

Cultural negotiations and representations of identity: The national image through musical programs of Radio Exterior de España (REE)

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Abstract

Mobility has been a concept associated with radio since its beginnings, being particularly relevant in international radio. Historically, international broadcasters have contributed to the formation of national imaginaries, playing an essential role in the configuration and negotiation of what Anderson (1983) called “imagined communities”. By representing a country's identities at stake for both diasporas and international audiences, these broadcasters act not only as political tools but also as instruments of cultural dissemination (Clark and Werder, 2007). In this context, it is crucial to differentiate between the historical roles of state-owned and public service media. While the former, such as Radio Sawa or Radio Liberty, funded by the U.S. government, were created for propagandistic purposes, the public service media seek, in principle, to offer the public content of interest to them, under the famous premise of “educate, inform and entertain”. At present, international radio focuses mainly on news and language learning, with prominent examples such as the BBC. However, music broadcasting plays a crucial role in the representation of national identity. RFI, for example, has channels dedicated to French-language music, promoting a transnational Francophone culture, as does Deutsche in Africa. This raises the question of whether these broadcasters perpetuate an updated version of cultural imperialism. In the Spanish case, the musical proposal of Radio Exterior de España (REE) encompasses a miscellaneous programs that include genres such as flamenco (Tiempo flamenco), novelties by Spanish and Latin American artists (Dicho con música) and nostalgia programs (Golosinas) (RTVE, n.d.). This research delves into REE's programming through interviews with the creators of the programs, exploring programming practices from the perspective of cultural studies of music (Negus, 1996; Hesmondhalgh & Negus, 2002). By examining the distribution, consumption and the production of social meanings of music in the radio

medium, we seek to broaden our understanding of how popular music acts as a vehicle of meaning and cultural change in diverse communities and historical contexts.

Keywords: public service, music, radio, Radio Exterior de España, diaspora, international audiences.

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BIOS

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