "fuzzy" and did not "claim to represent or exhaust all the layers of selfhood of its members," but instead were "definable with precision for all practical purposes of social interaction" (Chatterjee, 1993, p. 223). Simplistic interpretations of community imply homogeneity and stasis, and conceal power relations and biases associated with class, caste, gender, and religion (Shah, 1998). A geographic definition of community privileges the powerful and may erase the presence of

marginalized groups. Thus, it is important to remember that community identity, as expressed within and through community radio, is subject to the same power struggles of broader society.

Both stations where this research took place were bounded by a 15-kilometer broadcast radius, for the most part restricting their community of focus to their immediate geographic area. The limitations of this definition of community, however, were most clearly observed at Station 2, a rural station in a mountainous region, home to several different tribal groups. The station made a concerted effort to broadcast to these groups in their own languages, recognizing that even a relatively small geographic community is not as homogeneous as the term implies. The staff at this station were resolute in their goal of building a sense of community.

We do work with diverse communities because the knowledge that one community withholds will not be present in other community. Through their knowledge we could help other community. . . . By this both the villages get along. We also do this for other platforms like agriculture and we create a sense of community among the listeners. (Station 2 broadcaster)

In practice, however, staff at this station encountered challenges in reaching the different groups within their designated geographic community. The geography was, in fact, a key contributing factor. The station manager lamented the challenges associated with broadcasting in a mountainous region. This interview took place in a village roughly 20 km from the station, well outside the station's 15-km broadcast radius, but the programming came through loud and clear. In contrast, tribal villages in the valley next to the station were unable to tune in.

The greatest challenge is the tower. The information does not reach every people because of the network problem. . . . People from cities on the plains [more than 100 km from the station] call and tell that they're listening to our programs. They cannot understand the tribal songs, but still ask the meaning of the song through phone. But here there are only two tribal villages where the radio could be heard. For one group of tribal people, none of their villages can hear the radio. We play content and songs in their language, but they cannot hear it. When you are not able to hear the radio, gradually the interest to participate in the radio programs decreases. They hardly show any interest in participating. Only if they could hear what they speak they will get interest in participating. I consider this as the greatest challenge. In spite of this, we record their programs in CD player and play while we go to their villages for field visit. But nothing matches the joy of hearing their voices in live program. (Station 2 manager)

The experience of Station 2 clearly demonstrates the challenges associated with a geographic interpretation of "community" and attempting to develop a common identity for fragmented groups. Despite the best intentions and efforts of broadcasters, there were no discussions of collective identity among the audience focus group discussions.

In contrast, building a sense of mediatized community identity was far more straightforward at Station 1. This can be attributed to several factors. First, Station 1 did not have the topographical challenges that faced Station 2, as it is located in the plains. The ethnic and cultural demographics of the villages within Station 1's broadcasting range were also far more homogenous than those of Station 2. Finally, while Station 2 worked under a broad remit of supporting tribal groups, Station 1 focused almost exclusively on agriculture. This focus stems from the primary vocation of the surrounding area as well as the significant influence of the station's parent body, a local farmers' federation. This clear directive laid the foundations for a strong sense of community identity, but the station also made significant efforts to further develop this identity and provide opportunities for mediatized expression. One of the key approaches here was to treat local people as experts in their own right. The station further facilitated this by placing emphasis on sharing local knowledge and using "resource" people from within the community rather than relying on external experts. This approach was also observed by Ilboudo and del Castello (2003), who found that rural populations were receptive to innovation and creative application of technology when they were introduced by familiar, trusted sources of information. There were extensive discussions among several different focus groups on this topic:

Farmers have habit of copying other farmers. They copy the same crop that the farmers are planting. If a farmer plants Basmati paddy and gets 20 sacks per hectare, the other farmers also do that. If any other farmer plants IR20 and faces loss, the other farmers desist from doing that. We learn from experiences and caution ourselves. We know all this as we are doing agriculture from very young age. Many other farmers listen to me in the radio and do cultivation. If I plant lady's finger, the other farmers tell my speech was good and they are also planting the same and ask me to pay a visit. I will feel very happy. (Station 1 audience member)

Community radio played a vital role in amplifying the sharing of rural knowledge sharing (Backhaus, 2019). One broadcaster observed how their approach "built a sense of oneness" among their audience. Manyozo's (2018) work supports this observation—he discusses common shared knowledge as "aimed at giving community members a sense of identity and citizenship, by increasing their levels of social capital as well as and their social and knowledge infrastructure" (pp. 401–402). Another participant also discussed the cultural embeddedness of this kind of knowledge sharing and its importance to the community:

We do not have many resource persons from our side in the community radio. People are our resource persons. Only their experience helps us. In regard to agriculture, it is traditional and inherited through generations. They will like to go according to what experienced farmers do. Even if we bring agricultural officials to guide them, they wouldn't listen. They will follow only what successful farmers have done. If a farmer has took high yield in brinjal or paddy, they wish to follow the same. Agriculture is a thing that is inherited through generations, and hence experienced farmers are our resource persons. In our radio, people are our contributors. (Station 1 broadcaster)

Increasing a sense of community identity and building the relationships central to this process can have more tangible effects than just community cohesion. One participant discussed the community organizing that took place following his participation in an interview:

They recently did an interview with me about coconut farming. I spoke about insecticides, the coconut pests and about coconut association that is going to be formed. I spoke about forming a group to harvest and sell the coconuts through sales stall. This is being told to all the farmers and they will be benefited through this. Now we are in the process of setting this association and increasing the production. (Station 1 audience member)

Based on these findings, it is clear that community radio can play a crucial role in the articulation and expression of community identity in the right circumstance. Cohesive station identity, as well as logistical issues, seem to be contributing factors toward a community radio station's capacity to act in this role. When it does take place, though, it is clear that local knowledge sharing and facilitating social interactions between communities of interest across geographic spans can significantly contribute to a strong sense of community identity.

Empowering Identity

The second broad area of findings related to the influence of community radio in the expression of individual identity. As this was a particularly broad area of findings, this section focusses on one of the most noteworthy aspects: the role of community radio in the identity expression of women. Participation in local community radio stations, even at the level of simply being interviewed for a program or volunteering to conduct listener surveys in their local village, had a profound effect on women. This is of particular importance because, recalling the earlier discussions of fragmented communities, even where participation has resulted in increased agency and identity expression for other community members, there are those within the community whose voices are silenced (Dutta, 2014). From a social change perspective, A. K. Sen (1999) argues that women's agency and voice influences the nature of other public discussions: "Freedom in one area (that of being able to work outside the household) seems to help to foster freedom in others" (p. 194). In each of the women's audience focus groups at Station 1, empowerment and increased agency resulting from engagement with the radio station was discussed at length. Interestingly enough, rather than any specific initiative or women's empowerment project run by Station 1, it was a female staff member who, through her social interactions and respected position in the community, used her power to persuade a group of women, and their families, to take a more active role in volunteering and taking part in station events. The results of her work frequently appeared in the findings of the research, with many female volunteers at this particular station mentioning this staff member by name and crediting her with their increased confidence, sense of self, and freedoms.

Identity expression and women's empowerment, in this context, draws on three different but related concepts: voice, ownership, and identity. Voice represents personhood and individuality, and is significant as an identification of personal identity: Kunreuther (2012) describes this as "as natural in its relationship to identity as the fingerprint or signature" (p. 51). Drawing on their work with women in India, Tacchi, Kitner, and Crawford (2012) describe the relationship between ownership and identity in terms of

marginalized women in India taking ownership of their own identities, which had always been subsumed under their husbands'. This was observed throughout this research, with several audience focus group participants from Station 1 discussing the empowering effects that the community radio station had on their own mobility and sense of individual agency.

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

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

Yes, at first, the people at home protested and did not allow us go anywhere. But now they have slowly started to understand what we are doing. (Station 1 manager) has a great role in that. She came door to door and encouraged us to participate, and we have also benefitted through it. We are very proud that a woman from our village is doing so much for the community. We are also determined to become like her. (Station 1 audience focus group)

The impacts of identity expression among female audience members were less pronounced at Station 2, though one woman made an interesting observation: "We speak in many places and that's different. But in radio, people listen to what we speak." What is implied in this quote is that the authority and power bestowed on those that speak on the radio somehow means that their voice is more likely to be listened to and taken seriously. This particular audience member enthusiastically recounted the story of her first time speaking on the radio. Her friends and family all gathered together to listen to the broadcast. It was a source of immense pride that her opinions were valued enough to be broadcast on the radio. Many of the audience members who were interviewed expressed similar sentiments of pride and accomplishment resulting from their interactions with the radio stations.

There was one particular example that represented the liberating and empowering act of identity formation, expression, and recognition resulting from participation in community radio. A volunteer at Station 1 stated, "Earlier, I was just me, without any identity. But after being a part of this radio, I am identified in my village as a girl who makes them speak in the radio." This powerful statement was in response to a question that asked whether she had learned anything or gained anything from her interactions with the radio station. When asked the same question, most other participants spoke of an interesting fact or program that they had heard. This particular woman's response was unprompted by any mention or prior discussions of identity. The woman who expressed these sentiments is married with two children, she has a diploma in nursing, and had worked for the village computer center for years. It is, however, her participation in the local community radio station that she associates most with her identity. Having said that, it is worth paraphrasing Tacchi (2014), who reminds us that technology, like mobile phones in her research or community radio here, contributes to processes rather than acting as mechanisms, as they serve to "highlight, extend and magnify communicative and other capabilities" (p. 116). Bearing this

in mind, these findings suggest that community radio has clearly contributed to a mediatized sense of identity, increased agency, and increased opportunities for exercising voice for the female audience members and volunteers of the stations.

Identity at the Margins

Those who are able to participate in community radio yield clear benefits in terms of identity formation and expression, but what is less clear is the impacts on those at the margins of the broadcast range, both physically and culturally. Community radio in India is structurally limited in terms of how it is able to serve these groups. As discussed, the legislative environment limits how community radio stations can interpret "community," but it also places limitations on the size of this community by restricting broadcasting equipment. Further, the ownership models of stations add a layer of institutional priorities to be navigated. As discussed earlier, the ownership of community radio stations in India is restricted to educational institutions, agricultural science centers, or established NGOs. This inherently limits the amount of access, participation, representation, and thus identity expression that certain groups are able to engage in. Not only are groups subject to sociocultural factors that may limit participation, but also the development imperatives and priorities of NGOs or the educational goals of colleges and universities. The emphasis on development operating throughout the sector acts to further limit community radio activities. A developmentalist agenda within Indian community radio (Pavarala, 2015) takes precedence over aspects like participation, access or activism, some of the theoretical underpinnings of community radio according to the literature (see Bailey et al., 2007; Carpentier, 2015; and Rodriguez, 2001). Issues such as voice poverty, representation, and media democratization are overlooked in favor of the developmental goals of both the government of India and the parent organizations of community radio stations. Thus, there are systemic factors that effectively limit if and how certain groups are able to access community radio.

Bearing these systemic factors in mind, the gaps or oversights of community radio acting as a vehicle for identity expression become clear. Community radio may facilitate identity formation and expression for those groups who belong to the organizational and legislative interpretation of community in use, but there are those at the margins of these communities that remain excluded. Though much has been made of the role of community radio in addressing voice poverty, there remains systemic issues in terms of the access of different groups, particularly Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The framing of caste in this context is particularly important. Satyanarayana (2014) warns against the common trope of considering caste as a traditional institution and a system of outdated religious practices, arguing that framing caste in this way overlooks contemporary power struggles. Indeed, the related concepts of power and voice poverty are particularly relevant to these groups, who find themselves marginalized from a supposedly participatory medium. Thomas (2011) observes that "the right to speak is a privilege associated with the structures of domination undergirded by caste, class and gender" (p. 98). The developmentalist agenda underpinning the community radio sector in India broadly fails to engage with power struggles and communication rights, but instead relies on simplistic change models ill-suited for the complex task of democratizing media access and communication rights for all groups. This agenda sees modernization as a linear, universal process from "traditional" to "modern," where the caste system is transformed into a demarcated structure of economic classes (Sheth, 1999). Under this approach, reservations and allowances for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are seen as "compensation for past wrongs and not as remedy for current suppression

and marginalisation" (Satyanarayana, 2014, p. 49). In this context, it is possible to view community radio as a tool of this developmentalist, modernist agenda. Though some stations perform admirable work in this space by especially focusing their efforts on access and representation for and by groups marginalized by class or caste (a notable example is Sangham Radio; see Pavarala & Malik, 2007), this varies greatly between stations. Both stations within this research aimed to address those suffering from voice poverty as a result of economic class and gender, and were observed to achieve some success in terms of facilitating identity expression among these groups. The approaches to other sociocultural groups, however, differed greatly. Station 2 made concerted efforts to engage with tribal groups within their broadcasting range, they faced significant challenges and appeared to be unable to foster a sense of identity among these groups. For Station 1, their priorities lay with their parent NGO's target demographic of farmers and agricultural workers. Reaching Dalits living within their "community" appeared not to be a matter of primacy. Thus, a developmentalist, modernist agenda, in conjunction with restrictive ownership models that preclude true community ownership, may signify that community radio in India is ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of marginalized group identities. Understanding the relationship between groups who suffer from ingrained and ongoing voice poverty and opportunities for mediated identity expression represents an important area for future research. One that may make a compelling argument for the loosening of restrictions on the community radio sector to allow for greater access and opportunities for all groups.

Conclusion

The expression of identity is increasingly important in everyday life which can be attributed, at least in part, to the growing mediatization of society. Community radio is widely regarded as a "voice for the voiceless": a space for self-expression, alternative discourse, and more democratic media access within a media landscape dominated by multinational conglomerates and the voices of the powerful. These characteristics—alongside its pervasive, low-cost, and oral nature—mean that community radio is a hugely appealing tool for communication for social change. The question that remains, however, is the role of community radio in identity expression and how this fits within a communication for social change agenda. Expanding definitions of social change away from narrow, quantitative measures and toward freedoms and capabilities provides some insight into how community radio might contribute. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted at two stations in India, this study aimed to explore this theory. Using data from participant observation as well as interviews and focus groups conducted with community radio practitioners and audience members, the key findings related to how community radio facilitated community identity and the impacts of identity expression on empowering women, but also fails to create space for addressing the voice poverty of marginalized groups, due to structural and legislative limitations.

To conclude, though it is important to bear in mind that mediatized identity and the use of technology are just small aspects of infinitely broader, more complex, and ever-changing identity, there is a role for community radio within a social change agenda. Community radio has the potential to contribute to the development and expression of mediatized community identity through knowledge sharing and facilitating social interactions between audience members. Further, participation in community radio can also contribute to increased mobility, confidence, and a sense of self among female audience members. Though this study is limited by its small scope, the findings indicate that there is significant potential for future research into the impacts of community radio on identity. If structural limitations could be addressed

so as to facilitate broader access and participation, community radio, with its grassroots focus and emphasis on voice and self-expression, has a role to play in an expanded communication for social change agenda; one that recognizes the diversity and complexity of the freedoms that individuals have reason to value and creates space for these freedoms to be articulated and pursued within the contemporary media landscape.

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