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Version of record first published: 16 Apr 2013.

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

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I have been very careful about big news and popular matters; I prefer minor and subtle matters […] My preference for DIY derives from this idiosyncrasy. For me, DIY is not only a 'bricolage' of small transmitters but also a way of thinking and creating.[1]

This special issue is about affective and micro-political practices within creative forms of making political worlds. By looking toward the less visible moments and processes, by focusing on the relations and social reproductions within our organizational activities, we hope to open up spaces for asking not only how we understand ourselves, but also how we address each other. Oftentimes, when speaking of politics, there is a tendency toward encompassing stories and experiences that come to infer a coherent and smooth narrative. Such narratives obfuscate the mess and uncertainty of political labour. To recognise these more messy and uncertain terrains does not mean to dismiss the role of broader discourse; rather, it means to look at these alongside them, to try and find points of communication that show how more marginal practices can speak to wider conditions and vice versa.

The political practices of micro-radio move between and interconnect these different scales. Micro-radio is a communications and media form that has had relatively little visibility beyond the realms of radio enthusiasts: amateur radio operators, radio art practitioners and some sections of the political left. This is because unlike community radio, free radio or pirate radio, micro-radio has rarely been used for the mass dissemination of information and music. Rather micro-radio, through its minor and localised form, opens up an attention to its more immediate surroundings, to itself as a technology and as an experimentation.

I recently undertook an interview with Japanese micro-radio creator Tetsuo Kogawa. Kogawa was involved in the micro-radio movement in Japan during the early 1980s-1990s. Inspired by the writings of Ivan Illich, his friendship with Felix Guattari and the radio praxes of the Italian Autonomia movement through stations such as Radio Alice, Kogawa sought to organize tactically 'legal' networks of micro-radio, later called 'Mini FM'. His work in this realm anticipated the widely-relayed cellular phone and peer-to-peer information and communications networks.

The control of radio had been strong in Japan since 1951, with the instantiation of a strict regulation of radio licensing. Perhaps this is why the micro-radio movement found a popular articulation. By 1983, over seven hundred Mini FM stations were operational throughout Japan. One of these, Setagaya Mama, was instigated by two housewives and mothers in South Tokyo, in a small room used both as a meeting place for the neighbourhood and an alternative retail store. The station was completely amateur, broadcasting even in-store chatter, nearby noises and doors being slammed. This community atmosphere was also resonant in the project of Radio Komedia Suginami, which was set up in a coffee shop free for anyone to use as they pleased.

The micro-radio movement provides a compelling site for discussion when considering the intersections of affect, politics and communication because of the communicational multi-directionality it sets into play. In his text *Free radio in Japan: The mini FM boom*, Kogawa writes that

> Guattari stressed the radically different function of free radio from conventional mass media. His notion of 'transmission transversal' suggests that, unlike conventional radio, free radio does not impose programs on a mass audience whose numbers have been forecast, but freely comes across to a 'molecular' public, so that it changes the nature of communication between those who speak and those who listen. The service area should be relatively small, because free radio does not broadcast (scatter) information but communicates (co-unites) messages to a concrete audience. In order to overthrow the passivity of the audience, Hans Magnus Enzensberger has noted that radio receivers could easily be transformed into transmitters. However, the problem is not only with the technology but also with the culture of both receiving and transmitting. Nothing would change if radio receivers were only technologically transformed into new broadcasters. The concept of receiving and transmitting itself must be changed.[2]

Kogawa's assertion of the proliferation of transmission and reception is of consequence, and not simply on the mechanical level. From as early as the 1930s, Bertolt Brecht had already argued for the importance of radio as a communicative rather than distributive medium, stating that

> [...] the radio would be the finest possible communication apparatus in public life, a vast network of pipes. That is to say, it would be if it knew how to receive as well as to transmit, how to let the listener speak as well as hear, how to bring him into a relationship instead of isolating him.[3]

What Kogawa and his contemporaries took further was a reconceptualisation of capital's social relations: an emphasis on the transformation of the techno-relational organization. Rather than turning receivers into transmitters, the whole organization of reception and transmission was to be regenerated. The geographies

of radio production became critical, as did the composition of their producers and the methods of production. What was recognized to be at stake was a different way of employing technology; a way that was contingent on radio's topologies and actants – the rooms and constellations of buildings, the microphones, airwaves, antennas, (later) Internet platforms, amplifiers, the voices, food, drink, intimacies, corporealities, psychic states, hands, gestures, cables and so forth. Through this employment and organization, micro-radio was configured as a political and therapeutic dispositif – a device for action.[4]

Despite their historicity, the ideas and methods of these micro-radio movements retain significance at a time of digital enfolding. We have seen an expansion of podcasts and streaming radio stations and programs since 2004 that far surpasses anything imagined for the micro-radio movement of the last fifty years. Organizationally and politically, this expansion has been grounded more on individuation than a coming together of common political desires. While file-sharing, open source software and coding marks out resistant territories, this is less popularly thematised within a radical framework, and when then in academic, technical and other niche communities. While this is obviously a vastly different context then that of the 1970s and 1980s, where the significance in remembering micro-radio lies is in its attention to the spaces and organization of social and technical (re)production – in its relations and affects. We might ask, what does this mean for political radio today?

Anja Kanngieser: I would like to ask specifically about your participation in the micro-radio movement in Japan, not from a technical angle per se, but from the angle of (becoming) organization. Can you speak about how the micro-radio movement began?

Tetsuo Kogawa: The technological roots of micro radio, which was later called 'Mini FM', were (1) HAM radio, (2) hobby transmissions using a tiny FM transmitter and (3) the broadcast of DJs using microphones and audio players. But the organizational roots were in parties (with much talking and drinking), teach-ins, performance art actions and political meetings in the late 1970s. One of the oldest Mini FM stations was set up during my seminar on phenomenology at the Wako University in Tokyo. It was 1980. At the time, I had serious difficulties getting my students together because, after the collapse of independent new left movements, students had lost their collective address. There were no more so-called 'asylums' – free spaces where various people would gather regardless of differences in positions or ideas – for radical groups who had been pushed out, or had been fractionalised through ideological conflict. New age religions started to appeal to some of students. But most of them felt isolated and uncomfortable. Apart from theoretical discussions and research, I developed a workshop-style seminar, where I used performance art experiments and the creation of zines, picture installations, short movies (8 mm camera) and sound works (cassette tape recorder). One day, I brought a tiny transmitter to my class and opened up a temporary radio station. It quickly fascinated my students and they wanted to continue transmitting. It was difficult to permanently set up the transmitting system in the class-room and on campus, so we set up the transmitter and the antenna every week.

A few years before introducing the transmitter to my class, I was experimenting with transmissions for free radio with my friends. I had been deeply involved with HAM radio (7 MHz) from my second year of junior high school in 1956; I enjoyed remote communication over the airwaves, and was familiar with how to transmit. But my school-teacher warned me to stop broadcasting in my unlicensed adventures. At the time (even today) illegal broadcasters were severely punished. So my transmission activity was limited to two years. After that, while I was still interested in transmission, I became more interested in philosophy, literature and aesthetics. Through this shift, I moved my attention to print media: reading books and journals, while publishing independent magazines with my friends and taking photos. The first impact on radio came from Hans Magnus Enzensberger who visited Tokyo in 1973. In 1975, the first Japanese translation from his *Palaver. Politische berlegungen 1967–1973* was published.[5] This included 'Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien' where he radically and futuristically developed Brecht's radio theory. It revived the idea that radio is not only listened to but also transmitted by oneself. The Italian situation of Free Radio after 1976 awoke the expectation of an alternative form of radio, accessible to anyone. In Italy this new type of free radio movement started along with the Autonomia movements. My first encounter with a theoretical approach to the Italian free radio movement were Guattari's articles in *Kollektive A/traverso*.[6] That was a surprise because Guattari helped me to find a common ground between my interests in philosophy and socio-cultural theories and radio practice. However, I found the description of Radio Alice (Bologna) too 'abstract' to really help start up an actual free radio station. In 1978 in New York, friends of mine (Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis) filled me in with more detail on the Italian political and radio movements. My friendship with John Downing also helped; he later published *The Media Machine* in which he described how it was that in Italy people could freely open their own radio stations without a licence.[7]

During this period we expected that political groups could claim their own medium, like magazines. At the time, alternative groups had very little chance of using radio as a medium. There was no public access to radio at all. We were fully aware that regulation of the airwaves was very tight and there was no hope to legally apply for a license, monopolized by broadcasting companies. We had to find a different way to transmit and finally came upon the idea of using a low-power transmitter, which was being sold as a toy. I wrote about the technique in popular magazines and newspapers. Good ideas always appeal to people when they resonate with their hidden needs. The monopoly of the broadcasting license was so encompassing that no newcomer could really enter the broadcasting industry. So the idea of using a tiny transmitter and covering a small area attracted many people wanting to have a radio station. Given the cheapness of transmitters that were readily available, many people, especially young people, started following the idea and, due to demand, major electronics companies started selling a similar type transmitter, explicitly advertising that 'you can open your own radio station'. This was a kind of social phenomenon that could illustrate a Japanese communication model based on mass media and rumour. The unexpected reaction had good and bad consequences: it was good as it helped us to organize an alternative radio network, but it was bad that people developed too high an expectation and were quickly disappointed when they found that their ready-made 'toy' didn't work well for broadcasting and

(even if it worked) they had to be accustomed to a very different concept of 'broadcasting' (narrow-casting).

Our surprise about the Mini FM boom aside, we continued our own technical and organizing experiments. In our earlier stages, I thought that Mini FM was a small scale of broadcasting and therefore that we could extend the service area using many sets of transmitters and receivers. But I gradually realised that this technique was effectively developed by the digital system (actually peer-to-peer or cellular phones adopted a similar idea) and that to relay the same program in this manner was not so interesting; a hundred stations in different areas would be much more interesting than one large network to widely share the same program. In relation to this understanding, the physical space of transmission (the radio station) became not only a technical spot but also a gathering place. Every Mini FM station had its different culture and content, just like small underground theatres. There was no technology available like the Internet at that time, and every Mini FM had weak national networks except through telephone and post. Phone-ins and the exchange of tapes were indispensable.

AK: I'm interested in your description of the proliferation of radio stations over the development of a centralised project; the fact that these worked autonomously but also in relation to one another in some way. Can you describe the day-to-day life of one of these radio projects? What were your experiences organizing around a technology? What were the common stakes and desires that brought people together?

TK: There were a couple of types of Mini FM spaces in the 1980s: (1) a free space where people lived in the space and shared it with the members and their guests, (2) in a coffee shop or a bar and sometimes a restaurant, (3) in a studio with audio facilities just like professional radio station, (4) in ad hoc stations built inside and outside. The day-to-day life of these radio projects depended on what kind of people organized these spaces. Only those organized in free living spaces could ignore opening/ closing times. Given the meeting place, such free living spaces created many unexpected encounters. In our Mini FM station, people moved in and out nomadically and the centrifugal/ centripetal direction of communication was ruptured by people we didn't know. New friends and lovers met, there were always many flyers for events, parties, demonstrations, zines and books on politics and used goods. The size of the room was generally small so that once you visited you had to talk to other people. Most of the Mini FM stations were located in dense city areas and people went in and out of the station as they pleased. There is a video that documented some of this, with the radio station Radio Home Run.[8]

Music programs and live concerts were often held during the broadcasts, as well as many talk shows. Sometimes sound artists who were interested in voice held programs of experimental music. One of the most dramatic examples was John Duncan, who had been notorious for his 'vulgar' performance art pieces in the US. He ran away to Japan and started media art experiments. Radio art experiments were more energetic in the later stages of Radio Home Run, that is NetRadiohomeRun (1998-2001) and Radio Kinesonus (2003-2008), where instead of net radio they followed the practice of creating a gathering space as well as

broadcasting place. In accordance with the rise of noise music and the contemporary experimental music, radio stations, especially Radio Kinesonus, undertook many collaborations with international artists over the net.

AK: Space is very important I feel, in all of what you're saying, especially in conjunction with the relational aspects and the micro-political aspects – that is to say, how people come together – even in the later Internet permutations of Radio Home Run and Radio Kinesonus. Do you feel that the form of micro-radio you're recounting, the ways it worked and its spatialities, allowed for particular affective resonances?

TK: After the late 1970s, young people had difficulties communicating with one another, especially in terms of political discussion. This had a lot to do with the decline of radical movements and the nightmare of police repression, as well as the rise of the new economy. In the 1980s, the consumption rates grew and the American way of life, I mean the Yuppification of life, started to develop here. In this context, shy and modest young people needed a different medium, one that would let them have some mutual distance and at the same time let them have a new intimacy.

Because of this situation, my interest arose in how we could communicate with each other given the otherwise isolating tendencies of our society at that time. The concept of 'electronic individuality' was one of my theoretical attempts to deal with this, while Mini FM was a practical example of this.[9] When I wrote the article in the late 1970s, I had not really known that many participants in the Mini FM movement were 'hikikomori' (withdrawing and hiding himself/herself to his/her room). Phonologically, 'hikikomori' is 'hiki' ('strain' or 'straining the') and 'komori' ('shut oneself up'). Why does the 'hikikomori' person shut him/herself up? It is a kind of hibernation. When I examined Adorno's theory of 'hibernation' from the perspective of our political practice, I found that his idea might justify 'hikikomori' as a 'normal' attitude in the post-capitalist society but it didn't illustrate how 'hikikomori' lives and works.[10]

According to the OED 'hikikomori' is a kind of autistic phenomenon today. Generally speaking in Japan, there is no more 'banzai collectivity' in the social realm. Whether interpreted as a positive or negative situation, people are isolated as individuals. The problem is, however, that the individuality of 'hikikomori' person is 'schizophrenic' (in a broad sense with Guattarian/Deleuzean connotations): this may not mean 'isolation' but a living-together with multiple units (for this, 'ego' and 'person' would be not irrelevant). While pursuing Mini FM, I found that a very shy person could talk over his/her microphone. They, otherwise silent in the same room, started talking only when over their own microphones. It was just like a kind of therapy. When I told this story to Félix Guattari, he told me about his similar experiences at Radio Tomato, the Parisian radio station that he was briefly part of, and we agreed that micro radio is a form of 'schizoanalysis'.

For these young people, the sharing of a space in which to broadcast together provided an ideal model to help them recover from their aphasia. For them, the delivering of their messages from one place to another was not so important. They were satisfied with just taking a microphone and talking into it together.

This might have had a similar basis as the popularity of the karaoke machine; it is an irony that karaoke started in the same period as Mini FM and survives it still today.

Although for radio art it was not necessarily the message that was crucial, conventional radio had been clinging to the centrality of the message and the sender-receiver model of broadcasting. In Mini FM, however, the message was not as important as the sharing of space and microphones. In extreme cases, people didn't really mind how far their transmissions reached, or who was listening to their program. That's why Mini FM is a form of schizoanalysis, or a therapeutic machine. When people were using the microphones, they talked freely. But as soon as they stopped using their microphones, they acted as though nothing had changed and withdrew again. Mini FM created a means for intimate remote communication. And this idiosyncrasy is still popular now with mobile phones, when people sometimes talk to each other over the phone within eyesight of one another.

AK: You mention the work of Felix Guattari, who also had an interest in these radio forms; his ideas around politics, transversality and group relations found articulation, and were inspired by, the micro-radio movements that were occurring in the 1970s and 1980s in Italy and France. Along with this idea of radio as schizoanalysis, what influenced you in terms of your theoretical and practical landscape?

TK: Ivan Illich was much more influential for me than Guattari in my interest in DIY radio. His *Tools for Conviviality* (1973) was instrumental for convincing those involved in alternative organizing to use contemporary technologies.[11] Since his *Deschooling Society* (1970), Ivan Illich had been rethinking the different directions of technology, the ways of thinking and living, and the essence of nature.[12] Being conscious of alternative movements in the late 20th century, he provided many inspiring formulations, such as his ideas of an 'educational web', 'conviviality', and 'shadow work'. Lee Felsenstine, who started Community Memory (the first example of a bulletin board system) in San Francisco, was deeply inspired by this book. Illich explained that as long as DIY has an alternative significance, DIY tools should be 'convivial' while ready-made tools are for 'industrial productivity'.

In the Western tradition, tools have been considered as means to achieve a planned aim, neglecting the communal aspects of the tools. Whenever you use a tool, however, you share feeling and meaning with others. Tools are not only technological means but also a space of sharing that relates individual bodies. 'Conviviality' expresses how tools can be used creatively and joyfully, in ways totally different to the impersonal use pursued by industrial mechanisms.

Guattari's importance lay in his theoretical ideas that micro and subtle activities could sometimes be more relevant, and far stronger, than big activities and events. He developed the idea of the 'Annales School' of micro politics and micro revolution. The influential and mutual relationship between one group and other must be transversal rather than hierarchical and central-marginal. According to the basic ideas of the 'Annales' historians such as Marc Bloch, Fernand Braudel, Jacques Le Goff, Philippe Ariès, history changes not by way of big events or heroes, but through long-term micro changes that can be only be subtly perceived (a microscopic passion for the details, as

Carlo Ginsburg might say). As such, revolutions occur not through big affairs or by heroic revolutionaries but are composed of the ways in which ordinary, anonymous people eat, love, behave and die in their everyday lives. This means that revolution mostly depends on unconscious and contingent attitudes; if we could access the subtle area of our everyday lives, we could have 'molecular revolution' by our 'micro politics'.

Our micro-radio didn't work without the micro-politics. As long as it worked as a praxis of micro-politics, it prevented itself from becoming a mode of ordinary broadcasting where messages and data (even if they are artistic) are delivered. When visible repressions began, such as repression following the death of Hirohito in 1989, we worked politically both through our radios and our direct actions. To my memory, the radio program itself had less impact on society at large. It worked rather on the unconscious levels and sides of society. That's micro-politics.

AK: It is very clear to me that there is an intimacy to micro-radio as a communications technology because of its scale, the way that people can participate in it in very personal ways, as a therapeutic dispositif, if you like. It can connect people both involved in its production and those listening in different ways, partially because it can be entirely anonymous, but also because there is an openness for the producer/ listener roles to be transferred. What were the compositions of these social relations, and the intimacies, in your experience of these projects?

TK: Given the many talk shows in our programs during the 1980s, it was very common that different opinions were thrown together. However, long discussions through the night often gave way to some kind of agreement. When someone got a microphone, s/he spoke for her/himself, even if s/he was a representative of some group. It was the magic of radio. There were at least ten programs emphasizing live talk. Some of them were about Jazz and others for R&B. Some of them were about sex and discrimination. In my own programme, 'Saturday Night Virus', I invited many people from different arenas: artists, critics, journalists, activists, temporary visitors that I met outside, drunk people. The topics were, therefore, very wide

The core members and their friends were diverse and belonged to various groups and activities. They influenced each other through sharing their transmission activity. There were many cases where new friendships were formed with people visiting the station. Although the tendency was modest in general in Japan, Radio Home Run, for instance, was one of the most avant-garde spaces where LGBTI people, ethnic people, homeless people and so-called 'unusual' people got together. Our radio station was a gathering space where people could talk, eat, drink and even take a bath. Given the very tight control of drugs by the authorities, drugs were dangerous to use. We didn't want to waste away in jail for years. Alcoholics and people addicted to sleeping pills sometimes came to our station, and were taken care of. Alcohol was the basic lifeblood. Until the early 1990s, drinking was an important catalyst for communicating with each other cheerfully. People drank too much. There were no serious conflicts in the space because everybody enjoyed being there: if they did not they just left. It was quite a peaceful place. We often had visitors

outside of Japan, especially after international journals such as AMARC and Paper Tiger Television mentioned our activities and publicised the address.

The intimacy you mentioned would be what Ivan Illich called 'conviviality'. To create conviviality, we need some continuation of time. A slow stream of time heals antagonism and at the same time reveals difference. In this slow process, even antagonists could leave without violence. They could respect a variety of opinions on some level. We had no violent fights in the station although there were orgies. At other Mini FM stations, located on the groundfloor, anyone could enter from the street, even those not interested in the radio. But in our station, located at the second floor, we had few random passers-by. Most of our visitors had their own portable radios. They were tempted to come through the radio.

AK: The kinds of relations you recall here are very relevant today for those thinking about alternative forms of radio-making, and they are particularly interesting given you mention the Internet articulations of Radio Home Run and Radio Kinesonus. It is often commented that the conventional geographies of collaboration and organization are lost through online formats. Through your recollections, two things stand out for me with regard to the current techno-social condition. Firstly, micro-radio in the Japanese context you describe did not necessarily emerge from a hyper-collectivity and nor did it demand it; it allowed for people to participate differentially, as they desired. This was in part due to the anonymity that radio affords. Micro-radio seemed to both allow for a sociability and a retreat, less about everyone participating in the same way: the fact that people were in-relation through this 'schizoanalytical' moment seemed to fulfil some need. In this way, the technology functioned as more than a mechanism for outward transmission. Secondly, even in its Internet permutations the focus was still on the gathering space of production, as you say.

These two points are interesting from the perspective of online and DIY radio today, as they emphasise the complex social and psychic compositions within the production of radio, regardless of its technological expression: radio as dispositif, as I mentioned earlier. I think this is central to an understanding of how one might organize radio politically today, especially within those slower times, where there seems to be malaise. If we understand radio as a device, both therapeutically and organizationally, we can widen our focus from an economy of value quantified by mass attention, to see value in the micro-political gesture. This is not to say to become myopic, because radio has long served as an important mass political communications technology, but to recognise that it does not always require the loudest of speakers to be antagonistic, or the furthest of transmissions to find communication in common.

Notes

[1] Tetsuo Kogawa interview with Anja Kanngieser, 2012.
[2] Tetsuo Kogawa, 'Free radio in Japan: The mini FM boom', in *Radiotext(e)*, ed. Neil Strauss (New York: Semiotext(e), 1993), pp.90-96.

[3] Bertolt Brecht, 'Radio as a Means of Communication: A Talk on the Function of Radio', *Screen*, 20 (1979/1980), pp.24–28.
[4] I understand the term 'dispositif' or structuring device following its use by Franco (Bifo)

Berardi – reconfiguring Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze – in his text *The Image Dispositif*, wherein he states 'By the word dispositif I refer to a semiotic engine able to act as the paradigm of a series of events, behaviours, narrations, and projections modelling social reality' (2005: 67). Franco Berardi, 'The image dispositif', *Cultural Studies Review*, 11 (2005), pp.64-68.

[5] Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Palaver. Politische berlegungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974).

[6] Felix Guattari 'Foreward', in *Kollektiv A/traverso: Alice ist der Teufel. Praxis einer subversiven Kommunikation. Radio Alice Bologna*, ed. Luciano Capelli, Stefano Saviotti (Berlin: Merve Verlag, 1977).

[7] John Downing, *The Media Machine* (London: Pluto Press, 1980).

[8] Tetsuo Kogawa, 'Fourteen Years of Radio Home Run' < http://anarchy.translocal.jp/radio/homerun/historyrhr/index.html > [01/08/2012]

[9] Tetsuo Kogawa, 'Beyond Electronic Individualism', *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory/Revue Canadienne de Thetorie Politique et Sociale*, 8 (1984), pp.15-20

[10] Tetsuo Kogawa, 'Adorno's "Strategy of Hibernation"', *Telos*, 46 (1980/1981), pp.147-153

[11] Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality* (New York and London: Harper and Row, 1973).

[12] Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (London: Pelican Books, 1970).

Tetsuo Kogawa is a performance artist and prolific writer on media philosophy, information technology, film works, Kafka and various contemporary themes. He was, until recently, a Professor of Communication in the Department of Communication Studies at Tokyo Keizai University. He directs the Goethe Archive in Tokyo. He is renowned for his radio art pieces and FM workshops and parties, which he has been invited to facilitate around the world. He was a key figure in the microradio movement in Japan in the 1980s, and worked with Felix Guattari on small-scale radio projects. Since the 1990s he has been actively involved in digital and online cultures and communities and has created an archive his radical radio practices available at http://anarchy.translocal.jp. Email: tetsuo@translocal.jp

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