

**INVESTIGATING BENEFICIARY COMMUNITIES'
PARTICIPATION IN HIV/AIDS COMMUNICATION
THROUGH COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS:
A CASE STUDY OF X-K FM**

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DECLARATION

I Siyasanga M Tyali, hereby acknowledge that except where it is indicated, the information contained in this dissertation is my original work and has never been submitted for examination at any University. The dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the Master of Social Science degree in Culture, Communication and Media Studies (Coursework: 50%) in the College of Humanities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College, Durban, Republic of South Africa.

Signature..... Date.....

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DEDICATIONS

This work is dedicated to the people who are working tirelessly to make advances against the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is also dedicated to those who have been infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

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ABSTRACT

The thrust of this dissertation is concerned with investigating beneficiary communities' participation in HIV/AIDS communication through community radio stations. The aim is to understand the presence and access of targeted community voices in the dialogue against HIV/AIDS. The research focused on a single case study of a community radio station that is based in Platfontein, Kimberley in the Republic of South Africa. X-K FM is a community radio station under the auspices of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and its primary target audiences are !Xun and Khwe communities of Platfontein. It is the only formal communication channel that targets these San community members in their respective mother tongues. The study approaches communication at a nuance level in that it evaluates participation possibilities between communicators and the communicated. In its third decade, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus is one of many challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa and the Republic of South Africa is no exception. This dissertation attempts to understand participation and access of civil voices in the strategies of prevention, care, support and treatment of HIV/AIDS. On a broader level, the dissertation seeks to understand the possibilities of bottom-up approaches in communicating about HIV/AIDS. In analysing the beneficiary community participation at X-K FM, the research was underpinned by the theory of Jurgen Habermas: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere – An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. The data was gathered using semi-structured interviews, as well as simple and partial participant observation. The study concludes that the radio station has provided some avenues to facilitate the process of beneficiary community participation in HIV/AIDS communication content.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFSA – AIDS Foundation of South Africa

AMARC – World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters

AIDS – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

CPA – Communal Property Association

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ICASA – Independent Communications Authority of South Africa

Khwe – Khwedam people of Platfontein

MISA – Media Institute of Southern Africa

OSFSA – Open Society Foundation for South Africa

RDP – Reconstruction and Development Programme

RLC – Radio Listening Clubs

SABC – South African Broadcasting Corporation

SADF – South African Defence Force

SASI – South African San Institute

STI – Sexual Transmitted Infections

SWAPO – South West African Peoples Organisation

UNAIDS – Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

USAID – United States Agency for International Development

!Xun – Xuntali people of Platfontein

PREFACE

AIDS remains a major pandemic and the growing biomedical emphasis that is edging out social sciences research is a worrying factor (Tomaselli, 2012). South Africa is reported to have arguably recognised the need for effective HIV/AIDS communication in the early 1990s. In his early career as a young medical practitioner, Gareth Japhet realised whilst treating poor, rural patients, that South Africa harboured “developing” country health problems in a “developed” country environment (Singhal and Rogers, 1999: 213). The Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS) at University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College) has conducted various research studies to understand why HIV continues to devastate the South African society. The Centre also focuses on how communication can be used effectively against HIV/AIDS (cf. Durden and Govender, 2012). An important drive in undertaking my Masters study at the Centre was the existing pool of expertise available and the research currently being undertaken by students and academics on HIV/AIDS communication.

With support from the Ford Foundation International Fellowship (2011–2012), my aim was to understand how beneficiary communities participate in HIV/AIDS communication content that is available at a local community radio setting. My hypothesis is that community participation in this context is invaluable because these communities understand their social dynamics and negotiate their lives around the AIDS pandemic. I thus located my study in two research tracks currently being undertaken at CCMS:

- i) Communication for Participatory Development (CFPD)
- ii) Rethinking Indigeneity.

For CFPD, the process of expanding a course at the CCMS to be a fully-fledged research track was started in 2006, with an aim of building research as well as training future social and strategic communicators around HIV/AIDS (cf. Coleman, 2012; Tomaselli, 2012). Another important component of my research is that it was conducted among indigenous San communities of South Africa. The impetus was therefore to align the study with the on-going NRF-funded Rethinking Indigeneity research track on indigenous San communities¹.

¹ The Rethinking Indigeneity research track has been going on for more than 20 years with five phase projects on issues relating to the San people. This research has involved nearly 80 Honours, MA and PhD students -

Thus, various life experiences have shaped my scholarly outlook. These experiences include:

- i) my rural upbringing in the Eastern Cape and the ways in which I continuously have to negotiate this background with my evolving experiences of urban South Africa;
- ii) transitions between four Universities where I either studied, undertook research or graduate training - the University of Fort Hare, Rhodes University, University of KwaZulu-Natal and Johns Hopkins University (USA)
- iii) interactions with communication and media academics, graduate studies colleagues; as well as personal experience on how people deal with HIV/AIDS. However, of more importance is that my research outlook has been shaped by my research respondents in Kimberley, Platfontein. Some of the personal experiences gained whilst undertaking the study are recorded in this thesis.
- iv) my experience of working as a news reporter and talk show producer for a community radio (Forte FM) has greatly influenced the value I place on this medium of communication.

registered at UKZN, and a number of local and international research affiliates since 1995. For further information see:

http://ccms.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=735&Itemid=90

Geographic Location

The maps presented in this page depict the macro as well as micro positions of the study location. Platfontein is located in the Northern Cape Province of the Republic of South Africa.



Figure 1 Map of South Africa indicating different geographic areas including Kimberley (the nearest town to Platfontein) Sourced from: Hart (2011)



Figure 2: A map indicating the location of Platfontein. Sourced from: AFSA *et al.* (2012)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Development communication scholars have deliberated extensively on the role of communication in the quest to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS. According to Thomas Scalway (2010), HIV communication is effective, cost-effective and a crucial counterpart to clinical HIV prevention interventions. My study investigates how targeted communities participate in the process of HIV/AIDS communication at a community radio level. This is done using a case study format of a single community radio station that is based in Platfontein, Kimberley, North West Province in the Republic of South Africa.

1.1 Introduction

Without effective communication and educational measures, HIV/AIDS poses a serious threat to South Africa and the world at large (Bauer and Scott, 2005). The national prevalence of HIV among all South Africans was 10.6 per cent in 2008 (South African National AIDS Survey, 2008). The estimates of this survey indicate that about 5.2 million people of the total population of 51.2 million were then HIV positive². Communication represents an important role in the strategies of prevention, care, support and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Parker (2006) explains that an AIDS campaign includes any communication activity involving content that is related to HIV/AIDS. This communication occurs through diverse ‘channels’ and, in the case of mass media, it mainly occurs through television, radio, print, and outdoor (Parker, 2006). My research is located in the realm of understanding different effective roles that participatory communication in community radio stations could play in turning the tide against HIV/AIDS.

1.2 Understanding the situational problem

Community radio stations are typically expected to provide space for community participation in the management, production and broadcasting of content (Teer-Tomaselli, 2001). The word, ‘participation’, entails certain challenges. “Participation changes its colour and shape at the will of the hands in which it is held” (White, 1994:16; cf. Bessette, 2004). In

² More information on the “South African National Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey (2008)” can be attained at: <http://www.mrc.ac.za/pressreleases/2009/sanat.pdf>

addressing this challenge, participation, as examined in this research, is analysed through the “Habermasian” sense of the public sphere. Jurgen Habermas (1989) defines the public sphere as a virtual or imaginary community which does not necessarily exist in any identifiable space. In its ideal form, the public sphere is made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society (Soules, 2008). The importance of the public sphere lies in its potential as a mode of societal integration. Public discourse is a possible mode of coordination of human life (Calhoun, 1997). This study examines the openness of X-K FM as a notional public sphere that allows public discourse and participation on HIV/AIDS communication by a beneficiary community. The Family Health Institute (2002) noted that a supportive environment in HIV/AIDS requires national and community-wide discussion of relationships, sex and sexuality, risk settings, risk behaviours and cultural practices that may increase the likelihood of HIV transmission.

As with other constituencies, HIV/AIDS presents a huge challenge to the ³San/Bushman⁴ people of South Africa. The San Baseline Study (2010) conducted by the AIDS Foundation of South Africa (AFSA) reports that health research and its related interventions are well established in most parts of South Africa (Letsoalo, 2010). According to this report, these include campaigns about HIV/AIDS as well as gender based violence awareness endeavours that are common in most urban populations. The AFSA study however cautions that there is a lack of outreach on HIV into local rural populations, especially on the historically marginalized San groups (Letsoalo, 2010).

While three prior studies on the radio station have been conducted (Mhlanga 2006; Hart 2006, 2011), mine is the first to exclusively focus on the relationship between X-K FM and its listeners in relation to HIV/AIDS dynamics.

³ According to the Kalahari Meerkat Project, the ‘San’ or ‘Bushmen’ are the oldest inhabitants of southern Africa. This is where they have lived for at least 20,000 years according to this project. Further information about the San/Bushmen can be found on the following link: http://www.kalahari-meerkats.com/fileadmin/files/guides/Bushmen_light.pdf

⁴ Bushman and San are used interchangeably in the body of this research. Although it had been argued that the word “San” can be derogatory, the researcher has noted that bodies such SASI continue to associate with it. The word Bushman is also used because the research participants refer themselves as such (Bregin and Kruiper 2004: 54).

1.3 Objectives of the study

Development communication requires that stakeholders work together in pursuit of development objectives (Mefalopulos, 2008). Mefalopulos argues that, too often the most important missing element in development programmes is genuine (two-way) communication between the decision-makers, the experts, and the so-called beneficiaries. Participation and consultation are important factors in cooperating with stakeholders. These entail an inclusive development. Consultation requires making constant contacts with the majority of the local community without manipulating them to accept outsider's thinking towards a particular problem (Manyozo, 2005).

The aims of this study are to:

- i) understand the current practice of community participation in designing HIV/AIDS communication strategies at X-K FM;
- ii) assess how target audiences understand their participation in HIV/AIDS broadcast content;
- iii) evaluate any policies that encourage participation in HIV/AIDS content; and
- iv) research stakeholder perceptions of HIV/AIDS messages broadcast by X-K FM.

Key research questions

This study addresses the following questions:

- i) What is the current practice of community (listeners) participation in designing HIV/AIDS communication strategies at X-K FM?
- ii) How do X-K FM audiences identify their participation in HIV/AIDS broadcast content?
- iii) What policies does X-K FM have in place to ensure stakeholder (SABC, the local clinic, local NGOs, listeners) participation.
- iv) If policies are in place, what do they outline about community participation in HIV/AIDS content and how have they aided participatory communication practices in relation to community dialogue?
- v) What are stakeholder perceptions of HIV/AIDS messages broadcast by X-K FM?

- vi) How does the Platfontein community relate to HIV/AIDS messages broadcast by X-K FM?

Dissertation outline

The next chapter examines X-K FM in relation to HIV/AIDS communication. Chapter 3 examines the literature on community radio, HIV/AIDS communication and the concept of participation. Chapter 4 offers the theoretical framework. The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere was chosen to understand access and participation on HIV/AIDS communication at X-K FM. Chapter 5 deliberates on the research methodology as applied by this study. Chapter 6 analyses the collected data and offers conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND TO THE CASE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

Previous research at X-K FM indicated that the community has an interest in participating at the radio station (Mhlanga 2006). The two listener communities: the !Xun and the Khwe, are not consulted when policies and programmes are being formulated and implemented (Mhlanga, 2006:71). This chapter delves on X-K FM as a case study.

2.2 !Xun and Khwe history, Platfontein and HIV/AIDS situation

Approximately ten kilometres from the nearest town, Platfontein is located on the outskirts of Kimberley in Northern Cape Province of South Africa. It is a small dusty township that is situated adjacent to the province's biggest black township settlement – Galeshewa. A special project of land redistribution under the Department of Land Affairs, the township was established to accommodate a group of two San communities in Platfontein (cf. Robins *et al.*, 2001). A brief history of the Platfontein people is offered in this section. However the researcher's perspectives on the township are narrated first.

Platfontein appears beyond thorny bushes after a kilometre-long uncomfortable drive on a bumpy gravel road, once off the tar. Branching on the left side of an un-marked junction [except for a small signage written: San Foot Prints] from the road leading to Barkley West, one encounters an un-tarred and a visibly unmaintained road that leads to the township. Once the R31 national tarred road has been vacated, the travelling car drives for a couple of minutes and from a distance appears the house structures that are a complete replica of the popular "RDP Houses" of South Africa. The term "RDP Houses" has a particular history in this country. It is known as such because these matchbox house structures started appearing at the time of a government policy that was known as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) under the Presidency of Mr Nelson Mandela⁵.

⁵ Further information on the RDP Housing policy of South Africa can be accessed on: <http://www.polity.org.za/polity/govdocs/rdp/rdp2.html#2.5>

These structures in Platfontein accommodate the !Xun and Khwe. The !Xun and Khwe had no traditional connections with each other, with Platfontein, Kimberley, Northern Cape or even with the Republic of South Africa. The !Xun had originally come from Angola, and the Khwe from Namibia and Caprivi, as well as Angola. Both groups were recruited by and assisted the South African Defence Force (SADF) in its war against SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation) and its allies in Namibia and southern Angola (Robbins, 2004). Ludman (2003) explains that in the 1960s, the SADF needed trackers for its operations in Namibia and Angola, and therefore recruited the men, sometimes forcefully. They were therefore logically followed by their families as well. A generation of !Xun and Khwe San people grew up in army camps, far from their ancestral lands. When Namibia became independent in 1990, the SADF offered its erstwhile trackers sanctuary in a tent town, specifically built for them on a windy plain at the Schmidtsdrift military base in the Northern Cape. It is explained that when Angola and Namibia became independent states, some of the !Xun and Khwe people feared that they might be in danger of being persecuted as a result of their alliance with the SADF. Therefore some opted to be moved to South Africa with the South African military (Robins *et al.*, 2001).

In 1990, about 4500 of the !Xun and Khwe soldiers and their dependants arrived at Schmidtsdrift, 74 km west of the Northern Cape provincial capital of Kimberley (cf Robins *et al.*, 2001). Four years after they had been settled, Schmidtsdrift, their original settlement was declared by the new South African government to belong to the BaTlhaping (Batswana) group that had been removed from this land decades earlier (Ludman, 2003). The Department of Land Affairs assisted the !Xun and Khwe when it bought the Platfontein farm for the Communal Property Association (CPA), which represents the two communities. The !Xun and Khwe now live on and own 12 500 hectares of farmland. The land also contains hundreds of ancient rock engravings. Thomas Hart (2006) argues that in terms of the two San ethnic groups at Platfontein, the !Xun and the Khwe can be seen as ethnic refugees that were displaced from their places of origin in Angola and Namibia due to political conditions. He further argues that they can also be seen as ethnic immigrants with modern values who see themselves as South African citizens and still have ties with their places of origin, their histories, their cultures and their traditions through the means of their languages.

The Platfontein Township is built in such a way that the two San groups occupy the opposing ends of the settlement. In the middle of this township, one encounters what appears to be the

most developed area of the settlement. In the centre of the township there is a School (that is both a Primary and a High School), a Community Clinic, a Community Centre (that has a social worker office and electricity purchasing outlet), a Beer Hall and the South African San Institute (SASI) offices. Most importantly in this township square; situated right at the centre of Platfontein, stands the subject matter of this study; X-K FM:



Figure 3: the side view of the building housing X-K FM in Platfontein

Like most parts of South Africa, Platfontein is affected by HIV/AIDS. In a study that was conducted between the Kalahari and Platfontein San, AFSA (2011) noted that health interventions for San communities need a slightly different cultural and developmental approach rather than a strictly public health one to combat the prevalence of new incidences of HIV/AIDS. AFSA (2011) observed that 72.0% and 73.0% of the research respondents indicated not using condoms at first and last sex and there is also a greater concern over pregnancy than infection with HIV and other STIs among San, more especially those living in the Kalahari Desert. Gender based violence was also a key concern in this study. The respondents revealed that a man has good reason to beat his wife if she refuses to have sex with him; if she refuses to use a condom; and a 'real man' has multiple sex partners (AFSA, 2011).

The following section details the background to X-K FM and its role in HIV/AIDS communication.

2.3 X-K FM: HIV/AIDS communication tool for Platfontein

The Open Society Foundation for South Africa (OSFSA, 2003) argues that community radio is rooted in the community and therefore has the potential to become a useful platform to inform and educate community residents around HIV/AIDS. Community radio also has the potential to address the local needs and the availability of services that could help people to cope with the effects of the epidemic. In this report, OSFSA (2003) however also argues that the lack of genuine community participation – particularly by those directly affected by HIV/AIDS – has had an impact on community radio coverage of HIV/AIDS. According to (OSFSA, 2003), community residents should be given the opportunity to actively participate in programme production, and to discuss and engage in the issues being broadcast.

X-K FM is a first radio station of its kind in Southern Africa. It caters exclusively for the two San communities of Platfontein in their own languages (Open Africa, 2012). The station was granted a four-year community sound broadcasting licence by the Independent Communication Authority of South Africa (ICASA) in 1999 and started broadcasting in August 2000 (Mhlanga, 2006). This was done after many years of the two communities and their leaders rallying as a cohesive movement for the preservation of their languages, cultures and heritage as well as better living conditions. The purpose of granting this licence to the !Xun and the Khwe was a need to establish X-K FM as a platform that would safeguard the two languages and respect the cultural heritages of the !Xun and Khwe people (Mhlanga, 2006).

X-K FM was initiated as a development project in partnership with the National Department of Communications under the then Minister of Communications, Dr Ivy Matsepe-Cassaburi (1999-2009 ministerial terms). By the year 2000, the radio was presented under the auspices of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as a development project for the community of Schmidtsdrift (cf. Mhlanga, 2006). In his 2006 study, Hart noted that the station's footprint covers a radius of 50km and it broadcasts a variety of entertainment, current affairs, news, development, historical, cultural and community related programmes. During "dead time" the station carries a live feed from Radio Sonder Grense, which is the SABC's Afrikaans language station (Hart, 2006). Before it moved from Schmidtsdrift to Platfontein, the station was housed in three converted and air-conditioned steel shipping containers that provided office and studio accommodation (Sokutu, 2000). Due to the resettlement of the !Xun and Khwe at Platfontein, the radio station was moved in the year

2003 to its current location. It is now housed in a building provided by the SABC that accommodates both the studio and offices of the station (Sokutu, 2000; Hart, 2006).



Figure 4: Studio 2 of X-K FM. This studio is mainly used by the radio producers to edit and sometimes translate content for broadcasting

The station consists of two studios with modern broadcasting equipment and editing suites as depicted in Figure 4. The interior consists of an office that is used for archiving and equipment storage, an office for the station manager as well as two other offices shared by the presenters, producers, administrators and the assistant station manager. Other features of the station include a boardroom, a flushing lavatory, a kitchen and a square room in the middle mostly used for the radio station's general meetings and for the mid-morning coffee break by the staff.

The station is compelled by ICASA to play an active role in education through its content. X-K FM's 2008 compliance report indicates that the SABC's quarterly report stated that the radio station broadcasts 425 minutes (6 hours) of educational programming per week. These educational programmes are book reviews and other educational and cultural topics. The station is also mandated to broadcast on health matters, including HIV/AIDS. In his study, Hart (2011: 125) noted that often, the radio station uses development themes to deliver its

broadcasting mandates. Hart reported that in June 2009, the theme for the radio station during that month was HIV/AIDS. Other broadcasting development themes at X-K FM have included “Better Lifestyle” and the “Previous Life”. OSFSA (2003) argues that community radios should go beyond broadcasting HIV/AIDS related programmes. They should develop mechanisms to involve the community through outreach programmes. Community radio stations should toil with organisations working with HIV/AIDS in the communities that they serve (OSFSA, 2003). Among many other objectives; community radio stations have mandates to make positive impacts on the socio-economic challenges facing their communities (cf Teer-Tomaselli, 2001). This includes playing key roles in community improvement endeavours such as knowledge generation.

Community stations in South Africa are mandated by ICASA to contribute to community development through their broadcast content among its many objectives. One of South Africa’s leading role players in this task of community development is Bush Radio, which is based in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Bosch (2003) writes that among other initiatives, Bush radio has long been assisting in playing a role in HIV/AIDS education. An example of one of its roles was when:

Driven by the increasing numbers of youth infected with AIDS, and drawing on the popularity of hip-hop, Bush Radio launched the *Youth Against AIDS 2000* (YAA) campaign in March 2000. The main objective of this project was to create effective ways to educate high school youth in Bush Radio’s broadcast area, on issues of sexuality and AIDS (Bosch, 2003:185).

This is but one of the many strategies that Bush Radio used to assist in community development through the airwaves.



Figure 5: An X-K FM radio presenter monitoring a pre-recorded programme during transmission

The programming schedule of X-K FM indicates an existence of health communication (See Appendix D). For this study, the practice of beneficiary community participation in HIV/AIDS at Platfontein has been assessed in connection with these programmes as well as communities' views on the station's role in HIV/AIDS communication. According to Open Africa (2012) "X-K FM is more than just a radio station; it serves as a medium of basic communication in Platfontein. This fact is prevalent when one hears the announcer addressing individuals who are late for doctor's appointments or Community Property Association meetings."⁶ The role of beneficiary community participation in HIV/AIDS communication at this station is discussed in Chapter 6.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the geographic location of the case study. It also gave a background discussion on some of the conditions of using the airwaves for HIV /AIDS communication at X-K FM. The broadcasting circumstances surrounding X-K FM may impact the participation

⁶ Further information outlined by Open Africa can accessed at: <http://www.openafrica.org/participant/x-k-radio-station>

of Platfontein community in HIV/AIDS communication. At a broader level, these factors may have an impact on general HIV/AIDS communication.

With the objective of understanding the debate from the background of X-K FM to broader discussions about community broadcasting, HIV/AIDS and participation, the following chapter explores the literature on the key focus areas of this study.

CHAPTER 3

RADIO; PARTICIPATION & HIV/AIDS COMMUNICATION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the dominant debates about: i) the community radio sector; ii) how community radio can or cannot enhance participation; and iii) HIV/AIDS communication with a special focus on community radio.

3.2 Contestations over definition: community radio

There is still a lack of consensus on how the community radio sector should be defined (Banda, 2006; MISA, 2000). This is because the term ‘community radio’, according to Guy Berger (1996: 3), has become less rigidly defined over the decades, especially in terms of ownership and control. Historical and socio-political contexts of community stations offer different approaches with regard to ownership and community participation.

On a general level, community radio signifies a two-way process that entails the exchange of views from various sources and the adaptation of media for use by communities (AMARC, 1998). The Media Institute of Southern Africa (2000) states that, community radio is a station built by the community, used by the community and serving the interests of the community. Emphasis is on community ownership, autonomy, participation and representation. Programmes are produced by the community, while in the case of a public broadcaster programmes are imposed to the community by the broadcaster (cf. Mhlanga, 2006).

In critiquing the various notions and objectives of community radio, Teer-Tomaselli (2001) notes that, taken together, the aspirations of community radio stations are onerous and few stations anywhere have been able to achieve them in their entirety. This therefore, means that the term community radio, its definition or even its objectives, should be adapted on a case-by-case basis. Hence, Fackson Banda (2006) concludes that conceptually community radio has undergone some paradigm shifts and as such, the conceptual contestations will redefine the realm of alternative media. Carpentier, Lie and Servaes (2008) warn that the concept of community radio and community media in general has proved to be, in its long theoretical

and empirical tradition, highly elusive. This may be because the multiplicity of media organisations that carry this name have caused most mono-theoretical approaches to focus on certain characteristics, while ignoring other aspects of the identity of community media. For example, X-K FM is a rare example of a community radio operating under the auspices of a public broadcaster (cf. Mhlanga, 2006).

3.3 Community radio and the audience

This section examines the complex relationship between a community radio and the community that becomes a core component of the community radio station. The value and purpose of community broadcasting lies in the relationship between the community radio station and the community. The existence of this relationship helps the founding philosophy of community radio by giving a “voice to the voiceless” (Mgibisa, 2005: 47). However, the community radio vis-à-vis community relationship should not be simplified; as the question of “who is the community in community radio stations” needs to be unpacked and clarified (Teer-Tomaselli, 2001). As stated earlier by Teer-Tomaselli (2001) the problem with the aspirations of what is known as a community radio is that its role is too ‘ambitious’ and that these aspirations end up not being fulfilled for most of these radio stations.

However, before the complex relationship between a community radio and the audience (community) is untangled, a further understanding of community radio broadcasting needs to be achieved. According to Jo Tacchi (2003), there are two types of community radio station. These include a community radio service serving: i) a geographical community; and ii) those serving a community of interest. The community of interest may be defined as having a specific, ascertainable common interest. This common interest is what makes such a group of persons or sector of the public an identifiable community. These common interests may vary from being institutional, religious or cultural communities depending on the licensing conditions (Tacchi, 2003; cf. Teer-Tomaselli, 2001).

Therefore, a relationship between audiences and a community radio station is likely to be influenced by the classification of that specific station. One of the distinguishing features of community media, including community radio, is that it allows citizens to be active in one of many (micro) spheres relevant to daily life and to exercise their right to communicate (Carpentier, Lie and Servaes, 2008). It is also stated that community media offers different societal groups and communities the opportunity for extensive participation in public debate

and for self-representation in the public sphere, thus entering the realm of enabling and facilitating macro-participation (Thomas, 2007 *cited in* Carpentier, Lie and Servaes, 2008).

The audience/community is an important element of community media, including radio. For Browne (2005), audience as community includes activities by audience members with little or no specific prompting for the media services. These range from informal (letter writing, telephoning, e-mailing, casual conversation with the media services staff) to formal (community government sponsored open meetings such as reviews of community funded activities, community government appointed boards of supervisors from media services).

The programmes of a community radio are based on audience access and participation and reflect the special interests and needs of the community (Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada, 2002). What matters with any form of involvement is whether community members feel that it is meaningful, not only on a personal level (the service actually listened to by me/us), but also in terms of impact, especially at the community-wide level. One of the clearest distinctions between ethnic minority media and mainstream electronic media is their perceptions of the audience. Many and perhaps most ethnic minority services appear to regard the audience as a community, which they see as essential to work with rather than to speak to. Establishing a sound working relationship with the community/audience often begins even before the service of broadcasting is launched (Browne, 2005).

3.4 Participation in the context of community radio

This section deliberates on the concept of participation and how it is applied in the community radio sector. The concept of participation is one of the major themes underlying this study therefore an analysis of the concept is necessary.

Community radio stations do not exist for the mere purpose of broadcasting. Their mandate is mainly for development purposes using the local communities to fulfil their objectives. A key feature of a community radio is the involvement of communities through a ‘participation’ processes in the structure that is known as a community radio (Moyo, 2012).

In the case of South Africa, programming for community stations is to a large extent defined by the Broadcasting Act in that it must relate to and be influenced by the needs of the communities served (cf. Fourie, 2001). The programming must also provide diversity in format and language, reflect the cultures of the communities served and promote South African identity (Tacchi, 2003). Community stations become important because they are

widely seen as an act of participation in the process of community creation (Teer-Tomaselli, 2001). However, the act of participation should be handled carefully as it is implemented differently across the spectrum.

Participation is not limited to the notion of “consultation” (Bessette, 2004). In development, communities must be involved in identifying their own development problems, in seeking solutions, and in taking decisions about how to implement them. If there is some generation of information, it should be conducted in order to help the community understand and act upon the debated issues, and not as an “extractive process”, as has generally been the case with traditional research (Bessette, 2004). Participation does not equate to mobilisation either. The participatory models emphasize the local community rather than the nation-state, monistic universalism rather than nationalism, or spiritualism moderately different than monologue, and emancipation rather than alienation (Servaes, 2008).

Community participation in the selection and provision of programming underpins the democratic values of community radio (Mgibisa, 2005). This aspect of participation is not just through letters, phone-ins, musical requests, on-air competitions, greetings and dedications and simple conversations. The involvement and participation of community members in the actual design, implementation and evaluation of a station programming schedules is crucial. Participation is important because it encourages two-way communication and this communication demands two partners more or less equally interested in communicating (Carpentier, Lie and Servaes, 2008).

Participation as praxis does not exist in a vacuum; rather it exists within communication practices or structures, one of which is development broadcasting (Manyozo, 2005). Central to development broadcasting practices is the community ownership of radio programmes and structures, in which participation is both an interaction, flow and sharing of local knowledge and experiences (Manyozo, 2005). Therefore, it is the participation of community members in programming decisions that upholds community radio as the locus of a truly democratic media (Mgibisa, 2005). In their written proposals applying to obtain licences, most stations promise to facilitate methods that ensure that community members participate in the selection and provision of programmes. They promise to establish programming committees that consist of members of the community. The ideal is that members of the community will be afforded an opportunity to critique the stations’ programming and suggest new programming ideas (Mgibisa, 2005).

A number of examples in participation through grassroots community radio have been recorded in countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia (Banda, 2006; Bosch, 2003; Manyozo, 2005). One of the greatest models of community participation was the “radio listening clubs” (RLC) project implemented by the Panos Institute of Southern Africa in Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe from 1996 onwards. This model involved rural women organising themselves into clubs, whereupon the Panos Institute trained the women in basic radio production and provided them with cassette recorders. The women then engaged in community discussions about their community needs and problems. These discussions were recorded and forwarded to a producer at the partner radio station. The producer later listened to the tapes and solicited answers from relevant policy-makers, edited the women’s questions together with the policy-makers’ responses which were later made a radio programme. The programme was then broadcast nationally. The women would listen to this programme and, if they so wished, would engage in more discussion about how their issues had been dealt with (Banda, 2006). (Further work done by Panos Southern Africa is reflected in the last section of this chapter. The section gives case study examples on the work done on radio and HIV/AIDS communication).

Participatory radio programming through RLCs should be considered a form of development broadcasting (Manyozo, 2005). By providing spheres for dialectical and dialogical discourses on local development policies, radio listening clubs become local citizens’ radio, with which indigenous people practise participation. In a way, these offer alternative definitions of development and participation (Manyozo, 2005; cf Freire, 1996). In some instances, participation becomes a major element in programme content; especially radio talk shows where hosts (sometimes joined by guests) set out provocative topics and then invite listeners to express their reactions and viewpoints. However, the service itself selects the topics, and callers rarely have the opportunity to ask follow up questions or to express dissatisfaction with host or guest responses, so there is little dialogue in the Habermasian sense (Browne, 2005:122).

Previous research has argued that the structural arrangement of X-K FM has limited the potential of community participation. In his 2011 study, Hart argues that the role and function of the station’s board of directors is determined by the SABC’s regional manager for the Free State, the head of Public Broadcasting Service Radio, the Group Executive (GE) and the Radio Broadcasting Facilities (RBF) division. This group excludes the management of the

station, the two communities and their associated leadership bodies and organisations. The arrangement limits the participation of the two communities in the ownership and governance of the radio station and ensures a form of communication and operation that is top-down, from the GE of the SABC to the stations managerial and production staff. At a micro level, Hart (2011) argues that there is a clear presence of participation in content creation at X-K FM. This participation and self-management in the decision making processes of production and content creation is evidence of having the power to make decisions concerning the station's micro level of operations and the development of one's own community. In conclusion, Hart (2011:127) states that this participation and self-management "arguably is empowering for the station's management and staff because they have the authority to take control and to produce representations that resonate with the lived experiences of the communities."

3.5 Stakeholder participation in HIV/AIDS communication programmes

This section considers the role of stakeholders in devising HIV/AIDS communication messages as directed at them.

Effective communication is a two-way process. It should never be a one-way dissemination of information, nor should it consist of telling people what they should or should not do (Bessette, 2004). Unfortunately, during the early post-World War II period, communication was a top-down mechanism that was based on the assumption that diffusion of technical knowledge through mass media would transform traditional societies into modern ones. Communication during this period served to transmit information related to health, agriculture and other sectoral development issues from the Global North, empowered by science and technology, to Global South subjects whose behaviour it was assumed would change for the better on the basis of the information received (UNESCO 2007).

Bessette (2004) states that by "community participation", he means facilitating the active involvement of different community groups, together with the other stakeholders involved, and the many development and research agents working with the community and decision makers. Tackling development problems, and experimenting and implementing appropriate solutions must be based on the active participation of the end users and involve other stakeholders working with the communities (Bessette, 2004).

The participation of stakeholders is equally important in the development communication process, including HIV/AIDS communication. Recent developments make both possible and necessary a revolution in the way HIV prevention is conducted. People living with HIV and affected by the AIDS epidemic must lead and own effective HIV responses to ensure a rights-based sustainable response and to hold national and global partners accountable (UNAIDS, 2010).

Participation in the making of HIV/AIDS content is one of the areas that people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS can engage in. Criselda Kananda, an HIV positive woman, is one such person who has played an active role on radio and the general HIV/AIDS understanding. Reported to have stated “I want to bring the ‘I’ back in HIV”, Kananda hosts a radio programme on Metro fm called Positive Living. Her involvement in the HIV/AIDS field also includes a membership of the Board of Trustees at the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) 2005-2006⁷. Within media, radio has been used widely in public health awareness raising and significantly in HIV/AIDS awareness, both in developed and developing countries. Ultimately radio in health communication is seen to be on the cutting edge of innovation (Davies, 2005).

It is important to understand that development communication is divided into two main paradigms – the dominant ‘delivery’ mode and the more ‘participatory’ mode (Davies, 2005). This study is concerned with the participatory mode of development communication in the context of HIV/AIDS communication using community radio.

As explained in the previous section, it is important to note that the term ‘participation’ is understood differently. For the purpose of this study, the idea of participation is explored among other things by investigating policies as set and implemented by X-K FM that allow community contribution in the creation, planning, broadcasting and feedback from community on HIV/AIDS content.

3.6 HIV/AIDS communication at a community radio level

The significance of community media lies in its ability to provide the means for cultural expression, community discussion and debate among other similarly important priorities. It

⁷ Further information on Criselda Kananda her work in HIV/AIDS can be located here: <http://www.inspiringwomen.co.za/inspiring-women-of-the-month/863-criselda-kananda>

supplies news and facilitates political engagement on local issues (Mavhungu 2009; Ibrahim 2005). Furthermore, this type of media offers concrete means for public participation and a means for defending cultural diversity. Through access to the production and consumption of relevant communication material, community media forms a collective platform for community empowerment (Mavhungu, 2009: 3).

Bush Radio has consistently proved that community radio can play a key role in the quest for effective HIV/AIDS communication. Bosch (2003:116-185) writes that Bush Radio has an AIDS Workplace Policy whose purpose is to decrease new infections among staff, volunteers, in-service trainees, the board and the audience of the station. They also aim to create an environment of openness and knowledge with regard to HIV/AIDS at the workplace and in the community. Davies (2005) writes that radio in health communication is a vibrant and dynamic field, and one that will last many years as radio retains a pre-eminence in media and developing countries as well as experiencing a ‘renaissance’ in the developed world over the past ten years. Health communication will continue to innovate with radio in seeking to impact on behaviour change, delivery of key health information and broad health education.

Mhlanga’s research entitled “Community Radio as Dialogical and Participatory” suggests that the Platfontein community is not active in the formulation of X-K FM radio station policy. Policy formulation and recruitment of new staff is the preserve of SABC, which acquired the community broadcasting licence for the !Xun and Khwe communities (Mhlanga, 2006). Furthermore, Hart (2006) reveals that in terms of community participation, there is community participation at the radio station, but it is limited. Of the !Xun respondents, Hart (2006) noted that 60% of respondents stated that there is community participation and 40% disagreed. For the Khwe on the same question the study reported that 70% agreed, while 30% disagreed.

The above studies focused on issues pertaining to governance, control, community participation, identity, ethnic audience and community, as well as development programmes and their reception. They provide relevant literature especially when exploring community participation in a community radio station. Their findings are important in understanding issues of governance, control, community identity, ethnic audience and community, as well as matters of development programmes. However, they do not address the issue of HIV/AIDS which is a major concern among the !Xun and the Khwe community. It is this gap

that the present study seeks to fill by examining how these communities participate in HIV/AIDS messages of X-K FM.

3.7 Mediated HIV/AIDS campaigns

The media has been the primary method for disseminating HIV/AIDS messages (Myhre and Flora, 2000). Mass media interventions aim to prevent HIV by increasing knowledge, improving risk perception, changing sexual behaviours, and questioning potentially harmful social norms (USAID, 2011). Campaigns may utilise radio, television, and other outlets and ideally operate as part of multi-level efforts, in which mutually reinforcing messages are offered through interpersonal, community, and national channels.

Media interventions are a critical part of an effective prevention approach (USAID, 2011). The Young South African, Broadcast Media, and HIV/AIDS Awareness: National Survey (2007) reports that overwhelmingly, young South Africans think that broadcast media has an important role to play in HIV prevention. Nine in ten individuals were reported to have said that television and radio can help reduce the spread of HIV/ AIDS by focusing attention on the sexual behaviours, attitudes and traditions driving the spread of the epidemic (Young South Africans, Broadcast Media, and HIV/AIDS Awareness: National Survey, 2007). This survey reports that when participants were asked as to which sources they trust the most for information about HIV/AIDS; at the top of the list are experts like doctors and scientists (87%), national HIV/AIDS prevention and education campaigns (85%), HIV positive persons (80%), and parents (79%).

3.8 Putting theory into practice: community radio initiatives in health and participation practice

This section examines some practical initiatives that have been used in relation to health related awareness raising and participatory practice. The aim is to highlight case studies that have used mediated communication for HIV/AIDS purposes. These case studies are not only limited to HIV/AIDS, but there is deliberation on general participation and other general cases of community radio stations.

Alexander (2005) notes that, it is important to state that almost all South African community radio stations have included programming on HIV/AIDS in their line-ups. This programming often consists of guest appearances by health workers, social workers, HIV positive people or Non-Profit Organisations working with HIV/AIDS. Outside parties are also encouraging

community radio stations to increase programming on HIV/AIDS and also to improve the quality of the programming.

In South Africa, the oldest known community radio station emphasising health-related content is Radio Zibonele. Gumucio-Dagron (2001) traces this radio station to a time when it was primarily broadcasting health care programmes for two hours a week to the community of Griffith Mxenge in Khayelitsha, Western Cape. According to Gumucio-Dagron (2001), Radio Zibonele was established in 1993 as a homemade station that was set up under a hospital bed in an old container truck. The container truck served as a clinic for the Zibonele Community Health Centre. Radio Zibonele then provided illegal broadcasts, which reached the community of Griffith Mxenge (with approximately 20,000 people at the time) initially every Tuesday morning for a period of about two hours. The practice of Bush Radio in HIV/AIDS communication and general good practice has already been alluded to in this chapter.

The UNAIDS annual report (2004) states that many media organisations are rising to the challenge by promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS and educating listeners and viewers about the facts of the epidemic and how to stop it. A study by Mavhungu (2009) on five community radio stations – Kopsie FM , Radio Maputaland, Radio Riverside, Radio Zibonele and Bush Radio – reveals that HIV/AIDS is a topic that should take top priority as communities cite it as required programming in the majority of the five community radio stations researched.

In recent years the Panos Institute of Southern Africa commissioned a research study that aimed to:

- i) study the impact, if any, of HIV/AIDS radio messages on the targeted audiences;
- ii) study the appeal of these messages to various target groups and determine whether they influence audience understanding of the pandemic; contribute to behavioural change, and/or promote and stimulate debate on poorly understood aspects of the pandemic;
- iii) find if target groups feel messages are socially and culturally appropriate; and if there is a systematic, structured and planned campaign; and
- iv) advise media organisations and HIV/AIDS organisations on how best to carry out campaigns to ensure maximum impact, stressing for full participation

that is not based on financial benefit but on a genuine need to contribute to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Panos Southern Africa (2008) research report revealed that in Botswana, HIV/AIDS messages largely take the form of activity specific discussion shows. Radio Botswana is therefore largely viewed by civil society as the premier station of choice for message placements on HIV. The study established that the originators of HIV/AIDS messages depend solely on radio stations for information on audience reach. According to this research report, Botswana has about four radio stations (two belonging to the government) and of these four, those mainly used for HIV/AIDS communication include YA Rona FM and Gabz FM. There are no community radio stations in Botswana.

Panos Southern Africa (2008) also revealed that programming of HIV/AIDS radio campaign messages in Zimbabwe is overwhelmingly top-down. The nature, content, and ultimate presentation of the messages is pre-determined by the funders and originators of the programmes. In Zimbabwe, Panos Southern Africa further revealed that HIV/AIDS campaign messages are mainly aired on radio and are diverse in terms of content, duration and target. Presentation formats include adverts, interactive programmes (phone-ins/talk shows), jingles, features and news items. Radio stations play a crucial role as they develop the programme, in terms of style and presentation, and civil society organisations inform the programme in terms of content.

The major concern of the research that was commissioned by Panos Southern Africa (2008) is the extent of HIV/AIDS coverage by media organisations. In Southern Africa, the coverage of HIV in the media as reported by Panos Southern Africa (2008) is extremely low. This was proved by the findings of the monitored media material. Up to 2008, of the 37 001 media items monitored in the region, only 3% focused on or mentioned HIV/AIDS. The fact that in a country like South Africa, which faces a major HIV crisis, coverage of the pandemic is only 2% of the total is a deep source of concern according to Panos Southern Africa (2008). The report notes that AIDS fatigue has often been given as a reason for the low coverage.

This section has highlighted some case studies of radio and community radio services. The services that some of these radio stations fulfil includes issues of HIV/AIDS communication, participation in these radio stations as well the broadcasting perspectives of some radio stations.

3.9 Conclusion

What is a community radio and how can it ensure the participation of audiences as one of its key mandates? This is a key question that the conceptual discourses around the role communities to the community media. There is still no conceptual agreement about how to define what we know as a community radio. Furthermore, the concept of participation continues to be debated as consensus of what constitutes participation has not been fully reached.

The following chapter presents the theoretical framework that guides this study. This is the theory of the Public Sphere (Harbermas, 1986).

CHAPTER 4

THE PUBLIC SPHERE: X-K FM IN HIV/AIDS TALK

4.1 Introduction

This chapter critically discusses the conceptual framework underpinning this study: the theory of the Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. The aim is to apply this theory in understanding beneficiary community access to X-K FM as a critical opinion making body in HIV/AIDS communication context. AFSA (2011) reported that the media and street campaigns are the major sources of HIV/AIDS information. In this chapter, the concept of the Public Sphere is defined, brought into the context of media and more specifically to community radio and HIV/AIDS discussions.

4.2 Understanding the public sphere

Newspapers, magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere (Habermas, 1989; McQuail 2000). Ideally, this means that they are especially open to all members of the society as receivers and senders of information.

This role of the media is not always fully exercised as participation in the public sphere is sometimes affected by more urgent factors. For instance, Wasserman and Garman (2012) note that in South Africa, the high levels of inequality have prevented the majority of citizens from participating in the public sphere and making decisions at local level that impact their daily lives. This observation could be very pertinent in how X-K FM has been used as a public sphere platform in Platfontein. The station is located in a very impoverished township. Therefore the research also assessed how some other challenges may impact on the community's perceived need to participate in the station's HIV/AIDS communication.

However, before further synergies can be constructed on X-K FM as a micro public sphere and how it contributes to participation and community access on HIV/AIDS communication, a definition of the public sphere is needed. According to Habermas (1997: 105 *cited in* McKee, 2005) the public sphere is a domain of our social life where such a thing as public opinion can be formed and possibly, where citizens deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion to express and publicise their views. Habermas further

states that it is in this virtual space that citizens exchange ideas and discuss issues, in order to reach agreements about matters of ‘general interest’ (cf Calhoun, 1997; McQuail, 2000).

Three types of public spheres exist: micro, meso and macro public spheres (Keane, 2004). Micro public spheres include spaces such as discussion circles, the church, the clinic and most casual political chat with friends or acquaintances. These public spheres tend to be small involving an institution, a community or an association that may be advocating for certain interests. Citizens in these sites question the pseudo-imperatives of reality and counter them with alternative experiences of time, space, and interpersonal relations. Micro public spheres are today a vital feature of all social movements. These are spaces in which citizens enter into a dispute about who does and who ought to get what, when, and how (Keane, 2004).

Another segment of the public sphere identified by Keane is the meso-public sphere. Meso-public spheres are described as those spaces of controversy about power. These encompass millions of people watching, listening, or reading across vast distances. They are mainly coextensive with the nation-state, but they may also extend beyond its boundaries to encompass neighbouring audiences; their reach may also be limited to regions within states. Meso-public spheres are mediated by large circulation newspapers as well as through electronic media (Keane, 2004: 9-12). Keane also identified the macro-public sphere. These operate at a global level as well as in regions of the globe. Macro-publics of hundreds of millions of citizens are the consequence of the international concentration of mass media firms previously owned and operated at the nation-state level.

Having arrived at a contextual consensus definition about the notion of the public sphere and its three different types, the following section discusses the classical debate about the theory of the public sphere. The section draws its analysis from the writings of Habermas. It also discusses alternative arguments on the theory of public sphere.

4.4 Classical contextualisation of the public sphere: Jurgen Habermas

Craig Calhoun (1997) wrote that in the “Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere”, Habermas’ task was to develop a critique of a category of bourgeois society that shows: i) its internal tensions, the factors that led to its transformation and partial degeneration; and ii) the element of truth and emancipatory potential that it contained despite its ideological misrepresentation and contradictions.

The history and character of the public sphere of the high middle ages reveals an elite representation and a highly bourgeois public sphere (Habermas *et al.*, 1974). This form of representation was through feudal authorities and bodies such as the church, princes and nobility. However, through various processes of polarisation, the representative public sphere disintegrated. And though its remnants are still visible in institutions representing public citizens today, the consensus is that the public sphere has undergone a series of transformation from the medieval period (Habermas *et al.*, 1974).

The transformations of the public sphere described turned largely on its continual expansion to include more and more participants (Habermas, 1989). In this need for transformation, it is suggested that ultimately this inclusivity of more people in the public sphere brought degeneration in the quality of discourse. Habermas however contends that both the requirements of democracy and the nature of contemporary large-scale social organisations mean that it is impossible to progress today by going back to an elitist public sphere (Calhoun, 1997; cf. Habermas, 1989).

Various criticisms have been raised over the years about the public sphere theory. Calhoun (1997) observes that leftists criticised the focus on the bourgeois public sphere to the exclusion of the proletarian one; for an inadequate group of everyday life (including mass media) in advanced capitalism; and for exaggerating the emancipatory potential in the idealised bourgeois public sphere. Other scholars have argued that the transformation of the public sphere is idealised and exclusionary of other groups such as women, black people and homosexuals (Chiumbu and Ligaga, 2012). For instance, Catherine Squires (2002) argues that these marginalised communities have created coexisting counter publics in reaction to the exclusionary politics of the dominant public sphere. But the theory's role is invaluable. Helge Rønning (1993) affirms that the public sphere is an arena for discussion and the meeting place of social and cultural interests linked to class, gender, social and cultural interest groups. Thus while there is a strong rationalistic impulse in Habermas's theory of publicity, the theory also has room for those aspects of the public discourse that go beyond rational arguments. He notes that this theory may be interpreted as the first attempt in Habermas's arguments in favour of what may be termed the role of critical publicity as a prerequisite for the development of a democratic society (Rønning, 1993: 4). Rønning further argues that it should not be viewed as far-fetched to apply this theory which has a background in the analysis of early modern Europe. In fact, Rønning states that the public sphere is

relevant in Africa because anti-colonial struggles took place within counter public spheres. In the context of this study, some academic literature and past research studies have indicated that the Bushman community has been a consistently marginalised⁸ community in South Africa (Dockney, 2011; cf. Bester & Buntman, 1999).

The value of this theory in the study lies in its acknowledgement that the public space needs to be transformed in such a way that it includes more and more voices. X-K FM represents a public sphere for the community of Platfontein (Mhlanga, 2006). In this study, the contributions and participation of the Platfontein community in this public sphere and with a special reference to HIV/AIDS communication have been assessed using this theory. The value of this research lies in the sense that media facilitate the process of equitable public debate by providing an arena for discussion, and by reconstituting private citizens as a public body in form of public opinion (Curran, 1996 *cited in* McQuail, 2000). However, taken to extremes, certain structural tendencies of media, including concentration, commercialisation and globalisation, are harmful to the public sphere (McQuail, 2000). This occurs in instances where the focus of media institutions is on providing more advertising space, maximising shareholders' profits and any other commercial agendas. These interests can therefore divert the true agenda of the media as a public sphere.

The following section discusses the dimensions of participation in their relation to the public sphere. The objective is to highlight the problem of participation against the backdrop of a public sphere.

4.5 Participating in the public sphere

Who participates in the public sphere and who is excluded? Some academic literature has suggested that participation can be hijacked and used for unintended purposes. According to Moyo (2012), participation is not always positive, as it can be top-down, mediated, regulated, and therefore, exclusive and undemocratic. It can serve as a regime of endorsement and disapproval for political, economic and cultural power. Participation has been seen as an infinitely malleable concept, which can be used to evoke – and to signify – almost anything

⁸ Julie Grant (2011) details the disempowerment of the Bushmen community of South Africa. This she does by looking at pre-colonial, colonial and “post” colonial eras on how the Bushmen community has suffered immensely including being marginalised. For further information on this study, see the following link: http://ccms.ukzn.ac.za/images/Rethinking_indigeneity/jgrantphd_thesis.pdf

that involves people (Cornwall, 2008). As such, it can easily be reframed to meet almost anything. So many claims to 'doing participation' are now made that the term has become mired in a morass of competing referents (Cornwall, 2008).

The value of participation in the public sphere lies in the sense that its founding philosophies argued for an open discussion on all issues of general concern (Kellner, 2008). These are issues in which discursive argumentation was employed to ascertain general interests and the public good. The public sphere thus presupposed freedoms of speech and assembly, a free press, and the right to freely participate in political debate and decision-making (Kellner, 2008). The value of participation for people in their public sphere is that:

When a community's participation in the public sphere is welcome, members become actors whose voices are included in the content. This is contrary to being passive recipients of information that may have nothing to do with the realities of their daily experiences. In this new context, third parties are not involved in making communication decisions on issues that affect the communities. This process is a departure from the trend notable in the dominant paradigm of development where decision-making is top-down with no built-in mechanism for feedback from the community during the planning, the execution, and the evaluation stages of the programmes. Where participation is inculcated as a dimension, people are involved in the process rather than being human subjects of social change campaigns (Katz, 1996).

Importantly, the definitions, approaches and various literatures on participation imply that participation in development endeavours needs to be understood on some of its basic elements. These include an: identification of appropriate stakeholders (community members, donors, non-governmental organisations, and government); needs identification and goal determination (local people identifying their needs and goals of the programme); information dissemination (sufficient relevant information should be provided on the programme); consultation (people's views should be invited in any development programme); genuine interests (participation depends on the legitimate interest of people in the project); public involvement in decision making (participation should be encouraged in the overall decision on the project as well); accountability (programmes should be answerable to the people); repeated interaction (programmes should repeatedly engage with the people); ownership and

control (people should be encouraged to manage their programmes); sharing benefits (participation will be encouraged when there are shared benefits); and partnerships (participation will be guaranteed when the programme works in partnership with the community⁹).

Taken in the context of HIV/AIDS, this means that development communication practice needs to involve more input from communities affected and infected by HIV. More than anything, this is because it is the people on the ground that must live on a daily basis with the dynamics of HIV/AIDS. In a way, they are the experts in the challenges of negotiating their lives around HIV/AIDS (cf. Kunda and Tomaselli, 2012). The involvement of people in HIV/AIDS communication further eliminates the possibilities of “banking” education in HIV/AIDS awareness. Freire (1996: 53-67) argues that in the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those considering themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Therefore, it is argued that instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which students patiently receive, memorise and repeat (Freire, 1996). The meaning of this in an HIV/AIDS communication process that does not encompass community participation is that people become passive recipients of AIDS information. This then precludes them from engaging with the complexities of HIV/AIDS as experienced by those people affected by it.

By its nature, participatory communication puts decision making in the hands of the public (Olorunnisola, 2002). This translocation enables communities to express their own ideas and opinions. Participation of beneficiary communities in HIV/AIDS can therefore provide space for them to express their challenges, opinions and solutions in dealing with HIV/AIDS. Olorunnisola concludes that the radio medium has been a frequent stakeholder in both participatory communication and in the oscillating trends in social development. Radio is popularly recognised as one of the best ways to reach excluded or marginalised communities in targeted and useful ways.

The following section discusses the value of radio as a notional public sphere.

⁹ Further elaboration on participation is offered in “Understanding Community Participation”: http://lyceumbooks.com/pdf/Effective_Community_P_Chapter_02.pdf

4.6 Radio as a public sphere

The arena (public sphere) can be a specific place where citizens gather (for example, a town hall meeting), but it can also be a communication medium through which citizens send and receive information and opinions¹⁰. It is commonly understood that media represents a form of public sphere. This section deliberates on this position of the media and public sphere. However, the section examines this position at a nuanced micro-public spherical level: that of a geographically limited radio station. The objective in this discourse is to build from general media debates to focus specifically on radio and X-K FM as a public sphere.

In South Africa, the radio medium has been overwhelmingly embraced by the general population (Mudhai, 2011). Among other factors, the portability of radio, its cost-effectiveness, versatility and its oral nature have helped to maintain its sound status as a mass communication apparatus in South Africa (Mudhai, 2011). It has been predicted that there are an estimated 10 million radio sets nationwide and more than 88% of the population listens to radio programming (Milne and Taylor, 2006). But has this adoption of radio resulted in the participation of opinions from the general audiences, especially when it comes to issues such as HIV/AIDS? The interest of this study is on HIV/AIDS community broadcasting through X-K FM and the theory of public sphere is being adopted to assess participation at this micro public sphere platform (cf Mhlanga, 2006). This theory helps in understanding: whether people participate; how do they participate and why do they participate at X-K FM.

The classification of media as constituting a public sphere represents certain challenges in South Africa. Clive Barnett (1999) argues that in this regard, the aim of constituting the media as a public sphere supportive of a diverse, independent civil society and as an instrument of nation-building, is faced with the hurdle of extending access to the means of communication in both technological and cultural ways. Among other things, this access can be enhanced by infrastructural development, including electrification and telephone rollout as a means of encouraging participation (Barnett, 1999).

Radio has been proved to offer slightly more advantages than disadvantages in its public sphere notion. Moyo (2012:488) states that with the advent of the internet at a community broadcasting level, radio “is increasingly associated with deterritorialised and transnational

¹⁰ Communication for Governance and Accountability Programme
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/PubSphereweb.pdf>

alternative public spheres”. This study looked at community radio not just as a way of broadcasting and distributing HIV/AIDS information, but also as a “communicative agent” (Freire, 1996) that provides shared lessons on HIV/AIDS. These are shared because they are *dialogical* in nature. This is the dialogue described by Freire (1996) as an encounter in which it is the united reflection and action of dialoguers who are addressed to the world and whom are to be transformed and humanised. This dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person’s ‘depositing’ ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be ‘consumed’ by the discussants. Central to dialogue and ultimately to a public sphere is access and participation (Fairchild, 2001). These factors rely mostly on the democratic nature of the communication process.

Democracy in communication is the most amorphous yet omnipresent ideal that defines community radio (Fairchild, 2001). Community radio stations can be considered more or less democratic only if they facilitate participation and they are widely accessible to the local population. Therefore, ‘access’ and ‘participation’ are the extreme variable concepts that most fully distinguish community radio from the dominant media (public broadcasting and privatised media) platforms (Fairchild, 2001). These two variables form important determinants in answering the key research questions of this study.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has elaborated on the theory underpinning this research. The focus of the chapter has been on outlining participation as an important element in the public sphere. The priority of the study is investigating beneficiary community participation in HIV/AIDS communication. Therefore Habermas’ theory is instrumental in evaluating participation in a public sphere platform such as X-K FM. The advantages and challenges of participation in public sphere platforms were also highlighted in this chapter. This therefore, resulted in balanced arguments about the value of participation in the public sphere.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHOD & DATA COLLECTION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the research methodology and data collection process as followed at the research site. It also discusses the analysis plan for the data gathered. The investigation into X-K FM and HIV/AIDS communication is based on a case study format. This chapter contains the following discussions: the interpretative research paradigm, methodology used on the case study and research instruments used by the researcher in the field study.

5.2 Qualitative research

This study is embedded in the interpretative paradigm. Deacon *et al.*, (1999) explain that the central role of using the interpretative paradigm is not with understanding relations of cause and effect but rather with exploring the ways that people make sense of their social worlds and how they express these understandings. This paradigm is important in this study as the research seeks to answer the “how and why” question of beneficiary community participation in HIV/AIDS communication. The data gathering process in this study collected non-statistical and non-calculated information on the manner and perspectives of beneficiary community participation in HIV/AIDS content at X-K FM. Hancock (1998) explains that the research which attempts to increase our understanding of why things are the way they are in our social world and why people act the ways they do is ‘qualitative’ research. Instead of drawing from a large, representative sample of an entire population of interest, qualitative researchers seek to acquire in-depth and intimate information about a smaller group of persons. Another central aim of qualitative research is to learn about how and why people behave, think, and make meaning as they do, rather than focusing on what people do or believe on a large scale (Ambert *et al*, 1995).

For this study, the researcher draws meanings and conclusions from a small group of people that have a direct contact with X-K FM. To a large extent the intents of qualitative methodology as stated above has influenced the research process.

5.3. Case study approach

A case study approach was conducted to make sense of X-K FM's role and the participation of community members in HIV/AIDS communication. This is a detailed and intensive understanding of a single case usually by a combination of methods – such as document analysis, interviews, observation or participant observation – often resulting in thick descriptions (Bertrand and Hughes, 2000).

The aim was to use this approach to make a detailed analysis of X-K FM's beneficiary communities' perceptions and their participation in the generation of HIV/AIDS messages broadcast by the station. This process started with the selection of the radio station in February 2011 and terminated with this thesis. One of the rationales for using X-K FM was a need to continue the initial research that had been conducted in Platfontein by previous CCMS students (Mhlanga, 2006; Hart, 2007; Hart, 2011). The existing relations between X-K FM and CCMS at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College) were vital in choosing X-K FM as a case study. The aim was to continue research in Platfontein and ultimately align this study in the Re-Thinking Indigeneity project of Professor Keyan Tomaselli. However, unlike the previous studies at X-K FM the uniqueness of my analysis lies in the sense that it focuses exclusively on HIV/AIDS communication by the radio station.

The following section discusses the type of sampling strategies that were implemented by the study in Platfontein.

5.4 Study design

For de Vaus (2001:9) the function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible. He further states that obtaining relevant evidence entails specifying the type of evidence needed to answer the research question, to test a theory, to evaluate a programme or to accurately describe some phenomenon. The research design process of this study was on participation analysis and it focused on: i) identifying key respondents and soliciting information as pertaining to the objectives of the study. Thus the following table introduces individuals that provided key responses for the study:

Name	Portfolio	Place	Gender
Linda Pieter	Station Manager	Platfontein	Female
Petrus Maroga	Community Member	Platfontein	Male
Kiet Verizile	Radio Producer	Platfontein	Male
Reggie Kiringa	Community Member	Platfontein	Male
Ghumba Kiringa	SASI/Community Member	Platfontein	Female
Oscar Muringa	Community Member	Platfontein	Male
Veka Katchorro	SASI/Community Member	Platfontein	Male
Reginald Muyenga	Community Member	Platfontein	Male
Piorro Hasjenda	Community member	Platfontein	Male
Petrus Singa	Radio Producer	Platfontein	Male
Zieka Hasjenda	Community Member	Platfontein	Male

NB: As part of the agreement with the research respondents pseudonyms have been provided to protect the respondent's privacy

Thus some of the research respondents were people who work for X-K FM and are engaged in designing HIV/AIDS communication messages. They were complemented by people who live in Platfontein but do not work for the radio station. The objective was to gather responses from people who were designers of HIV/AIDS communication as well as recipients of HIV/AIDS communication messages in Platfontein. Researchers are generally required to sample whenever the population or a set in which we have an interest is too large (Anderson, 2012). Sampling techniques used in analysing people and institutions can be broadly divided into two categories: random probability sampling and non-random non-probability sampling (Deacon *et al*, 1999). One of the most important features of sampling is that the best possible sample is a smaller reproduction of the population with all its characteristics in their proportions (Anderson, 2012). Thus the researcher implemented probability sampling method in selecting the key respondents (de Vaus, 2001).

Petrus Singa was allocated to me as a field guide by the radio station to recruit respondents from the community (he also became resourceful respondent for the study). The rationale for settling on Petrus was that he is involved with the production of HIV/AIDS communication content, has extensive contact with the members of the community and works with the members of the community in HIV/AIDS programming. In selecting respondents, the researcher had settled on using the snowball sampling technique with the field guide as the initial contact in the community.

As a field guide, Petrus became the initial contact that referred the researcher to other people for possible to interviews. Katz (2006) does however warn that because sample members are

not selected from a sampling frame, snowball samples are subject to numerous biases. For example, respondents who have many links are more likely to be recruited into the sample. These biases which might or might not affect the credibility of the study are therefore acknowledged in this study. However, without initial contacts, it seems that the community of Platfontein might have been more resistant in cooperating with the researcher.

5.5 Data collection instruments

The field data was collected using notes, documents; transcriptions of interviews and community interactions, as well as photographs (see Appendix A, B and C). According to Freeman *et al.* (2007) data is produced and generated from social interactions and are therefore constructions or interpretations. They further state that it is important to note that there is no "pure" or "raw" data or even data uncontaminated by human thought and action. This therefore means that it is possible that consciously and unconsciously, the attitudes, views and actions of the researcher during the field work in Platfontein might or might not have influenced the interpretation of the data in the study.

Whilst in Platfontein, the researcher relied mainly on semi-structured interviews (in-depth and face-to-face), as well as simple and partial participant observation to obtain data from the respondents (Deacon *et al.*, 1999). For ethical purposes, consent forms were provided and their purpose was explained to the respondents. The informed consent forms as well as the interview question guides were written in English, but where necessary, these were translated to the respondents by the field guide. The ability of the researcher to speak Afrikaans also helped in communicating with the respondents and in seeking clarity where needed. Permission for the photographs taken at the station was requested and fully granted. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and the procedure of storing their responses.

The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they obviate concerns with standardisation and control (Deacon *et al.*, 1999). They therefore seek to promote active and open dialogue. In this study, the researcher's data collection objective was to solicit extensive information from the respondents using semi-structured interview discussions. The interviews ranged from fully recorded, to more informal interviews that were unrecorded. Perspectives from the unrecorded interviews were noted down in a daily diary that was kept whilst collecting data in Platfontein.

The recorded unstructured interviews were done on a collaboration basis between the researcher and Petrus who also assisted in the field with translation where it was necessary. Interviews can be highly formal and rigid whilst some can be less structured and provide more detailed information from the respondents. The main objective of using unstructured interviews in this study was to obtain insight and depth into the topic being investigated, and to allow the respondent more freedom in responding in his or her own words (Du Plooy, 2002). Although most of the respondents were invited to do the interviews at X-K FM, the researcher ensured they did not take place inside the offices of the station but rather outside in a less formal environment that would be possibly less constraining.

The following section discusses the alternative and supporting data that has been used in the study to verify and support the claims and conclusion of this research study.

5.6 Secondary data

Secondary or alternative data was used to support the claims of the study and encourage further analysis. This secondary data included internet sources or desktop data gathering methods (Mhlanga, 2006:41) on information mainly from the GCIS about X-K FM as a radio station, the X-K FM compliance report from ICASA, as well as work by Mhlanga (2006) and Hart (2006; 2011). Reports from AFSA provided further data about HIV/AIDS in Platfontein. The data from these sources was used to support or to disprove arguments of this research. Importantly, because the researcher could not stay for long extensive periods in the field, this secondary data was relied upon for further in-depth explanations on the situation of X-K FM and Platfontein in general. In terms of distinguishing data that is primary to that which is secondary, Boslaugh (2007) notes that if the data set in question was collected by the researcher (or a team of which the researcher is a part) for a specific purpose or analysis under consideration, it is primary data. If it was collected by someone else for some other purpose, it is secondary data. Therefore it is clear that in reference to this study, the primary data is that which was collected by the researcher in Platfontein. The secondary data is that which has been obtained in prior studies of X-K FM and publications on X-K FM and Platfontein in general.

The following section describes the strategy undertaken in making sense of the available collected data from Platfontein. This section discusses the concept of thematic analysis as used by this research study.

5.7 Themes and coded data

In a research project conducted as part of the researcher's course work (Communication for Participatory Development) in 2011, the researcher was exposed to the techniques of coding and placing data to themes for efficient analysis. Therefore the researcher decided to continue and utilise the NVivo software package skills obtained in 2011. This assisted in drawing the findings and conclusions of this study. In 2012, the researcher attended another NVivo training session organised by the CCMS. This has helped in polishing the skills of the researcher in using this programme for efficient data analysis.

A theme is an outcome of coding, categorisation and analytic reflection (Saldana, 2009). After transcribing the data, NVivo was used to categorise the research data into codes that were later grouped into themes. In the process of analysing data, the thematic analysis process was applied. In conclusion Saldana (2009) notes that in thematic analysis, the themes and their related data serve as illustrative examples to support the interpretation.

The following section explains the challenges encountered whilst collecting data in Platfontein.

5.8 Challenges encountered in the field

This research has been affected by a number of challenges that were encountered by the researcher before and during the data collection process in Platfontein. Refusal to be interviewed was the biggest challenge experienced in the field. Participation rates in a study vary according to methods of contact and the communicative and interpersonal strategies that are used in that contact. Among issues that could exclude participation in a sample include: the individuals who do not participate because of absence, language, disability; individuals who just refuse to participate; and those who fail to competently participate (Anderson, 2012).

In this X-K FM research fieldwork, I encountered a lot of community resistance to participate in the study. Among these challenges, there was a constant request for financial rewards by some potential respondents. They stated that they would only participate on condition that the

researcher remunerated them. This occurred with more than seven individuals who were encountered at different times. As I was unable to oblige because of financial constraints, they subsequently refused to participate. Another potential field assistant from the !Xun community was contacted about the possibility of interviewing residences from his side of the community. This was because Petrus could not assist with the !Xun community as a result of language differences. This potential assistant stated that he was unable to help as he felt that people will not be interested in talking to me about the subject matter [HIV/AIDS] of the study. I later approached another individual (Ghumba Kiringa) who negotiated with a group of !Xun women in the researcher's presence on the possibility of being interviewed. These women also refused to be interviewed. As a last resort, the researcher tried to communicate with them in Afrikaans (an alternative language in Platfontein) but they also declined this request.

As noted in my interaction and an explanation by some people from the community, a possible explanation for interviews refusal is that the subject matter of HIV/AIDS in this study made people uncomfortable about opening up and talking with a perceived stranger about how they feel in terms of participating at X-K FM in this regard. Another factor that may have been a stumbling block was that I might have been seen as an "outsider" who was simply in Platfontein to obtain data with no perceived contribution to the community. This possibility was explained to me by one of X-K FM employees. Possibly the researcher could have been seen as an exploiter by the community, as it was explained that other researchers simply collect data in the community and never return with the findings or even tangible benefits of the research (cf. Dockney, 2011). Thus it is possible that the community is starting to bargain their response or participation in a research study with something tangible that they will receive. It is rational to believe that had there been a monetary compensation to the research, one would have received a greater proportion of response rates than the ones that were available. The accuracy of such paid-for information can however not be taken for granted as observed by Dockney (2011: 70) in his Platfontein study.

These non-responses should not diminish the value of this study. The eventually sampled group of people provided information that did not exist about HIV/AIDS communication at X-K FM. This is obviously preferable to no information whatsoever had this research process not been undertaken.

5.9 Validity

To analyse the validity of a study, Gunter (2000: 36) writes that external validity is the ability to generalise experimental findings to events and settings outside the experiment itself. If a study, according to Gunter (2000), lacks external validity, its findings hold true only in the experimental situation. As a researcher I relied on the above-mentioned research instruments to obtain valid results that could possibly be applied to settings outside this study and therefore validate it. However, this research has attained mainly internal validity as its results can be arguably only contextualised with regard to the conditions of X-K FM in Platfontein. One of the limitations of this study is that the actual interviews were conducted in !Xun, Khwe and Afrikaans languages. These were translated to me into English by the field assistant and therefore their total accuracy depended on his translation skills. However, the assistant was briefed before the actual interviews took place but nevertheless, the bulk of the primary data was gathered using this procedure and this may have some implications on the validity of the research results. The researcher's lack of !Xun and Khwe language skills was another form of limitation to the study.

5.10 Reliability

Reliability means that the indicator consistently comes up with the same measurement (de Vaus, 2001: 29). To obtain reliable research results, the researcher followed the necessary guidelines in qualitative research methodology. The unstructured interviews allowed the researcher to obtain raw data. It cannot be ascertained that should procedures be repeated in Platfontein, the same results may be achieved as the context and setting of the respondents could have changed. It is however emphasised that should everything remain the same and research instrument be sufficiently used and implemented correctly, then the findings of the study are more likely to be consistent. The dependability of the results relied upon the implementation of the necessary steps determined by the research methods followed in the field.

5.11 Conclusion

Among other things, this chapter has outlined the steps that were taken during the data gathering period in Platfontein. The chapter highlights the epistemological and philosophical guidelines that shaped the process of data collection of the study. Of importance is that the chapter states that this study was a form of exploration on what is presently happening in Platfontein's X-K FM.

Therefore it is concluded that the research strategies used were successful in assisting with data collection process. The following chapter discusses and highlights the findings of this research study.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS; DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the results of the data collected from the field. As previously stated, the primary data was obtained using in-depth, semi-structured interviews; both recorded and unrecorded. The chapter also includes the researcher's own observations whilst in the field.

The study concentrates on how HIV/AIDS communication is conducted at X-K FM. This is done through an assessment of how HIV/AIDS content is broadcast to the population of Platfontein and how the community engages with the radio stations content. In keeping with the study objectives, this chapter includes a critical assessment of beneficiary community participation at the radio station. Community participation is assessed both in terms of general broadcasting content as well as specific HIV/AIDS programming¹¹.

For the purpose of analysis and discussion, the data was coded and themes were developed. The major themes that came through from the data include: problems identification, problems determinants, health promotion partnerships, health communication initiatives and popular communication strategies.

6.2 Confounding factors to HIV/AIDS in Platfontein

One of the basic research objectives of the study was to gain perspectives from the !Xun and Khwe communities as to how they see HIV/AIDS as a problem in their community. This is in contrast to most predominant development strategies that are largely modelled on the modernisation paradigm (Rogers, 2006). These development agents mostly enter as outsiders and make recommendations without taking account of the perspectives of those that are being 'developed' (Bessette, 2004). Except for a single respondent who did not wish to comment on whether or not he "sees HIV/AIDS as problem in Platfontein", all of the respondents identified the virus as a huge burden for the community. As one responded observed:

¹¹ To protect the identities of the people interviewed in Platfontein, the researcher has settled on referencing them using their gender, location of interview and date of the interview. Throughout they are quoted using their pseudo names. The protection of identity was part of the ethical agreements as explained to the people in the field. This is also because they have raised their own private opinions which might prejudice them in one way or the other, should their identities be revealed.

Ja, it [HIV] is a problem in the community. But you know, well actually it's a big disease, so people, as community members, people must go out there and talk to the community and tell them how to behave. Or we must get information on a daily basis to know that HIV is a disease that kills all the people. Most of the people have lost their parents and their loved ones.

Kiet Verizile; (Male)

Radio Producer

March, 2012

As indicated by the literature, HIV/AIDS is one of many health and social challenges for most communities (cf Botha and Durden, 2003; Singhal and Rogers, 1999). During the interviews the respondents raised challenges in addition to the problem of HIV/AIDS. A figure illustrating the universe of challenges identified by the community was created by the researcher.

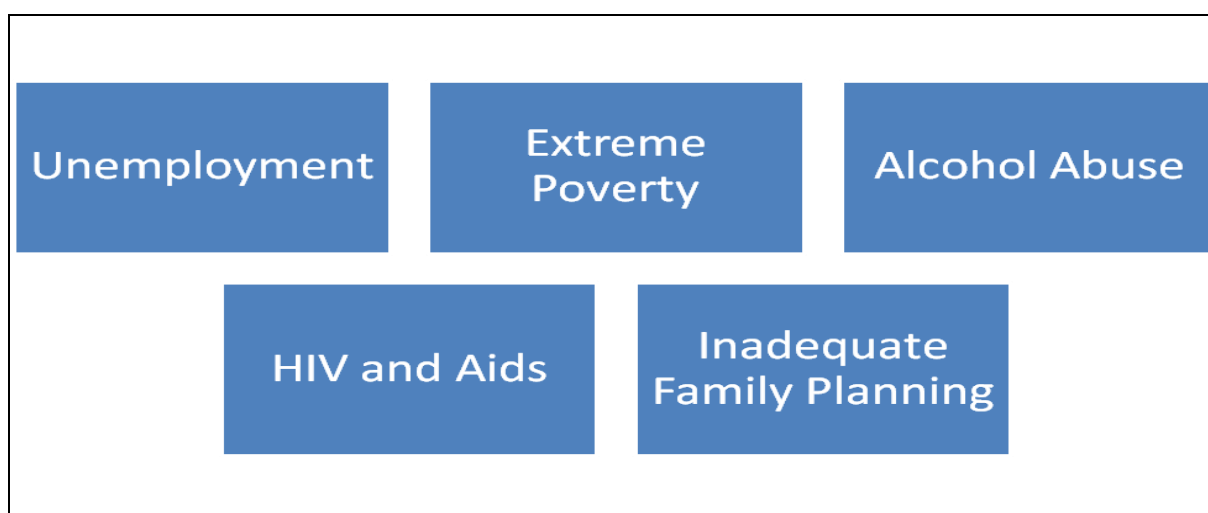


Fig 6.1 Key challenges facing the !Xun and Khwe of Platfontein

It was stated by some respondents that the government's response to poverty and unemployment among HIV positive individuals in the form of social welfare grants may be a contributing factor to the increase and prevalence of HIV in the community. As one informant put it:

In my personal view, what I see that is making this [HIV] big is the government grants. I spoke to the nurses one day and they told me that it's [HIV] getting worse because young people will go to the clinic to tests themselves [for HIV] and when the results come and say its negative, they will

go like, “No, no, no I must have it [HIV and AIDS] to have the social grant or the government money.” And you see, they will go out and do everything they can to have the disease so that they test positive and get the government pension.

Linda Pieter; (Female)

Station Manager

March, 2012

This comment signals a problem with how the government’s HIV/AIDS welfare grant system has been communicated to poor communities of South Africa, such as Platfontein. Whereas the grant is intended to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS (Booyesen, 2004), it seems that potential unintended consequences have been noted by impoverished communities such as Platfontein.

The welfare grant money was not the only social determinant associated with HIV/AIDS¹² by the study participants. Because there is extensive evidence showing the linkages between alcohol abuse and HIV/AIDS, the researcher included questions about the level of alcohol consumption in the community. Asked whether alcohol consumption is an issue for his community, one of the respondents stated that:

Ja, it [alcohol] is here, too. Because some of them are unemployed. They don’t have things to do and this is why they end up in alcohol.

Kiet Verizile; (Male)

Radio Producer

March, 2012

The HIV/AIDS Media Project (2012) states that excessive alcohol consumption has an impact on HIV in three ways:

- i) HIV infection: alcohol is said to impair decision making and therefore abuse of alcohol may lead to unprotected or risky sexual behaviour,
- ii) HIV progression: excessive alcohol use can speed up the disease progression as it can compromise the immune system and

¹² For further details about alcohol use and HIV and AIDS, see the toolkit developed by the consortium working on HIV & AIDS Media Project: http://www.journaids.org/images/uploads/JournAIDS_Notebook.pdf

iii) HIV treatment: excessive alcohol use may result in ARV's being irregularly taken which could lead to drug resistance of the virus. The Health and Culture Programme that was run by SASI on behalf of AFSA in Platfontein seemed to be attempting to make inroads on health promotion in Platfontein. This programme worked on the health and well-being of culturally vulnerable and marginalized populations in the country. It was funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy and is working with 20 NGOs in South Africa.

Another challenge in the community mentioned by the study participants was that of inadequate use of family planning:

I find it a problem because most of them [young mothers] don't finish school. Of course they must take care of the children. So it is a big issue here... Most of the girls are not finished with school, they get married.

Petrus Maroga; (Male)

Radio Producer

March, 2012

As explained by some research respondents, another factor that could be encouraging adolescent pregnancies in the community is the welfare grants benefits allocated to no- or low-income earning parents in South Africa. Continuous research in this area is being undertaken, and some studies have disputed the relationship between social welfare grants and frequent teenage pregnancies in South Africa (cf. Makiwane and Udjo, 2006).

Overall, it has been stated by the respondents that the community does view HIV/AIDS as a problem. This can be seen as a step towards addressing the problem of HIV/AIDS in Platfontein. As the problem and its related driving forces are identified, the people can direct their energy towards curtailing the spread of the virus in the community.

6.3 Partnership for an HIV/AIDS-free Platfontein

X-K FM as a radio station has been broadcasting in the !Xun and Khwe communities since the year 2000. A development project of the San/Bushmen, the radio station has been a pioneer in the role of preserving the fast-disappearing languages of the San/Bushmen people. This project has been as a result of a co-operation between the SABC and the Department of Communications of South Africa. A baseline study conducted by AFSA, CCMS and

JHHESA (Govender et al., 2012) indicates that over the last decade there has been increase in the use of mass media in the dissemination of health information. In Platfontein, this study noted that 70.9% and 67.9% of people listened to radio and watched TV. These findings further reinforce the important role of X-K FM in assisting with the role of effective HIV/AIDS communication. The study noted that there has been a relatively large increase in people taking up HIV counselling and testing for the first time between 2010 and 2012 and this can be attributed to health communication programmes (HCPs) in Platfontein during this period (AFSA et al., 2012).

X-K FM as a development project has focused on the fight against HIV/AIDS. The evidence into the important role of the radio in the fight was stated by the respondents:

...Before in Schmidtsdrift, we were there and only in 2000 [year] we had X-K FM in Schmidtsdrift. There was no radio addressing HIV; people just heard about HIV and AIDS at the clinic. Not all of the people go to the clinic; there are people who want to use traditional doctors, so those people do not get that enlightenment. So only people who went to the clinic got information about HIV.

Ghumba Kiringa; (Female)

SASI/Community Member

March, 2012

However, the fight against HIV/AIDS has not been played by the radio station alone. The radio has directly and sometimes indirectly collaborated with a number of agencies. These partnerships have been forged with the National as well as the Northern Cape Department of Health including the local Platfontein clinic. The non-governmental fraternity has also played a role and continues to do so. Namely the NGO players that have worked directly with radio station include: *Lovelifa*, SASI, AIDS Foundation of South Africa, Red Cross and Isibindi.

At the time of conducting this research in the field, the AIDS Foundation of South Africa was conducting a survey in collaboration with SASI. This was based on the culmination of the Health and Culture Programme which is working closely with the radio. From the perspectives of the research respondents, the partnerships are bearing positive results as they stated that there is high awareness of HIV/AIDS in the community. The figure below illustrates the working relationship between X-K FM and its partners around HIV/AIDS communication.

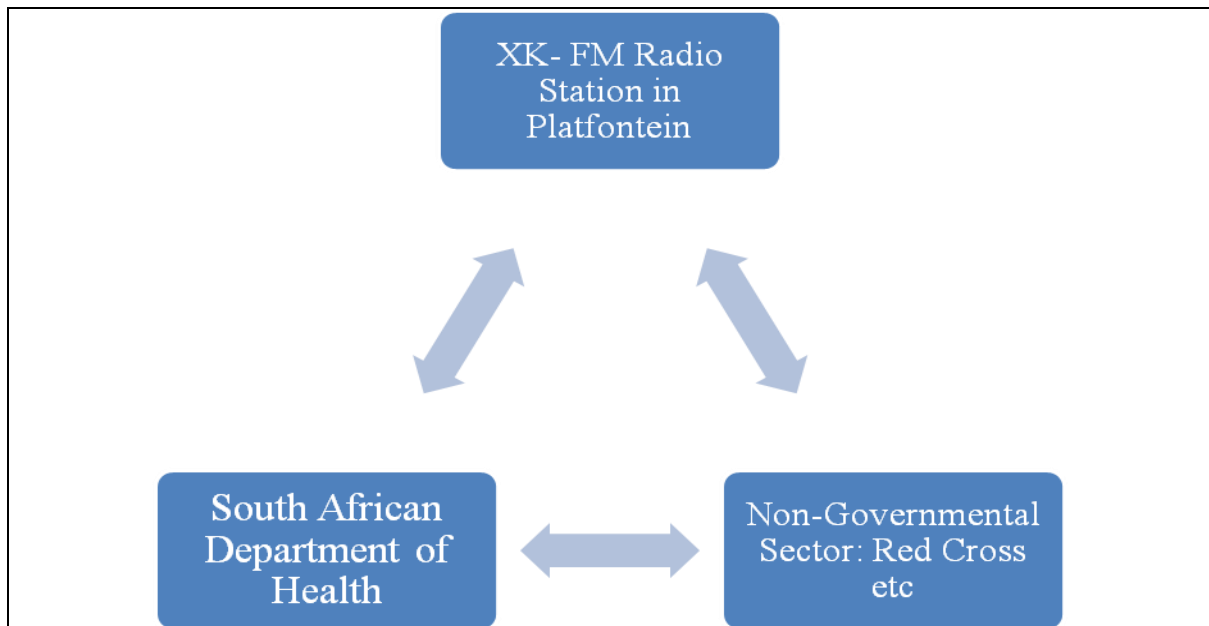


Fig 6.2 HIV response and prevention partnership in Platfontein

In most instances, the partnership on the side of X-K FM involves inviting the public health practitioners to the station:

And we do have nurses from the clinic who will come and talk on the radio.

We have interviews with them about this [HIV/AIDS]...

Linda Pieter; (Female)

Station Manager

March, 2012

Because the station identifies itself as a community radio, it is mandated by the requirements of the community radio station licence to play a role in community development. One of the major research objectives of this study was to understand radio policies that encourage beneficiary community participation in HIV/AIDS radio content. Before examining this participation, the relationship of the station with its immediate environment was explained by the station management as follows:

...the relationship between the station and the community is very good. I don't see this as a radio station. I see X-K FM as a community centre because what I see is the community are,...they depend on the radio station. First of all, they will come to the station to call an ambulance. They will come to X-K FM for municipality if someone's electricity box or water pipes are not working. They will come to us...When SASSA [South African Social Security Agency], the

government pension people come to do their payments and everything in Platfontein, the community will come to X-K FM for photocopies of their IDs and so on. I see it as community centre. We are a post office. There we receive the letters for the communities from the post office. We call the people and they will come to collect their letters at the station.

Linda Pieter; (Female)

Radio Station Manager

March, 2012

Linda's observation indicates that the station is not playing only a broadcasting role but its facilitating a community development role through strategic partnerships. This also suggest that a vital partnership has not only been created with the different NGOs and government departments, but that the station is forging a vital partnership with its immediate constituency: the people of Platfontein.

However, there is an area of concern when it comes to how X-K FM continues to have its relationship with its community. Difficulties pertaining to direct access to the station premises were noted by the study participants (see the discussion on participation section).

6.4 Communicating health at X-K FM

At the time of going to the field, there were mainly two radio programmes that were identified as specifically focusing on public health matters. These programmes target a range of public health concerns including but not limited to: tuberculosis, physiotherapy, gender-based violence and related matters, nutrition and HIV/AIDS.

There are various strategies that are used by the radio station to communicate public health messages. They include inviting experts and health awareness practitioners to discuss certain health topics or issues:

When they [health experts] come or when we invite them to come and talk at the radio station, they will come to talk about TB, about HIV and AIDS, about diseases that are infecting everyone in the community. They will come and talk about how do we prevent the disease.

Linda Pieter; (Female)

Radio Station Manager

March, 2012

Besides this strategy of communicating health related matters, the station also works with partners to develop public health communication content. The station receives content from external health promotion agents that has already been packaged and just needs to be translated into the local Platfontein languages for broadcasting. Mostly, the generic HIV/AIDS programming and general education is handled by the SABC Education office at the radio station:

...They (SABC Education) have this programme *Intersexions*, they have *Youth Ke Yona*, they have *Takalani Sesame*, they have *Brothers4Life*. They do have these other programmes that they have information that they send to us.

Linda Pieter; (Female)

Radio Station Manager

March, 2012

These programmes are disseminated through the broader SABC Education strategies and the station is required to broadcast the content at the time that the station management deems appropriate. It was indicated that some of the content is not new, but has been re-broadcast so as to fill the health education agenda of the radio station in Platfontein. The researcher was provided with an example of some of the content that comes from other public health agencies that they would have to broadcast from time-to-time. The following script is an example of some of the HIV/AIDS public health communication/announcements broadcast at the station:

“This message is brought to you by the NC Department of Health

Are you HIV positive? If you have not yet been assessed, the Department of Health request that you...

Go to your nearest public health facility (Clinic or Hospital) in order to receive further assistance with your condition.

When you present yourself at the health facility our expect clinicians will provide the following services for free:

- CD4 count testing – to check how weak or strong your immune system is;
- ARVs if your CD4 count is 350 or less;
- Screening for TB and other opportunistic infections;
- Nutrition including exclusive breast feeding advice;
- Continuous counselling and support; and
- Contraceptive advise and condoms.

HIV is no longer a death sentence as it was perceived years ago.

Remember: live a healthy lifestyle to enhance your quality of life”

Fig: 6.3 a typical HIV/AIDS communication script that is to be translated into Xuntali and Kwedam for X-K FM. Sourced from X-K FM

It was indicated that the people who are responsible for translating the content from any language to that of the local communities are the radio programme producers. The type of content the radio broadcasts is not only HIV/AIDS. There is a range of content that the station is sometimes required to broadcast and it sometimes happens that the dispatched content is given to the radio station in a foreign language for use in Platfontein. Therefore, unless Afrikaans – a bridging language in Platfontein – was used in the content that was externally supplied, it has to be translated or its meaning will be lost, since most of the community members do not speak most of the official South African languages.

When it comes to health communication, the station is involved in dynamic programmes around health matters that affect the community of Platfontein. One of these is the SASI-led Health and Culture Programme¹³. According to the research participants, this programme worked and continues to work in close co-operation with X-K FM:

¹³ The Culture and Health Programme (CHP) aims to improve the health and well-being of culturally vulnerable and marginalized populations. The programme operating in Platfontein is among the 20 community-based organisations supported by the project. For further information on this project see the following: <http://www.aids.org.za/page/about-culture-and-health-programmemememe>

...In the beginning, the programme we had to involve the radio station. Therefore we involved the radio station and so as we did interviews, Petrus (Radio Producer at X-K FM) went with us to record and as we talked with the people and so in 2010 we started working with them...

Ghumba Kiringa; (Female)

SASI/Community Member

March, 2012

The Health and Culture Programme is not the only health communication project of X-K FM. The approach in health programming at the station does not only involve building partnerships with the various stakeholders that are involved in public health promotion, but it also involves working closely with community of Platfontein. The strategy also involves approaching the health communication programmes on a very diverse level. The station targets most public health matters that affect the community of Platfontein. All this is done through working in partnership with stakeholders for better health standards and outcomes in the community.

6.5 Communiqué vs. communication at X-K FM

One of the biggest challenges in HIV/AIDS communication programming is that community-level engagement is still inadequate and too few people get to participate in sustained face-to-face programmes (Scalway, 2010). The central aim of this study was to understand the concept of beneficiary community participation in HIV/AIDS programming of broadcast media [X-K FM]. The proximity to its community makes this radio station a prime tool that could be used to facilitate engagement around these matters of HIV/AIDS. Before participation could be assessed, this study used the available data to understand the strategy employed at this radio in communicating HIV/AIDS to the !Xun and Khwe people of Platfontein. It was stated that the policy of communicating around HIV/AIDS is at the discretion of the station. Respondents from the station revealed that:

...In the station we sit with the staff. We do have this meeting that we call Weekly Planning Session. It's held every Tuesday. The SABC will send us something – maybe you must broadcast about these problems. You must have a programme on your station about these issues. What we do, we give them the

time and the slot and the day that suits us. In terms of having programmes from the community or anywhere else for the station, what we do is the presenters will come up with ideas. And then they will give this info to the producers.

Linda Pieter; (Female)

Radio Station Manager

March, 2012

This therefore, means that the X-K FM team has a limited influence in the programmes of the station. The policy control in the content of the station is one of the key factors that were used by this study to determine whether the station could be defined as a community radio station. Other indicators that were used by this study included the participation in the content of the station as well as the general community friendliness of the station. These indicators were derived from AMARC's (1998) community radio definition that is used by this study (see Chapter 3).

In relation to the main objective of this study, it was revealed that the station uses two forms of engagement processes when handling general broadcasting as well HIV/AIDS broadcasting measures:

...Eh, what we do is if we do a programme in the station, we will contact the community leaders. We will talk to them, and maybe get two people from each. Two !Xun and two from Khwe. Come together and talk to them; what the problem is and how we can solve it. Eh, sometimes we do have feedback sessions from the community. We do an OB [Outside Broadcasting] at the school, where we invite the whole community and they will come talk to us about programmes and about music. How we can change it...

Kiet Verizile; (Male)

Radio Producer

March, 2012

Kiet's comments suggest that the station's focus is not only on information dissemination but that there is some process being followed to obtain feedback from the targeted communities. Therefore, the strategy of mass-directed information through the airwaves is complemented by the strategy of feedback sessions and outside broadcasting:

...Eh, we do have this information programme. It runs every day from 11:00 to 12:00 [am]. This is the programme where we broadcast information about HIV and AIDS. Sometimes we do pre-recording. We play pre-recorded stories and sometimes we invite those people to come and talk live...

Linda Pieter; (Female)

Radio Station Manager

March, 2012

The method of outside broadcasting includes a procedure of conducting interviews with members of the community. These are conducted by the radio producers of the station and the process involves asking for permission to interview the community and upon granting of the permission from potential interviewees, the recording process starts. These are normally conducted in the homes of the community members, or when there is a group interview process, and then a suitable location is determined and agreed upon. The OBs are conducted on a number of subjects that the station is dealing with, including HIV/AIDS. In respect to HIV/AIDS and other health related topics, the station has mostly been working in partnership with the SASI Health and Culture Programme. Another advantage in conducting these interviews by the station is that one of the station's radio producers had previously worked for the Red Cross organisation on health related matters. Therefore the transition to the radio has been smooth and allowed a sense of trust as the community members are familiar with this producer. In addition, the station has kept recordings of HIV/AIDS communication interviews that have been done in the past. These were conducted with *loveLife* and occasionally the stations taps into these when required:

People from *LoveLife* were coming. They were talking on air. We were recording the stories they were talking about. We are still playing that on air.

Linda Pieter; (Female)

Radio Station Manager

March, 2012

X-K FM has developed a very unique and affordable tool in receiving enquiries from the community members in relation to its content as well. X-K FM has encouraged the community of Platfontein to write notes on papers that are addressed to the station for clarity about information, or general commentary, and sometimes complaints. It is the responsibility of the community members to drop their notes at the entrance of the station where the

security officer will collect them and hand them over to the producers. In the absence of airtime to contact the station, this practical format has been designed to meet the needs of those individuals who are interested in participating in the content of the station. Where most conventional radio stations use telephones, text messages and lately social media, to receive opinions from the target audiences, this is not feasible at X-K FM because most respondents stated they cannot afford airtime for these conventional engagements formats. Though there are identifiable weaknesses in the written note procedure of X-K FM– delayed communication and the risk that the feedback may not get the priority it requires – it can be concluded that the process is relatively cheap for people who cannot afford the money to make telephone calls to the radio station.

Some of the respondents, however, raised reservations about the process of writing to the station. It has been indicated that the process largely requires the approval of the programme manager and therefore without him granting a signature for the written messages to be broadcast, it seems that the message may never be aired. This discretion of the programme manager is also causing some concern to respondents who feel that if the programme manager does not agree with the content of the written message, then the message may never be heard on radio.

Can this research establish whether there is any participation in HIV/AIDS communication at X-K FM? There is data to suggest that there are initiatives by the station to involve communities in the broadcast content, including that of HIV/AIDS. The Outside Broadcasting and the innovative measures that have been designed to allow members of the communities to contribute to the station's content indicate that there is some limited participation in the communication initiatives that are being conducted by the radio (see Chapter 4 for the relevance of public sphere as a theory in this research study) such as X-K FM. In describing the relationship of the radio station with the community, it was revealed by a research respondent working at the radio station that they had a good working relationship with the community of Platfontein:

...The relationship with the community is very open because we work for the community. So we cannot keep things close to our side. We get information outside, we broadcast it out to the community and the community listens to it. The community also sends us their stories or anything they have so that we can set it on air for the listener...

Petrus Maroga; (Male)

Radio Producer

March, 2012

This therefore sheds a very important dimension in the continuing quest to classify X-K FM. Previous studies have dwelled on this relationship (Mhlanga, 2006; Hart, 2006; 2011) about the classification of the radio as either a public broadcaster or a community radio. This study has ascertained that the radio station can only be classified as a community radio using the word “community” in a very loose format. This is because although the radio station has some participatory strategies in its programmes with the community, there is still much that makes the station less “community radio” in the true definition of this type of radio. This includes the fact that the employment policy at the station is at the discretion of the SABC and there seems to be no consultation with the communities on the appointment of staff at X-K FM:

...I was appointed in 2001, when the station was in Schmidtsdrift as the first female presenter on air until 2005. Then the station manager passed away, and they (Regional SABC office) appointed me as the acting station manager, and ja, I was acting until 2006. For one year, and then the SABC appointed me as a trainee station manager. And I was that for six years, till the 1st of December [2011]. The SABC appointed me then as a station manager...

Linda Pieter; (Female)

Radio Station Manager

March, 2012

It was also observed [later confirmed by some respondents] by the researcher that there seems to be restriction in the main entrance to the station as there is 24-hour security personnel that control access to the station. Also, the overall content policy of the radio is still dictated largely by the SABC. These factors therefore make it impossible for the radio station to be classified as a true community radio, in the definition as provided by AMARC (1998).

6.6 HIV/AIDS communication and the people of Platfontein

Another key objective of the study was to establish the type of initiatives that are being followed at the station in HIV/AIDS communication process. It has been established that the most popular form of conducting HIV/AIDS communication at the radio station was through seeking expert advice. This is mostly obtained from the people who are public health practitioners in Platfontein as well as some practitioners occasionally coming in from the nearby town of Kimberley:

....and then sometimes we do have these Red Cross people from the community. They are doing door to door. They will come and have interviews on air. All that information is from the community.

Linda Pieter; (Female)

Radio Station Manager

March, 2012

The interviews at the station are also conducted with the nurses at the local clinic. Judging by the responses from the respondents, it is clear that the bulk of information about HIV/AIDS in Platfontein is directly from the local clinic or that confirmation and questions/doubts about the virus are mostly settled at the local clinic. The radio staff indicated that their quest is to make sure that people are empowered with knowledge on how to deal with HIV/AIDS:

The relationship is we want to make the people aware of how to deal with such things [HIV/AIDS]. If they got that message, they must know where to go. Maybe to the clinic or need professional help from them to support themselves.

Kiet Verizile; (Male)

Radio Producer

March, 2012

Not all of the respondents owned radios in their homes. Some indicated that although they may not own radios, they accessed HIV/AIDS information as well as other content through secondary sources. The sources tended to comprise local community members, who have access to the airwaves as well as HIV/AIDS information from the clinic. However, it should be noted that X-K FM is the primary source of information for most of the residents of Platfontein as it offers content in the primary languages of the respondents:

...X-K FM is the only communication medium in this community from government and everyone from outside...

Linda Pieter; (Female)

Radio Station Manager

March, 2012

It should be acknowledged that there are other radio stations that are starting to find favour with the community. These include Radio Sonder Grense (RSG), Motsweding FM and all other radio mediums whose frequency can be accessed in the township.

The following section provides a summarised discussion from the findings of the research study.

6.7 Conclusion

Participatory communication can occur at micro-, meso-, and macro levels simultaneously as forms of discourse in the public sphere (or public spheres). As a medium of public criticism, the public sphere can support, strengthen and change programmes of all kinds (Storey and Jacobson, 2004). This means that bodies such as X-K FM can support interpersonal and small-group communication as well as village-level debates in a range of diverse matters including HIV/AIDS discussions. This section brings the research to a conclusion. Recommendations from the researcher's perspectives are also offered in this section.

The questions that this study addressed were:

- i) What is the current practice for community participation in designing HIV/AIDS communication strategies at X-K FM?
- ii) How do the X-K FM target audiences identify their participation in HIV/AIDS broadcast content?
- iii) Does X-K FM have policies in place to ensure stakeholder participation in HIV/AIDS communication aimed at their community?
- iv) If there are policies in place, what do they specify about community participation in the HIV/AIDS content and how have they aided participatory communication practices in relation to HIV/AIDS community dialogue?
- v) What are the stakeholder perceptions of the HIV/AIDS messages broadcasted by X-K FM?

vi) How does the Platfontein community relate to HIV/AIDS messages
broadcasted by X-K FM?

The study was not only conducted through collaborative and extensive dialogues with research participants about matters relating to the research questions, but it was conducted via a multi-step process. As a first step in answering the research question, the research study examined extensive literature on matters pertaining to HIV/AIDS communication, participation and community radio. Following this, the study outlined the theory used to make sense of the research results, and the research process that followed in the field was discussed in Chapter 5.

Through X-K FM the research participants have stated they have gained a sense of empowerment in dealing with the challenges around HIV/AIDS. This was because they saw value in adhering to the messages of prevention and dealing with HIV/AIDS in general. It was stated that before the radio station broadcasts, there was a sense of confusion about the virus. Those that were not seeking public health services in the health clinic had no knowledge about the virus. Therefore, with the establishment of the radio station project by the SABC and the Department of Communications, it can be concluded that this has helped to disseminate knowledge and elucidate some of the complexities of HIV/AIDS. However, there is still a concern about the virus. As stated by the research participants, the virus still poses as a huge challenge for the community of Platfontein. The research participants voiced opinions that more still needs to be done to mitigate the impact of the virus. Some participants have raised concerns that messages around the virus are still not being taken seriously by the target audiences. There are a number of reasons that can be raised in this regard. HIV/AIDS is a complex problem that cannot be understood in isolation. This is because there are a number of social determinants driving the spread of the virus. These were clearly observed in the community, with respondents citing such examples as poverty and the misuse of alcohol (see beginning of this chapter).

Thus the radio station is playing a recognisable role in the objective of bringing about an HIV/AIDS-free Platfontein. X-K FM as a radio station has undertaken different strategies in communicating around HIV/AIDS. These include conducting and recording interviews to allow community voices in the dialogue of HIV/AIDS. However the station can still do more. Hence, the following recommendations are offered as a way of not only communicating

around HIV/AIDS, but also of encouraging participation in the information content around the virus and syndrome:

1. The radio station needs to develop a comprehensive vision on its role in Platfontein and HIV/AIDS. This will enable specific strategic planning – something seemingly lacking – at the station about HIV/AIDS. The strategy needs to define long-term and short term targets on how to communicate around HIV/AIDS. Most importantly it is that strategy that will eliminate haphazard planning and guide the vision and steps that X-K FM will play in helping to make Platfontein a HIV/AIDS free township.
2. The station needs to develop more strategies to allow communities to participate in the HIV/AIDS broadcasts. This could be done by making up to date and interesting radio dramas on the virus and the drama could include community voices.
3. There is vague clarity on how feedback around HIV/AIDS is acquired by the station; therefore the radio station needs to develop a consistent plan on how feedback is acquired, its value and use for the station's strategic planning.
4. There seems to be an over reliance on 'expert' advice about the virus; this can make some members of the community feel that they are passive receivers of HIV/AIDS information. In its annual talk shows, the radio station can do more to include the community members, including inviting them to the studio to be discussants of HIV/AIDS in Platfontein.
5. Community members should be encouraged to avail themselves more on the radio station's invitations to discuss matters in relation to HIV/AIDS.
6. X-K FM needs to develop more up to date but culturally sensitive communication material on HIV/AIDS. This may have a positive impact on encouraging those people who are not interested in communicating about the virus.

This research has outlined and presented the data made available to the researcher. The research should be seen as very formative and it is recommended that further research be conducted to corroborate and validate the findings as outlined above. This is because issues pertaining to sample size and representivity make it difficult to generalise the research findings to the entire community of Platfontein.

6.8 Summary of discussions:

1. Practice of community participation in designing HIV/AIDS communication strategies at X-K FM: generally, just as in most HIV/AIDS studies, the research demonstrates that there has been significant progress made in the dissemination of HIV/AIDS knowledge in Platfontein. As stated by one of the research respondents, from the period that there were reportedly serious infections in Schmidtsdrift to the current scenario in Platfontein, there seems to have been major improvement in the knowledge around HIV/AIDS.

Though there are a number of partnerships that have been formed to tackle HIV/AIDS, X-K FM as a communication medium in the township has played a significant role in the dissemination of information around HIV/AIDS. The station has assisted with two types of interaction with the community in reference to HIV/AIDS: it has provided mass broadcasting and additionally, a limited form of community participation in HIV/AIDS communication.

The type of community participation in the station around HIV/AIDS has mainly involved community voices through a programme format known as Outside Broadcasting (OB). This process is being carried by the programme producers at the radio station in a format that includes an arrangement of these recordings and subsequently discussions on whatever matter around HIV/AIDS that are of concern to the community.

It should be noted therefore that the type of participation in these programmes by the station does not include the communities' having an input in the arrangement of programme for broadcasting. This is the preserve of the station employees. However, it can never be under-reported that the employees of the station are the members of the community of Platfontein. They represent a section of the !Xun and a section of the Khwe community. Therefore by virtue of being people from the two communities, these employees of the station characterise a form of representation for them. Although representational, it can be argued that the employees of X-K FM make up a form of participation in HIV/AIDS communication at the station.

2. Targeting audience understanding of participation in HIV/AIDS broadcast content: it has been assessed that there has never been incidence where the audience/members have requested participation in HIV/AIDS content or productions from the radio station.

However a conclusion has been drawn that there is insufficient evidence to suggest that they have been invited to the radio station to participate in the planning of broadcast content around HIV/AIDS either.

The interviewed audiences of the radio station indicated a satisfaction in their involvement in the radio station in relation to health communication. The audiences felt that X-K FM broadcast staff were sufficiently “educated” to handle HIV/AIDS communication on their behalf. Asked how they felt, most of the audiences stated that they were satisfied in participating through the OBs as well as through the feedback sessions that are reportedly conducted by the radio station. Therefore the research participants as audiences indicated satisfaction in the status quo of HIV/AIDS and their role of participating.

One of the research objectives was therefore to understand this participation from their perspectives. The general view from the respondents was that the radio station was handling the process of HIV/AIDS in a manner that was satisfactory in their perspective.

3. Policies that encourage participation in HIV/AIDS content: The established policies of the station and daily working protocol indicated that X-K FM as a radio station is first and foremost accountable to the SABC. Although recognised as a community radio station, it should be noted that this radio station is an extension of the public broadcaster and therefore, is governed on the protocols of the public broadcaster.

In terms of broadcasting policy formulation around HIV/AIDS, the study has established that the radio station is mandated as an extension of the public broadcaster to broadcast on matters pertaining to health. This mandate is also guided by the licensing agreement conditions as requested by ICASA (see compliance report as a last Appendix). Therefore in this regard, the study has established that the radio has not been allocated quotas in terms of time allocation or percentage of broadcasting required around HIV/AIDS. This issue is the preserve of X-K FM and the station allocates time that it deems necessary to broadcast about this virus. This indicates that HIV/AIDS communication will increase or diminish as deemed necessary by the radio station employees. Thus the future of effective and strategic HIV/AIDS communication will most likely be determined by the radio station in Platfontein.

6.9 Reflecting on the field: the researcher

Whilst conducting the data collection process at Platfontein, the researcher maintained a daily diary. This was in keeping with the simple observation process that was conducted by the researcher at the station as well as in the community. The following observations were made:

Departing Durban for Kimberley was an exciting journey. However the journey was equally a nerve wrecking experience. So much could go right and yet so much could go wrong. Although I had made contacts with some of the respondents in 2011, I still felt that anything could go wrong as I was alone and not part of the team as in the previous encounter. I departed, on 02 March 2012, and spent a weekend in Bloemfontein as there is no direct public transport from Durban to Kimberley. I later arrived in Kimberley on 04 March 2012. Although I had no private hired transport I however managed to make an arrangement with a student from the Netherlands where we subsequently both made daily visits to Platfontein whilst residing at a local Bed&Breakfast house in Kimberley.

The encounter with the research respondents was equally challenging. Although I had made telephone arrangements with the station manager of X-K FM, upon arrival I was left with the impression that there was not really an expectation of my arrival as the station management had seemed surprised by my arrival. Beyond this, it should be stated that most of the objectives I had set for the data collection process were met. However, there were huge adjustments and extensive challenges that were encountered in the field. These included:

1. A constant demand for financial rewards after the process of conducting interviews.
2. Utter refusal by many potential respondents to be interviewed.
3. A need to constantly readjust the interview questions so as to accommodate new information that was revealed by the respondents.

It should be stated that whilst in the field, I had to be flexible and make constant rearrangements in the research instruments or even research process. That said, the data collected and the research results have provided information that was not previously extant and therefore the challenges and successes of this study helps us to prepare the way for future research.

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Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant

Thank you for taking part in this research study and your input will add significant value in this research project. This research process forms part of my Masters thesis entitled: **“Investigating beneficiary communities’ participation in HIV/AIDS communication through community radio stations: a case study of X-K FM”** at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College. This study aims to explore whether there is participation by the community on HIV/AIDS communication content broadcast by X-K FM.

Please be advised that that you may choose not to participate in this research study and should you wish to withdraw at a later stage, you have full right to do so and your action will not disadvantage you in anyway.

Your participation in this research study will be through participating in an unstructured interview or being part of a focus group. These will be arranged to bring thee most minimal disruption in your daily schedule. There is no material or financial benefits attached to participating in this research study and this is done on a volunteer basis. The information obtained will be treated as of confidential nature and will be safely stored at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Should you need further clarity on the matter explained above, or at any matter that directly or indirectly associated with this research study, please contact me or my supervisor:

Siyasanga M Tyali

Professor Keyan G Tomaselli

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Your participation is much appreciated, thank you.

Appendix B

DECLARATION:

I.....hereby declare that I am fully aware of the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I fully agree to participate in this research project.

However, I am taking part in this project as a volunteer, and therefore I have full rights to refuse to answer questions that I may not wish to answer. I also have full rights to withdraw at any point in this research project should I wish to do so, and my action will not disadvantage me in any way.

Signature of Participant

Date

.....

.....

Appendix C

DRAFT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDE

1. Do you ever listen to the programmes being broadcast by X-K FM, and if so which?
2. In your view, do you think that it is important that X-K FM broadcast information about HIV/AIDS?
3. In which way, do you think that the community benefits in the HIV/AIDS messages broadcasted by this station?
4. Do you believe that the HIV/AIDS messages broadcasted are relevant to issues affecting your community?
5. In what way do you see yourself as a contributor in these HIV/AIDS messages?
6. Do you ever participate in the HIV/AIDS discussions broadcasted by X-K FM?
7. How do you think yourself or the community can have input in the HIV/AIDS messages broadcasted by the station?
8. In your view, who initiates HIV/AIDS discussions? The community or the station or any other agent?
9. Does X-K FM ever consult you or the community to give input, in HIV/AIDS messages as experienced by your community?
10. Are you satisfied with your participation in HIV/AIDS content broadcasted by the station? Please elaborate on your answer.
11. What is the most popular way of participating by the community in these HIV/AIDS discussion e.g. phone ins, text messages, letters to the station or as guest in the studio discussing the subject matter?
12. Would you like to change anything about how HIV/AIDS messages have been communicated to you and your community?
13. Is it important to you that you are involved in the creation, planning and broadcasting of HIV/AIDS content at X-K FM?

14. Is there anything you would like to express about how you have participated, and how the HIV/AIDS content has been broadcasted to you or to your community?