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The impact of inclusion practices on the identity of people diagnosed with severe mental illness: Radio Nikosia

O impacto das práticas de inclusão na identidade de pessoas diagnosticadas com doença mental grave: Radio Nikosia

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Abstract *This article examines the discursive approach adopted by Radio Nikosia, highlighting its crucial role in the recovery of people diagnosed with severe mental illness. It examines how putting social representations aside has enabled Radio Nikosia to render agency to these social actors, acknowledging their capacity to construct, reconstruct and change their own identities. The geographic scope of the study comprises the Autonomous Community of Catalonia while the methodology followed is qualitative in nature, analysing programme audio and transcription, reports, academic articles, theses, and a participant interview. The aim of the analysis is to examine the significance of discursive practices in Radio Nikosia in modifying the permanence of identities anchored in severe mental illness. The results illustrate the practical use of radio as a powerful tool that both promotes social inclusion and impacts mental illness identity.*

Key words *Recovery, Mental disorder, Agency, Social inclusion, Discursive practices*

Resumo *Este artigo examina a abordagem discursiva adotada pela Rádio Nikosia, destacando seu papel crucial na recuperação de pessoas diagnosticadas com doença mental grave. Examina como deixar de lado as representações sociais permitiu à Rádio Nikosia dar agência a esses atores sociais, reconhecendo sua capacidade de construir, reconstruir e mudar suas próprias identidades. O escopo geográfico do estudo compreende a Comunidade Autônoma da Catalunha, enquanto a metodologia seguida é de natureza qualitativa, analisando áudio e transcrição do programa, relatórios, artigos acadêmicos, teses e entrevista participante. O objetivo da análise é examinar o significado das práticas discursivas da Rádio Nikosia na modificação da permanência de identidades ancoradas na doença mental grave. Os resultados ilustram o uso prático do rádio como uma ferramenta poderosa que promove a inclusão social e impacta a identidade da doença mental.*

Palavras-chave *Recuperação, Transtorno mental, Agência, Inclusão social, Práticas discursivas*

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Introduction

Insanity is often suffering, but it is also a way out of the clinical care system and a release from the atomised rehabilitation structure focused on brain alteration. The application of this structure stems from psycho-educational indoctrination wherein training hinges on a biomedical criterion of illness. Therapeutic follow-up often becomes therapeutic harassment as the person with mental problems must recover whether they like it or not. Not only abuses of power, benevolence, and the professional's good intentions but also a lack of respect for the patient's words and positioning are all consolidated under this framing[1].

The construction of inequalities is often executed through the intentional use of language and its manipulation. Discursively, a subject's identity can be reduced to pure stigma when a power relationship towards those who are different is at play. The impassable category of the diagnosis leads them to training sessions and rehabilitative practices that involve alienation while at the same time reinforcing a repetitive and meaningless activity that swiftly leads to chronicity.

The existing reductionist and hegemonic thinking must be approached critically for the very fact that it constructs disorders and diseases. In our opinion, an appropriate means of understanding this process and its effects would be to ask in what way auto suggestive practices affect the constitution of identity in people diagnosed with Severe Mental Illness (hereinafter referred to as SMI). Specifically, we propose a critical analysis of the discourse of active participants in Radio Nikosia, the aim being to probe the mechanisms and processes that produce truths and beliefs derived from overarching watertight categories. This article aims to delve deeper by examining the importance of discursive practices in Radio Nikosia in modifying the permanence of identities anchored in SMI. To this end, the abilities and possibilities of Nikosians to express their identity are presented, relating "doing a radio show" with citizen status and showing how the practical use of radio can be a powerful tool in promoting social inclusion with an impact on mental illness identity.

We believe that this way of thinking about mental illness will be of great help because, if we want the person with psychic suffering to recover, mental health must be considered a social responsibility. This means involving ourselves in its transformation through the creation of a supportive community, or at least a social fabric capable of intervening. In this way, we can defend their rights (legal, training, social benefits, welfare services, etc.) as persons in full possession of their human and civil rights. It is thus also vital to make room for those self-managed practices that promote a group methodology aligned with creating a community radio. This way they can both highlight multiple discrimination and, especially, the rejection they experience for being mentally ill and regain control of their personal resources through mutual aid and solidarity. Yet this is a difficult reality since psychic suffering starts from the moment these human beings are diagnosed and relegated to carrying out the very basic tasks of daily life, sentencing them to segregation or "Occupational Apartheid"[2], which differs a great deal from approaches geared towards collective action and participation. Through these minority groups, the person identified as a threat fights against social stigma by developing micro-cultures of resistance to hegemonic ways of producing meaning.

Something similar happens with virtual social networks such as Facebook as they provide an alternative way to establish communities that give support to diagnosed people and foster social interaction at a low cost[3]. Other psychosocial techniques which boost creativity, such as dramatherapy, are aimed at improving intra and/or interpersonal integration through the creation of spaces for the expression and transformation of emotional problems[4]. Another example of a dissident group is the *Grupo Pensadores* [Thinkers Group], which allows participants to give voice to the other and re-signify their identities through narratives that allow them to become experts on psychic suffering in the first person[5]. One of the core findings is that by "doing a radio show" they experienced a re-signification of social stigmas because doing so means addressing their own interests and desires as people in a world that is not colonised by psychiatric diagnosis. Here, other lives are possible (radio announcer or student, poet, writer, or journalist streaming a podcast, etc.) in which they are allowed to be agents of a social change. The community radio is a space for group participatory action which favours empowerment and self-management through one's own personal resources, and it is overall a collaborative context in which greater autonomy is possible.

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Inclusion practices at Radio Nikosia. effect on identity transformation

Radio is a means of communication which grants the mentally ill person the possibility of expressing and disseminating thoughts, ideas, and opinions. Through radio, each person is able to adopt a representative role in the context of their personal experience and, in doing so, gain satisfaction, increased autonomy, control over their own life, and meaningful social ties. Radio makes it possible to move forward in a personal journey in which, as defined by Alonso[6], recovery is a subjective process of giving meaning to one's own experience and of freeing oneself from the coercion and labelling of psychiatric diagnosis, providing solutions to the social factors that influence psychic suffering. Community radio thus becomes an open door that spurs participation and the recognition of the rights of the "insane" as citizens who have the right to freedom of expression and means of communication like radio to narrate, propose, share, and denounce. Certainly, it is also a practice that confronts people who have experience in mental suffering with their way of thinking about the world and defining themselves[7]. Developing personal recovery itineraries for the construction of new individual and social meaning, the diagnosed person can express their experience and connect to a rich vision of diversity in which they are willing to undergo a process of change[8]. This process is conditioned by stories that belong to invisible and unintentional subjects who have been delegitimised from their knowledge, so this is an added difficulty that conditions both the decision to start making radio and their trajectory in this context.

Therefore, in this radio project, three main factors must be taken into account: first, all those skills, competencies, and experiences that the person has and offers as they work in radio; second, the need for the mentally ill person to broadcast their message through the radio waves; and third, the social links they establish among themselves as a collective and also with other collective experiences. In this sense, the expectations generated are related to making radio, hoping that their message will be understood, improving their skills over time, and supporting the claims of people with experience in psychic suffering.

A sense of commitment to the radio is shared with the identity group, causing changes in daily dynamics and, especially, re-signifying their experience of mental suffering. Their identity as mentally ill loses symptoms and relevance when linked to the dynamics and organisation of the collective. The status quo of the mentally ill in relation to radio is jeopardised. For many, a process of psychosocial inclusion begins, which becomes relevant when returning to the suffering they have experienced in order to deconstruct the identity of the mental disorder.

In this article we address the importance of discursive practices in Radio Nikosia centring on the proposals of Íñiguez-Rueda[9] in which identity has to do with the singularity of the person but also with an idea of social identity that is related to "the experience of the group, of the we". In this sense, Radio Nikosia is one of the first radio stations in Spain to carry out a project involving people with first-person experience of psychic suffering. It is both a radio project and a public space in which everyone is an important player because they exercise their right to communication and information, as mentioned in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. This entails acquiring the necessary skills and abilities to make radio a place where citizenship can be expressed.

The first broadcasts would appear in 2003, through the radio station Contrabanda, on 91.4 FM. Its activism is a continuation of the *Asociación Civil Salud Mental y Comunicación* [The Civil Association for Mental Health and Communication], known as LT 22 Radio La Colifata, in Argentina, which has been operating since 1991, initiated by Alfredo Olivera at the Dr. José T. Borda Neuropsychiatric Hospital[10].

Over time, and especially after being constituted as a Socio-Cultural Association in 2008, Nikosia has begun to function as an entity that not only has not limited itself to the radio field but also organises artistic-cultural workshops and awareness-raising seminars open to the community[11] (Figure 1). Participation and decisions are collective, and they adopt a critical position with regards to the hegemonic discourse of psychiatry[12], confronting the effects of social stigma on people diagnosed with SMI.

Figure 1 shows a synthesis of the different regions of the conceptual map that can explain the Radio Nikosia experience. These interrelated points describe their objectives, activities, and their practical implications, as well as the different itineraries according to their organisation. In Nikosia over the years, a social network has been built that has linked more than 400 people diagnosed with SMI[13], to share an open social

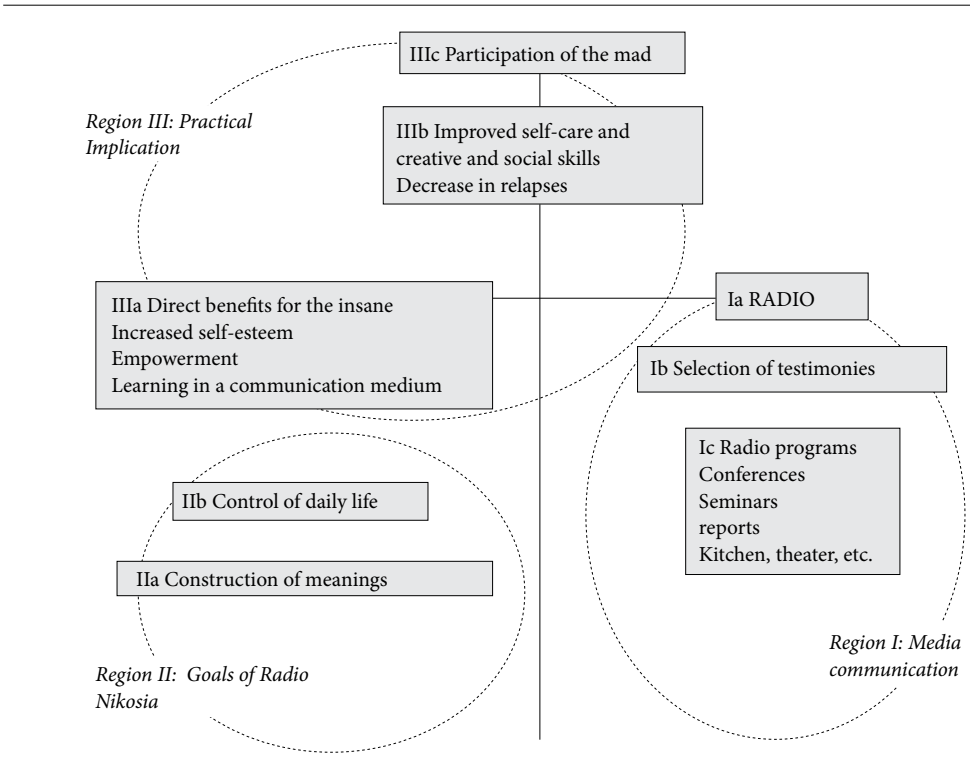

Figure 1. Concept map of Radio Nikosia and its group description.

Source: Authors.

and communication space in which students and friends are also incorporated to collectively develop individualised accompaniment strategies both in social (learning in a communication medium, empowerment) and therapeutic (self-care, self-esteem, construction of meanings, relapses, etc.) itineraries of the Nikosians. Therefore, the radio works as a "Plaza Intima, a space that welcomes the possibility of the resignification of madness"[14] by organising didactic, cultural, communicative, and educational activities in the community to deconstruct the social stigma of mental illness.

Methodology

This research project followed a discursive qualitative method, based on the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed through signifiers and symbols[15] and that, therefore, each discourse[16] is the result of "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak"[17]. Discourse is more than a set of signs because it contains within itself cultural influence, communicative action, and every social interaction, and therefore, the social world and social actors are constructed through discursive productions[18]. This entails the possibility of seeing the difficulties of social life through the analysis of the discursive construction of social representations and actions, in order to study how social actors are identified and how they are named through their attributes and the actions attributed to them. In other words, it is to get to know the production of strategies related to polarisation (opposition) between social groups (us versus them). In this way, categories are installed in a historical context in which discourses are produced which, in turn, produce the differentiation and exclusion of the "other" in order to construct identity; that is, their own self-definition is produced as a consequence of relationships with others and the creation of meanings. This means that, depending on how the semantic roles over which responsibility is attributed are socially managed, i.e., depending on who produces it and from where it is

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enunciated, a different social value is attributed to it. Therefore, the representation of the processes falls especially on the one responsible for these positive or negative actions (agency) as well as for their consequences. In this sense, the power of discourses produces the legitimisation and de-legitimisation of discursive representations in relation to social actors, social relations and the discourse itself[19].

For this analysis, textual structures were selected to provide knowledge about the understanding of identity of people diagnosed with SMI, noting their link to social inequalities as well as to the accuracy with which they were able to convey the representation of mentally illness. In this way we were able to examine the logical structure of their discourses and their relationship with the identity of mental illness. The study corpus (Chart 1) is made up of public domain materials and is composed of a set of texts extracted from various sources of discursive production of Radio Nikosia. The results will be presented in relation to the categorisation process carried out, based on describing which lexical items are used by the social actors to express their new identity. Specifically, for this paper, we focused on observing the use of nouns, adjectives and rhetorical figures related to the question "Who am I?" from which we can explore the way in which people define themselves and, therefore, refer to their identity.

The selection of the testimonies was based on criteria related to a dynamic conception of identity. We understand this characteristic as a strength since the aim was to identify identities other than the identity of the mental disorder. In the corpus, the testimonies that were not directly related to the discursive strategies describing their positive or negative aspects were excluded, selecting those parts in which each one of them talks about themselves. We identified the expressions in which they describe themselves, focusing the study on how they construct their identity through the use of language. For this purpose, we had access to the programmes broadcasted by Radio Nikosia on Contrabanda's website at the following link http://nikosia.contrabanda.org/ while a search for reports on YouTube was also conducted. Subsequently, a search was made for scientific productions on Google Scholar with an emphasis on the following keywords: Nikosia, Nikosia Correa, article Correa, article Nikosia, thesis Nikosia. To reach key informants during the process, we contacted Martín Correa-Urquiza, founder of Radio Nikosia, whose collaboration was of great value, not to mention with the spontaneous and invaluable contributions from the project participants. Interviews were conducted following the ethic guidelines of information of the Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona. This code requires obtaining informed consent, confidentiality and not putting research participants at risk (UAB, https://www.uab.cat/etica-recerca). We also believe that the selection of discursive strategies located in different areas of the scholarly corpus adds richness to the study and helps to understand the diversity of alternative identities that are constructed.

Chart 1. Corpus of study.

Authors	Year	Publication	Type
Nikosia	2007	La radio que cura	Video
Nikosia	2008	Radio Nikosia, radio libre, mentes libres	Video
Nikosia	2009	El libro de Radio Nikosia	Book
Correa, M.	2009	La rebelión de los saberes profanos	Thesis
Liana Della Vecchia	2015	La experiencia nikosiana	Thesis
Nikosia	2011	Radio Nikosia. ContraBanda FM	Video
Redes	2011	Sigue el desafío de la Esquizofrenia	Video
Nikosia	2013	El revés tapiz de la locura	Video
Matissos	2014	Reunión con Dolors y Xavier	Audio
Nikosia	2015	La ciudad dividida. Radio Nikosia	Video
Nikosia	2015	¿Qué es Nikosia?	Video
Nikosia	2015	Otros sistemas de atención de la salud	Audio
Nikosia	2016	La auto-representación	Audio
Nikosia	2016	La soledad	Audio
Rojo, C.	2017	Interview	Participant

Source: Authors.

The analytical procedure

This research was carried out using discourse analysis (hereafter DA) techniques and procedures. The starting point was to take a concept of social identity in which the subject positions themselves and others via certain linguistic strategies[20]. We have collected transcriptions of the most representative examples of Radio Nikosia's testimonies regarding its purpose and its positioning as a collective and in which they speak of reality from the particular and legitimate point of view of Nikosians. Thus, based upon a concept of dynamic identity in which they deconstruct mental disorder, expressions have been identified that convey how they describe themselves through the actions attributed to them or that represent them. Before moving on to the statements, the following steps have been followed: 1) selection of expressions; 2) identification of discursive strategies that are involved in the description of themselves; 3) identification of nouns, adjectives, and rhetorical figures in the expressions; 4) description of the logic of the communicative situation, taking into account the factors that influence this situation and one's own experience. Therefore, after much sifting and reading over the different areas of the corpus, we were able to select discursive strategies for identifying how people with MSD participating in this self-managed community radio define themselves. Within each category, reference is made to content that expresses how the positive and/or negative aspects of themselves are emphasised or mitigated, or how these aspects are valued by others, depending on the context of communicative interaction as well as on what their experience means when meanings are generated that are not exclusively subject to linguistic codes but rather which refer to their social stratum and their own experience.

The categorisation process involved the creation of a log containing representative categories which each referred to a single, unified concept. The categories were organised and grouped according to their content into larger categories or macro-identities (group, political, expert, clinical) while the remaining categories were grouped int smaller micro-identities.

Below, we have organised the most salient discursive strategies from the testimonies of Radio Nikosia so as to link them to the objectives that were initially outlined.

Results: the impact of Radio Nikosia on the identity of its participants

Lessons learned

Overall, the discursive strategies show how participants emphasise positive aspects of themselves reflecting on the experience and what they have learned from it. From Radio Nikosia, one can access the public sphere[21] and develop strategies to fight the system and the control mechanisms of the "psy" disciplines (psychiatry and clinical psychology). In this sense, their discourse is modified and readjusted by means of expressions that give it legitimacy, such as: "The situation (psychiatric institutionalisation) does not seem to be so different in terms of aspects related to treatment and preservation of their rights as citizens"[21](p.194).

This statement is not only a description but also an action because linguistic expression itself has the capacity for action. In this case, radio functions as an element of performativity enabling a discourse aimed at transforming all forms of oppression towards and discrimination against the insane. To do so, one must be able to express that dissident identity in order to challenge and rebel against the condition of normality and social order. In Santiago's words, he remembers: "For me these three years of radio have meant freedom"[21](p.208).

Group identity

Factors of identity construction are brought into play through the use of radio because it functions as a collective space in which to be insane is to express one's experience and to create new forms of social interaction. This implies viewing radio as an object, resulting from a discursive proposal offering language as an active part of the construction of a reality different from the clinical one of helplessness. In this context, the discourse of the mentally ill person opens doors to subverting the defining social discourses, whose end is compliance with ideologies and politics of power, and gives rise to social deviation.

This approach to psychological suffering is therefore appropriate because it not only allows us to understand mental illness but also makes it easier for us to analyse stories from within and in mental illness's own words. Specifically, it becomes a way of observing how the socio-historical space operates in mental illness and defines it through the particular and the personal, until

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reaching the "we" (group identity), to understand human diversity and how these individuals express their identity and interact in certain social and communication spaces.

Other expressions are associated with radio programmes in which metonymy is used as a figure of speech and where one positions oneself as the scriptwriter, leaving aside individual rehabilitation processes to transition towards a "we" identity that emerges through the creation of new relationships of mutual aid offering strategies of opposition: "And think that the radio gives us wings to escape from an inner, bodily and mental prison"[21] (p. 58).

Critical identity

The logic of exclusion is increasingly more widely used, and this has an impact on their testimonies. This means that the possibility of creating other types of connection is often not considered. Radio Nikosia, on the other hand, opens up the possibility of a new narrative, which contrasts with this inflexible category in that it posits the vindication of their rights, as we can see in the following statement: "They humiliate us and surround us with barriers"[22](p.85).

This metaphor relates to participation in a resistance movement that refuses classification in other words, it refuses "the diagnosis" that objectifies and evokes a place to get away from. This raises important questions about the concept of rehabilitation in which "every man is his own entrepreneur"[23](p.6) because it is a recovery process which will also be affected by moral judgments surrounding mental illness. This transitional process in Radio Nikosia, however, has no connection to a lack or to something negative. The recovery process is the act of discovery itself, a realisation that working on the radio is "good". Here one's experience and the difficulties pervading it can be re-signified, becoming a kind of resistance of a critical nature, giving birth to the Nikosian, a new position from which to be accepted socially. On the other hand, we also find critical stances which use metaphors: "We will fight on all fronts to vanquish this poor and cowardly idea of ourselves"[22](p.75).

These subjective positions appear as voices that believe in everything and achieve everything because they correspond to hegemonic social discourses that do not dismiss "the diagnosis" and are thus conceived through the lens of the neoliberal. Meanwhile, for Nikosians recovering spaces consists of taking back language[21] to create a dissident discourse[24]. In this sense it is not surprising, then, to find that radio is a democratic form, as suggested in the following: "I claim the right to daydream and to build horses in the air"[22](p.173).

Symmetrical and mutually supportive relationships

In this context, there are three main axes that decorate interactions (symmetrical relationships, intimate cooperation and strengthening of feelings), and allow the construction of alternative social identities. This means that individuals can be incorporated into and progress in a career path outside of social deviance.

The construction of a collective identity and the presence of "*compañeros*" (comrades or peers) account for many of the participants' decision to continue, and even endure, on the radio. One is able to appropriate language and establish an "expert" identity, which raises self-esteem through the world of work, bringing words like "scriptwriter" to the table: "that work as a weapon gives us communication to express it, to be able to express what a mad person says, so to speak"[25].

In the discourse on professionalism, there is a clear correlation between the objectives of the identity group and the practices they carry out, but tension is often also observed in the transitional practices: "Radio for me is a window into the world, a two-way window"[22](p.174).

We believe that the social discourses rooted in this person's history on the path of deviation from mental illness and ableism make this experience a turning point in their idea of mental illness as new elements are introduced. This implies that by bringing in a new notion of identity in which difference is also assumed, one accepts a paradox and thus a contradiction that exists between oblivion/otherness and certainty/identity[26]. Therefore, accepting that one is seen as an "other" means the experience of being treated or looked at in a different way is present and so one can search for: "a space where I can be myself and not feel like a freak"[21](p.143).

While this implies the power to express the "dissident" identity, it does not suffice to simply experience mental illness as it is sometimes affirmed and overcome and other times denied altogether. The task is to go beyond a statement that seems true, as in: "this open radio brought me back to life"[21](p.97).

Radio can improve one's reality because it relies on everyday language, clarity and simplicity.

Indeed, it is transparent because it does not impose reasons or block thoughts, and one becomes aware of the kind of expressions used (as in the scriptwriter identity) only when the positive aspects of doing so are emphasised. Radio, thus understood, becomes an alternative practice in a fragmented and divided society[27].

To summarise, the insistence on psychological alteration by applying diagnoses has different social consequences. Among them are the challenges of becoming independent in one's self-care and of carrying out everyday activities as well as the scarcity of social skills and bonds[28]. Therefore, helping the person define their life project by constructing new meanings and making decisions matters greatly, as suggested by Félix: "we have to try to take the helm of our lives"[22](p.165)

The above statement is first and foremost a construction of duty, using "have to" to offer a goal for an "activist identity". Accordingly, we must take into account the specific demands of each individual and push for a different approach to management at the institutional level (the traditional psychiatric care model focuses on psychiatric hospitals and community mental health services), which has often fostered training and "disciplining". Indeed, the idea of classical objectivity is played yet rejected within a therapeutic context as a person's reality is replaced by the "being other" and defined in ableist terms incapable of acting against their identity as mentally ill person. To an extent, this is assumed when "class identity" is expressed: "I am prey to very different states of mind"[21](p.273).

However, with the support of the group, the identity of an ill person is displaced and transformed, and the subject who has been categorised as ill, as "not being", may now take ownership over their words. Emerging expressions of "critical identity" can produce the following effect: "I was a case to solve, symptoms to cure, an object of experimentation, a research tool, a difficult file to classify"[22](p.188).

In this example, the rhetorical device transcends the discourse, evoking resistance and referring to the construction of a subversive argument of the insane.

By considering the presence of both dominant and dissident discourses, we are able to understand how difference and, consequently, identity are constructed. These discursive strategies make first-person testimony a possibility so that difference and mental suffering are heard. Above all, these strategies give permission to break from the pathological and speak from the group identity: "I can say that Radio Nikosia is radio in its purest form, improvisation, laughter, emotions, spontaneity and freedom to speak"[21](p.143).

Hence the recovery process must move away from training to allow the "being" and survivor of psychiatry to return to their self and truth, reinforcing the latter however it is expressed and adopted into the social fabric.

Discussion

From the radio waves, we reflect on a patriarchal society that continues to confine people to a sane-insane dichotomy that manufactures inequality and excludes. Nikosia makes stagnant categories visible and transitions between them, questioning the vertical axes that function as instruments of power when they keep new paradigms in mental health from being applied. In terms of the potential of radio as a culture-producing experience: "all communication practices, and consequently radio, become a space for the negotiation and creation of identities because the radio subject's imaginaries, bonds, and cultural traits are all involved"[29](p.12). The case of Radio Nikosia, a radio station where everybody has a place, appears to be consistent with this. Conveying a different image of the "mentally ill", it provides social support and occupational structure through routine. Nikosians are able to participate actively in radio and reap the benefits that it has to offer in terms of the socialisation process, empowerment, learning about mass media, and improving self-care pertaining to one's mental health.

Trading a recovery of cognitive deficits and mental disorders (the traditional rehabilitation model) for a group model in which subjects act according to their strengths and values, gives way to a new dynamic in which meanings are reconstructed. But the greatest achievement of radio in this context is that by creating social connections it also fosters social commitment.

Another valuable part of this project seems to be its attention to diversity and the uniqueness of each individual. Radio Nikosia embodies the respect for rights, specifically the right to express and share thoughts, ideas and opinions, while offering meaning through the development of emotional ties, along with a sense of belonging so vital in forging a new identity.

The group assigns a meaning and a use to the act of working on the radio. At the same time, the person suffering from SMI learns what it means

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to work on a radio show in that context and what the task carried out means in relation to collective self-management. Therefore, each person acquires a commitment and a social responsibility that comes forth in the emotional bonds that are created among the members of the group and in their ability to perform a task which they themselves manage and create. Participants who join the radio project are responsible for giving continuity to the message being broadcast. This is important because, Radio Nikosia is focused on establishing a critical stance towards the social stigma of mental illness, but at the same time it allows one to dream of winning over the audience with its dialectics and subvert the social order by carrying out collective forms of self-management. If we continue to fall back on the traditional mental health care model, we will only uphold segregation and abusive, prejudiced practices which overshadow social, cultural, and economic factors altogether perpetuating social injustice.

Conclusions

Mental illness is constructed around a norm born out of a historical context, which is why when the norm is modified the limits of madness also change. From this emerges a fragmented vision of the world, separating madness and sanity based on cultural and social control factors that in the past led to speculation about the invisible, demonic beliefs, mysterious extra-human forces, superstition, and the persecution of witches. These control factors continue to hinder people with SMI to this day, standing in the way of their attaining full citizenship and a different situation overall. This project is a contribution to a wider project of questioning. How are categories developed? How can we listen to these voices? Finally, how can we step into the world of the insane and help them gain a "life space?". This way we can move toward the "specific" demands of the person with mental health problems. In general, the aim is to make social inclusion possible so that new social identities may emerge untethered to the traditional mental health model. Consideration must then be given to the social value ascribed to doing a radio show and the meanings provide to the daily lives the mentally ill. We have aspired to contemplate the relationship between radio and its socio-therapeutic value when used by those who have been deprived of their right to be the actor of their own actions due to a compulsive tendency of the hegemonic power of psychiatry to disable forms of otherness.

Doing a radio show revolves to a great extent around the social connections that are made. Indeed, these connections and group dynamics affect the very survival of Radio Nikosia and determine the collective's identity. With each other's support, those with SMI are able to cultivate knowledge about the imposition of stringent categories, which for those with SMI translates into empowerment and a greater capacity for action. They exert this power as they recount experiences of abuse by psychologising disciplines like psychiatry and clinical psychology, breaking away from the historical narrative of a subject located in the margins, withdrawn into mental illness. Radio Nikosia wants the unbearable parts of mental suffering to be heard and seeks a departure from the system of domination of the other. Each participant constructs their social identity by sharing counter-information in response to the dominant discourse, and their actions on the radio show alter their mentally ill identity.

To understand this process and its effects, we have offered a discursive description of how Radio Nikosia's participants define themselves and of what they do when they position themselves to speak, how they organise their actions and reactions, and how they build new strategies. Their discursive practices are certainly linked to their capacity to autonomously construct their own world around relationships of knowledge or command of topics (they understand psychological suffering first-hand), relationships of action with others (they have been disciplined under the power of psychiatry but have also established relationships of symmetry and mutual aid, empowered by Radio Nikosia), and relationships with themselves (they act according to the ethics). This way of constructing knowledge on the radio can modify the permanence of identities anchored in mental illness as participation in this kind of dissident group allows for thinking independently while at the same time bringing people into a social environment. The speaking subject thinks, lives, perceives reality, and understands its discourses by analysing knowledge in terms of power tactics and strategies and so, in accordance with this, they express and represents themselves. In this sense, belonging to a collective such as Radio Nikosia means that in doing radio one becomes radio, the person becoming embodied in their own counter-discourse because they cannot recognise themselves fully outside of this collective.

Collaborations

The authors declare that it is an original work and that both have contributed intellectually in its elaboration. C Rojo-Pardo worked on the conception and delineation, on the analysis and interpretation of the data and on the writing of the article. L Iñiguez-Rueda worked on the conception and outline of the work, on the critical review and approved the final version of the article.

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