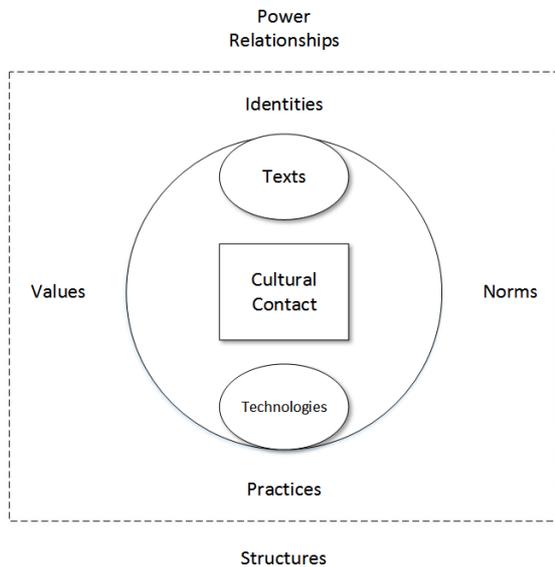**TECH1502-18 Social Media & Technology**

**Lecture Nine – Community Identity**

1   Constructing Identities

"Communication texts and technologies are but one site of cultural contact, which allow individuals to construct identities, based upon values, norms, and practices that challenge and sometimes subvert extant power relations and structures" (Howley, 2005, p. 32).

"What Katz's research suggests is how important the media is for actively constructing identities and common solidarities" (Jeffrey C. Alexander and Ronald N. Jacobs in Liebes & Curran, 1998, p. 28).
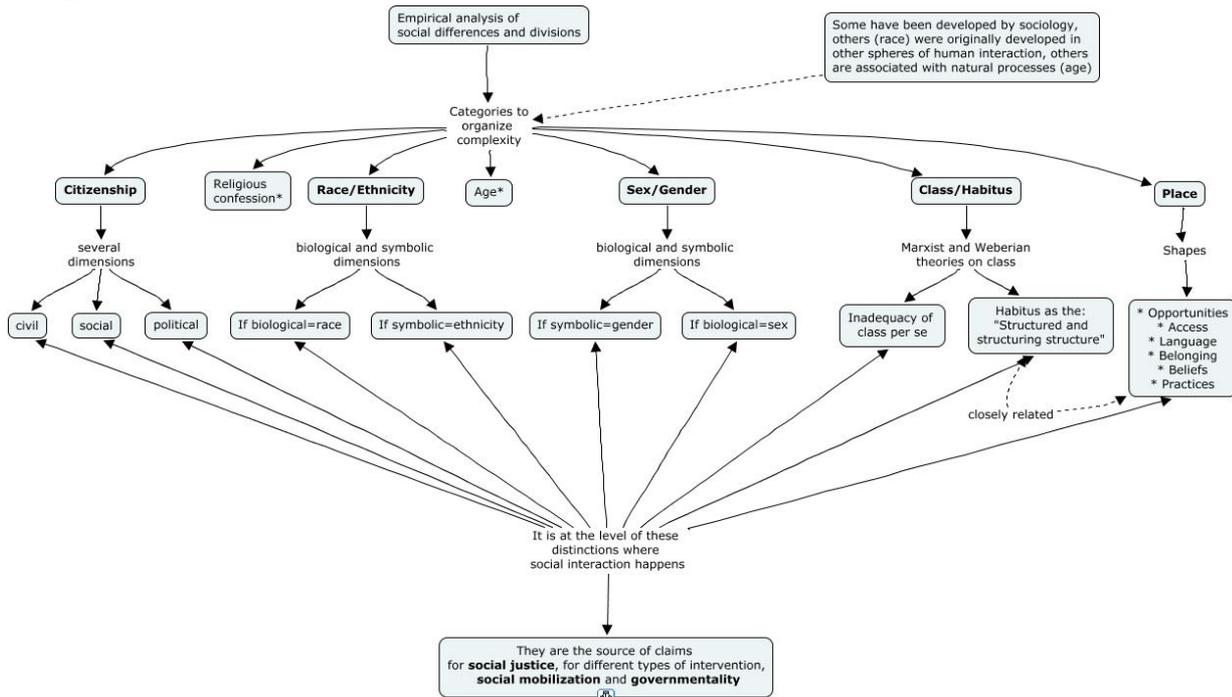
002

2   Essentialism vs Relationist Approaches
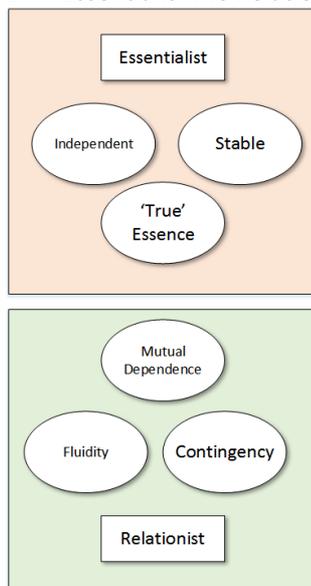
"The more essentialist approaches tend to see identities as stable, independent and possessing a 'true' essence. The more relationist approaches incorporate notions of fluidity and contingency, see identities as mutually dependent and ignore the existence of 'trues' essences" (Bailey, Cammaerts, & Carpenter, 2008, p. 5).

3 Difference

"Through this they produce difference and from that difference (as Stuart Hall, 1990 reminds us) come social identity wrought from everyday experience though what Fiske (1992c: 165) calls the 'bottom-up production of difference', created by the popular producer from the available technological resources of the dominant order, resources that tend to be used to create top-down media products that minimise or even discourage participation amongst their consumers" (Atton, 2002, p. 63).

4 Social Segregation

"The social homogeneity of space, emphasised and fortified by spatial segregation, lowers tolerance to difference in its residents and so multiplies the occasions for mixophobic reactions, making city life look more 'risk-prone' and so more agonising, rather than making it feel more secure and so more easy-going and enjoyable" (Bauman, 2007, p. 91).

"The longer people stay in a uniform environment – in the company of others 'like them' with whom they can 'socialise', perfunctorily and matter-of-factly without incurring the risk of miscomprehension and without struggling with the vexing need to translate between distinct universes of meaning – the more they are likely to 'unlearn' the art of negotiating shared meanings and an agreeable modus convivendi [mode of living together]" (Bauman, 2007, p. 88).

4.1 Britain becoming more segregated than 15 years ago, says race expert

British society is increasingly dividing along ethnic lines – with segregation in schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces – that risks fuelling prejudice, according to one of the country's leading experts on race and integration. Prof Ted Cantle, who carried out a report into community cohesion in the wake of a series of race riots in 2001, warned that growing divisions had led to mistrust within communities across the country. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/23/britain-more-segregated-15-years-race-expert-riots-ted-cantle

4.2 Call for action to tackle growing ethnic segregation across UK

Politicians must urgently tackle the increasing ethnic polarisation of many of Britain's towns and cities, according to a senior academic, as he revealed figures showing how rapidly the white British population had dwindled in urban "pockets" across England. Prof Ted Cantle, who first authored a report into community cohesion after a series of race riots in 2001, said his new study showed that in the most extreme cases the white British population had more than halved in two decades. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/nov/01/call-for-action-to-tackle-growing-ethnic-segregation-across-uk

5 Identity Formation
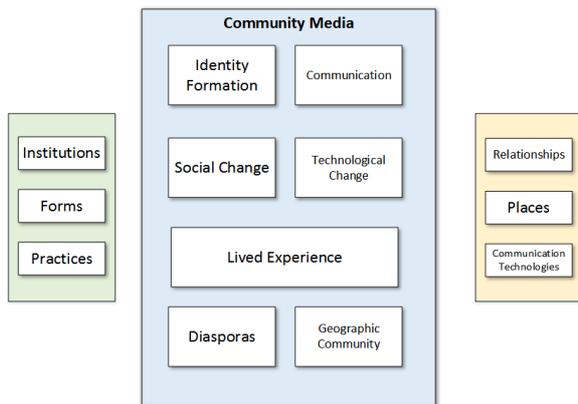
"Community media represent a unique site to interrogate the process of identity formation through communication technologies and to examine the dramatic impact of social and technological change on the everyday lived experience of disparate groups within a geographically based community. Put another way, attending to the institutions, forms, and practices associated with community media provides enormous insight into the relationship between people, places, and communication technologies" (Howley, 2005, p. 38).

5.1 Diversity of Identity & Practice
"This semiotic diversity not only forces us to select one denominator (alternative media) as a starting point, but more importantly, it also shows the diversity of identities and practices. In its attempt to encompass all these identities and practices, and to avoid a prescriptive definition that would include some and exclude others" (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 7).

https://lovelys-vintage-emporium.myshopify.com/blogs/lovelys-vintage/75515332-underground-fashion-in-britain-1960-1990

5.2 Inclusivity
"Identity and meaningfulness are the wellspring of creativity" (Etienne Wenger in Lesser, Fontaine, & Slusher, 2000, p. 14).

"While community media 'are mission-driven, in service to the broader community. They insist on the inclusion of diverse voices within the community, and their production and distribution processes emphasise community participation" (Plansak & Volcic, 2010, p. 81).

Cornershop - Brimful of Asha - Official Music Video (Original) (Tjinder Singh)
https://youtu.be/lM7H0ooV_o8

Cornershop are a British indie rock band best known for their 1998 UK number-one single "Brimful of Asha". The band were formed in 1991 by Wolverhampton-born Tjinder Singh (singer, songwriter, and guitar), his brother Avtar Singh (bass guitar, vocals), David Chambers (drums) and Ben Ayres (guitar, keyboards, and tamboura), the first three having previously been members of Preston-based band General Havoc, who released one single (the "Fast Jaspal EP") in 1991.[1][2] The band name originated from a stereotype referring to British Asians often owning corner shops. Their music is a fusion of Indian music, Britpop, alternative and electronic dance music.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornershop_(band)

6 Meaningful Interaction
"Sharing what you know or exploring a new idea with a colleague is not something you do in the abstract. It is part of your identity as a member of a community where what you share has meaning and currency" (Etienne Wenger in Lesser et al., 2000, p. 14).

The People's History of Pop / 2-Tone (08/10/2016)
2 Tone (or Two Tone) was a late-1970s ska revival in the United Kingdom led by Jerry Dammers and The Specials. It fused traditional ska music with punk rock attitude, energy and musical elements. Its name came from the record label

that Dammers founded, 2 Tone Records as well as a desire to transcend and defuse racial tensions in Thatcher-era Britain. https://youtu.be/aokqSclmJvo

7   Belonging

"Sharing itself is not a problem. It is belonging that is the real issue: sharing is a natural by-product of belonging" (Etienne Wenger in Lesser et al., 2000, p. 14).
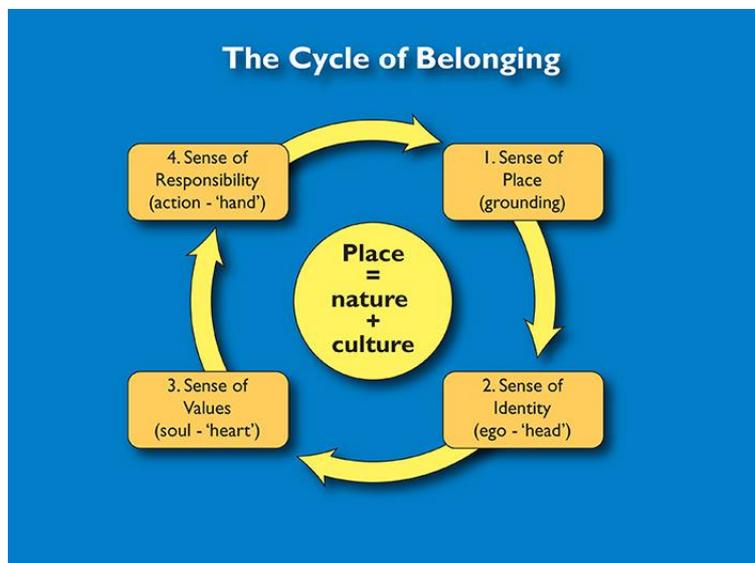
In contemporary Western societies we are persuaded by powerful and relentless advertising to find meaning and satisfaction in having things – material possessions, investments, income, knowledge, status, power. Adam Curtis's 2002 documentary series vividly shows the origins of this. To the extent that we rely on having things, not only are we in 'dead' relationships with them, but we fear losing the things on which we depend, and envy those with more. We call this consumerism. According to Ignatieff (p141), "Modernity and insatiability are inseparable." Our sense of security and our sense of who we are has become precarious – there are shadows in our psyche. It is difficult to avoid understanding this as a form of oppression, though so familiar and attractively packaged that few recognise it a such. http://bhma.org/the-cycle-of-belonging/

7.1   Stories of Belonging
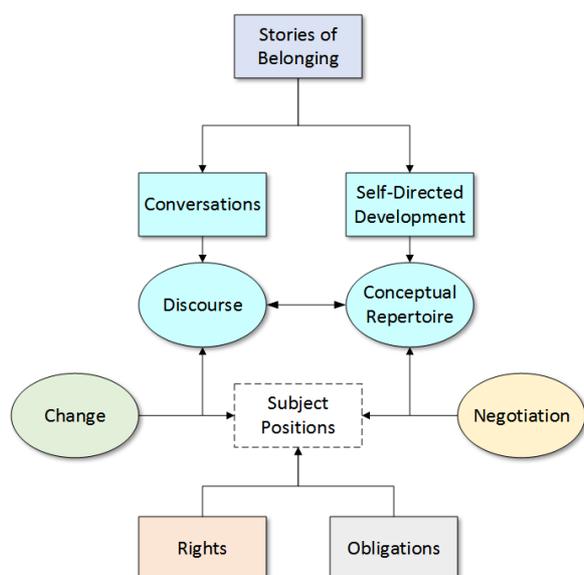
"As Johnson and Menichelli (2007) put it, the community media 'are media created to allow individuals to tell stories and have conversations necessary for their own self-directed development as citizens' (p.34)" (Plansak & Volcic, 2010, p. 79).

"Discourses provide us with conceptual repertoires with which we can represent ourselves and others" (Burr, 1995, p. 141).

"Our discourses of sexuality, for example, give us a very few options, 'gay' and 'straight' being the most readily available. These are the 'subject positions' that are available for people to occupy when they draw on this discourse. Every discourse has implicit within it a number of such 'subject positions', and these obviously have implications for the person who is located within them" (Burr, 1995, p. 141).

"The person can be described by the sum total of the subject positions in discourse they currently occupy. The fact that some of these positions are fleeting or in a state of flux means that our identity is never fixed but always in process always open to change. The subject positions that we occupy bring with them a structure of rights and obligations, they legislate for what 'that kind of person' may or may not reasonably do or say" (Burr, 1995, p. 152).

7.2   The Diaspora
"Diasporas are positioned in complex socio-cultural contexts characterised by diverse interactions through witch their identities are formed dynamically as much through the diaspora-homeland relationships, as in response to exclusion by the host culture. As diasporic audiences, they negotiate their position from a 'third space' (Appadurai 1990) which accommodates an ongoing process of cultural and political negotiation between different hegemonies – home and abroad" (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 65).

7.3   Transnational Flows
"Diasporic media are sites permeated by local and global forces and conditions, thus creating one of many 'heterogeneous dialogue' related to globalisation, and becoming part of a 'complex form of resistance and accommodation to transnational flows' (Howley 2005; Martin-Barbero 1993). These 'public sphericles' (Cunningham 2001) challenge essentialist notions of community. That is, diasporic community, through its socialisation around media events, is to a degree, constituted through media" (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 63).

Diasporas involve the migration of people from a homeland and the maintenance over time of links with that place. The homeland is often idealised, and collective memories or myths about it are nurtured and transmitted across generations, long after the living links of the migrants have died out. Migrant groups maintain a strong ethnic consciousness through shared habits, material culture, memories, and language; they often synthesize a sense of collective identity and construct a common cultural discourse.
http://www2.le.ac.uk/projects/impact-of-diasporas

7.4   Reimagining Belonging
"Taken together in their diversity, diasporic media constitute an important element in the communicative landscape of diasporas not only for their reimagining of the self and belonging within and across spaces but also for their struggles for pluralistic representation" (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 64).

8   Common Social Interests
"Without essentialising them, it can be said that diasporic audiences tend to form 'communities' bound by some degree of common political and social interests, and by ethnicity, language and/or culture, which, in many cases, produces alternative media relevant to their lives and, in the process, reveal commonalities and interlinks among them. Through this process, diasporas create an embedded alternative, mediated cultural space through the influences of both cultures and hegemonies, generating a unique new space for self-expression and/or resistant enabled by 'alternative' discourses" (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 66).

8.1   Social Relevance
"In this process, diasporic mediated communication enables and empowers diasporic communities to participate – inclusion – in the politics of representation and minority-majority discourses in the cultural spheres of their new homes, thus becoming a socially relevant cultural and political form of expression" (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 71).

8.2   BBC launches ambitious new diversity and inclusion strategy

The BBC has today launched its ambitious new strategy that will hardwire diversity and inclusion into everything the Corporation does, on- and off-air. The bold plans – themed around our audiences, our people and our partnerships - build on the significant progress already made, and set out how------- the Corporation will do even more to reflect the public it serves. By 2020, the BBC intends to have:

- a workforce at least as diverse, if not more so, than any other in the industry
- met stretching new portrayal targets that cover a much wider range of diversity than any other broadcaster, with a bigger impact for audiences across a wider range of programmes
- made diversity something that everyone at the BBC understands, and all those who make programmes for us support.

Tony Hall, BBC Director-General, said: "We have made some excellent progress to date on diversity and social mobility – and we should celebrate that – but we can, and must, do more. At its very core, our purpose is to represent everyone and give opportunities to people from all backgrounds. http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2016/diversity

8.3   BBC: Offering black, Asian and minority ethnic schemes is 'right thing to do'

The BBC has defended offering traineeships to ethnic minorities after a national newspaper accused the corporation of being "anti-white". The Sun quoted a job hunter who was turned down from a junior scriptwriting role because it was only available to people from "ethnic minorities". In a statement, the BBC said The Sun's headline was "irresponsible". It added as there is a lack of diversity in the industry, the trainee scheme was "the right thing to do". The Sun claimed the recruitment process, under the Equalities Act, "was illegal to discriminate against job applicants on grounds of race, unless crucial to the role". The corporation said: "As the Sun knows and has ignored, these are not jobs but training and development opportunities permitted under the Equality Act and to describe this as anti white is utterly ridiculous and irresponsible. "As we have an under-representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds in script editing roles at the BBC it's the right thing to do."
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-36443113

8.4   Feedback - Black and Minority Ethnic Representation

According to the 2011 census, the UK Region with the highest percentage of white British is Northern Ireland with 96%, but in rural areas such as Allerdale in Cumbria it is 97.6%. Contrast that with Greater London where white British make up 44.9%of the population. The overall percentage of white British in the UK population in 2011 was 81.9%. The BBC says its on-air portrayal of Black and Minority Ethnic members is around 10.4% ,and it wants to increase that to 15% over the next three years. It also has similar targets for all staff representation and slightly lower one – 10% - for so called BAME leadership. http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/radio4/entries/f58f007f-4d56-3db6-aaa0-abc9673f5ab4?filter=none

8.5   Public purposes: Reflecting UK audiences

BBC viewers, listeners and users can rely on the BBC to reflect the many communities that exist in the UK. These communities may be based on geography, on faith, on language, or on a shared interest such as sport. The BBC will stimulate debate within and between the communities of the UK, and encourage people to get involved with their local communities. http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/whoweare/publicpurposes/communities.html

9   Street Papers

"The Hobo News, in all its guises, provides important insight into the role newspaper publications plays in creating a forum in which the disenfranchised can articulation their concerns, coordinate their efforts, and forge a coherent collective identity" (Howley, 2005, p. 64).

"On the whole, it is in their own terms of reference that the segments of civil society renegotiate identities, values, and proposals. Keane evaluates the variety of bottom-up, small-scale locales in which citizens forge their identities and define their place in public life" (Howley, 2010, p. 36).

Hobo News was an early 20th-century newspaper for homeless migrant workers (hobos). It was published in St. Louis, Missouri, and Cincinnati by the International Brotherhood Welfare Association (IBWA) and its founder James Eads How. Hobo News was important for legitimatizing the hobo identity and has been credited as a predecessor to the modern street newspaper movement. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hobo_News

http://www.oldmagazinearticles.com/Hobo_News_History#.WDH2f1wuvxU
http://www.hobonickels.org/thenews.htm

9.1 Formidable Barriers

"Equally important, Street Feat publishes material that asserts the fundamental worth of people whose lives are rarely acknowledged, let alone examined, in mainstream publications. In this regard, then, Street Feat constitutes a site for oppressed people to establish their individual and collective identities and forge relations of solidarity in the face of formidable economic, institutional, and cultural barriers and constraints" (Howley, 2005, p. 187).

The Big Issue - A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out
For more information on how The Big Issue helps the homeless.
https://youtu.be/4K9Ni44CGYA

A Street Cat Named Bob - Action Homeless Donation Screening
http://www.phoenix.org.uk/event/streetcat-action-homeless-donation-screening/

A Street Cat Named Bob - Official Trailer - At Cinemas November 4
'A Street Cat Named Bob', is the film adaptation of James Bowen's much-loved, best-selling book. Starring Luke Treadaway (Unbroken, Clash of the Titans) as James Bowen, 'A Street Cat Named Bob' tells the moving and life-affirming true story of the unlikely friendship between a young homeless busker, James Bowen, and the stray ginger cat named Bob who changed his life. https://youtu.be/ai3hleBXRpo

10 Perceptions of Community Identity

"Rather, by making public the troubled, often desperate lives of the homeless, the unemployed, and the working poor, street papers problematize popular perceptions of what it means to be a member of a community. To paraphrase Raymond Williams (1973) Street Feat creates a 'knowable community' by articulating the increasingly complex urban environment" (Howley, 2005, p. 187).

10.1 Identity Formation

"That is to say, Street Feat not only provides a staging ground for identity formation, but also encourages readers to understand their own subject positions in relation to those whose experience may be quite foreign, yet whose lives are nonetheless intimately connected to their own" (Howley, 2005, p. 187).

Street Feat, a 17-year-old publication that advocated for the poor in downtown Halifax, hasn't printed a new edition in a year.
The paper featured stories about poverty, many of them written by people who are low-income or homeless. Vendors bought it for 75 cents a copy and sold it for $1.50 to make a little extra money. "I miss the interaction I used to have with all the people on Spring Garden Road," said Kendall Worth, who sold Street Feat. The paper was a labour of love for managing editor Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton. "It matters still, because where there's poverty there's injustice. And it brought a little bit of justice by showing what poverty is," he said. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton, managing editor of Street Feat, says he hopes the publication can be resurrected. The paper began as a monthly, then became a quarterly with 3,000 copies printed each edition. http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/street-feat-halifax-paper-that-advocates-for-poor-closes-doors-1.2653734

10.2 Otherness?

"The drive towards a 'community of similarity' is a sign of withdrawal not just from the otherness outside, but also from commitment to the lively yet turbulent, invigorating yet cumbersome interaction inside. The attraction of a 'community of sameness' is that of an insurance policy against the risks with which daily life in a polyvocal world is fraught. An immersion in 'sameness' does not decrease, let alone stave off the risks that prompted it. Like all palliatives, it may at most promise only a shelter from some of their most immediate and most feared effects" (Bauman, 2007, p. 87).

References:
Atton, C. (2002). *Alternative Media*. London: Sage.
Bailey, O. G., Cammaerts, B., & Carpenter, N. (2008). *Understanding Alternative Media*. Maidenhead: Oxford University Press.
Bauman, Z. (2007). *Liquid Times - Living in an Age of Uncertainty*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Burr, V. (1995). *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge.
Howley, K. (2005). *Community Media - People, Places and Communication Technologies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Howley, K. (Ed.) (2010). *Understanding Community Media*. London: Sage.

Lesser, E. L., Fontaine, M. A., & Slusher, J. A. (Eds.). (2000). *Knowledge and Communities*. Boston: Butterworth Heinemann.

Liebes, T., & Curran, J. (Eds.). (1998). *Media, Ritual and Identity*. London: Routledge.

Plansak, M., & Volcic, Z. (2010). Reimagining National Belonging with Community Radio. In K. Howley (Ed.), *Understanding* (pp. 78-86). London: Sage.