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**Communicating ethnicity and identity**

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## **Abstract**

As part of a continuing doctoral research project on ethnic minority radio and audience identity in the UK, this paper presents an analysis of the programmes broadcast by the stations and their role in communicating ethnicity and identity. This paper presents an analysis of the programmes broadcast two ethnic minority stations to examine their role in communicating ethnicity and identity. Giddens' theory of Structuration (1984) is employed alongside Paddy Scannell's work on radio (1996) and Baumann's work on identity (1999) to address the two main aspects of the paper:

1. An examination of the programmes broadcast, their sociable tones, intentions and how this ties into the daily lives of the listener.
2. How these programmes are bound up with the communication of ethnicity and identity.

The programme analysis utilises themes identified by Scannell for studying radio in everyday life. These themes seek to connect 'the meaningfulness of programmes...the intentions of the programme makers and the institutions in which they work, and the interpretations of any viewer or listener' (Scannell, 1996, p. 3). This approach is supported by aspects of Giddens' Structuration theory, his later writing on identity and Baumann's rethinking of identity and multiculturalism. Station staff and listeners (agents) use their tacit knowledge to inform actions which are negotiated through a mutual dialogue. These daily interactions form the intentions, identity and authenticity that the programmes communicate to the audience.

Identity is often treated as a separate concept so it becomes dislocated from its meaningful context. The paper draws on these separate theoretical concepts in a framework which treats identity and ethnicity as situated in daily interactions calling on structural rules and resources. The analysis shows how ethnic minority radio programmes have relevance to station staff and listeners in reflecting, reifying or contributing to their multi-faceted identity.

## **Context**

Ethnic minority radio in the UK is part of a growing market for niche, special interest stations at a time of market consolidation and great technological convergence. Though a relatively young market, it has seen a slow development from the mid sixties to the present, moving from local programmes to fully licensed stations. They are defined as those reaching Britain's marginalised communities, licensed as public service, community, commercial, or not licensed at all. This paper comes from a doctoral research project which is examining how the ethnic minority stations continue to exist, the types of services they provide and how they utilise ideas of ethnicity and identity to communicate with their audiences.

The paper presents a comparison of some of the analysed content from two of the participant stations. The stations were chosen for their ethnic diversity and for their licensing situation. The objective was to obtain narratives from participants across the radio station. These interviews and the programme analysis took place with a regional commercial DAB broadcaster in London and a small community station in Leeds.

This paper makes use of a qualitative case study approach and the methods of non-participant observation, interview and programme analysis. The observation focused on the activities of the studio, the DJ and other relevant agents with the aim to 'develop a detailed portrait' (Robson, 2000, p. 200) of the interactions going on. The observation categories were selected from Spradley's 'nine dimensions' (Robson, 2000, p. 200) which incorporate time, space, agents, activities, events on which data was collected. Semi-structured interviews were developed with questions derived from the doctoral objectives using Giddens' Structuration theory (ST) as a theoretical framework and took place with station staff.

The programme analysis draws on the themes Scannell uses for studying radio in everyday life, some of the themes are used for the paper analysis. Scannell's ideas draw inspiration from many of Giddens' perspectives about the recursive nature of interactions between agents which also have relevance to the construct of the self as narrative. The

biographical construction of the self through interaction is a concept also adopted by Baumann (1999) in his examination of the 'cross cutting cleavages' of society. Here identity and ethnicity is fluid, defined by the situated actions and practices of agents rather than abstract, static, historical and reified. These ideas are explored in the context of ethnic minority radio, drawing together disparate concepts into a theoretical framework which are then utilised in the findings.

### **Dailiness and routine**

Scannell views radio and the media in general in the context of the daily, cyclical lives of the audience and focuses primarily on the relationship between the audience, broadcasters and programmes. Dailiness is defined as a core concept by both Giddens and Scannell as a continuous, uninterrupted and never ending flow of routinised interactions and actions which constitute daily life or, in terms of Scannell, radio services.

Radio's effect is 'to re-temporise time, to mark it out in particular ways, so that the time of day (at any time) is a particular time, a time differentiated from past time-in-the-day or time that is yet-to-come. The time of day in broadcasting is always marked as the time it is now. Its now is endlessly thematised in a narrative of days and their dailiness' (Scannell, 1996, p. 148).

Time, reversible time and cyclicity serve to define a ritual function and play an emotional significance to a listener's day to day culture. We are by nature, ritualistic, settled and routinised. For Giddens cyclicity or recursiveness happen in the day to day actions of agents where 'in all societies the vast bulk of daily activity consists of habitual practices in which individuals move through definite 'stations' in time-space' (Giddens, 1981, p. 38). These stations are times of the day, breakfast time to night time and are punctuated by the temporal arrangements of radio.

These arrangements come partly from the calendar year with daily programming structured by anticipated events, Eid, the Caribbean Carnival, the Mela. Programming content anticipates these events and 'creates horizons of expectations, a mood of

anticipation, a directedness towards that which is to come, thereby giving structure and substance (a texture of relevancies) to everyday life' (Scannell, 1996, p. 155). The research analysed the meanings of the programmes and how these fit into the dailiness of the schedule – of listeners and of the station and in this sense, it looked at how the programmes and the dailiness of the schedule attended to the listener in the context of their immediate spatial and temporal constraints.

This leads to an examination of the structures of the programme that contributes to its continued existence or what Giddens (1984) refers to the 'longue durée' whereby institutions out survive those involved by way of the reproduction of the rules and resources governing broadcasting e.g. programme formats, scheduling, themes and station identity. Some forms of programming have become institutions and remain so despite the fact that 'routine actions in daily life are increasingly opened up from the hold of tradition' (Moore, 2003, p. 15) in modern (transnational) culture. This is shown in the persistence of drive-time scheduling even though some stations broadcast only on the internet.

## **Sociability**

It is in the context of programmes forming part of the recursiveness of daily life in the station, the DJs and of the listeners, that the paper examines themes of sociability, sincerity, authenticity and identity.

The sociable tones of the programme are studied through the perceived relationship to the audience and the positioning of the presenter as authority, friend, confidante or provoker. Radio, like other media is accessed through the choice of the listener and 'given that you can't coerce listeners to listen, it would follow that you would try to speak to them in ways that they would wish to be spoken to' (Scannell, 1996, p. 24). Programmes and DJ styles are built on the nature of sociability with the aim to establish an ongoing relationship and the 'bringing off' (Moore, 2003) sociable moments. Radio broadcasting relies on the voice as the primary method and style of sociability; there are no visual cues as in 'co-present interaction' (Goffman, 1959) or televised 'quasi-interaction'

(Thompson, 1995). The voice gives ‘rise to inferences about the character and personality of the speaker, their mood, their attitude to what they are saying and to the person they are speaking to (Scannell, 1996, p. 36).

Scannell considers the universality of radio programmes, broadcasting to a mass audience, a nation. Morley disagrees and this has particular relevance to ethnic minority radio. As the broadcasting industry has fragmented, the mass audience tends not to exist. This is reflected in the reality of broadcasting today where ‘sociability, by definition, can only ever be produced in some particular cultural (and linguistic) form – and only those with access to the relevant cultural capital will feel interpellated by and at home within the particular form of sociability offered by a given programme’ (Morley, 2000, p. 110). Morley writes from a critical perspective of the media however ‘capital’ can be substituted for ‘competences’ and so isn’t necessarily class restricted. Both perspectives point out that cultural competences are required, particularly in ethnic minority programming, for the ‘bringing off’ of sociability which is further examined in the analysis.

## **Sincerity**

Examining sincerity is about the performance of the DJ, a ‘period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers which has some influence on the observers’ (Goffman, 1959, p. 32). All broadcasting is a form of performance however it is possible to ascertain whether a DJ’s broadcasting style is a false or sincere performance in the sense that, did the DJ mean what they said or was there a falseness of presentation? This presentation is judged in the context of the identity of the station and perceived identity of the listeners as ‘the performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of a society...an expressive rejuvenation and reaffirmation of the moral values of the community’ (Op. cit. p, 45).

Sincerity is the projection of ordinariness and it is expected to hear narratives which are naturalistic and authentic in the programme. Scannell observed the changing style of presentation at the BBC from the formal to this everyday tone where ‘artificial, mannered

or stylised performances are rejected on radio...except as pastiche or as send-ups' (Scannell, 1996, p. 74).

## **Authenticity**

The analysis links together themes of sincerity and sociability with authenticity. We take Scannell's use of the meaning to be how the programme provides an authentication of daily life through its presentation and recursiveness. To provide this, the authenticity of the presenter is shown by the believability of the reality they present and this is based on whether the presenter has the experience to say what they do. Of this, Scannell says 'the effect that is sought for is a kind of truthfulness, of authenticity, that is held to reside in what the subject has to say...this authenticity rests upon their entitlement to speak about something that has happened to them, or that they have witnessed, and which they *know* about' (Scannell, 1996, p. 110). This belief is located in a shared use of language and style of presentation – taken for granted forms of talk. Though we may not see the ethnicity of the presenter, we hear the music they play, the people they interview, the experiences they share and the language that they use will signify who they are. We are then able to make a judgement on whether they are authentic.

Programmes for Scannell, by nature of their dailiness and scheduling also represent this cyclical and familiar nature of the listener's lives. The existence and regularity of the programme and its content authenticates a sense of ritual and place within the stations and listeners daily schedule. As Giddens notes, it is only when the daily and recursive nature of the programme is removed that we notice and are upset by the break from normality.

## **Identity**

Giddens considers authentication in the context of the development of identity where 'all individuals actively, although by no means always in a conscious way, selectively incorporate many elements of mediated experience into their day-to-day conduct. This is never a random or passive process rather one where 'the appropriation of mediated information follows pre-established habits' (Giddens, 1991, p. 188) and listeners avoid

narratives which jar with their inner beliefs. Identity is shown to be a ‘dual articulation’ through the DJ where ‘they make use of recurrent devices for reiterating the identity of the station, the programme and the presenter... and his or her identity is mediated very largely through talk’ (Scannell, 1996, p. 118). This reciprocal process, the linking of institution and agent action, forms part of the main theoretical perspective of the research from which this paper is written.

Self identity is defined by reflexivity, the act of self reference and feedback; it is the ability to ‘reflexively understand the self and is in the ability to keep the narrative going’ (Moore, 2003, p. 143). This implies the formation of self as part of a dialogue, an ‘individual’s biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing story about the self’ (Giddens, 1991, p. 54). Thompson concurs in his study of the self through a mediated world where ‘like symbolic materials exchanged through face-to-face interaction, mediated materials can be incorporated into the process of self-formation; increasingly the self becomes organised as a reflexive project through which the individual incorporates mediated materials (among others) into a coherent and continuously revised biographical narrative’ (Thompson, 1995, p. 212). This storied identity forms part of a presenter’s mediated self, a dialogue with the listeners through language, music and programme content where it then becomes something expressed as a collective understanding.

This understanding, or what Moore refers to earlier as ‘cultural competences’ are the shared comprehension of the narrative which is taking place. It assumes the listener is ‘capacity built’ to borrow one interviewee’s term, in a similar sense as the broadcaster. Issues of identity are often subtly expressed where those equipped with a shared background or cross cultural understanding will notice certain phrases, turn of words, the meaning of the music being played.

Culture is the subject of much of Baumann’s (1996) work in studying the Pakistani communities of Southall, London. He unpacks the meaning of culture through religion,

ethnicity and nation in understanding the process of reification. This is when elements of identity, seen as a fluid process, become fixed and separated. Culture is situated in the often mundane interactions of daily life and Baumann concurs, describing this fluidity of ethnicity, nation and religion as cutting 'across one another to form an ever-changing pattern of what may be called 'cross-cutting cleavages' (Baumann 1999, p. 84).

Nation and nationhood have been expressed through broadcasting, as a collective identity, one that Scannell felt more comfortable with in his analysis of the BBC than in addressing the fragmentation of shared experience. The borders which a nation relies on have become more permeable through the transnational nature of travel, media fragmentation and communication, so the concept of nation is threatened. Baumann examines how those of the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim religions in the UK were victim to quite vicious race hate and violence in the UK during the last few decade. Addressing ethnicity, Baumann supposes that many consider that we are born and embody or reject an ethnicity throughout our lives. This ethnicity is expressed through dress, language, locale and customs.

When taken out of the context of the person these elements which form continued dialogues become reified. Often this happens for political and social cause, but they cease being part of a complex and 'cross cutting' identity.

The idea of the hybrid identity is also problematic as it assumes the co-existence of two ethnic identities; again, these identities are 'thingimified' taken out of the dialogic reality within which we exist. Pilkington agrees and sees the only use for a hybrid concept as when there are 'deliberate attempts to draw on different cultures in order to challenge conventional boundaries' (Pilkington, 2003, p. 204).

In all of this dissention with reification and how difference is treated, Baumann is not so contentious as to write off these static elements of culture. Just as someone moves between fluid, situated identities depending on the context within which they are presenting themselves, much in the same way that Goffman (1959) treats front and

performance, so there will be times when the reified version of culture is useful. The very nature of its reification means it is conceptually more graspable, a way of explaining who you are. At times of adversity, when as Giddens would say, someone's internal security is threatened, the presentation of a certain aspect of identity is brought to the fore as protection.

This cross cutting nature of culture links with Giddens and Scannell's view of how society operates. Culture is, to borrow Giddens, a 'duality' or a 'dual discursive' construction. It is the 'conservative re'-construction of a reified essence, at one moment, and the path finding new construction of a processual agency at the next moment. It vacillates between the two poles, and therein lies the sophistication and dialectical beauty of the concept' (Baumann, 1999, pp. 95). Linking radio and the processual nature of culture, it is best summarised in Hendy's discussion on the relationship between broadcasters and audiences, expressed by Hennion and Meadel:

'Culture is not the content of a message which follows a linear path through production and consumption; it does not force an entry into people's lives, but is a material constructed by a constant process of iteration between all actors' (Hendy, 2000, p. 145).

Ethnic minority radio and the communication of ethnicity and identity are studied using this conceptual framework. It incorporates the situated dailiness of the programmes through the examination of sociability, sincerity, authenticity and identity. The last of which is treated as fluid, a continuing story expressed through mediated experiences it is located in the dialogue of radio talk and the interactions with agents of the stations. These perspectives are taken forward in the analysis of the programmes and DJ interviews.

### **Radio Asian Fever**

This paper focuses on two of the research case studies; the first is Radio Asian Fever which is a small South Asian community station based in the inner city of Leeds broadcasting to a diverse community of mainly South Asian, Middle Eastern and African

residents. The station has been in existence since 1993 in the form of pirate broadcasting, various restricted service licences, and it wasn't until 2007 that it began broadcasting under community licence. A small team of staff produce programmes which utilise a variety of languages such as Punjabi, Urdu, specialist Kashmiri dialects, English and some Hindi though the format mainly revolves around Bollywood, Lollywood and bhangra music. The specialised language programmes, usually broadcast in the afternoons are more varied, incorporating music, poetry and readings.

In line with community station requirements, evenings are dedicated to some form of community participation programmes which take the form of phone debates, on air talent shows and listener requests. They have also recently started to work with local police and health services to provide spoken access to usually printed information.

Until 2008, the station had avoided courting partnerships with both political and religious groups; the station was seen by traditionalists in the community as pushing the boundaries of acceptability which was a characteristic the manager was not uncomfortable with. The lead up to the Muslim festival of Eid saw a softening of relationships with the more moderate Molanas and for the first time, the station stopped playing music and dedicated the festival to readings and discussion. This followed negotiations with local mosques on the basis that 'if you're going to come in and show the beauty of Islam, I'm interested but if...you're gonna you know, be a bit extreme or be angry...or anything I'm not' (Karim, 2009). This approach has continued every Friday with music now only appearing in the evening.

## **Colourful Radio**

Colourful are a new black orientated talk/music station aimed at their local London community as well as those who feel disenfranchised with what they see as 'mainstream pitter-patter' (Bonsu, 2008).

They began broadcasting on Sky and the internet in 2007 as a black talk radio station but found securing monetary backing from within the community difficult. By summer 2008,

struggling to produce high quality programmes with few resources, they sought the services of Gordon Mac the founder of Kiss FM. Analysing their output, he saw the station as ‘narrow casting...doing speech radio to just a black audience’ (McNamee, 2009) and recognised the need to broaden the scope of the station for it to be commercially viable. The intention is not to whittle away their individual identity but to provide a broader alternative outlook which puts soul music at the heart of their ethos. With music programming costing much less in time and money to produce, Gordon invited well recognised DJs to come and take slots at the station formulating a ‘Kiss Gold’ for the now grown up Kiss generation.

The commercial radio industry has seen the slow decline of specialist shows and a higher reliance on playlists; Colourful see a gap for competitiveness by going in the opposite direction. The DJs currently receive no pay but are able to construct their own; virtually non play listed programmes which focus on their passion for specialist music but also fits into the soul music family.

### **Dailiness**

Both stations at present operate on the goodwill of volunteers though for Colourful, they hope to change this in the future. There are established schedules, but due to the volunteer nature of both stations, this is subject to change as other DJs fill unexpected gaps. The zoned areas of the day always remain the same, re-temporizing time by marking parts of it out through the themes of music and talk. For Colourful, the station currently has a split in format with familiar morning talk programmes giving way to traditional soul music which becomes more specialised as the evening progresses. The station manager sees this format as changeable until their listener base is more established and understood. The cyclical nature of the day, broken into zones of talk and music reflects the manager’s changing view of radio consumption. The schedule is constructed to tune into the varied media a listener will consume. He accepts their audio promiscuity, where ‘you pick and choose what you want, you go to cd’s...Last FM...SySez if he’s on here... ‘cause you know he’s house music and you’re part of his email friends and Facebook friends and all that stuff ... You deal with radio different to

the way in which you used to where you used to have to get them in the morning to drive them through the day, fucking hell , I hate that' (MacNamee, 2009).

Though the thematically zoned day exists on Asian Fever, careful consideration is given to a family audience throughout; it is *expected* that listeners will have the radio on in the background, attending to them through the day. The radio is a friend and informer, reflecting the recursive nature of daily life, played out in the content which is constructed by the listeners through text message and telephone. The manager who usually takes the morning programme of music and chat reflects that 'I think the radio is playing a very big part there and when you celebrate someone's birthday...we've had people saying "oh fantastic, my cousins came to see me because they didn't even know or remember my birthday but now because they heard it on the radio they came running to the house with a bit of presents"' (Karim, 2008).

Structures exist in the programmes that mutually ensure the station's continued existence. Jingles, the bane of some listener and DJs lives are central to the marking of the station's identity and Colourful DJs understand this importance in attending to the listener. The jingles are cyclical, played three times every hour and are utilised particularly by the evening DJs to separate out themes to their sets. AitchB of Soul II Soul hosts Soul 360 twice a week and acknowledges the reciprocal existence of the show. It allows him to express himself to listeners but also supports the communicative ethos of the station. Jingles are worked into this and offer structure to the programmes but are also subject to distortion and personalisation, augmenting the zoned feeling to the programme; then 'there's that whole thing of getting...various artists to do them... that is...adding credibility to what you are doing' (AitchB, 2009).

The calendar of community events plays a large role in Asian Fever's scheduling, enhancing the 'horizons of expectation' (Scannell, 1996) through long lead ups and sometimes, complete schedule changes such as during Eid. The station incorporates not just the Muslim calendar but significant dates for other community members. During Diwali the manager said to Hindu contributors "right, you take over and do your thing"

and they did a three day marathon where you know, for three days they just continuously did their religious programmes and culture programmes and...we told the Muslim community “this is what we’re going to do...you should listen and learn, there’s no harm, knowledge is power, knowledge is good” (Karim, 2008).

Religious events are less of a concern to Colourful though other calendar events play significance. The commercial nature of the station and the fact the presenters often have full time jobs as club DJs provides an agenda setting structure to some programmes, informing listeners of events coming up. The heavy advertising of the Soul Village Weekender had a dual role of bringing income to the station but also promoting the in house DJs who were appearing at the event.

## **Sociability**

The professional background of the DJs at Colourful filtered down into the sociable tones of the programmes though in different ways. The breakfast show usually had three presenters, two of whom were ex-BBC London and this affected the mood of the broadcast. Often the tones were friendly, informative and sometimes laughably silly depending on the discussion. In the presentation of news, sport and interviews however there were vestiges of BBC seriousness and formality communicated through the poise required to carry off talk radio; this reflected in changed vocal tones. The 10am lifestyle show was more naturalistic, its magazine format included interviews on fashion, celebrities and media reviews worked in with the play listed daytime music. This carried through to drive time with smaller elements of talk included by Chris who aimed to show the ‘humanistic side to radio. People do like to hear a voice on the other end of it that is in real time and is talking about things from their perspective’ (Philips, 2009).

It was as the day progressed that the sociable tones changed, programmes projected a greater degree of intimacy and the relationship to the audience was as confidante, conspirator and friend. Mistri’s skilled mix of club style soul in the early evenings encouraged a relaxed mood; he augmented this with reading out items from the National Enquirer to ‘gossip, all about other people’s business and anything positive within in the

world' (Mistri, 2009). DJs presenting the music focused programmes had a propensity to wiggle and dance in their chairs to the music and this was carried through their vocal tones as energy and enthusiasm.

The cultural competences were subtle at the station and this was deliberate with Gordon stating that 'we want to make this a bigger audience and a more multi cultural audience rather than it being pigeon holed... a black root kind of thing' (MacNamee, 2009). Talk and play listed music felt more open and the tones recognisably familiar for listeners tuning in during the day. The music and cultural references later in the evening were where differentiation and subtlety of meaning most existed; communicated through a DJs personal love for the music they were playing, the way they discussed it and the social occasions they would be promoting to listeners.

At Asian Fever, cultural competences are a requirement to listen where a high proportion of the 'bringing off' of sociable moments were participatory. JK's programme reflected the mood of the listeners, communicated by phone and text message. One listener had a regular slot where 'she controls, she tells me what songs she wants on it, she tells me what er poems she want on it, what I've got to say, what my backing music's got to be, what the format is' (JK, 2009).

Community radio is perhaps freer of expected formality and this was shown through the lighter tones of particularly the younger, more inexperienced presenters. Rakhi's inexperience became part of her character and personality, she said the listeners 'know I just laugh, I just laugh with them and I think they just realise I'm the one that just messes up and just laughs at myself all the time' (Sharma, 2008).

The station acquired the services of some ex-commercial presenters and their formal tones and distanced approach to the listeners jarred initially. The manager described them as 'like *in* the zone, they don't care who's flashing or who's texting or whatever, it's all about them and what they're gonna play...it was quite serious' (Karim, 2009). The demands of an involved audience has since softened their approach but the intellectual

and philosophical nature of the Ghazals music they broadcast means it's one of the few programmes where the listener is broadcast *to* rather than is part *of*.

## **Sincerity**

Broadcasting in some sense, always involves a performance and this was observed in the programmes and reflected later in interview. The breakfast programmes on both Colourful and Asian Fever had a high degree of sincere performance used to engage the audience and project characterised reflections of ordinariness. At Colourful, the three breakfast presenters took on roles as 'ethical man', the mediator and the doubter in light-hearted discussions of the news. By pursuing this characterisation, the programme was 'a cross between the star, the sport, the mail, the you know, little bit of the times and a little bit of fucking financial times' (MacNamee), 2009).

Jabbar, presenting the 10am show at Asian Fever took on a highly energetic character reminiscent of the DJ in Good Morning Vietnam purposely to engage and provoke the listeners for the day. The programme would employ a high paced mix of music and shared greetings with the listeners and between themselves, facilitated by Jabbar.

Off air, Jabbar was very different and the same was observed in other DJs though performance was not something they had ever overtly considered. Colourful's AitchB's broadcasting style was sincere performance; his voice on air was different to his soft speaking manner in interview. It was a transformation that was effected and enacted as soon as the headphones went on and the mic went up. Mistri talked about his personality on air and the priority he gives to fitting in with the context of the station. He said, you've got the 'pirates who talk every minute...legals who say the same thing every minute, but then I understand... you've got to give the station's ID as soon as you open the microphone so everybody knows, if they've just locked on, who they are listening to. Um, but...bits of you will come, you give your opinion on some things, but at the same time, you'll give another right next to it' (Mistri, 2009).

JK, at Asian Fever was aware of the false performance of broadcasting and actively seeks to utilise it in forms of exaggerated, recognisable talk. He's made 'JK into a character...he's always whacky, funny...and he tries to encompass all the human emotions...I try to come with a feeling that he's big headed, he's larger than life, it's like someone taking the micky out of you' (JK, 2009). His aim is never to provoke or upset listeners though he has been accused of that in his send-up of parts of the community. Rather, he utilises the programme to provide a space for self reflection and to consider shared narratives; 'I personally believe a radio should be a mirror of the community, of what they are and, and it shouldn't just be a fantasy world' (JK, 2009).

Sakina uses the performance of narrative in her programmes to impart community information in a naturalistic and familiar way. She was contacted by a listener who 'said "it's not just about songs, the songs help you pass the time but it's what you learn in between the songs and in between them you're chatting away and you're talking to each other and you're discussing things and you bring in organisations, that's when we learn the most' (Rehman, 2008).

## **Authenticity**

The specialised music shows at Colourful bring back an authentication of daily life for the listener that has been missing in commercial radio. This is particularly so in the specialised programme where they are playing music and interviewing musicians not heard anywhere else.

This is the first time that Keith has been able to express his reggae heritage as a proper show as he's better known for hip-hop and soul sets. Many of the DJs grew up with the sound systems and the evolution of reggae and soul where they felt pressurised to choose one genre over the other. Keith draws on his experiences and his diverse musical heritage and incorporates this into his show. This authenticity is represented in the programme that whilst it concentrates on reggae, it crosses musical boundaries; he said 'I had spurts on pirates but it was like er somewhat novelty like... "yah, you be tuned to Keith" you know what I mean and they were like "wah, why playing hip hop?"...they couldn't

understand that I could be into everything' (Lawrence, 2009).

AitchB uses his programme Soul 360 to represent his love of 'all forms of soul music...you know, soul, funk, disco, house, reggae, right up to what's happening now...it gives me the opportunity to...express my knowledge, my experience of...what I think good music is' (AitchB, 2009). By doing so AitchB authenticates the magpie relationship with music that is a common shared experience.

At Asian Fever, DJs like Rakhi and Ranjha, by standing in two worlds, the minutiae of life in the community and their university lives, authenticate the experiences of younger listeners. The DJs are seen to be human, making mistakes with language. Rakhi recounted feeling uncomfortable using Punjabi on air and reflected this in her programme. 'I was mixing the Punjabi and Hindi all over in the sentence and it sounds really funny...it just sounded, just crap...and then everyone used to laugh at me so I stopped speaking it' (Sharma, 2008). The listeners and station staff encouraged her to take lessons and though she still felt self-conscious, her mistakes were recognisable and felt by her audience who live a similar narrative.

## **Identity**

The strands of station and DJ identity run through the programme analysis and interviews. Colourful's AitchB musical knowledge comes from a personal narrative of the choices he felt he had to make between reggae and soul. Growing up in the mid seventies as 'the first generation born... black British born kids...there was this kind of identity thing sort of coming about where we had almost like a, like a conflict between two different cultures which we sort of seemed like we had to choose one or the other to kind of aspire to' (AitchB, 2009).

This mirrors the experiences of many of the other DJs. Mistri recounts that in the Brixton 'community, it was about reggae, reggae, reggae, I got fucking sick of reggae' and so during his teenage years, he went in search of something else. He found soul 'and I was just blown away by the music, the mixture of people...black, white, Indian, Chinese'

(Mistri, 2009). These identities were once reified, something they could grasp and be defined by as they grew up. Colourful's ethos demonstrates the fluidity that the DJs, managers and the listeners embody. Keith felt this was a commercial and important message and it was crucial to make it 'accessible to all, hence the title Colourful in every way, chat, music, you know... yeah been needed for a long time in that respect' (Lawrence, 2009).

The identities of the individual programmes and DJs are important in marking out the station themes. Mistri said 'between myself now...the next person to come on...is Stretch Taylor, his show, his music will be completely different, completely different and you know it's what brings out the identities of a station' (Mistri, 2009). We have seen how station tags and jingles run through the schedule but also how they are played with and manipulated into the narrative of the changing music. Stretches show, Ghetto Heaven, moves the narrative on from Mistri's funky soul. It is a diverse ramble through new and classic soul, R&B and hip-hop; the station identity is fluid, mixed into this self narrative of the DJs and the music.

Music is the core element at Colourful in the communication of identity which Keith sees as staying true to the consciousness of black music whilst being open to new genres. The commerciality of black music has whittled away much of the deeper meanings held within older reggae, soul and hip hop music. The DJs role then is to communicate to new listeners, of any background 'the essence of like black music...dig deep...you have to realise there's an awareness there as well still' (Lawrence, 2009).

We return to the cultural competences sometimes required in the communication of identity. Asian Fever is aware of the sensitive role it plays in the community where a definable identity is crucial, for the station style and in the recruiting of DJs. Sakina said 'we look at [ethnicity] very, very closely...we do need to have people who represent the community, who understand the community and who can voice their concerns for them on their behalves and that is what, to me, ethnicity is about in this place' (Rehman, 2009).

This is played with in the experiences of DJ Saiqa whose programme explores other narratives such as hip-hop; she also profiles her own boundary crossing music. The judgemental nature of some in the community is familiar, she's had difficulties with the fixedness of identity where 'you're never allowed to be yourself, who you really are and people expect you to be someone else and you end up getting lost because you can't find that balance between being two people' (Saiqa, 2009). The conflict of identity that was a common narrative for the Colourful DJs, particularly during the 70s and 80s, is still being played out across many of the case study stations.

The suggestion of fixedness, of reification in how identity is viewed, protected and utilised is contradicted in the dailiness of the station. Most surprisingly for the managers, the Molanas were the greatest reflection of fluidity. Jabbar acknowledges that 'I've seen them laugh, they're not so serious as they were...they're more open now and they're getting a wonderful response from the community that they've got so many questions that they need answering and they answer them' (Karim, 2009).

For a religious community where the questioning of tradition was alien for many until the Friday programmes, the changes being communicated through the station are quite monumental. Sakina sees this as a narrative of interactions with listeners where 'everybody's gone through difficult times and have to learn and tread a difficult path...they've come out at the other end a different person...I think that's the good thing, they're not being judgemental' (Rehman, 2009).

### **Communicating ethnicity and identity**

This paper has examined some of the programmes broadcast, their sociable tones, and the intentions of the DJs to see how these work together as a communicated authentication of self narrative. The cyclical nature of the schedules for both stations both reflected the temporal arrangements of the day, expressed through changing themes of discussion and music. Dailiness is the setting for a duality, the mutual reliance of the programmes and the station to enable a continued existence; the station is bound up with the presentation

of the shows. The DJs recognise the opportunities afforded to them and the roles they play in the *longue durée* of the station.

The repeated and continuing nature of the programmes provides the context for the bringing off of sociable moments and presenters understood this in their role of engaging and reflecting the views of the listener. This is achieved through the performances the DJs engage in as a hook for broadcasting recognisable narratives such as the breaking of a voice into a thick Jamaican lilt, the conspirator tones of sharing some gossip or the party exuberance of breaking in the weekend through agenda setting enthusiasm. This would fall flat without the authenticity of the DJs and the ethos of the station, broadcast through their experiences, by interaction with listeners or through music. Identity is never shouted out but woven subtly into the narrative of ordinariness in the programmes; it is recursive, nudged ahead day after day.

It was clear the important role identity plays for the station but for the DJs but it was a blurred concept. It is wrapped up in their musical heritage, their presentational role as broadcasters, their interactions with others and the subtle shared experiences inherent in the programme content. These cultural competences represented an unclinking of identity, made overt in the use of language, the meaning of the music played and the nuanced conversations which took place on air. Moments of fixed identity, or reification were swallowed up in the shifting narratives expressed through mediated interaction.

In many ways, breaking down the themes identified in communicating ethnicity and identity through the programmes and DJs is an unnatural separation. As has been shown, identity is situated in the continuous, uninterrupted and never ending flow of routinised interactions. The narratives of self which were discussed by the DJs are broadcast in the daily, recursive nature of the 'material constructed by a constant process of iteration between all actors' (Hendy, 2000) or as Giddens would say, a duality. However, the individual examination of these themes helps to detail the sociable nature of radio, to unpick the mutually recursive relationship between the DJs, listeners and the station identity.

Inevitably, authenticity of the DJ, the sociable tones they employ, the performances enacted and the narratives of identity which are shared, bleed into each other in the analysis; and so they should. To examine one alone disembodies its meaning when separated from the greater context and makes it an unnatural extraction. Identity ceases to be something communicated in motion; repeated, developed, and fluid so understanding of the complexity of identity is thus weakened.

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