

Neglected Narratives: A Bibliometric Study of Community Radio Research in Communication (1941-2025)

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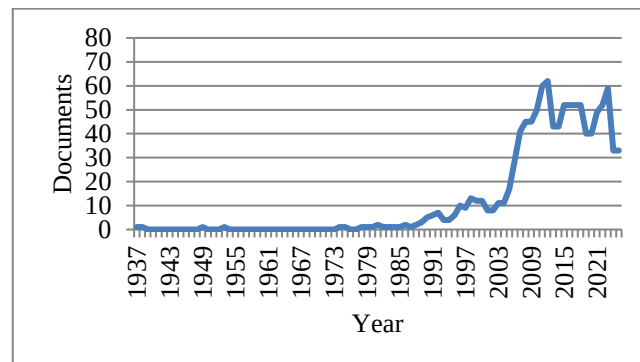
ABSTRACT

This study aims to fill this gap through a bibliometric analysis of publications discussing radio in communication studies from the time of the first article to 2025. Using data from the Scopus database and visualization tools such as VOSviewer, the analysis identified key contributors, publication trends, thematic clusters, and areas that have not been explored. Quantitatively, there was a surge in publications from 2019 to 2024, driven by the pandemic and the adoption of digital technology, marking a shift to a hybrid radio platform ecosystem. The map also highlights geographic disparities, with Australia as the most significant contributor, while emphasizing the need for cross-theme integration to more strongly connect the governance-public sphere axis with the digital frontier, particularly in terms of resilience and social justice.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, radio has maintained a significant position in the global media ecosystem, particularly in facilitating access to information, strengthening cultural identity, and supporting communication at the grassroots level (Anderson & Rodríguez, 2019; Hayes, 2015; Pavarala & Malik, 2021; Richard, 2017; Tebbutt, 2015). Although digital platforms and social media have shifted academic and commercial focuses, radio remains a resilient medium, particularly in areas with limited technological infrastructure. Low operational costs and extensive reach have kept radio as a solid communication channel in both urban and rural areas, thereby contributing to development agendas, public health awareness, disaster response, and public participation (Antwi-Boateng et al., 2023; Attuh & Kankam, 2022; Ewart & Dekker, 2013; Johnson & Rajadurai, 2020; Kanjilal et al., 2025; Waters et al., 2011). Accordingly, continuing academic explorations of radio in the context of communication studies is of great importance.

However, compared to commercial or public broadcasting, community radio has not been the primary discourse. Based on a search of the Scopus database limited to the subject area of social sciences, it was found that studies on commercial radio totaled 1278 (Figure 1). Conversely, research on community radio in terms of the communication aspect has rarely been given any attention (Kischinhevsky et al., 2025). The studies presented in the search instead discussed community radio in the economic, political, and social contexts (Adebayo et al., 2022; Backhaus, 2020; Bhat, 2018; Bosch, 2014; Castillo, 2014; Chavinda, 2023; Kischinhevsky et al., 2025; Kombol, 2014; Nirmala, 2015; Pavarala & Malik, 2021; Piñeiro-Otero, 2015; Piñeiro-Otero & Martín-Pena, 2018; Piñeiro Otero, 2017; Yaya Sada, 2022). This has resulted in a discrepancy in understanding the patterns, trends, and theoretical contributions of radio research in the field of communication.



Source: Authors' analysis based on data retrieved from the Scopus database

Figure 1. Annual publication trends in commercial radio research (1937–2024)

Furthermore, the dominance of digital media studies has led to the marginalization of radio, perceived as a traditional platform, in academic discourse. Marginalization may be observed in the form of a shift in research away from the field of radio due to new technologies (Coleman, 2021; Gautam et al., 2022; Heywood et al., 2024; Nettlefold, 2019; Tyali, 2021) or as a medium,

radio is no longer considered relevant in terms of both utilization and object of research (Garfield, 1979). In Indonesia, data suggest that research on community radio from 1999 to 2024 comprises approximately 75 articles (Sjuchro et al., 2025). Additionally, maintaining community radio in practice requires the harmonization of further policy and technological adaptations (Satria M & Urrahmah, 2025). This implies that the existence of community radio is heavily dependent on regulatory development and digital technology, which has the potential to marginalize the concept of conventional community radio.

This study aims to fill the gap in the lack of bibliometric analysis pertaining to publications that discuss community radio in community studies. Using data from the Scopus database and the VOSviewer visualization tool, this analysis identified key contributors, publication trends, thematic clusters, and underexplored areas. The main argument of this study is that radio's low visibility in academic literature should not reflect the urgency of community radio. This is why a reorientation in media studies, indicating radio as a vital subject from both historical and contemporary perspectives, is required.

Generally, bibliometric research in the field of community radio remains extremely limited. This has led to studies lacking depth and not becoming the dominant academic discourse. Existing research discusses radio broadcasting in general by using the Scopus database from 1923 to 2023, making it unable to specifically show the existence of community radio (Anwar et al., 2025). Meanwhile, a more specific study by Imandianto, Hasan Sazali, and Ahmad Tamrin Sikumbang presents a bibliometric analysis of da'wah radio using Google Scholar and Scopus data from 2013 to 2023 (Ismandianto et al., 2024). Accordingly, this study is also unable to comprehensively examine the development of research related to community radio. Research conducted by Riset Dian Wardiana Sjuchro, Rahmatullah, and Nurfauziah (2025) was interesting as it raised the issue of collaborative research on community radio (Sjuchro et al., 2025). This research used bibliometric analysis to examine the development trend of research on community radio based on co-authorship from 1999 to March 2024. By examining a mere period of five years, this research remains incapable of presenting the conditions of a longer landscape.

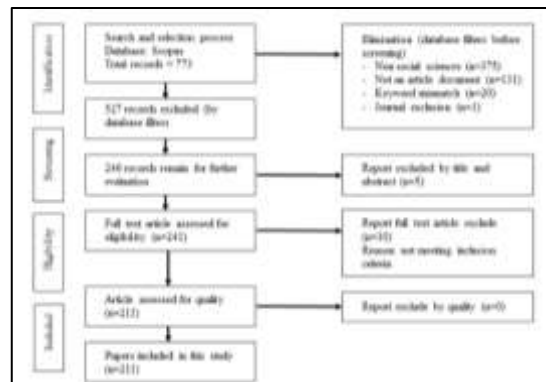
THEORETICAL REVIEW

Table 1. Literature search

Search database	Search formula	Records retrieved
Scopus	Technique 1: Without Limiters "Community Radio" OR "Community radio Broadcasting"	773
	Technique 2: With Limiters: subject area, document type, source title, keyword, source type, publication stage	211

"Community Radio" OR "Community radio Broadcasting" Filters: Social Science, article, journal, final

Source: Processed by author



Source: Processed by the authors in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines.

Figure 2. PRISMA flow diagram of the literature selection process

Search was conducted on Scopus database by using the query TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Community Radio" OR "Community Radio Broadcasting"), limited to journal article document type and the subject area of Social Sciences & Humanities, without any limitation on publication year and only including Scopus indexed scientific journals. Of the initial 773 records, 527 were eliminated by the database filter (non-social sciences $n=375$, not an article document $n=131$, keyword mismatch $n=20$, journal exclusion $n=1$), leaving 246 records for further evaluation; after screening for titles/abstracts, five records were excluded, leaving 241 articles to be assessed for eligibility at the full-text stage, with 30 records subsequently excluded; a total of 211 articles were ultimately included in the study. The inclusion criteria covered articles under the subject area of social sciences and humanities, article type document, matching with selected keywords, sourced from eligible/targeted journals, and meeting the criteria of full-text analysis; articles that did not meet the topic focus, editorials, proceedings, and book chapters were excluded from the study. Data extraction utilized bibliographical metadata provided by Scopus (e.g., publication data, abstract, and references) to set bibliometric indicators and the basis for mapping the keyword network in the analysis stage.

Potential coverage bias in this bibliometric study is latent in the method cycle since it only used a single database (Scopus) with scope limitations of social sciences/humanities and "journal article" type documents risking missing interdisciplinary work and grey literature. Furthermore, search/selection bias is possible due to the relatively narrow keyword strategy used ("Community Radio"/"Community Radio Broadcasting"). The risk of bias can be comprehensively reduced by expanding the sources (e.g., curated WOS/DOAJ/GS) and enriching the search synonyms.

All articles that passed the selection process (N = 211) were examined using bibliometric analysis based on Scopus metadata without any limit on the year of publication to capture the long-term dynamics of this field. The synthesis stage began with descriptive statistics (annual trend, country distribution, journal outlets, and most impactful articles) to map the publication landscape. Subsequently, network mapping was performed using VOSviewer to visualize the correlation between documents and concepts through a co-occurrence analysis of keywords and other bibliometric network features. This approach assisted in identifying themes, topical clusters, and interconnections between the fields of research. To reduce bias caused by reliance on citations, content analysis was conducted by applying a co-word strategy (based on terms/words that frequently co-exist) so that themes were defined by prioritizing content substance rather than citations. Cluster labels were determined by reading the title and abstract of articles that represented each cluster and are presented along with the network map and a brief table of findings. Given this outline, the results are presented in the form of network visualization (VOSviewer map), bibliometric indicator table, and narrative descriptions that link publication patterns, research geographical locations, and key themes that emerged in the corpus of the study.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a bibliometric analysis approach to map the academic research landscape pertaining to community radio in communication studies. Data were obtained from the Scopus web interface, a prominent scientific abstract and citation database covering peer-reviewed journals from various scientific disciplines. The keywords used in the search were "Community Radio" OR "Community Radio Broadcasting" applied in titles, abstracts, and keywords (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Community Radio") OR ("Community Radio Broadcasting"))).

The search was limited based on the following criteria:

1. Document type: journal article
2. Subject field: Social Sciences and Humanities
3. Source: only Scopus-indexed academic journals

No limitation on the publication period was applied to provide a more extensive illustration of the dynamics.

Articles that explicitly discussed community radio broadcasting as the main topic in communication studies were included. Articles that only briefly mentioned the radio or lacked conceptual discussion were excluded. Editorials, conference proceedings, and book chapters were also excluded to maintain data quality.

RESULTS

Analyses of 211 journal articles indicate diverse and varying results pertaining to research themes in community radio. The research data cover the period of all data displayed on Scopus without any time limitation, indicating variations from different perspectives. This study examined and categorized the data based on keywords (community radio, community radio broadcasting) with

a limitation of subject area “social science,” document type “journal article,” and only referring to publications sourced from journals in the field of “social sciences” and “humanities.”

Table 2. Annual Distribution of Publications on Commercial Radio

Year	Number of Publications	Year	Number of Publications
1941	1	2009	9
1946	1	2010	5
1985	1	2011	7
1989	1	2012	6
1991-1996	1	2013	10
1997	0	2014	10
1998	0	2015	10
1999	3	2016	5
2000	6	2017	6
2001	2	2018	12
2002	3	2019	13
2003	3	2020	14
2004	3	2021	12
2005	0	2022	13
2006	1	2023	15
2007	3	2024	19
2008	3	2025*	8

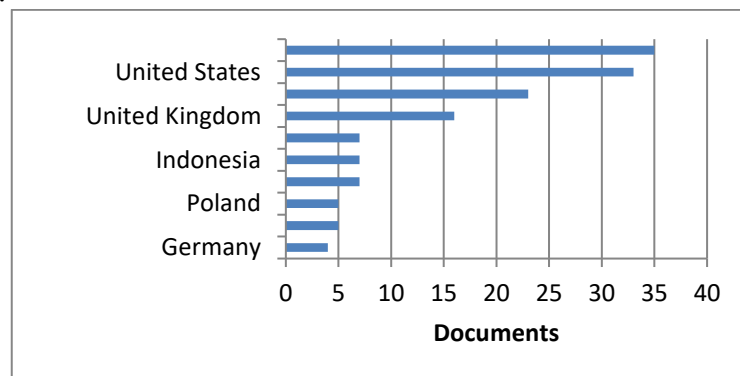
Source: Authors' analysis based on data retrieved from the Scopus database.

Based on the publication distribution analysis by year, it is apparent that research papers on community radio have been identified since 1941 (Table 2). Although Jerome S. Bruner and Jeanette Sayre did not explicitly discuss their research by using the term “community radio”, their work entitled “Shortwave Listening in an Italian Community” serves as the first scientific discussion regarding shortwave radio (Bruner & Sayre, 1941). This study is interesting because it employed surveys and in-depth interviews with 21 shortwave listeners to understand who listens to this type of radio and why they listen to it amidst the heated political conditions in 1941.

Meanwhile, the fluctuation in publications on community radio indicates an interesting pattern. First, the number of publications saw a general increased from 1997 to 2025. However, during this period, we also noticed decreasing trends following a spike in the number of publications. For instance, after a stagnant period from to 1982-1997, the number of publications increased in 2000. Post 2000 (six publications), publications on community radio experienced a declining trend until they eventually increased again in 2009. After the decline in the subsequent years, the number of scientific articles on community radio remained stable in the period of 2013 – 2015, before it eventually dropped until the 2018-2023 period, when dozens of publications were made in Scopus-indexed journals. Meanwhile, 2023 and 2024 became the time periods with the highest

number of articles since the publication of community radio was found for the very first time in 1941.

The increased number of publications on community radio from 2019-2024 can be attributed to two primary factors. First, the COVID-19 pandemic that hit various parts of the world resulted in the reconsideration of community radio. This is particularly important for facilitating connectivity among people who are unable to meet in person. Second, research during this period often associated community radio with a technological perspective. This is especially true given the presence of digital technology, which is considered capable of progressively marginalizing the role of community broadcasting or radio. From this perspective, community radio is positioned at the axis of opportunities and challenges. Discourses that are not contested in the field of commercial broadcasting.



Source: Authors' analysis based on data retrieved from the Scopus database.

Figure 3. Geographical distribution of commercial radio research publications
Source: Scopus database

As indicated by the publication distribution analysis by country, Australia has the largest number of publications at 35, followed by the United States with 33, South Africa with 23, and the United Kingdom with 16. Canada, Indonesia, and Spain stand equal with seven publications each, followed by India, Poland, and Germany.

The data (figure 3) show that publications on community radio are concentrated in certain countries with figures that are disproportionate to those found in the next group of countries, that is, Canada, Indonesia, and Spain. Australia has the highest scientific publication production compared to other countries. This is due to the presence of a highly dynamic community broadcasting in the country that remains highly relevant to local communities and is able to adapt to technological advances, resulting in continuous discourse.

According to research by Susan Forde, Kerie Foxwell, and Michael Meadows, Australian audiences listen to community radio because of its easy access, laid-back presentation style with a "commoners" approach, the desire to access local news and information, and appreciation of the diversity represented by community radio in terms of both format and content (Forde et al., 2003). Furthermore, in approximately 30 small cities in Australia, community radio is

the only source of news and information apart from the ABC radio (Forde et al., 2003).

Data from the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) indicate that they have 300 members, who are 90 percent of community radio license holders in Australia (CBAA, 2024). Another publication states that ethnic community broadcasting is the largest media sector that broadcasts content to Australian communities, covering nearly 30 percent of the population (Anderson et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, publications by Indonesian researchers or those researching the reality of community radio in Indonesia are generally not polarized into particular themes. For example, there is a theme that places community radio at the junction between opportunities and challenges. For instance, an article by Masduki titled "Between State Funding and Volunteerism: The Survival Strategies of Indonesian Community Radio Network" (2023) suggests that community radio networks in Indonesia are currently facing managerial and financial crises, resulting in questionable sustainability. Additionally, Masduki revealed that the sustainability of the Indonesian Network of Community Radio (*Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia* – JRKI) and its members is dependent on the political climate and that the JRKI requires favorable regulations as well as partnerships with both local and national public institutions (Masduki, 2023).

Another study correlated the state of community radio with the undemocratic media system, while attempts have also been made to empower communities in Indonesia. This discourse is presented through research data sourced from Manado and Yogyakarta (Hollander et al. 2008).

Table 3. Most cited articles

N o	Authors	Title	Journal source	Year	Citation
1	Manyozo, L.	Mobilizing rural and community radio in Africa	Ecquid Novi, 30(1), pp. 1-23	2009	63
2	Cammaerts, B.	Community radio in the West: A legacy of struggle for survival in a state and capitalist controlled media environment	International Communication Gazzete, 7(8), pp. 635-654	2009	46
3	Meadows, M.	Putting the citizen back into journalism	Journalism, 14 (1), pp. 43-60	2013	42
4	Forde, S., Foxwell, K., Meadows, M.	Through the lens of local: Public arena journalism in the Australian community broadcasting sector	Journalism, 4(3), pp. 314-335	2003	40
5	Fisher, D.	Mediating kinship: Country, family, and radio	Cultural Anthropology, 24(2), pp.280-312	2009	39

6	Fraser C., Restrepo-Estrada S.	Community radio for change and development	Development Basingstoke, 45(4), pp. 69-73	2002	39
7	Hartley, J.	Radiocracy: Sound and citizenship	International Journal of Cultural Studies, 3(2), pp. 153-159	2000	36
8	Sun, Y., Hu, Q., Grossman, S., Basnyat, L., Wang, O.	Comparison of COVID-19 Information Seeking, Trust of Information Source, and Protective Behaviors in China and the US	Journal of Health Communication, 26(9), pp. 657-666	2021	35
9	Servaes, J.	Development communication: For whom and for what?	Communication, 21(1), pp. 39-49	1995	33
10	Ahsan, M.N., Khatun, A.	Fostering disaster preparedness through community radio in cyclone-prone coastal Bangladesh	International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, 49, 101752	2020	29

Source: Scopus database

Data on the ten most-cited publications show that the paper titled “Mobilizing Rural and Community Radio in Africa” is the most cited article (Table 3). This article discusses the state of community radio in Africa, which is facing increasing challenges in terms of cultural, political, economic, and social developments. According to Manyozo, radio holds tremendous responsibility, particularly because this medium is pervasive, local, extensive, flexible, easy to understand, personal, portable, quick, and efficient. Other authors cite Manyozo’s article to illustrate the state of community radio in Africa and explain its characteristics of community radio. For example, Emmanuel Essel, Eliza Govender, and Sarah Gibson quoted Manyozo in their article to explain why community radio is a popular medium in Africa (Essel et al., 2023).

The second most cited article was written by Bart Cammaerts, titled “Community Radio in the West: A Legacy of Struggle for Survival in a State and Capitalist Controlled Media Environment”. Cammaerts presents a comparative perspective of the struggle of community radio in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Belgium. Generally, this article explains that community radio in those countries faces difficulties in legitimizing its existence, especially amidst the development of commercial and public radio. The community radio movement possesses little lobbying power and is positioned as “rogue and unprofessional actors” in the landscape of broadcasting communities in general. This research argues that from the perspective of democracy, media policy should extend support to community radio, as it can mobilize participation, which is a distinctive characteristic of democracy itself.

Other authors who cite this article are dominated by research that also discusses community radio as a medium for struggle and alternative media from the perspective of struggle and various potentials (Backhaus, 2024; Barranquero, 2020; Phillips, 2023; Pinto, 2025).

Another interesting matter refers to authors who published their research on community radio in Journalism. Michael Meadows and Forde (2003) suggest that studies on community radio or media can be observed from the perspective of journalism, which has thus far been dominated by research in the domain of mainstream media (Forde et al., 2003).

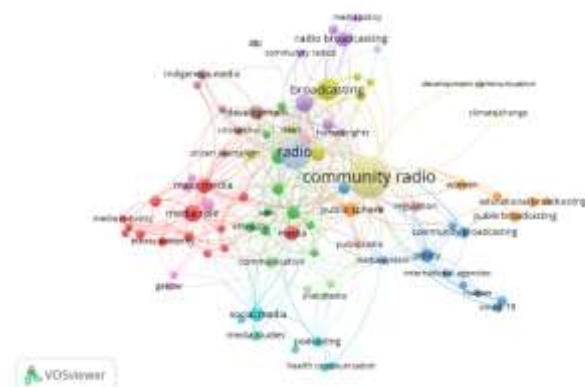
Meadows' writing indicates that the state of community radio differs from that of mainstream media. While Australian journalists working in mainstream media are less appreciated by their audience, community radio listeners enthusiastically tune in to local news and information. Meadows' research shows that "local talk" maintains a close connection with the essence of community journalism while simultaneously playing a crucial role in creating public awareness and conversations.

In line with Meadows, Forde, Foxwell, and Meadows also explored the role of community journalism as an alternative perspective to understand the world (Forde et al., 2003). This research also examined community broadcasting in Australia, showing conclusively that community journalism plays a vital cultural role in providing channels for the community's local voices. At this stage, community broadcasting is capable of becoming a "community public sphere."

These two publications are correlated with Figure 3, which shows that Australia has the highest number of publications on community radio in the world. The research done by Meadows and Forde suggest that community media development in Australia is experiencing an interesting growth pattern that is unlike the conditions found among community media in other countries, which are instead being left behind by their audiences.

Meanwhile, the network visualization below (Figure 4) shows "community radio" as the most central node with the highest level that links the three main clusters: (1) policy and governance of media policy, regulation, media system, public/public broadcasting, which signifies a strong regulatory domain in the discourse of community radio; (2) public participation and public sphere, citizenship, human rights, news, which emphasize the role of community radio as an arena for exchanging discourses; and (3) digital convergence, social media, podcasting, which show adaptation to the platform ecosystem. Connecting nodes, such as the public sphere and regulation/policy, play a role as inter-cluster bridges, while development communication links development themes with specific issues, such as climate change. On the other hand, peripheral topics such as women/gender, climate change, health communication, and indigenous mediaseem dissociated from the core and have a narrower edge, indicating that the volume of research/co-occurrence remains low or fragmented. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in the policy orbit suggests the sensitivity of this area to crises. Overall, the map indicates that the focus of research is on governance and the public sphere, with opportunities to integrate issues of gender, climate,

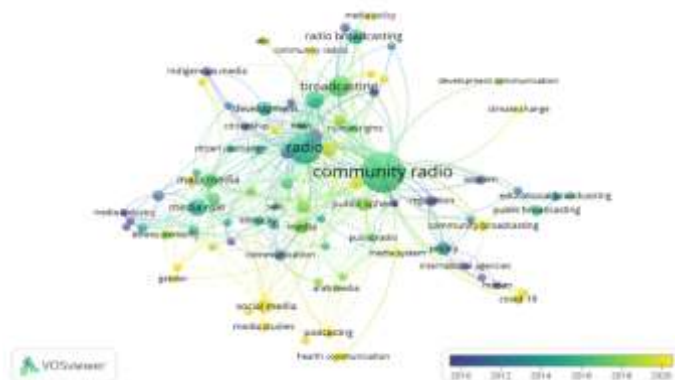
health, indigenous communities, and community radio operational modeling in the era of social-audio hybrids.



Source: Processed by author using VOSviewer

Figure 4. Network Visualization (Network)

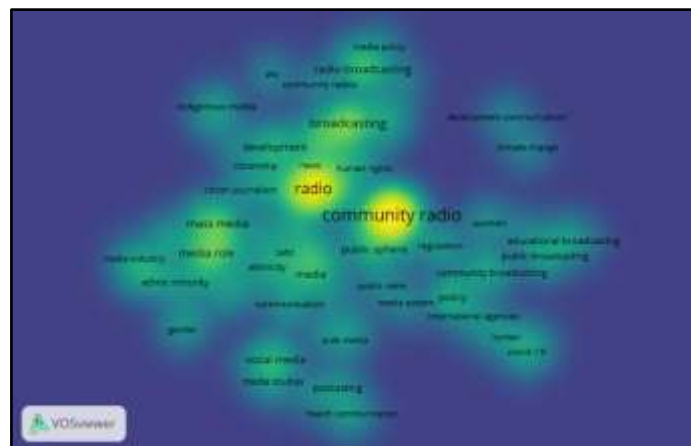
The overlay visualization in figure 5 showcases the temporal dynamics of research on community radio: the nodes tinted blue-purple (the early 2010s) are concentrated in the normative domain, such as radio/broadcasting, policy, media system, international agencies, and media industry. Subsequently, the green period (± 2015 –2017) is centered on the participatory stream of community radio (a large and central node), public sphere, citizenship, and human rights, which function as primary connectors across clusters. Meanwhile, the yellow node (2018–2020) signifies the research frontier that moves toward digital convergence and issues of disaster/sustainability, that is, social media, podcasting, media studies, development communication, climate change, health communication, and COVID-19. The breadth of the edge from community radio to the public sphere and regulation indicates the reinforcement of conceptual relations, while the relatively thin connection toward women/gender, indigenous media, and health communication indicates new themes that remain fragmented. As such, the map reveals a focal shift from regulation to platform transformation and crisis communication/sustainability, while also leading the way to integrate the social justice agenda (gender, indigenous community) into the community radio digital ecosystem.



Source: Processed by author using VOSviewer

Figure 5. Network Visualization (Overlay)

The density visualization (Figure 6) shows that warmer colors indicate the frequency of emersion and higher total link strength, suggesting three key findings: (1) the formation of the core of the discourse in the community radio, radio, and broadcasting (the brightest zone) nodes, which is supported by medium density in public sphere, regulation, policy, and media system; this pattern emphasizes the domination of the governance and public sphere agenda in community radio studies. (2) In the surrounding belt, the medium density is apparent in the comparative cluster with mainstream media, mass media, and media role along with the institutional, public/educational broadcasting domain, indicating stable conceptual relations, albeit not as intense as the core. (3) The cooler color areas (low density) appear in the themes of digital convergence, social media, podcasting, and issues of justice/resilience, women/gender, indigenous media, health communication, climate change, and COVID-19, indicating that these topics remain peripheral or have not yet been consolidated in the corpus. Interpretatively, the map revealed that the research field is still centered on the normative and classical paradigm of community radio, while the new frontier themes (digital, health, climate, and social justice) are present as promising but fragmented. This implies that a research strategy that reinforces the link between the core (governance-public space) and peripheral themes is needed through comparative studies, measured impact design, and inclusive digital radio-platform hybrid practice modelling.



Source: Processed by author using VOSviewer

Figure 6. Network Visualization (Density)

DISCUSSION

The research findings, particularly in network visualization, show that “community radio” is the most central node that binds the three key clusters: (1) governance–policy (policy, regulation, media system), (2) public participation and public space (public sphere, citizenship, human rights), and (3) digital convergence (social media, podcasting). Nodes such as the public sphere and regulation function as a bridge across clusters, while development communication connects development issues with climate/resilience (climate change). The density map indicates that the brightest areas (highest density) are on community

radio/radio/broadcasting, while medium density is shown on public sphere-regulation-policy, indicating the dominance of institutional and normative frameworks in the corpus. Conversely, the themes of women/gender, indigenous community media, health communication, climate change, and COVID-19 appear at the periphery with low density, suggesting fragmentation or a lack of conceptual integration. Overall, the research field is still based on legitimacy, public space, and governance, while digital domain-social resilience seems to have some potential but remains unconsolidated. Such conditions pave the way for research opportunities across multiple themes to design a community radio operational model in the era of social-audio hybrid and test its impact in a measured manner.

The temporal trend shown on the overlay map indicates a shift from a normative focus (radio/broadcasting, policy, media system) in the early 2010s toward a participatory stream (community radio as the large node, public sphere, citizenship, human rights) around 2015–2017, then shifting again in the 2018–2020 period toward the frontier, which is marked by platformization and communication crisis/sustainability (social media, podcasting, development communication, climate change, health communication, COVID-19). The strengthened relationship between community radio and the public sphere/regulation shows the reinforcement of the core theoretical relationship, while weak connections to issues of gender, indigenous communities, and health indicate that the social justice agenda remains disconnected.

These findings are in line with the classical literature placing governance and “public space” as the main axis of community radio studies. The visualizations show strong ties between policy/regulation and the public sphere, which supports the argument about the struggle for legitimacy of community radio in the Western context (Cammaerts, 2009) and its role as a “community public sphere” in Australia (Meadows et al., 2007). The concentration of publications from Australia identified in the research data is also consistent with an overview of the country’s community broadcasting ecosystem, which is dynamic and locally relevant. On the other hand, the clustering of “development communication” linking to issues of resilience/crisis resonates with the studies conducted by Manyozo (2009), Costa (2012), and Ewart and Dekker (2013). In summary, the bibliometric map corroborated three historical axes of discourse: legitimacy-policy, public space-participation, and the development mandate.

Compared to more recent literature on digitalization (Bosch, 2014; Coleman, 2021) and crisis communication/health (Waters et al., 2011; Ahsan & Khatun, 2020; Essel et al., 2023; Kanjilal et al., 2025), the maps of the finding results suggest that these themes have been present but remain at the periphery of the network. This indicates the presence of “neglected narratives” because the agenda of platformization and social resilience has been studied but not robustly integrated into the framework of community radio communication studies. In the Indonesian context, the literature highlights the issue of sustainability, which is heavily influenced by the political climate (Masduki, 2023), while the gender empowerment agenda, which has been a subject of advocacy for some time (Nirmala, 2015), has yet to become mainstream. The call for “de-westernizing” alternative media studies (Barranquero, 2020) is also relevant, considering the

dominance of certain geographical regions –particularly Australia–in the researcher corpus. Overall, these findings confirm the classical foundation while also emphasizing the need for integration across themes (digital-resilience-social justice) for community radio research to shift from case mosaic toward a more cohesive theoretical framework.

The primary gap appears under the themes of justice and resilience, which are observed to be on the map's periphery—gender/women, indigenous community media, health communication, climate change, and COVID-19—and rarely have strong links to the axes of public sphere-policy/regulation. This shows the lack of conceptual integration between governance, public space, and the agenda of platformization and resilience. An international study across multiple countries using multiple methods to test the “bridge mechanism,” for example, how institutional design and rules mediate public participation in the broadcasting-platform ecosystem. Geographical imbalance due to the dominance of Australia, in comparison to Canada, Indonesia, and Spain, also emphasizes the need for de-westernizing the empirical basis and deeper research explorations in the Global South (Africa, South Asia/Southeast Asian Region, Latin America) by using intersectional and decolonial lenses.

The current study had several potential biases. First, data were only obtained from Scopus, filtered using the field of social science-humanities and document type “journal article,” which may not include interdisciplinary studies, non-English articles, and grey literature. Second, the search query was relatively narrow—TITLE-ABS-KEY only “Community Radio” or “Community Radio Broadcasting”—making it sensitive to variations in terms across different contexts and languages. Third, dependency on the citation matrix tends to benefit old articles; co-word analysis and PRISMA flow diagram were helpful, but without code/data release and parameter documentation, reproducibility remains limited. Nevertheless, the size of the corpus (N=211) and transparent PRISMA flow provided a solid baseline*—but a careful reading is still necessary considering the limitations above.

Such limitations affect the reading of the maps: the centrality of “community radio” and the domination of the cluster of governance-public space may partly be triggered by indexation and vocabulary bias, and not solely a reflection of the “natural” structure of the science. Having Scopus as a single baseline may also influence the geographical pattern (e.g., the dominance of Australia) due to the variations in the scope and language of indexed journals, resulting in the distribution of countries/themes perhaps being more inclined to the ecosystem of certain publications. The spike in 2019–2024 needs to be carefully interpreted because it can be a combination of real dynamics (pandemic, platformisation) and technical factors (indexation pause). Finally, because the VOSviewer parameter is undocumented, the color thickness on the overlay density map may change if the co-occurrence threshold or normalization scheme is changed. Therefore, network findings should be viewed as indications of dominant patterns that need to undergo sensitivity testing and verification using other sources and parameters in subsequent studies.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

These findings are in line with the classical literature placing governance and “public space” as the main axis of community radio studies. The visualizations show strong ties between policy/regulation and the public sphere, which supports the argument about the struggle for legitimacy of community radio in the Western context (Cammaerts, 2009) and its role as a “community public sphere” in Australia (Meadows et al., 2007). The concentration of publications from Australia identified in the research data is also consistent with an overview of the country’s community broadcasting ecosystem, which is dynamic and locally relevant. On the other hand, the clustering of “development communication” linking to issues of resilience/crisis resonates with the studies conducted by Manyozo (2009), Costa (2012), and Ewart and Dekker (2013). In summary, the bibliometric map corroborated three historical axes of discourse: legitimacy-policy, public space-participation, and the development mandate.

Compared to more recent literature on digitalization (Bosch, 2014; Coleman, 2021) and crisis communication/health (Waters et al., 2011; Ahsan & Khatun, 2020; Essel et al., 2023; Kanjilal et al., 2025), the maps of the finding results suggest that these themes have been present but remain at the periphery of the network. This indicates the presence of “neglected narratives” because the agenda of platformization and social resilience has been studied but not robustly integrated into the framework of community radio communication studies. In the Indonesian context, the literature highlights the issue of sustainability, which is heavily influenced by the political climate (Masduki, 2023), while the gender empowerment agenda, which has been a subject of advocacy for some time (Nirmala, 2015), has yet to become mainstream. The call for “de-westernizing” alternative media studies (Barranquero, 2020) is also relevant, considering the dominance of certain geographical regions –particularly Australia–in the researcher corpus. Overall, these findings confirm the classical foundation while also emphasizing the need for integration across themes (digital-resilience-social justice) for community radio research to shift from case mosaic toward a more cohesive theoretical framework.

The primary gap appears under the themes of justice and resilience, which are observed to be on the map’s periphery –gender/women, indigenous community media, health communication, climate change, and COVID-19–and rarely have strong links to the axes of public sphere-policy/regulation. This shows the lack of conceptual integration between governance, public space, and the agenda of platformization and resilience. An international study across multiple countries using multiple methods to test the “bridge mechanism,” for example, how institutional design and rules mediate public participation in the broadcasting-platform ecosystem. Geographical imbalance due to the dominance of Australia, in comparison to Canada, Indonesia, and Spain, also emphasizes the need for de-westernizing the empirical basis and deeper research explorations in the Global South (Africa, South Asia/Southeast Asian Region, Latin America) by using intersectional and decolonial lenses.

The current study had several potential biases. First, data were only obtained from Scopus, filtered using the field of social science-humanities and

document type “journal article,” which may not include interdisciplinary studies, non-English articles, and grey literature. Second, the search query was relatively narrow – TITLE-ABS-KEY only “Community Radio” or “Community Radio Broadcasting” – making it sensitive to variations in terms across different contexts and languages. Third, dependency on the citation matrix tends to benefit old articles; co-word analysis and PRISMA flow diagram were helpful, but without code/data release and parameter documentation, reproducibility remains limited. Nevertheless, the size of the corpus (N=211) and transparent PRISMA flow provided a solid baseline* – but a careful reading is still necessary considering the limitations above.

FURTHER STUDY

The present study has a number of limitations, including dependence on a single database (Scopus), resulting in a lack of representation from non-English or local publications, temporal bias that benefits old articles in citation analysis, limited interpretation in co-word analysis that tends to be descriptive without in-depth contexts, and the absence of qualitative methods, which could be used to explore deeper sociocultural contexts. To address these limitations, subsequent studies can expand the use of other databases by integrating other sources such as Web of Science, Google Scholar, DOAJ, or regional databases, incorporating grey literature such as reports and policy documents, integrating qualitative data through in-depth interviews and case studies, applying a cross-regional comparative approach, and collecting more specific and focused longitudinal data. Subsequent studies would be more comprehensive, accurate, and relevant for reinforcing our understanding of the development of community radio in sociocultural communication.

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