

MEDIA PARTICIPATION AND CULTURAL NORMS AROUND MUGAMBO JWETU FM COMMUNITY MULTIMEDIA CENTRE IN TIGANIA WEST, MERU, KENYA

Kimani, R.N.

Department of Humanities, Chuka University, P. O. Box 109- 60400, Chuka, Kenya

Email: rkimani@chuka.ac.ke

ABSTRACT

Community media have been lauded for the opportunity they provide to enhance participation and therefore democratic culture. In Kenya, several community radio stations have been founded partly under this logic since 2004. As of 2017, there were about 25 operational community radio stations. However, exactly what participation consists of or what bottlenecks participation faces is not extensively laid out in either the country's legislation or the stations' best practices. This paper explores the daily interactions of a Kenyan 'community radio community' with the programmes of a radio station in their midst. It examines the media rituals at different times of the day by various sections of the community in relation to the content of the station, Mugambo Jwetu FM. Through this, social norms that determine participation, and the new social formations that occur through participation, are revealed. The data used are drawn from field research conducted in 2014 and 2015 in the context of a broader research project spanning 2014 to 2017. The project examined the roles and reception of community radio in the Kenyan media landscape and found that among other roles, community radio is a contested performance site for diverse social identities and that participation is subject to cultural norms.

Keywords: Participation; community; speech communities; radio; audiences; community radio; listenership; culture

INTRODUCTION

The idea of imagined communities created through media consumption is well outlined by Anderson (1984/2006) in description of the rise of nationalism. He argues that through the consumption of the same news media, particularly newspapers, individuals were, through their imagination, united into cohesive units. While this idea was put forth in relation to formation of European nations, it still is of value in reflecting the constitution of community through shared media consumption. Speaking from a micro-level, Fiske (1992) argues that while it is difficult to observe culture, examining media consumption practices - that is, how people do 'audiencing' - is a valuable entry into understanding how a social system functions and how people adapt to it. Fiske (1992) argues that audiencing practices are a glimpse of culture in practice, and therefore important to observe.

Participation is a key concept when it comes to community media. It is one of the features that distinguishes community media from other media, and is often conceptualised as a part of development. It is popular in politics, democracy, as well as communication and development. Participatory communication is conceptualised by communication scholars as part of people's right to communicate (Thomas, 2008); a tactic to challenge powerful discourses (Carpentier *et al.*, 2001); a way in which communities cultivate and exercise their citizenship (Rodriguez 2016; Jenkins and Carpentier 2013); and an avenue to express their voice (Pettit *et al.*, 2009).

Meadows et al. (2009) point out that participation in community media enhances other broader societal concepts such as democracy and citizenship, because production and reception of community media at the very least disturbs power relations between audience members and media producers. They view community media participants as being more empowered to participate in democratic processes. They argue that apart from focusing on content analysis of community media, it is vital to examine how community media facilitate community organisation.

Kenyan community media operate under the requirement of participation as one of their defining features.¹ However, what participation exactly entails seems to vary for each station. This paper examines the ways in which specific sections of the community engage with Mugambo Jwetu FM's programme content. In exploring audience activity contextually, I unpack what the term 'participation' implies in that context and how cultural norms determine the parameters of participation. The rest of the paper describes the station, methodology used and data illustrating media consumption practices. It then discusses audience participation in two shows and concludes by laying out the implications of the illustrated participatory practices.

Mugambo Jwetu FM

Mugambo Jwetu FM was established through funding by the UNESCO and the government of Finland, and received support from the local government via the

Constituency Development Fund (CDF)ⁱⁱ kitty in the form of premises in which to set up the station. The station has been on air since 2008 and is located in Tigania West, located 244 km north-east of Nairobi, Kenya. The main income generation activity in Tigania is growth and export of Miraa (*Khat*). With this activity come related issues such as children dropping out of school because they can earn quick money picking and packing Miraa, the spread of HIV/AIDS due to prostitution associated with the quest for quick money, high crime levels and family disintegration. These are some of the issues that the radio station seeks to address (Fairbairn & Rukaria, 2010).

Mugambo Jwetu FM is part of a Community Multimedia Centre (CMC) project. The CMC offers computer, internet, phone, fax and photocopying services to the community with the aim of “community empowerment through ICT” (Mugambo Jwetu CMC, 2013). It also offers training in computer literacy both to the community members and to members of the civil service working in the surrounding government offices. The CMC is a project of a community group known as ‘Mugambo Jwetu’ (meaning ‘Our Voice’), from which the station derives its name. It is this group that manages the centre, in the form of a management board consisting of community representatives drawn from different sectors such as gender, religion, and culture. The committee meets at least three times per year, and more often if necessary.

The station’s daily affairs are run by the station manager, who oversees several radio producers and presenters, a secretary, the computer training school teacher, and an intern. The individual show presenters produce their own shows, each of which runs for about 3 to 4 hours, starting from 5am till 10pm. Community members needing any of the CMC services deal with the secretary or intern, while those who want to meet the station manager are free to walk into his office without a prior appointment.

Until June 2014, the station was housed in the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) office premises, which is in the vicinity of other government offices. From July 2014, the station moved to a rented building in the Kianjai town centre, citing that the higher ground in the town centre offered better transmission possibilities. However, the rest of the CMC has remained housed at the CDF offices.

METHODOLOGY

This article draws on data collected during fieldwork conducted in 2014 and 2015 and validated with stations in 2016. The data was collected in the framework of a research projectⁱⁱⁱ spanning 2014-2017 that delved into

the roles and reception of community radio in the Kenyan media landscape. Both quantitative and qualitative methodology was employed for the broader research project, which focused on three stations selected according to length of existence, funding structure and broadcast language. This article draws on data specific to Mugambo Jwetu FM which was generated via both methods.

The quantitative methodology consisted of an audience survey in the community around the station, using questionnaires as a tool. The survey radius was based on the station’s identified signal-reach, based on transmitter strength and the approved broadcasting radius. Cluster sampling was employed in selecting the respondents for the questionnaires. Cluster sampling is a form of probability sampling in which, instead of sampling individual units which may be geographically dispersed, the sampling is done from groups that occur naturally in the population such as neighbourhoods or schools (Teddlie and Yu 2007). The station’s broadcast area was divided into clusters based on ten trading centres in the station’s broadcast radius: Kianjai, Kangeta, Makutano-Meru, Muriri, Ruiru, Muthara, Karama, Laare, Mikinduri, and Maua. A total of 115 questionnaires were randomly administered in each of the trading centres. In the course of the questionnaire administration, which took four days, an effort was made to ensure that a roughly equal number of males and females were interviewed. Hence, an element of purposive sampling – “selecting units (e.g., individuals, groups of individuals, institutions) based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study’s questions” (Teddlie and Yu 2007, 77) - was undertaken based on population characteristics. The aim was to get data across various demographic categories.

Based on community media research best practice (see Gordon 2012), the researcher settled for 100 questionnaires as a minimum and 115 questionnaires as a maximum. The latter figure was to create a margin to account for returned questionnaires that may be unusable. The minimum of 100 questionnaires was settled on in view of the population figures on one hand, and in view of Mugambo Jwetu FM’s identity as a community radio station on the other hand. Mugambo Jwetu FM’s signal coverage area has over 5000 inhabitants, who were all considered to be potential listeners. For large populations (categorised as more than 5000), 100 respondents offer a 95 percent confidence level, with a +/- 10 percent margin of error.^{iv} The ideal number of respondents for a minimal margin of error (+/- 2.5 percent) is 1000, and larger commercial stations making financial decisions based on listenership data may opt for this larger sample. However, in a community broadcasting context, 100

respondents can offer an indicator of listenership patterns and favourite programmes (Gordon, 2012). Therefore, the sample size was grounded in community media research recommendations as well as on the reasonable margin of error that this number would offer. This being an exploratory survey, the sample size was considered sufficient for the research purpose.

The qualitative methodology consisted of observation of workflows at the radio station, in-depth individual interviews with producers and focus group interviews with the station audiences. Focus group participants were drawn from lists of callers to the station and fan groups, whose contacts were provided by the station manager and producers. The focus groups were delineated along demographic lines into three categories: one gender-mixed group of youth (below 25 years of age), one of women (above 25 years of age) and another of men (above 25 years of age). Working with relatively homogenized focus groups was aimed at identifying age- and gender-specific audience preferences. The group interviews were done by the researcher on three days at a local cafe near the station, and were audio recorded, transcribed and anonymized. Anonymization was a condition agreed upon by audience members so that the focus group participants would be free to air their genuine comments. Due to the small geographical reach of the station and due to the research methodology, without anonymization the station management and producers would easily recognize which audience members made which comment, which was a concern for some participants.

Characteristics of Mugambo Jwetu FM Community

Figures from the survey point to a community that is moderately educated and engaged in business as their main income-generating activity, as shown below. As per Figure 1, the community around Mugambo Jwetu FM cannot be characterised as illiterate. Almost half of the respondents (44%) have attained at least a secondary school education, and another 27% have at least a primary school education. The third largest proportion of education levels is 18% which represents those who have post-secondary education (college, university or technical training institute). Five percent have a vocational training, usually pursued after primary school education. Only two percent of the respondents have no formal education at all.

As regards occupation, majority of the respondents surveyed stated that they engage in business activities. This majority is equal across genders; 38 men and 38 women, in total 76 people, named business as their occupation. This represents about 70% of the respondents. This is plausible, given that even among those who own farms and till them, the main way of

earning an income is through selling their produce. Farming was the next most cited occupation by the respondents, stated by 13% of the respondents. Only three respondents stated that they were in formal employment, and only three were unemployed. These figures, laid out in Figure 2, imply that most of these respondents would be outside their homes during the day as they attend to their business activities.

Radio Listenership Patterns in Mugambo Jwetu FM Community

A majority of respondents in the Mugambo Jwetu FM broadcast area indicated that they listen to radio. This was reflected across all age groups interviewed. Out of 108 respondents^v, 105 (97.2%) stated that they listen to radio, meaning that less than three percent of the people interviewed do not listen to radio at all. Out of these, 85 respondents (80.9%) indicated that they listen to radio daily, as seen in Figure 3. This points to radios being an important part of the media these community members access in their daily lives.

Mugambo Jwetu FM Listenership

When it comes to listenership specifically to Mugambo Jwetu FM, there were two different figures. First, respondents were asked to mention which radio stations they listen to, without being given options by the interviewer. In this scenario, 59 out of the 108 people interviewed mentioned Mugambo Jwetu FM. This is almost 55% of the respondents. Later in the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they listen to Mugambo Jwetu FM. In this case, 73 respondents answered in the affirmative. This is over 67% of the respondents. This disparity in findings could be attributed to respondent bias. It is therefore more probable that the true percentage of listeners to Mugambo Jwetu FM is closer to 55% than to 67%. This is nevertheless a high percentage of listeners from the station's envisioned target audience.

Delineated by age and gender, Mugambo Jwetu FM draws its largest listenership from the 31-40 age group (50.9%), followed by the 21-30 age group (44%). The popularity of Mugambo Jwetu FM among this demographic may have to do with its community ties in form of self-help groups which double up as fan groups, whose members span this age range. In terms of gender, males outnumber females in listenership in the 21-30 and 31-40 age groups (Figure 4).

Listening Frequency

In the survey area, of those who stated that they listen to Mugambo Jwetu FM, 71% tune in to the station daily, followed by 22.03% who tune in every two to three days. This is indicated in Figure 5.

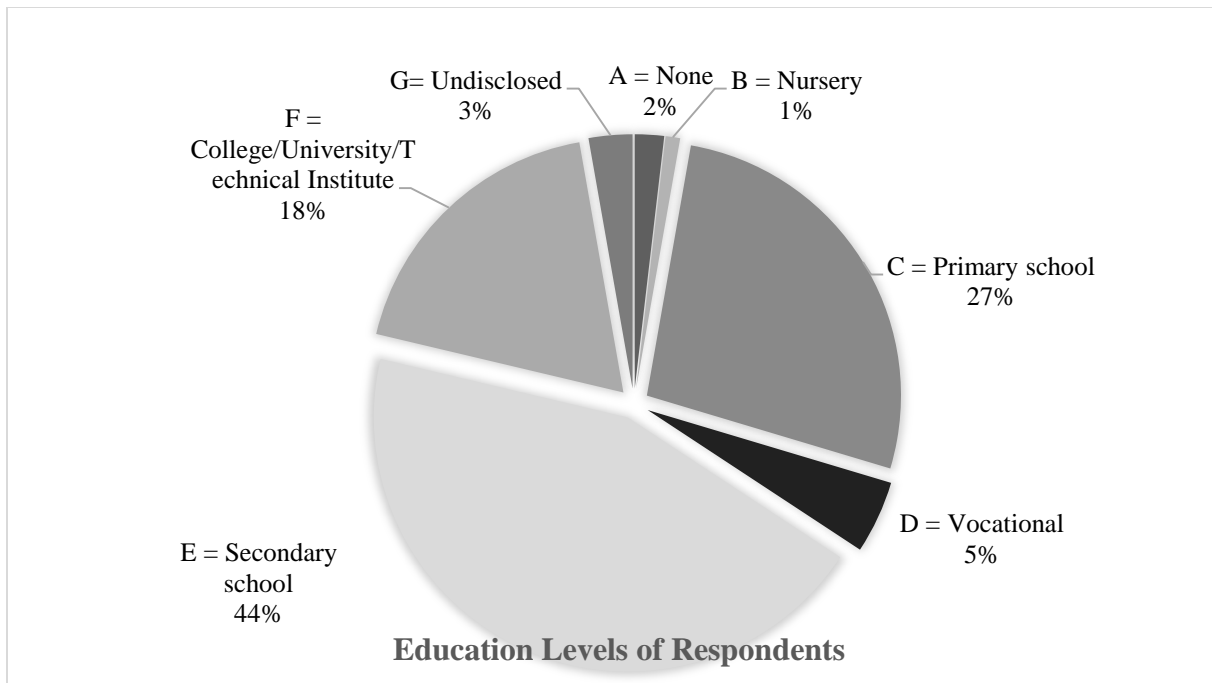


Figure 1. Community education levels

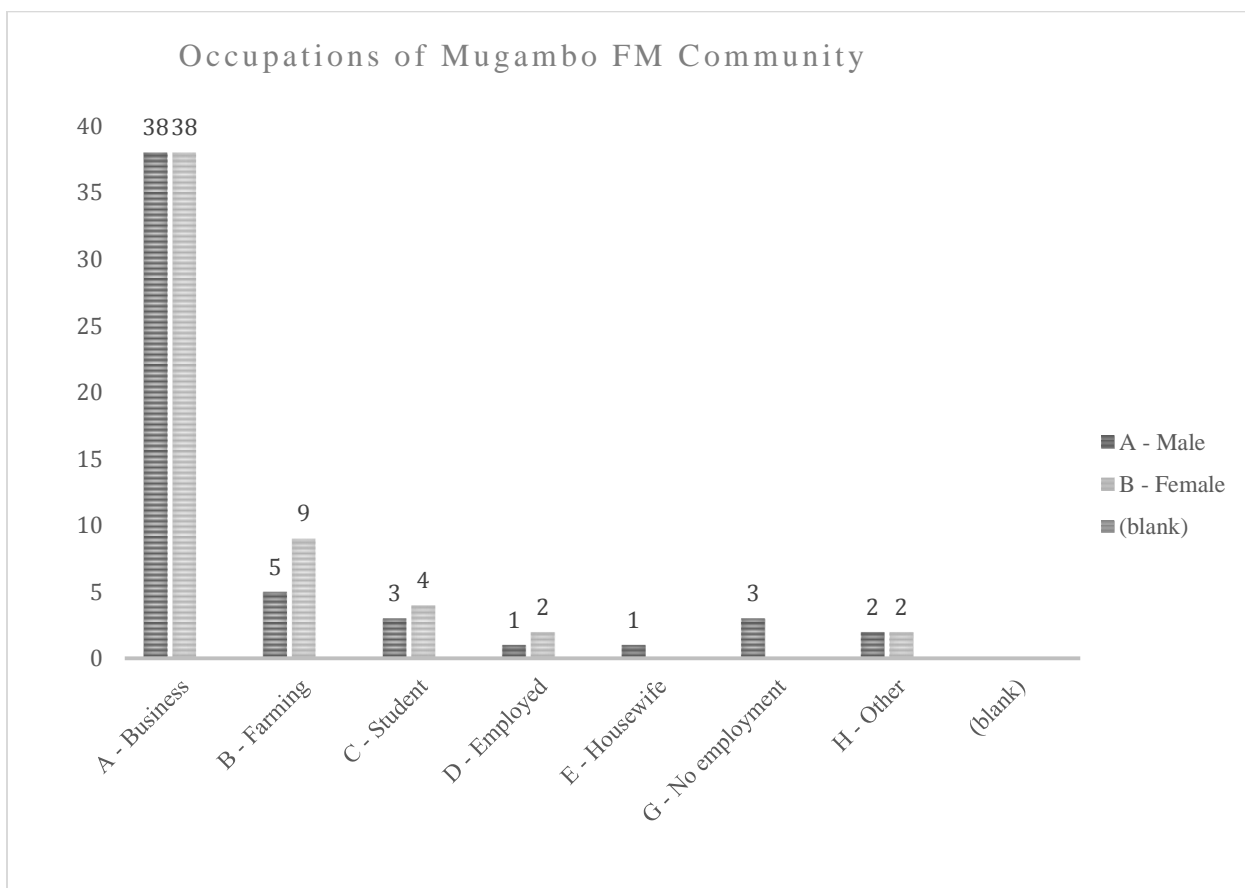


Figure 2. Community occupational activities

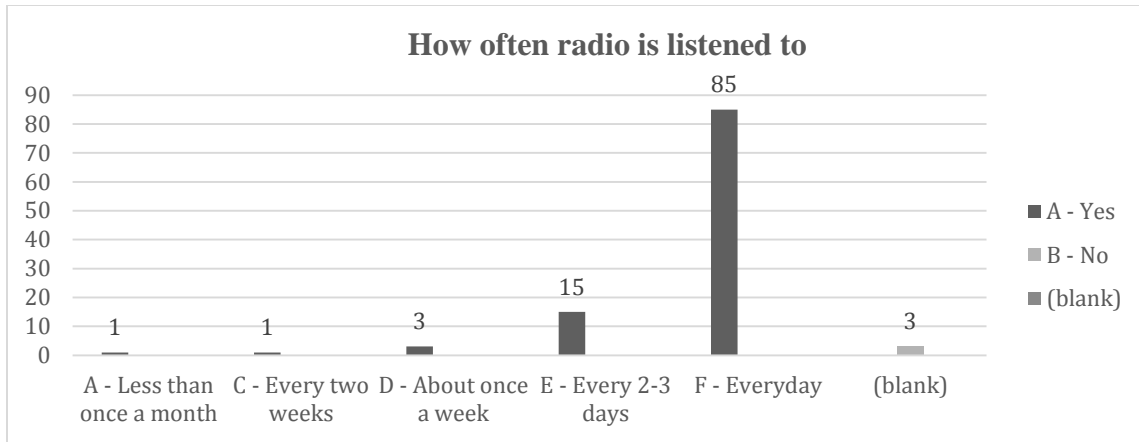


Figure 3. Frequency of listening to radio

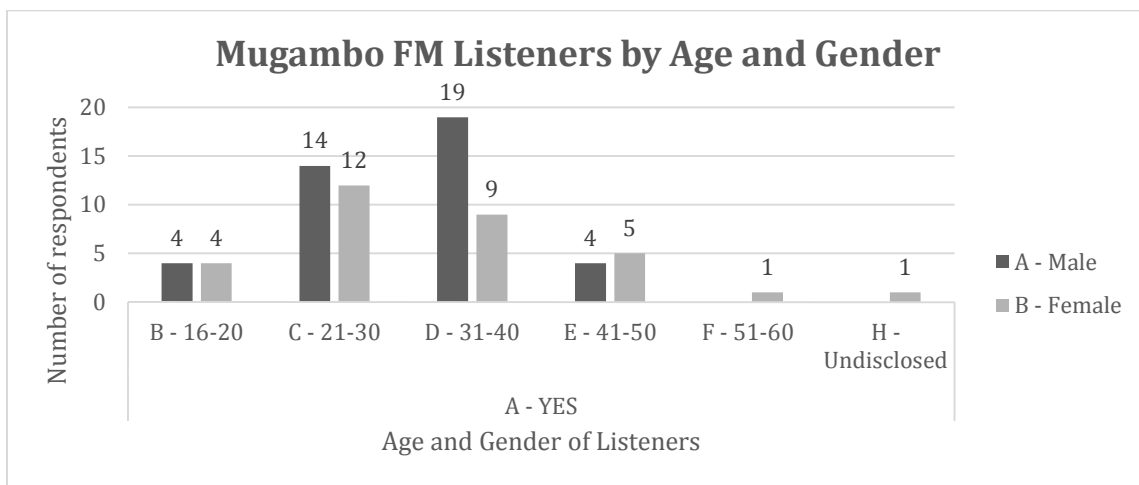


Figure 4. Age and gender of Mugambo Jwetu FM listeners

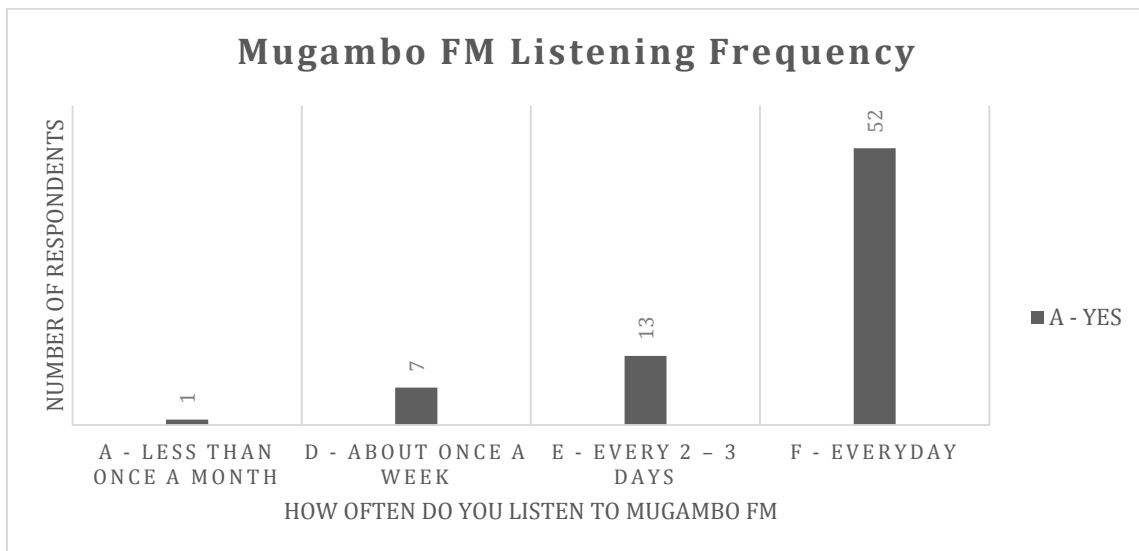


Figure 5. Frequency of listening to Mugambo Jwetu FM

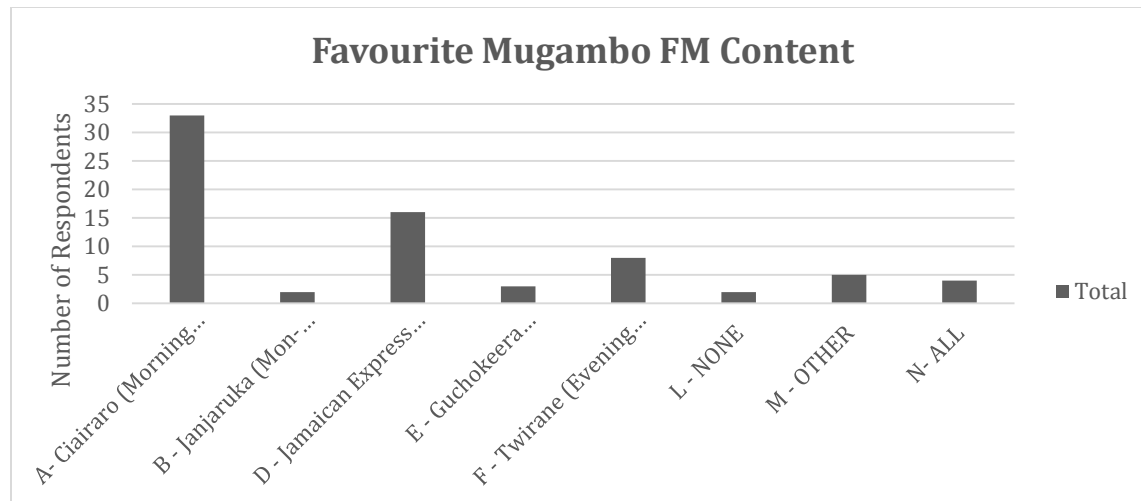


Figure 6. Favourite Mugambo Jwetu FM content

Favourite Mugambo Jwetu FM Content

Out of the available Mugambo Jwetu FM content, the morning show, *Ciairaro* ('Overnight happenings'), was the most frequently mentioned show that respondents listen to. This was followed in popularity by *Jamaican Express* (Reggae Show), and the third most listened to show was the evening talk show, *Twirane* (Let us talk to each other). This is indicated in Figure 6.

These findings are in line with the previous finding that the majority of radio listeners tune in to radio in the morning and evening. As well, it is a reflection of the stated content that respondents said they seek from radio in general. In group discussions, the majority of respondents said that they listen to radio in order to catch up on local news. *Ciairaro* ('overnight happenings'), the early morning show, performs this news function. Also of note is that although a low number of respondents indicated that they tune in to radio in the afternoon, the reggae show came out as a strong favourite among Mugambo Jwetu FM listeners. Among the youth, reggae was their top listenership choice, as reflected by the listenership figures for *Jamaican Express*, the reggae show. It is these two programmes that I focus on for the rest of the paper. I explore the interactions of the listeners with the two shows, and from these draw conclusions about the community norms that are revealed.

Early Morning Show - *Ciairaro*

At Mugambo Jwetu FM, *Ciairaro* begins between 5 and 6 am, and consists of news of the day and a selected discussion topic. The timing of the show arguably keeps in mind the typical Kenyan listener's schedule, which involves being awake and getting

ready to leave the house early in the day in order to be at work by 8am, whether one's own business enterprise, formal employment or contract work that is assigned every morning. For farmers, milking takes place before dawn and cultivation starts early. At this time of the day, as the average adult is busy doing things around the home, the radio acts as a companion that keeps them informed and entertained. Indeed, as presented in the quantitative findings above, the most popular radio listening times were first thing in the morning and last thing in the evening. The listeners found these times the most convenient to listen to radio, and indicated that they usually tune in at home.

In the *Ciairaro* show, apart from newspaper reviews of the national news, there is a specific slot for community members to call in and contribute to the news agenda. This explains the show's name: '*Ciairaro*'. People call in with information about happenings of the previous evening. The show host gives guidelines on the kind of content expected: nothing currently in court or being investigated by the police, and of purely personal interest (i.e. it has to be relevant to the community). In addition, anonymous calls are not entertained – anyone who calls in should be ready to give their name – “even a fake name, but a name” (TD, Producer, Mugambo FM, 2014). The host then selects an issue for discussion, and asks community members to call in with their opinions about the same. At times it may be a local issue, at other times it may be an issue on the national news.

According to the show host, the whole community participates in discussion. He mentions that “even old Mamas, they call me, just to debate, to discuss the issue

we are debating...I have some 3 fans, who are old Mamas over 70, and they are calling..." (TD, Producer, Mugambo FM, 2014) Another producer who alternates on the same show mentions that the target audience is "Everyone in the community. We try to have something for everyone" (MN, 2014). However, interviews with different groups in the community regarding their participation in the show reveal a different picture. Whether intentionally or not, it is almost exclusively the adults in the community who contribute to this show.

The youth state that they do not feel that they have the right to call in, and explain it in this way:

If there is a show contributed to largely by the adults you will take it as belonging to them, so even if it is something interesting to you as a youth, you will not have the confidence to contribute to the discussion. If you are with your parent you tell them your opinion and then they can call into the station on your behalf, because you don't want to be heard commenting on that issue...we are afraid to be heard 'oh, so-and-so is a gossip' especially when we meet in the afternoons as youth in the market. (Mugambo Youth, 2014).

This thought is echoed by adults, who state that the morning show is their special show, and youth should focus on 'their' show, that is, reggae in the afternoon. As a respondent during group discussions explained, "The youth don't call in the morning. They know the morning is for adults...those are issues for adults; youth should let us be... Even my son at reggae time tells me 'now let me have the radio' and I let him have it to listen to reggae" (Mugambo Women, 2014).

Thus, much as the show's producers assume that the show is open to participation by the whole community, participation in the show follows the already existent social norms - in this case, that young people should not engage in conversations where adults are speaking. As such, participatory parity in the Habermasian sense is mediated along age lines. Fiske (1992) sees audiencing - the practices of audiences - as a way of understanding culture. In the case of this show at Mugambo Jwetu FM, the delineated participation in audiencing the show demonstrates community values. It brings to mind Moemeka's description of communication norms in what he characterizes as communalistic societies, of which African societies may be said to be a part. He points out that verbal and non-verbal communication are delineated along age lines:

Whereas elders have the right to communicate mostly verbally, young children and youths are,

by tradition, expected to communicate mostly nonverbally. Because younger generations are presumed to have limited experience in life, they are expected to watch and listen, and act according to what is judged to be the best for them in the context of the overall welfare of the community (Moemeka, 1998, p. 133)

In such societies, should the youth have something to say about an issue being discussed by their elders, then they would be expected to channel these views through someone who has the right to communicate in that situation: another adult. Such a community defers to gerontocracy, that is, the older someone becomes, the more traditional and social authority they garner in the community (Moemeka, 1998). This seems to be the case in the community around Mugambo Jwetu FM; at least as far as this morning show is concerned, certain sections of the community have more right to speak than others based on age. Calhoun (1993) sees tradition as grounded less in the historical past and more in everyday social practice, which reinforces the tradition. This is arguably the case for the *Ciairaro* show, where both the youth and the adults implicitly agree that the show should be contributed to by adults and not by youth, and act in a manner that upholds this thought. This idea is verbally stated by both groups almost as an 'obvious fact', and is reproduced and reinforced by social censure among the youth, where they fear losing social standing among their peers if they should be heard participating in this show.

Apart from debating on national issues and giving community updates, the *Ciairaro* show also tackles specific community issues which offer the possibility to tackle 'taken-for-granted' issues that have an impact on the community. One example is the fact that children in the area walk to and from school before dawn and after dark, because they are enrolled in 'good' schools far away from their villages. Not only is this exhausting for the students, but it is also unsafe for them, and often costlier for their parents. However it has long been seen as a necessary practice to ensure academic success.^{vi} Discussing this issue is a way of challenging the assumptions around this practice, and seeking an alternative way to achieve desired outcomes. It is not an explicitly political issue, but it is certainly one of importance to the community, questioning the existent relations between 'good' and 'bad' schools, and thinking through ways to re-imagine these. It is an example of the community engaging in meaning-making processes through community media, by asking questions such as: 'is the only way to ensure our children get a good education to enroll them in far-off schools?' Schudson (2002) argues that the most important value of news media to society is their role

as cultural actors. They do not indoctrinate individuals but rather, establish “a web of meanings and therefore a web of presuppositions, in relation to which, to some degree, people live their lives” (Schudson 2002). In the case of Mugambo Jwetu FM, the station arguably goes beyond establishing this web of meanings. In offering space for debates on previously unquestioned ways of doing life, it creates room for the community to challenge established meanings and norms and co-generate new ones. Hence, community radio acts as a dialogic space in which fresh value systems are discursively produced.

Afternoon Show – Jamaican Express

In the afternoon, Mugambo Jwetu FM airs a youth programme. The Mugambo Jwetu FM programme is themed on reggae, and goes by the name *Jamaican Express*. As regards the actual content of this show, one notes that there is no hard news on offer, but rather, entertainment in the form of music. However, this programme goes beyond entertainment to function as an arena where identities are created and enhanced. The show is targeted at the youth in the broadcast areas, and works with the assumption that youth are available to listen to radio in the early afternoon hours. This supposition may not be far-fetched. As the women in Mugambo Jwetu FM pointed out, “The afternoon is for our children. Mostly we are not at home at that time – we are out in the farm” (Mugambo Women’s group interview, Urru, 10.12.14). At this time, even if the youth may still be engaged in house chores, they use the radio as a companion to keep them entertained as they work. This choice of programme schedule considers social context and is designed to fit into the daily flow of life in the community. It highlights the function of the radio outside of its content, specifically its intersections with daily activities and illustrates that when a station is embedded in a community, it is better able to tailor not only its content but also its programming schedule to fit the social context.

Taking a closer look at the *Jamaican Express* show offers some insights into how the youth participate in radio programmes, and further expands the idea that different sections of the community interact in diverse ways with the programmes and are in those moments interpellated into specific formations. To start with, the producer herself goes by a pseudonym on the show, ‘Empress Natty’, but uses her real name on her Facebook page, which she also uses to communicate with audience members. Similarly, the youth who contribute to the show go by reggae-related pseudonyms. This illustrates that in this context of media use, social identities are created and played out beyond the online space. In the *Jamaican Express* show, radio is more of the place where social identity is

constructed, rather than the internet, as has been found in other parts of the world. This might hint at difficulty in accessing the internet for the youth of the area and therefore using the radio as an alternative sphere to carry out activities that other youth might carry out online. It could also point to the notion that the social function of radio among youth in the African context has been overlooked, especially keeping in mind orality as a cultural trait. Radio has been viewed as a medium through which to receive information, but as suggested here, plays an equally important social function of identity construction.

The *Jamaican Express* show discusses social issues, often revolving around relationships. In this slot, the youth offer their opinions and ask for advice from each other and from the show host. Often, the show host asks a question or raises a topic, and then asks the listeners to contribute to the topic and request for the songs that they would like her to play. Listeners contribute to this show through Facebook posts, SMS and calls. As the programme runs, the producer checks her Facebook account and responds to comments and song requests.^{vii}

The reggae show producer sources the latest hits from the internet knowing that her audience is interested in and aware of international trends in reggae music. The show features a mix of languages, and is not limited to Meru, the local language. The producer speaks Kiswahili, English and Sheng^{viii}, and the reggae music played is mostly in English. As such, the audience for this reggae show is delineated not only by age, but also along language lines. Given the additional variable of language used for the show, I view the youth who participate in the afternoon show as a separate speech community within the Mugambo community. They are youth embedded in the community around Mugambo Jwetu FM, but are simultaneously also an independent speech community.

Morgan offers a useful definition of speech communities as “groups that share values and attitudes about language use, varieties and practices”, based on the premise that “language represents, embodies, constructs and constitutes meaningful participation in society and culture” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1). She further states that, “What is fundamental to both speech and community is that a system of interaction and symbols is shared, learned and taught, and that participants and members are aware they share this system. This is why speech communities are one way that language ideologies and social identities are constructed” (Morgan, 2014, p. 2). The language of the afternoon show at Mugambo Jwetu FM is one that clearly sets it

aside from other programming, as explained by the youth interviewed:

Youth 3: [The reggae show] inspires me.....you may get some information in some reggae [songs] that may help you in life.

Interviewer: Information like? You know information can be anything. Is it mathematics, is it English?

Youth 3: No, it can improve even your way of life even you can hear some pronunciation of words, English words that you were not aware of before. (Interviewee 3, Mugambo Youth, Urru, 09.12.14)

In this case, the show offers not only entertainment but also implicitly provides English language tips. In the case of this show, there is a construction of social identities and a system of interaction going on, for instance the idea that the youth listen to the show in order to be able to speak in a certain way.

As Morgan elaborates, many people operate within multiple speech communities in order to participate in words and ideas exchange, and to represent their identities as ‘full social actors’. Speech communities are organized “around people who want to share their opinions, identities, thoughts and solidarities and generally communicate with their evolving social world” (Morgan, 2014, p. 18). Similarly, the fact that youth speak in other languages during the afternoon show does not mean that they do not speak their local language at home – they do. But in the moment of listening to the reggae show and contributing to it, they express their membership in another speech community, through a specific form of self-expression that befits the listening community. They use the show as a space to exchange ideas pertinent to them, through the use of codes they have developed. They put on the identity befitting the speech community they are members of at different times of the day, creating and enhancing their multiple identities.

In their contributions to the show, the youth often identify themselves using nicknames, taking up different identities from their ‘official’ ones. In addition, they speak in a mixture of their local language and Jamaican patois, the latter used in much reggae music, and in this way communicate using a code that the adults don’t understand. Through this show, the youth have an arena to openly converse about issues that they might not be comfortable discussing in the hearing of adults. Since they are on air and cannot prevent any adult from tuning into the station and listening to them, they create their own alternative on-air meeting space with its own language code to keep out those who do not belong and keep

connected those who do. As one mother put it, “they start saying ‘reee...leeee...’ things we don’t understand. But they themselves understand, and you see that your child is engaged with the radio, even when they are doing their washing you see they are enjoying themselves listening” (Interviewee 2, Women’s Group Interview, Urru, 10.12.14). As such, this speech community is marked by simultaneous exclusivity of adults and inclusion of youth.

In some instances, apart from the use of special language, song requests are a way of contributing to debates on the show, as explained by one youth during group interviews:

Interviewer: So what are the debates on the reggae show about?

Youth 2: It can be a discussion about relationships, for example, how youth relate. And young people start to call in with comments and questions.

Interviewer: And do you contribute to this show?

Youth 2: Of course.... For example, you can request a song within that motion [i.e. debate]. Let’s say if the debate is talking about how youth behave, you ask for Lucky Dube’s^{ix} song ‘A question is a crime’, so I contribute to the discussion through that song. (Interviewee 2, Youth Group Interview, Urru, 09.12.14)

Through clever use of a code recognised by fellow youth, that is, song lyrics which are familiar to the show’s listeners, the contributor communicates a certain message. The message, which hints at the idea that youth are not allowed to raise questions, illustrates the youth’s repertoire of communication resources from international music. Community-youth-specific issues are discussed, but the tools used for discussion are drawn from outside the community – a foreign language and an international song – which have been appropriated into the local context.

Audiencing in this show is a way in which cultural norms are reproduced. For instance, it is frowned upon for adults to participate in the reggae show. As one youth answered to the question ‘why can’t adults also contribute to the reggae show’, “If you are known to really love reggae – and you are a grownup - especially a woman – it can be said that you are a drunkard or you go to clubs excessively. People will wonder how come you know those songs. If you hear such a person even naming artistes it is shocking, now you see that woman is digital! You get suspicious” (Interviewee 3, Mugambo Youth Group interview, Urru, 09.12.14).

The ‘suspicion’ about an adult and especially a woman being familiar with reggae indicates a clear

demarcation of ideas about what it means to be young person and what it means to be an adult, male or female, in the community. These ideas in turn determine who can participate in which programme and who cannot. The expectations by the youth regarding how adults should behave hint at the successful reproduction of a habitus, that is, unquestioned beliefs or understandings which serve as the basis for disputing or questioning other claims (Calhoun 1993), who argues it is what bounds a nation or ethnic group. The demarcations of participation in radio programming in Mugambo Jwetu FM acknowledge and reinforce existent cultural structures. Participation in different programmes is mediated by cultural norms, because each programme is not equally open to the participation of all.

CONCLUSION

For the community in which Mugambo Jwetu FM is located, radio listenership is a daily activity. Radio listenership takes place chiefly in the morning and in the evening, before listeners leave home for work and after they get home in the evening. This implies that radio listening is an active engagement which is done purposely at specific times, rather than mere background noise. It is construed as a distinct leisure activity. During different time slots in the course of the day, distinct publics and communities are constituted through their audiencing practices. During the morning show at Mugambo Jwetu FM, deliberative publics are constituted through debating on community issues. However, this deliberative public sphere of the early morning show is not open to everyone; rather, it is delineated according to age lines. For the afternoon show, Mugambo youth are constituted as a separate speech community. They not only deliberate on youth issues, but do so in a language different from that spoken at home, which locks out their parents.

As demonstrated in this article, engagement with radio programmes is based on pre-existent community characteristics. The station's community has in place different types of community organisation, not only due to the presence of a media outlet in their midst, but also based on their pre-existent social ties. Mugambo Jwetu FM; thus, facilitates community organisation as proposed by Meadows et al. (2009), but does this through responding and adapting to pre-existent forms of community organisation, rather than creating new forms of social organisation.

Thus, although broadcasting to the same geographical community all day, through the content it offers, community radio acts as an arena for the interpellation of different sections of the community into diverse configurations at various times of the day. As such,

examining communities' diverse engagement with media content is valuable for further understanding how communities are structured, the ways in which they are evolving, and what values they hold dear.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, B. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised. London: Verso.
- Calhoun, C. 1993. Nationalism and Ethnicity. *Annual Review of Sociology* 19:211–39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2083387> Accessed : 30-05-2016 16 : 55.
- Carpentier, N., Lie, R. and Servaes, J., 2001. Community media - Muting the democratic media discourse? p. 5-8. In: *Proceedings of The International Social Theory Consortium Second Annual Conference*. 5-8 July, 2001, Centre for Critical Studies in Communication and Culture, Brighton, United Kingdom.
- Fairbairn, J. and Rukaria, D. 2010. *Poised for Growth: Community Radio in Kenya in 2009*. Commissioned by Open Society Institute for East Africa.
- Fiske, J. 1992. Audiencing: A Cultural Studies Approach to Watching Television. *Poetics* 21:345–59.
- Gordon, J. 2012. Community radio audience research. In *Radio and Society*, by Matt Mollgaard, 197–215. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publ.
- Jenkins, H. and Carpentier, N. 2013. Theorizing participatory intensities: A conversation about participation and politics. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 19(3), pp.265–286. Available at: <http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-84881276579&partnerID=tZOtx3y1>.
- Meadows, M., Forde, S., Ewart, J. and Foxwell, K. 2009. *A Catalyst for Change? Australian Community Broadcasting Audiences Fight Back*. In: *Notions of Community: A Collection of Community Media Debates and Dilemmas*. Janey Gordon (Ed.), p. 149-171. Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers.
- MN Producer, Mugambo Jwetu FM. Interview by Rose Kimani. 9 December 2014.
- Moemeka, A.A. 1998. Communalism as a Fundamental Dimension of Culture. *Journal of Communication (International Communication Association)* 118-141.
- Morgan, M.H. 2014. *Speech Communities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MT Show Host, Mugambo Jwetu FM. Interview by Rose Kimani. 11 March 2014.

- Mugambo Jwetu CMC. 2013. Mugambo CMC 2008 to July 2013.
- Mugambo Women, group interview by Rose Kimani. 10 December 2014.
- Mugambo Youth, group interview by Rose Kimani. 09 December 2014.
- Pettit, J., Salazar, J.F. and Dagrón, A.G. 2009. Citizens' media and communication. *Development in Practice*, 19(4–5):443–452.
- Rodriguez, C. 2016. Human agency and media praxis: Re-centering alternative and community media research. *Journal of Alternative and Community Media*, 1:36-38.
- Schudson, M. 2002. The News Media as Political Institutions. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 5:249–269.
- TD Producer, Mugambo Jwetu FM. Interview by Rose Kimani. 11 March 2014.
- Teddlie, C. and Yu, F. 2007. Mixed Methods Sampling: A Typology With Examples. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1):77–100.
- Thomas, P. 2008. Communication and the Persistence of Poverty: The Need for a Return to Basics. In: *Communication for Development and Social Change*, Jan Servaes (Ed), p. 31-44. New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd.

ⁱ Section 46 (F) of the KICA (2009) Act

ⁱⁱ Now called 'NG-CDF' - The National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF). As per <http://www.ngcdf.go.ke/index.php/about-ng-cdf>: it is "a fund established in 2003 through an Act of Parliament, the CDF Act 2003. The Act was later reviewed by the CDF (Amendment) Act 2007, and repealed by CDF Act, 2013 which was succeeded by the current NG-CDF Act, 2015. The Fund is domiciled within the ministry in charge of national economic policy and planning, currently the Ministry of Devolution and Planning. The main purpose of the Fund is to enhance infrastructural and socio-economic development at the grass root level in order to reduce poverty by dedicating a minimum of two and half per cent (2.5%) of all National Government's share of annual revenue towards community projects identified at constituency level by the communities."

ⁱⁱⁱ Full research report available online on <https://epub.uni-bayreuth.de/3622/1/Kenyan%20Community%20Radio%20Players%20Production%20Participation%20Mar18.pdf>

^{iv} Statistical calculation programmes indicate a margin of error of +/- 10 for random sampling sizes of 100 out of large populations (over 5,000). See for example <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>

^v The total number of usable questionnaires

^{vi} During discussions with the station staff, it emerged that one of the issues under discussion in the community was how to strengthen schools in the local area. Parents in the area usually opt to enroll their children in schools that perform well in primary

school and secondary school national exams (referred to as 'good' schools), even if this means ignoring a nearby school and taking one's child to a school many kilometres away. The idea is to give their child an opportunity to perform well in the national exams, which determine one's entrance to the next level of education.

^{vii} Noted during observation sessions at the station in 2014/2015

^{viii} A Kenyan urban slang consisting primarily of English and Kiswahili but it also borrows words and expressions from other Kenya's local languages

^{ix} A South African reggae artiste