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Articulating the Shan migrant community in Thai society through community radio

A case study of the Map radio FM 99 in the city of Chiang Mai, Thailand



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Abstract

Community radio as an alternative public sphere for minorities has emerged apart from mainstream media and formal public spheres. In particular, its ethos of understanding community participation as a key component of operating a station highlights its potential to empower community members as active social agents. This study examines the social consequences of an ethnic migrant community radio station, Map radio FM 99, to explore its role for the Shan migrant community in Chiang Mai, Thailand. To do so, field work was conducted for 7 weeks between December 2015 and January 2016, with data collected from semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and relevant documents. Employing a qualitative approach, this study found that participation in community radio helps participants to be socially active in Thai society by maximising their participation in the social sphere through the use of media. This study concludes that participation in Map radio enables participants to adapt to Thai society by providing and obtaining information necessary for their lives and contributed to the formation of a collective identity as ethnic migrant workers, creating community cohesion. Nonetheless, lack of political efficacy of this alternative public sphere might partly prevent social participation of community members in Thailand.

Keywords: community radio, ethnic migrant, minorities, social participation, Thailand, alternative public sphere, community cohesion

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It was three years ago when I got to know what community radio is while working in Senegal. There was the Millennium Villages Project in Potou, northern Senegal. One community radio station for rural women was a part of this project. I was curious of how radio can benefit people. That curiosity became the starting point of this thesis. And then last year, I encountered the Map radio in Thailand, which was a great coincidence. I would like to thank UNESCO Bangkok who made this coincidence happen.

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Acronyms

AM	Amplitude Modulation
AMARC	World Association of Community Radio Broadcaster
CRS	Community Radio Station
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FM	Frequency Modulation
ICT	Information Communication(s) Technology
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRT	National Radio Thailand
PRD	The Government Public Relations Department
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WACC	World Association of Christian Communicators

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“We have to understand how the social organization of the kinds of cultural production facilitated by community radio stations is shaped by ways in which participants at these radio stations make sense out of their practices and experiences. If we can understand these processes of making meaning in relation to the contexts in which they exist, contexts that can often be unfriendly, then we can understand how to make this often misunderstood media sphere stronger and more resilient (Fairchild 2013, 23) “

1. Introduction

Media in the public sphere plays an important role in ensuring the participation of citizens in modern society. The public sphere indicates a communicative space where citizens raise their opinions their general interests and discourses free from external powers with freedom of expression (Habermas et al. 1974). The importance of the public sphere arises from, in particular, the achievement of social integration through the facilitation of public discussion. However, a general disregard in mainstream media for minorities limits their opportunities to participate in the public sphere and leads to their exclusion from society. In response to this crisis, community media emerge as an alternative, separate from mainstream public and commercial media. Emphasizing community participation from a grassroots level, community media highlights the potential empowerment of community members and promotes democratic communication across many spheres of society.

Community media are generally characterised by community ownership, control, and participation, as well as non-profit making (Bonin & Opoku-Mensha 1998), although there is no universally accepted definition of ‘community media’. One form of community media, community radio, is known as one of the most influential community communication tools (Vatikiotis 2005). Some research suggests that marginalized communities are able to benefit from utilizing their own self-controlled media to participate in society (Fleras 2009; Lee 2013). However, most studies have been conducted in developed countries (Georgiou 2002; Deuze 2006; Castillo 2014) and not in developing countries. Additionally, the social functions of community media are still ambiguous (Howley 2010).

The worldwide growth of community media run by minorities can be linked with increases in migration patterns (Georgiou 2005). This presence of community media also appears in Thailand. Thailand is a multicultural society in which more than 70 ethnic groups co-exist though the country has denied social-cultural diversity and stresses homogeneity (Jory 2000;

Hayami 2006). Recent economic growth in Thailand has led to an increase in the influx of migrants from neighbouring countries, especially from Myanmar (IOM 2013). Such movements further diversify the country's cultural and ethnic landscape.

The geographic proximity and cultural similarities of northern Thailand to Myanmar have attracted Shan migrants from Myanmar for decades (Jirattikorn 2016). For this reason, the Shan migrant community has been recently reformed as a combination of old and new migrants, increasing their visibility in the country. Nonetheless, early Shan residents in Thailand received little attention from the Thai authority. This is well reflected in their early exclusion from the 'Hill-tribe', considered the country's minority groups (Lewis 2006). Moreover, new Shan migrants are known to meet demands for low-skilled and cheap labourers in Thailand (Jittatikorn 2016). In particular, their disadvantaged legal and economic status lead to their occupation of the most marginalized sections of Thai society and their exclusion from the public sphere (Murakami 2012). Furthermore, Thai media has often described migrant workers from Myanmar as illegal or a threat to national security (Sunpuwan & Niyomsilpa 2012).

1.1. Research purpose and questions

Despite their increasing visibility, the Shan migrant community is becoming a marginalized part of Thai society (Murakami 2012). Nonetheless, their participation in community radio indicates the creation of an alternative public sphere for this community. With this in mind, I consider community radio's relevance to study the ways this medium functions as an alternative public sphere in which the Shan migrant community can participate and empower themselves. This community participation is expected to bring about a range of social consequences in Thai society, as well as the community in particular. In this regard, the study views community radio as a social practice as well as an empowering tool for developmental intervention.

This study aims to explore how community radio functions as an alternative public sphere which facilitates social participation for the Shan migrant community through a case study of an ethnic migrant community radio station in the city of Chiang Mai, Thailand, focusing on individual and collective experiences. The main purpose of the study is to recognize the social value of the practices of community radio run by the ethnic migrant community in Thailand. The study further wishes to contribute to the existing literature examining the way minorities

utilise community radio in the context of Southeast Asia. The principal research question guiding the study is as follows:

What is the role of community radio as an alternative public sphere for the Shan migrant community in the city of Chiang Mai, Thailand?

This question necessitates an examination of the relationship between the Shan migrant community and their participation in community radio. For this reason, I adopt Howley (2010)'s *articulation* as an analytical framework for studying the connection between the community and communication made through community radio. This framework consists of three dimensions which inform an exploration of the social practices of community radio: *process*, *relationship*, and *agency*. In this regard, the social consequences of community radio can be answered by three subsidiary research questions:

- What drives and hinders the **process** of creating community radio as an alternative public sphere?
- What are the implications of the **relationship** with current Thai society in community radio?
- How does participation in community radio bring about changes for participants as social **agents**?

In this thesis, *participants* refers to community members who participate in practices surrounding community radio. The terms *participants* and *community members* are used interchangeably depending on the context.

1.2. Structure

In chapter two, I conduct a literature review to understand the research topic and issues surrounding community media by locating the practice between media and development studies. Chapter three uses relevant theoretical frameworks to explore the study and is followed by an introduction of an analytical framework. Chapter four provides a detailed discussion of the methods utilised in addition to the limitations of this study, including the limitations of the methodology. Chapter five analyses the case study following Howley's (2010) *articulation*.

Chapter six concludes with a discussion of the social consequences of practices pertaining to community radio with the purpose of exploring its role for the Shan migrant community.

2. The emergence of community media

This chapter provides a literature review examining historical and conceptual approaches to community media. I first explore the connection between media and development from a historical and international perspectives, examining how this connection affected the emergence of community media characterised by alternative and participatory natures. Community radio is one form of community media so it is important to understand community media broadly (Bosch 2014). Second, I introduce the notion of the public sphere in relation to community media and the exclusion of minorities. Third, I discuss the elusiveness of both ‘community’ and community media run by minorities. Finally, I examine the current status of community radio in Thailand and existing literature on the social consequences of community media on a global level.

2.1. Historical connection between media and development

Historically, the connection between media and development traces back to the 1950s, post-World War II. Media was expected to play a role in facilitating development as a method of transforming knowledge and ideas from modernised countries to developing countries (Mefalopulos 2008; McCall 2011). However, this provoked a perception of cultural imperialism in developing countries and perpetuated the top-down use of media as a tool for expressing a country’s slogan on a national level. The emergence of a participatory communication paradigm pushed back against one-way communication and gave birth to two-way communication flows (Servaes & Malikhao 2005). Participatory approaches in particular saw community as a necessary element for producing media because the community is well-attuned to daily issues (*ibid.*). Accordingly, in this approach, both community and individual members are seen as active agents for achieving developmental efforts.

In the meantime, against cultural imperialism, international players in media expressed concerns about achieving democratic communication. Such concerns are expressed in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)’s report on the structural reform of global communication infrastructure (MacBride 1980). Even though this reform was confined to national governmental levels, this inspired local and global civil society

to contribute to so-called ‘globalization from below’ with the support of communication rights in the 1990s (Saeed 2009, 469). According to World Association of Christian Communicators (WACC) (2006),

Communication rights go beyond mere freedom of opinion and expression, to include areas such as democratic media governance, participation in one’s own culture, linguistic rights, rights to enjoy the fruits of human creativity, to education, to privacy, peaceful assembly, and self-determination. These are questions of inclusion and exclusion, of quality and accessibility. In short, they are questions of human dignity. (67)

Such an assertion suggests that civil society understands communication rights as basic human rights. Nevertheless, a growing worldwide recognition of communication rights does not necessarily guarantee that they are upheld within the boundaries of nation-states (O’Siochru 2004). Arguably, communication rights cannot be fully realised without community media created by an ‘alternative communication infrastructure’ (Saeed 2009, 470).

2.2. Participatory and alternative community media

The participatory approach discussed in the previous section resulted in many community-led development projects, especially in the global South (Mefalopulos 2008). Serving specific communities, community media operates *for*, *of*, and *by* the community. This highlights the participatory nature of community media. According to Rennie (2006, 22), community media is broadly defined as ‘media that allows for access and participation’. Jankowski (1994, 3) argues that the main differences in community media are attributable to ‘the higher level of participation of different social groups and communities’.

It is also possible to understand community media as alternative to mainstream media. Arguably, the growth of community media can be attributed to the inability of mainstream media, public services, and commercial broadcasting to meet the needs of disadvantaged social groups (Lewis 2008). Shukla (2014) claims that mainstream media do not represent the voices of the marginalized. From this perspective, community media are located apart from the state and market and thereby their existence weakens the power of mainstream media (Chiumbu 2014; Conrad 2014). Howley (2005, 2) defines community media as ‘grassroots or locally

oriented media access initiatives predicated on a profound sense of dissatisfaction with mainstream media form and content, dedicated to the principles of free expression and participatory democracy'. Therefore, community media as an alternative provides marginalized communities with the means to raise their excluded voices (Atton 2001).

Radical media studies, however, argues that alternative media should be replaced with 'citizens' media to prevent the binary notion of community media as alternative which renders ordinary people powerless while providing the elites in mainstream media with absolute power (Rodríguez 2008). Rather, Atton (2001, 21) focuses on the function of community media as complex 'agents of developmental power' which create social participation by producing and disseminating media, more so than in mainstream media, while recognizing their alternative natures simultaneously. Furthermore, he claims that the interest of alternative media is more than simply having an oppositional position to the mainstream media, rather it is 'the processes and relations that form around alternative media' (*ibid.*, 3). This reflects the participatory nature of alternative media, similar to participatory community media.

2.3. Media, the public sphere, and the exclusion of minorities

Media is an essential space for creating public discussion despite divergent opinions among scholars (Butsch 2007; Bosch 2014). In understanding this, the notion of the *public sphere* has been particularly influential. According to Habermas et al. (1974, 49), the public sphere refers to a space where 'citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions about matters of general interest'. In principle, this sphere is distinct from the state and the official-economy, thereby enabling citizens to participate independently and equally (*ibid.*). By doing so, the public sphere creates social integration by achieving a single, unitary public sphere from public consensus. This is conducive to a functioning democracy (*ibid.*).

Nevertheless, the concept of the public sphere has been revised and expanded in light of its shortcomings (Fraser 1990; Butsch 2007). Typically, as Fraser (1990) points out, the public sphere proposed by Habermas contributes to the social exclusion of minorities, including women, ethnic groups, and the lower classes. In other words, in his bourgeois concept of the public sphere, Habermas ignores the existence of minorities who are inherently precluded from the formal public sphere (*ibid.*). In contrast to the public of Habermas' formal public sphere,

so-called ‘subaltern counterpublics’ create alternative public spheres to ‘create counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs’ (*ibid.*, 67).

Community media associated with these subaltern counter-publics are considered important in shaping their identities, needs, and interests, and challenging the dominant order of the formal public sphere. This is well reflected in the statement that

community media provides a platform for those who are often voiceless in society. Radio, moving image and internet are all powerful campaigning tools to bring attention to inequality and injustice in communities [...] to present their perspectives and challenge negative images of themselves. (Paul Zealey Associates 2007, 5).

2.4. ‘Community’ media by minorities

Nevertheless, little research has been completed concerning the use and production of community media by minorities. Moreover, reflecting the diversity of minorities, community media which serves such groups takes on different names, including indigenous, ethnic, migrant, minority, and multicultural media, among others. (Bailey et al 2008; Lin & Song 2006; Mahlangu 2015; Matsaganis et al. 2010; Meadows 2015; Fleras 2009).

Such breadth in naming is partially attributable to the inherent elusiveness of the concept of *community*. Community has been traditionally recognized in terms of geography and ethnicity, examining collective identity and group relations (Carpentier et al. 2003). However, the concept has developed into a fluid notion which encompasses a group of people sharing interests and virtual spaces influenced by the development of information communication technologies (ICTs) (*ibid.*). On the other hand, Cohen (1985, 70) emphasizes the subjective meaning of community, arguing that ‘a shift away from the structure of community towards a symbolic construction of community and in order to do so, takes culture, rather than structure as point of departure’. Bosch (2014) asserts that, in the context of community radio, the notion of community should be defined by the changes of the radio station based on their network sociality.

2.5. Community radio landscape in Thailand

The presence of community media in Thailand has increased because of continuous political instability, mainly caused by military intervention and the following reaction from civil society called the ‘Campaign for Popular Media Reform’ (CPMR) in the late 1990s (Klangnarong 2009; Siriyuvasak 2009). According to Booten & Klangnarong (2009), not only the CPMR, but also ethnic minorities, and labour organizations worked together to defend their communication rights and freedom of expression (*ibid.*). Along with increased funding from international donors directed towards Thailand at the time, this social movement resulted in a nationwide surge of community radio. In Thailand, radio is the second most popular medium and almost half of the urban populations listen to the radio (*ibid.*). Lewis (2006) argues that radio was the only medium available for civil society reformers because it is not capital-intensive. Additionally, the 1997 Constitution, which changed the status of frequencies from government resources to national assets, is considered a critical turning point in the spread of community radio in the country (Magpanthong & McDaniel 2015). Before this point, media outlets were mostly controlled by the state and focused largely on the capital city, Bangkok.

Community radio is relatively new in parts of Southeast Asia compared to other developing countries such as those in Africa or Latin America (Helbardt 2015). Though Thailand has the largest number of Community Radio Stations (CRSs) in the region, and there have been several developmental projects concerning community radio (Green 2013; Buckley 2011), community radio has largely been exploited as a tool for political propaganda and profit (Magpanthong & McDaniel 2011; Brooten & Klangnarong 2009). For this reason, the principles of community radio, such as serving the community and non-profits, have been neither strictly nor strongly upheld in the country. Today, no strong legal identity or licensing framework exists for community broadcasting. Moreover, military coups in 2006 and 2014 endangered the status of CRSs and restricted freedom of expression (AMARC 2014). Some scholars doubt whether CRSs exist which aim to empower minorities in Thailand (Supadhiloke 2011). In this regard, research on a national level concerning the interrelation of minorities, community radio, and its social consequences is sparse.

2.6. The social consequences of community media by minorities

Globally, some studies on community media used by minorities demonstrate that these communities can bring about a range of social changes. For instance, in the case of immigrant media, Matsaganis et al.’s (2010, 60-63) study shows that community media provide new

immigrants with information such as immigration and citizenship policies which are not offered by mainstream media. Moreover, Meadows (2015) in his study on indigenous radio in Australia, equates this radio with an indigenous public sphere which has the potential to connect indigenous people with a mainstream public sphere. While these studies express the potential of community media in connecting minority communities with the mainstream society, some studies reveal that community media play a facilitating role in forging community bonds. In a study on British Muslims and their involvement in community media, Bailey et al. (2008) suggests that community media helps the minority group to articulate their identities, simultaneously confirming their differences in the country's multicultural setting. Further, indigenous community radios in Mexico contributed to making socio-cultural cohesion among ethnic groups by subtly changing the dominant cultural order which weighed on indigenous cultures (Rodríguez 2005).

In Thailand, despite its scarcity, some research shows that ethnic minorities have utilised community radio. For instance, Helbardt's research (2015) on Malay Muslim in southern Thailand shows that community radio has contributed to creating a local public sphere for the community by allowing community members to speak their language in the context of a Muslim insurgency. However, the study also revealed that there have been dominant commercial interests, as well as threats from the Thai military (*ibid.*), which fail to preserve the ethos of community media. Acknowledging these political and commercial disturbances in community radio in Thailand, Supadhiloke's (2011) research nonetheless shows that using the participatory features of community radio creates the potential to empower rural people, particularly hill-tribes, as well-informed citizens.

In summary, despite scholarly interest and contributions to understandings of community media and their use by minorities, the concept and social functions of community media are highly elusive (Howley 2010; Carpentier et al. 2003; Atton 2001). The inherent heterogeneity of the concept *community* makes such an understanding even less attainable. Additionally, this elusiveness is also attributable to the fact that community media is already embedded in the social, political, cultural, and economic context of a given society (Atton 2015; Jallow 2012). In this sense, social consequences revealed by researchers cannot be directed applied in different contexts.

Furthermore, in Thailand, though there is a general consensus that political and business

interests are prevalent in community radio, evidence concerning community radio as a tool for empowering ethnic minorities in the country, as well global evidence concerning gaps bridged by minorities with mainstream society and the strengthening of cultural identities through participation in community radio, contribute to the positive relevance to this study. Additionally, the exclusion of minorities in the public sphere leads to the creation of an alternative public sphere *of, for, and by* minorities. In the next chapter, in considering community radio as this alternative public sphere, I outline a theoretical lens which guides the current study.

3. Theorizing community radio as an alternative public sphere

In this chapter, I first explore community radio through the notion of an alternative public sphere where community members create their social participation. Second, I discuss the practices of community radio, including participation with different action rationales, as well as participation created by partnerships and strategic alliances with external organizations beyond the community. Third, the socio-cultural functions of community radio are presented. Finally, I describe the social consequences of community radio in a multicultural setting.

3.1. Understanding community radio as an alternative public sphere

Community radio is considered the most effective and democratic mode of community communication (Vatikiotis 2005). Bosch (2014, 430) argues that radio has several advantages due to ‘more widespread geographic coverage; access to rural or illiterate populations and the ability to broadcast in minority language’ as well as its low cost of operation. According to the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC, 2007),

Community radio [...] should not be run for profit but for social gain and community benefit; it should be owned by and accountable to the community that it seeks to serve; and it should provide for participation by the community in programme making and in management. (63)

Such a call highlights the participatory features of community radio and its contribution to social gain. Similarly, Berrigan (1981) argues that community radio allows either social groups or individuals to enter into the public arena by promoting their participation. In particular, its accessibility by minorities leads to a favourable environment for creating an alternative public

sphere. Alternative public spheres here indicate a communicative space where minorities create their own discourses (Fraser 1990; Bosch 2014; Meadows 2015).

Fraser (1990)'s recognition of an alternative public sphere is valuable in understanding community radio. Fraser focuses on distinct features of the alternative public sphere which are absent from Habermasian official public sphere, such as social inequality and exclusion (Butsh 2007). In other words, alternative public spheres are created as a result of social inequality and the exclusion of minorities from the official public sphere. Furthermore, Fraser (2007) pinpoints the importance of 'efficacy' in forming an (alternative) public sphere. Rooted in political theory, the notion suggests the public sphere should be equipped with both *normative legitimacy* and *political efficacy* to have critical mass (*ibid.*). While legitimacy concerns the inclusiveness of the public in a sphere, efficacy concerns delivering the will of the public as a form of civil society, which can be further realized in a certain society (*ibid.*, 8). In this regard, Fraser (1990, 89-92) claims that the (alternative) public sphere can have more influence on social change when it involves the formation of public opinion and decision-making.

The recognition of an alternative public sphere implies the presence of multiple public spheres in society. According to Fraser (1990, 65-70), multiple public spheres are preferred and better ensure participatory parity for all, especially in a stratified or multicultural society. Although this claim is based on the assumption that 'multiple public spheres are situated in a single "structured setting" that advantages some and disadvantages other' (Fraser 1990, 68), it is clear that a single unitary public sphere can not guarantee participation for all.

On the other hand, in considering the presence of multiple public spheres, Keane (1995) expresses a different perspective, arguing that multiple public spheres are created based on 'difference' within public spheres. Keane distinguishes public spheres on a spatial basis: macro public spheres (global and regional levels), meso-public spheres (at the level of the territorial nation-state), and micro-public spheres (sub-state level). Regarding this approach, Vatikiotis (2010, 39) notes that 'this significantly sets a dynamic understanding of the public sphere on the grounds of practices realized in the arena of civil society'.

According to Keane (1995), a micro public sphere is a local space where the public can easily come for discussions as well as the origin of all social movements. While a meso-public sphere

encompasses millions of people as an audience within a national boundary, a macro-public spheres encompasses more than hundreds of millions of people as a consequence of the international concentration of mass media beyond a national level (*ibid.*). Therefore, community radio is considered part of a micro public sphere as a result of its locality and limited focus. Nevertheless, Keane claims that multiple public spheres are ‘complex mosaic of differently sized, overlapping and interconnected public spheres’ (*ibid.*, 1).

In the current study, I understand community radio as an alternative public sphere which is one of multiple public spheres, drawing on Fraser (1990) and Keane (1995). In this regard, its potential growth and interconnectedness with other public spheres are discussed in chapter five.

3.2. The practices of community radio

Participation is an essential element in the practice of community radio. Thus, it is imperative to examine the ways participation is constructed in a variety forms and manners. Additionally, participation in community radio can be constituted by partnerships and strategic alliances with the state and commercial media outlets, as well as other civil society organizations (CSOs).

3.2.1. Participation with different action rationales

In community radio, different forms of participation are made through the different action rationales of participants. For Leal (2009, 159), different action rationales refer to ‘the differing orientations that motivate the actions of the actors who perform in the space of the radio station, namely the host/presenters and directors who are connected to the station by means of voluntary and contractual regimes’. Participants—community members—are planners, producers, and performers at a radio station (Berrigan 1981). Despite different action rationales, Leal (2009) claims that this does not prevent radio stations from being democratic and participatory spaces.

Theories concerning participation in media have been extensively discussed by Carpentier. According to Carpentier (2011), two participatory dimensions of the media sphere can be explained with maximalist and minimalist approaches. The minimalist approach emphasises the professionalism of media practitioners and their control of the content of media while allowing an audience to make mediated-contributions to access to and interact with this content. On the contrary, the maximalist approach to media participation stresses the audience’s

heterogeneity, multidirectional participation, and non-professionalism by maximizing audiences' participation in the media sphere (*ibid.*, 66). In particular, the maximalist approach is considered important in community media (Bailey et al. 2008; Rodriquez 2001), which is also adopted in the current study.

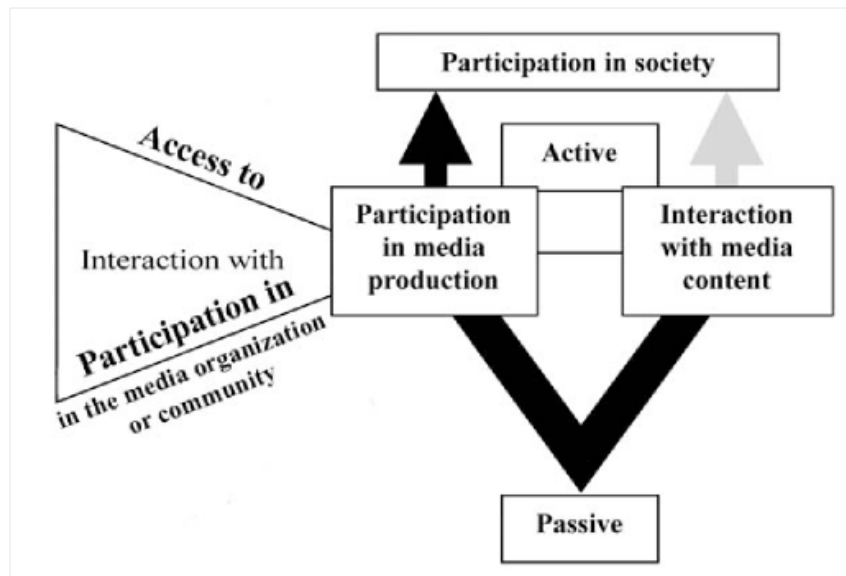


Figure 1. Participation dimensions in the media sphere (Carpentier 2011, 70)

For Carpentier (2011, 67), audience participation in media can take two forms: *participation through media* and *participation in media*. Traditional binary patterns which describe an audience as merely receptive/passive or active are reformulated here under the category of participation.

According to Carpentier (2011), *participation through media* takes the form of expressing individual voices and experiences to interact with other people. Interaction is a process of exchanging interpretations of the media content. In addition, *participation in media* production consists of content-related participation and structural participation (*ibid.*). While the former refers to direct engagement in the production of the content of media, the latter refers to involvement in decision-making processes. Both forms of participation encourage participants to be active in the public spheres related to their daily lives (*ibid.*). Access to and interaction with media contents, or participation through media, is also a process of participation, however, such aspects are clearly distinct from participation in media which tends to focus on power dynamics and decision making (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, according to Carpentier (2011), access to, interaction with, and participation in media organizations or communities support ‘participation in media production’. Arguably, both participation in media production and interaction with media content ultimately lead to participation in society (See figure 1).

3.2.2. Strategic alliances and partnerships

Partnership and strategic alliances between community media and other organizations are considered important as they help produce social gain (Lewis 2008; Holwey 2010). Theoretically, such social gain can be understood through a consideration of the rhizome as postulated by Deleuze and Guattari. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the rhizome encompasses a philosophy of the state of being non-linear, anarchic, and nomadic. They argue that the rhizome ‘ceaselessly established connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power and circumstances’ (Carpentier et al. 2003, 61). With this metaphor, it can be seen that community media can make a fluid connection with the state and the market, but can also act as a part of civil society (*ibid.*). Additionally, Bosch (2014, 428) notes that the rhizome helps community radio to ‘create linkages within and between communities, and leads to horizontal growth through its grassroots engagement with community organizations and community members’.

Carpentier et al. (2003, 51) asserts that “the antagonism towards state and market and the resistance against a multitude of hegemonic discourses has left the community movement in a position of discursive isolation.” From this point of view, different types of partnerships or strategic alliances are recommended. According to Carpentier et al. (2003), strategic alliances reduce the long standing antagonism of community media towards mainstream media. Furthermore, partnerships with civic groups can facilitate social movements through common goals (*ibid.*).

According to Girard (2007, 16), partnerships in community radio are ‘a result of an association with a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), profession, business or government agency outside of the station’. Through partnership, community radio can have partnership volunteers and partner organizations. Partner organizations often decide to partner with radio stations for the purpose of airtime and establishing reciprocal relationships (*ibid.*). Community radio is characterized by a high level of volunteer participation because of its non-profit ethos (Bonin

& Opoku-Mensah 1998; Girard 2007; Bosch 2014). Volunteers can be considered as individual volunteers or partnership volunteers (Girard 2007). While individual volunteers participate in community radio within the community, partnership volunteers come to the station through external organizations which are partners of a radio station. There is a general perception that partnership volunteers have a higher level of expertise than individual volunteers who are more enthusiastic to participate (*ibid.*).

Work by Bailey et al. (2008, 156) notes that collaboration with public and mainstream media can be beneficial if this collaboration is based on respect for the individual actors involved. Additionally, such collaboration may strengthen the relatively weak position of community media, broadening 'public sphericules' (*ibid.*). However, 'public sphericules' should be differentiated from counter-publics in the alternative public sphere. Public sphericules are 'social fragments that do not have critical mass' (Cunningham 2010, 134), which has 'limited chances to get proper attention and have a minimal effect on national politics' (Lee 2013, 2612). Members of sphericules do not have much interest in participating in other public spheres (Lee 2013). Cunningham (2010) explains that the development of ICTs along with globalisation enables communities to find their community members beyond the nation and stay closer with them within this community. For this reason, while counter-publics attempt to make connections with other public spheres, public sphericules rarely interact with other spheres, persisting in their own differences (Lee 2013). With a similar perspective, Schiller (2007) claims that the presence of multiple alternative public spheres (made by partnerships or strategic alliances) does not necessarily result in favourable conditions for social inclusion. The question here is whether strategic alliances or partnerships facilitate the character of public sphericules or counter-publics in community radio.

In the current study, I understand strategic alliances as those taking place between community radio and mainstream media, namely state and the commercial outlets, and partnerships as collaboration with CSOs out of convenience.

3.3. The socio-cultural functions of community radio

Participation in community radio facilitates a range of socio-cultural changes within a community. This section explores these functions through notions of empowerment and collective identity.

3.3.1. Community radio, participation, and empowerment

Entering public discourses through participation in community radio promotes a greater level of individual and collective agency (Berrigan 1981). Agency is a central concept to understand empowerment, describing the process of change, whereas an agent is someone ‘who acts and brings about social change’ (Sen 2001; Kabeer 2012).

Describing community radio as empowerment radio, Jallof (2012) explains that empowerment grows when people realize their knowledge and through the power obtained by sharing this knowledge with others. Similarly, Khawaja (2005) argues that empowerment consists of information and influence. The first component of empowerment, *information*, can be divided into two aspects, provision of information and access to information. While the provision of information intends to benefit listeners by matching their needs, access to information does so by allowing them to make informed decisions (*ibid.*). In this sense, participation in community radio can be understood as a means of providing and gaining information (Bosch 2014). Indicating the role of community radio as democratising information, Shukla (2014) claims that information further reduces disparities in resources and opportunities by facilitating their equitable allocation in society at large.

Moreover, as discussed by Khwaja (2005), information is often accompanied by influence. *Influence* refers to agents’ relative ownership in decision-making processes, largely linked to bargaining power (*ibid.*, 274). The bargaining power might suggest power relationship with others, however, for Page and Czuba (1999), power can also be understood as mutual sharing and collaboration.

In discussing radical democracy, Rodríguez (2008, 21) claims that community radio is a space where ‘quotidian politics’ can take place in everyday life. Participants in community radio experience a unique setting with ‘a more fluid notion of citizenship’ (*ibid.*, 160). Similarly, Rennie (2006) suggests that community media provides community members with civic competency outside of formal political structures. The concept of citizenship presented here is not confined to legal statuses or arrangements. According to Kabeer (2012), citizenship can be understood in terms of citizenship as status and citizenship as practice. While the former refers

to the legal arrangement of defining citizens' rights and responsibilities, the latter details the ways in which community members seek to act on or challenge formal definitions of citizenship (*ibid.*). Furthermore, Kabeer argues that citizenship as a practice is connected to human agency in terms of interpreting understandings of citizenship (*ibid.*). Therefore, it is likely that the practices of community radio are invested in the process of experiencing citizenship as practice.

3.3.2. Community radio, participation, and collective identity

Community radio enables community members to share a language that reflects their common social and ethnic formation. For Howley (2010), this facilitates the creation of a sense of shared identity and collective solidarity. Especially for minority groups, this can be an act of demonstrating indigenous forms of expression and defending cultural identities (Rodríguez 2008). Nonetheless, the notion of collective identity can present dualistic elements. Identity appears from a dynamic systems of relationships and refers not only to inclusion but also to exclusion in defining social boundaries (Lewis 2008). Furthermore, this collective identity differentiates one community from another (Howley 2010). However, in discussing community as 'unity in difference' (Cohen 1985), Howley (2010) explains that while community implies similarities between/within community members through symbolic practices such as language and discursive practices, diverse and heterogeneous lives and experiences exist within community.

3.4. The social consequences of community radio

The practices of community radio result in social consequences for a given society as well as the community. Fleras (2009) claims that these consequences are multidimensional. For this reason, this section explores multidimensionality as it is important for understanding the 'underlying logic in form, function and process' of community media (*ibid.*, 725).

By recognizing community media as a form of social capital, Fleras (2009; 2015) argues that community media creates bonding (within community) and bridges roles (between communities) for migrant communities in a new society. According to Fleras (2009, 726–727), community media can operate inwards by announcing relevant information about a homeland, and outwards by reporting information of 'relevance and immediacy' necessary for life in a

new society. According to Mediam'Rad¹ (2009, cited in Fleras 2009, 725), these two functions highlights community's 'cultural multi-belongings and spatial interdependence'.

	Reactive	Proactive
Inward focus (bonding/insular)	Constructing buffers Reaction to invisibility in mainstream media by offering the perspectives of minorities	Creating bonds Foster community pride/cohesion by celebrating community achievements and provide news from a homeland
Outward focus (bridging/integrative)	Removing barriers Address injustice by advocating for positive change and levelling uneven discourse	Building bridges Civic participation while fostering intercultural dialogue for social integration

Table 1. Multidimensionality of community media as a social capital (Source: Fleras 2009; 2015).

Community media can also operate reactively and proactively (Fleras 2009). As discussed, as alternative media, community media responds to the needs, identities, and furthermore, the realities of communities which are not discussed in mainstream media by offering a community's perspectives. Moreover, community media can proactively celebrate community culture and identities, creating social cohesion within the community. However, thinking from an outward perspective, such strengthened cohesion may insulate a community from a new society (Fleras 2009). Similarly, McQuail (2010, 262–263) explains that community media has the capability to both facilitate and diminish social integration and that both forces take place simultaneously. Furthermore, he notes that 'this social integration and dispersal can be valued differently, depending on preference and perspective' (ibid., 263). Lewis (2008) claims that this perspective is largely dependent on the political stances of the regime in power.

Nonetheless, Fleras (2009, 726) emphasizes that the outward role of community media should not be underestimated because it allows community members to challenge inequitable social structures to create a more inclusive society, as well as proactively facilitate intercultural dialogues. A multidimensional understanding of community media that considers outward and inward perspectives, as well as proactive and reactive actions, is depicted in Table 1.

¹ Mediam'Rad is a program initiated by the Paris-based Institute Panos 'in order to promote partnerships and collaboration between ethnic media and mainstream media' (Matsaganis et al. 2010, 17)

To summarize, through this theoretical framework, I have tried to explore how community media, especially community radio, is formed, functions, and creates social consequences. In the next section, I outline the analytical framework used to examine a case study.

3.5. Analytical framework

To analyse the social consequences from the practices of community radio and in keeping with the multidimensionality of community media (Fleras 2009; Fleras 2015), I adopt *articulation* as an analytical framework based on the theoretical grounds discussed. Articulation entails the act of combining separate elements, namely, connecting, in addition to enunciating. Howley (2010) finds the practice of combining two different meanings useful for examining various conditions, including the multiplicitous and often competing interests and players which shape the practices of community radio. According to Howley (*ibid.*, 4), ‘the feeling of affinity, belonging, “we-ness” that we share for our local neighbourhoods, ethnic communities, or nationality are articulated within and through communication’. In cultural studies, this is referred to as the ‘symbolic construction of community’ through communication (Hall 1989; Anderson 1991). As Bosch (2014) argues, the notion of community in the context of community radio should be defined by networked sociality. In this regard, I explore ways of defining *community* in the CRS under study.

Articulation theory is useful for analysing this particular case in that it views community radio as a range of socio-cultural practices (Howley 2010). As an analytical lens, articulation posits three dimensions concerning the practices of community radio: process, relationship, and agency. Below, I outline the manner in which these three dimensions are defined and explored in the current study, drawing largely on Howley (*ibid.*).

3.5.1. Process

Process indicates the way in which two different elements are articulated together. Specifically, process explores how community members create connections within community radio to create their own public sphere, understood as an ‘alternative public sphere’ in the current study (Fraser 1990). On the other hand, this process also indicates why community members are not allowed to be part of the ‘formal public sphere’ (Habermas et al. 1974). The current study thus explores community radio as an alternative public sphere by scrutinizing the reasons underlying the establishment of the CRS which is being studied. Furthermore, community radio

has a strong focus on ‘doing communication’ (Atton 2001; Howley 2010). This is largely linked with the process of community participation. As discussed by Carpentier (2011), participation in media arises from different modes and motivations, called ‘different action rationales’ in the context of community radio (Leal 2009). Additionally, Atton (2001) argues that community media as an alternative produces content which is not examined by mainstream media. Thus, process can also refer to the way community members participate by producing alternative media content. With this in mind, the current study explores community participation arising from different action rationales as well as the content produced by participants.

3.5.2. Relationship

Relationship refers to the articulated linkages or alliances within community radio across any social levels including the nation-state, a media system, a neighbourhood, civic groups, and even individuals (Howley 2010). In the current study, I pay particular attention to the relationship between community radio and contemporary Thai society with the purpose of exploring the outward functions of community radio. Furthermore, relationship can also arise from partnerships and strategic alliances with external organizations. Carpentier et al. (2003) argue that strategic alliances with the mainstream media diminish antagonism from community media towards mainstream state and business-oriented media, preventing the isolation of community discourse. Furthermore, Bosch (2014) claims that partnerships within other CSOs can facilitate community or social movements through shared goals. As specified, the question is whether these strategic alliances or partnership facilitate the characters of community radio as public spherules or counterpublics, addressing the inward or outward functions of community radio. Therefore, I examine the mode in which these relationships influence the transformation of an alternative public sphere.

3.5.3. Agency

Agency refers to ‘the pivotal role human actions plays in articulating and rearticulating social formation’ (Howley 2010, 15). In other words, a form of articulation emerges when community members are empowered through their participation in community radio (Mhlanga 2015). In the context of community radio, agency can bring about social changes by mobilizing individual and collective abilities. As discussed, Jallov (2009) argues that empowerment as an expression of agency grows when people realize their knowledge as well as through the power

obtained from sharing this knowledge with others. In this regard, the role of information in empowering individual participants is examined following Khawaja's (2005) argument. Moreover, it is argued that shared language and cultural identities strengthen the collective identity and solidarity of community members (Holwey 2010; Rodríguez 2008). For this reason, I explore how collective identities can lead to the exercising of participants' collective agency through community radio.

4. Methodology

In this chapter, I outline the methodology used in the current study. This includes the research design, sampling strategy, methods for data collection, quality of data, and analysis process of data. Relevant ethical considerations during fieldwork are addressed in addition to methodological limitations as well as the limitations of this study. I first briefly introduce the research site and the Shan migrant community in Chiang Mai.

4.1. Research site and subject

Chiang Mai is the second largest city located in northern Thailand. The majority of the migrant population in the city are Shan (Eberle & Holliday 2010). There are more than 150,000 Shan migrants in the city, almost one-sixth of the city's population (Jirattikorn 2012). According to Jirattikorn (*ibid.*, 1), Chiang Mai became a main destination for Shan migrants because of 'its provincial border with the Shan State in Myanmar, the language similarity² between the northern Thai dialect and Shan language, and Chiang Mai's status as a metropolitan centre in the North where there is a great deal of demand for cheap labour' (See figure 2 below).

As the second largest of seven ethnic minorities in Myanmar, the Shan have struggled for independence during the country's history. In addition to long-standing civil conflicts, economic hardships in Myanmar continuously motivate the Shan people to migrate to Chiang Mai (Murakami 2012). Early migrants who arrived in Thailand before the 1960s have obtained Thai citizenship while recent migrants often hold the status of temporary or illegal (*ibid.*). For this reason, Thai media has often described migrant workers from Myanmar as illegal or a threat to national security (Sunpuwan & Niyomsilpa 2012). According to Jirattikorn (2016), the number of the Shan migrants is expected to grow in the near future. In Thailand, Shan

² According to interviewees, the similarity between Shan and Thai languages is 60–70%.

migrants often work on construction, agricultural, or horticultural sites if they are men, and most Shan women work as domestic workers (Map Foundation 2012).



Figure 2. The location of the Shan state and Chiang Mai city (Source: Wijesingha 2016)

The Migrant Assistant Program (Map) radio FM 99.75 under study is the first CRS in the Shan language in Chiang Mai. With the financial support of the Map foundation, the Map radio has broadcast for the migrant community in Chiang Mai since 2004 without advertisements. The broadcast is daily from 9 am to 8 pm, 77 hours per week. Radio programmes are broadcast in three languages, (northern) Thai, Shan, and Burmese³. Today, the radio station is operated with the help of volunteers as well as staffs from the Map foundation. All parties engage in broadcasting and their skills used for broadcasting has been largely self-managed after a short time of training.

³ The Map foundation has two Map CRSs, the Map Radio FM 99 in Chiang Mai and the Map Radio 102.5 in the Mae Sot district eastern Thailand. The programmes at the Mae Sot CRS are broadcast in Burmese as the migrant and refugee population in MaeSot is dominantly Burmese because of its proximity to the Myanmar border. As shown in the timetable of broadcasting for the Chiang Mai Map CRS (see Appendix IV), there are also programmes broadcast in Burmese. These programmes are recorded from the MaeSot station and broadcast in Chiang Mai using online files.

4.2. Research design

The current study is conducted following a qualitative research strategy. As Chambliss and Schutt note (2013), qualitative research involves exploratory research questions, orientation towards a social context, and a focus on human subjectivity. More specifically, the strategy chosen is a case study. This enables researchers to explore in depth a programme, activity, or individuals (Creswell 2013). Map radio FM 99 was chosen as a case study to help explore and understand how community radio as an alternative public sphere might encourage the social participation of the Shan migrant community through participation in the practices of community radio.

4.3. Sampling strategy

A case study requires a researcher to find a rationale for a purposeful sampling strategy to gather information on a specific case (Creswell 2013). Purposeful sampling refers to the process of selecting sites and participants because of their unique positions (Chambliss & Shutte 2013). As a site, Chiang Mai city was selected primarily in consideration of the large ethnic and migrant populations. The radio station was then selected based on three criteria: 1) lacking commercials or political propaganda with the aim of remaining true to the principles of community radio, 2) serving a socially marginalized community, and 3) including strategic alliances/partnerships with other social groups. The first criterion was particularly important because community radio in Thailand is highly politicised and commercialised, as discussed (Magpanthong & McDaniel 2015). For these reasons, the case study fits the rubrics of a ‘critical case’, meaning a case including rich information regarding my inquiries (Chambliss & Shutte 2013).

In considering participants, community members of Map radio were purposefully selected in terms of their varying action rationales, including volunteer and staff broadcasters, and listeners. In addition to purposive sampling, I adopted a snowball sampling strategy to interview individuals working for partner organizations by asking for help from interviewees in identifying the sample (*ibid.*). Even though this strategy was at first unplanned, it enabled me to become more flexible.

4.4. Methods

According to Creswell (2007), a qualitative researcher employs multiple sources of information to explore a case. The methods I chose for collecting data include: 1) Semi-structured interviews, 2) Participant observation, and 3) Document analysis. I interviewed 23 people and my overall field work continued for 7 weeks between December 2015 and January 2016. In the following sections, I outline each method used as well as how they were employed in the field.

4.4.1. Semi-structured interview

Type	Categories	Number of interviewee	
Semi-structured interview	Map Radio	Staff Broadcasters	5
		Volunteer Broadcasters	7
		Listeners	5
	Others	Academics/researchers	3
		Media activists	1
		Government officials	1
		Other	1
	Total		23

Table 2. Types of interviewees

At the Map radio, all interviews were conducted at the radio station. Most interviews were conducted in English. Some interviewees, five listeners and two volunteer broadcasters, do not speak English, and so interviews were conducted with the help of an interpreter from Shan to English. All interviews took the form of a semi-structured interview with prepared guiding questions (See Appendix II). Additionally, interviews with media activists and government officials were conducted to explore the landscape of community media and radio in Thailand. This was particularly important because CRSs are embedded in regulatory paradigms related to the policies of the host country (Bailey et al. 2008). Interviews with academics/researchers were also conducted so as to better grasp theoretical and contextual insights into the dynamics of radio stations in Thailand. These three interviewees have extensive experience in the field of media and communication. Finally, a Shan broadcaster working for National Radio Thailand Chiang Mai who worked with Map radio was interviewed (See more details on interviewees in Appendix I).

4.4.2. Participant observation

As discussed by Chambliss and Schutt (2013), participation observation includes several options for particular research settings: complete observation, mixed in observation and participation, and complete participation. Because I am not a Shan speaker and have basic knowledge of Thai, I positioned myself as a complete observer. In complete observation, a researcher observes events without active participation (*ibid.*, 184).

During fieldwork, participation observation was conducted to observe interactions between listeners and broadcasters taking place at the radio station and during the broadcasting. Nonetheless, observation focused mainly on broadcasters and their programmes. The details of these programmes and for observation are presented in Appendix I and Appendix II. Considering the language barrier and despite the presence of the interpreter, observation focused only on how many calls the broadcaster received from listeners, how broadcasters acted while interacting with listeners, and other dynamics such as listeners' song requests and broadcasters' responses.

Moreover, I attended an international conference "Culture and Communication for Sustainable Development Goals" on December 18, 2015 where two staff broadcasters from Map radio presented their communication strategies for migrant workers. One listener panel held in January 15, 2016 was also observed. Because participation observation lasted seven weeks, enough time to create close relations with community members, my role as a complete observer was often confused with participant researcher. Nonetheless, I consider this irrelevant to the data collection and draw conclusions based on this data.

4.4.3. Document analysis

During field work, a few relevant documents were collected with the help of key informants at Map radio, including the timetable, a historical background of the establishment of Map radio, as well as policy guidelines for volunteer broadcasters. Moreover, the Map radio organises the monthly listener panel discussion at the radio station. During my field work, two listener panels took place in December 2015 and January 2016. Accordingly, two minutes made as a result of these listener panels are collected, which contained 15 listeners' opinions on the radio programmes. The questions in these minutes are shown in Appendix III.

4.5. Validity and reliability

As Creswell (2007, 206) writes, validity is ‘the attempt to assess the accuracy of findings’. During interviews with community members, I tried to use simple and accurate words to ask questions as intended. If I felt there was ambiguity in interviewees’ responses, I asked them again to confirm whether their responses were as intended. Moreover, in the last week of the field study, I had a short conversation with key informants to correct misinformation. Creswell (2007, 207) argues that validity is to a large extent achieved through ‘extensive time spent in the field, the detailed thick description, and the closeness of the researcher to participants in the study’. As discussed, I spent 7 weeks in the field and visited the radio station almost daily, except on weekends. This allowed me to gain close relationships with the research participants. To ensure the reliability of the study, field notes were made in detail on the same day as the observation based on preliminary notes made during the day. This was done to prevent the saturation of memories (Chambliss & Schutt 2013). Moreover, all interviews conducted within the Map radio were recorded with their consent and then thoroughly documented.

4.6. Ethics

Prior to the start of research, research plans such as the methods and duration of the study were extensively discussed with key informants from the Map radio during a visit to the station. Moreover, while conducting interviews, my purpose and the use of data was clearly revealed to interviewees and the confidentiality of personal information was confirmed. When interviewees asked about myself and my research topic, I answered in a simple and kind manner. I considered this appropriate as to help interviewees feel comfortable and in control. This can be referred to as procedural ethics, as noted by Tracy (2010). Procedural ethics suggest that research participants should be given the opportunity to understand the consequences of their responses during research through voluntary participation (*ibid.*). Moreover, as my interpreter was on the staff of the Map radio, I was often relied on her for help during my fieldwork. When the interpreter was not available to help me on a given day, I accepted this and waited until she was available. This was a way to maintain my relational ethics with the interpreter (Tracy, 2010). Further, England’s feminist research (1994) views favour as a way of seeking a reciprocal relationship between the researcher and the researched. I do not consider myself a feminist researcher, nonetheless, this line of thinking was significantly useful for being adaptable.

4.7. Analysis process

According to Chambliss and Schutt (2013), qualitative data analysis involves an iterative and reflexive process while interacting with data during collection and after data has been collected. Similarly, as a qualitative researcher, I naturally began to analyse data when it was collected in the field. Such inductive approaches allow a researcher to construct and reformulate ideas and images based on evidence in combination with analysis and synthesis (Ragin & Amoroso 2011). After completing data collection, I reviewed all transcribed data to identify recurring themes, unexpected opinions, and other facets of the data. These were transferred into an excel spreadsheet and rearranged according to themes such as partnership, content, and agency, among others. Simultaneously, texts to analyse the themes are identified.

4.8. Limitations

Some limitations of the current study have been identified on a methodological level as well as throughout the study. First, on a methodological level, the language barrier, despite the presence of the interpreter, limited and delayed the process of observation. In particular, because I was not able to be verbally aware of interactions taking place between broadcasters and listeners, I had to rely on external explanations by asking for the interpreter's help. For this reason, I tried to use data obtained through observation strategically, for instance, by developing research questions and confirming, identifying, and refuting other data collected.

Additionally, one staff broadcaster at the Map radio was both my interpreter and a key informant. As I spent a large amount of time observing activities at the radio station with her help, my close relationship with her may have affected the research. For example, for some interviews conducted with her interpretation, and considering the assumption that she is well-aware of the dynamics related to broadcastings, broadcasters, and management of the station, her interpretation may have been biased, affecting my findings. Second, at the station, only Shan participants were interviewed in spite of the presence of Thai participants. This was due to financial difficulties which prevented me from hiring a Thai-English translator. Third, compared to a long period of observation of broadcasters and their programmes, listeners were only observed once during a listener panel in January 2016. However, this short observation is compensated for by reports made after two listener panels written by one staff broadcaster from Map foundation.

Concerning the limitations of the study, though the status of community radio is affected by a country's regulatory paradigm (Bailey et al. 2008), the current study does not touch upon these issues in detail, such as funding, licensing, and infrastructure, in consideration of the limits of the paper. Moreover, although the importance of the use of ICTs in community radio has been increasing (Carpentier et al. 2003; Bosch 2014), and that this was also revealed during my fieldwork, because it was not within the initial scope of the study, the issue is not examined in the current study. The aforementioned aspects can be further explored in future research.

Furthermore, though Map radio does not consider itself as an ethnic migrant CRS, rather a migrant CRS, I understand Map radio as an ethnic migrant CRS considering its historical background and the main language used at the station and during broadcasts. These aspects in this context can be considered characteristic of ethnic media (Lin & Song 2006; Matsaganis et al. 2010). I believe this understanding provides more comprehensive insights during my exploration of this case study.

5. Analysing the Map radio 99 FM

This chapter analyses the practices of Map radio FM 99 through the lens of *articulation*, exploring process, relationship, and agency. I first examine why Map radio can be understood as an alternative public sphere for the Shan migrant community as well as what facilitates and hinders its functions as the alternative public sphere. Second, I analyse existing relationships within community radio, especially in relation to contemporary Thai society, as this aspect may affect the transformation of this sphere. Third, I discuss how participants have changed as social agents on individual and collective levels since participating in community radio.

5.1. Articulating the process of Map radio 99FM

In this section, I attempt to determine the factors that contribute to and hinder the creation of Map radio as an alternative public sphere. First, a history of Map radio is presented followed by the action rationales of participation. Second, the content produced by Map radio is analysed. In this section, I argue that community participation which involves Shan communities in addition to Thai and Burmese communities facilitates the creation of an inclusive alternative public sphere at Map radio, nevertheless, it is also argued that insufficient political efficacy, as well as participants' different action rationales, may prevent its complete functionality.

5.1.1. The establishment of Map Radio 99FM

While Map radio has been on air since 2004, previous efforts for radio broadcasting in the Shan language have been made by the Shan community. In the early 1990s, Dr. Uthaiwan Kanchanakamol, a Thai professor who witnessed the constant marginalization of ethnic minorities in northern Thailand, specifically in Chiang Mai, set up a home-based radio station called Empowerment radio in collaboration with media activists and NGOs as a form of civil society (Interviewee 1, 2015). At the time, programmes included some ethnic minority languages, such as Shan, Lahu, Karen, and Hmong (Interviewee 2, 2015). To participate in this programme, a few Shan migrants recorded 'what they know about the Shan people' and sent tapes to Empowerment radio regularly (Interviewee 3, 2015). When the Map foundation decided to take over Empowerment radio, Map radio has expanded its focus 'from the ethnic to the ethnic migrant community' (Jirattikorn 2016, 111). At the current station, most participants stay and work in Thailand as temporary migrant workers except for a few who have already obtained Thai citizenship, having been born between the border of Thailand and Myanmar, or having remained long enough to be Thai citizens. As Habermas et al. (1974) argues, because the public sphere is a space for public discussion by citizens, temporary migrant workers are not qualified for participation in the public sphere. The establishment of Map radio can thus be considered as the emergence of an alternative public sphere because of migrant exclusion from mainstream society. Today, Map radio aims to be 'a space where migrant workers' voices and opinions can be heard by encouraging public participation and civic engagement' (Map Foundation 2009). This also highlights the desire of Map radio to be the alternative public sphere for migrant workers.

5.1.2. Participation with different action rationales

Map radio emphasises community participation in their operation of a radio station (Interviewee 2, 2015). Community participation in Map radio arises from the different action rationales of participants as explained by Leal (2009). For instance, the radio station is mainly supervised by one Shan staff broadcaster with a one-year contract. After 5 pm on weekdays and during the weekends, a Shan volunteer broadcaster comes to the station and supervises both the station and the broadcast programmes (Interviewee 4, 2015).

Volunteer broadcasters and staff broadcasters

Broadcasting at Map radio is performed by both volunteer and staff broadcasters⁴. Both staff and volunteer broadcasters have an average of almost six years of experiences in broadcasting. During interviews, most volunteer broadcasters responded that they decided to do this work because of their interest in either volunteering or broadcasting, as well as because of recommendations from friends or within the Shan community. Furthermore, they mentioned that their largest motivation was concern about migrant workers and their awareness that new Shan migrant workers' need specific information to properly navigate life in Thailand. With this in mind, it is perhaps clear that volunteer broadcasters' participation in Map radio is largely motivated by shared experiences with and empathy for Shan migrant workers. Additionally, staff broadcasters broadcast for 6 hours a week because 'they have more updated information on migrant policies and health which is important for the community' (Interviewee 3, 2015). Nonetheless, some staff broadcasters expressed negative feelings about this task which also requires a heavy workload (Interviewee 4, 2015; Interviewee 5, 2015). In fact, this finding is against Leal's argument (2009) that participants' different action rationales in community radio do not hinder participation in community radio. Indeed, one staff broadcaster described individual's different motivations as one of the challenges in operating the station (Interviewee 5, 2015). On the other hand, one staff broadcaster mentioned that 'broadcasting is my interest and I feel happy when I can help migrant workers' as other volunteer broadcasters also did (Interviewee 6, 2015).

Listeners

Map radio allocates almost half of each broadcasting slot for phone calls from listeners. All listeners interviewed responded that they listen to Map radio because the radio programmes provide them with useful information, including the period of visa extension, Thai migration policy changes, and updated news on the Shan state in Myanmar. Furthermore, one listener mentioned, 'Map radio speaks in Shan and talks about the Shan issues which are not dealt with on Thai radio' (Interviewee 17, 2016). This highlights the alternative nature of Map radio in comparison with mainstream media. Interestingly, most volunteer and staff broadcasters were previous listeners of Map radio. One staff broadcaster discussed, 'I was a listener before and listened to songs and migrant issues from the Map radio. I also talked with broadcasters through

⁴ Even though partner volunteers are also involved in broadcasting, this is considered as a part of the relationship with partner organizations in the current study.

the phone-in programme’ (Interviewee 6, 2015). Considering such sentiments, it is possible that participants’ experiences as listeners through access to and interaction with media content, namely participation *through* radio programmes, supported participation *in* Map radio and encouraged them to become broadcasters, as emphasized by Carpentier (2011).

Activities

Map radio organizes a listener panel monthly at the radio station. After broadcasters announce information about the event during broadcasts, listeners who want to attend the panel are asked to call the station to participate. Through this panel, listeners are encouraged to share their opinions, such as their preferences concerning programmes and broadcasters, give advice about content, and share any thoughts on the programmes they listen to. Their opinions are reflected on and discussed at the monthly broadcasters’ meeting which takes place after the listener panel. In other words, through the listener panel, a form of ‘participation in media organization or community’, listeners maximize participation to structural levels, namely, *participation in media production* (Carpentier 2011). Furthermore, the regular meeting among staff broadcasters takes place to discuss overall issues related to the management of Map radio. These participants’ action rationales, which include different motivations and activities, are shown in table 3 below.

Participants with different action rationales	Motivation	Activities involved
Listeners	- Information on Thai migration policies, visa extension - News on the Shan state	- Phone-calls - Listener panel
Volunteer broadcasters	- Interest in broadcasting and volunteering - Concern and awareness about Shan migrant workers and their situation in Thailand - Former listeners - Recommendations from the Shan community	- Broadcasting - Monthly broadcasters meeting
Staff broadcasters	- Work responsibility - Individual interests - Concern and awareness of Shan migrant workers and their situation in Thailand	- Broadcasting - Monthly broadcasters meeting - Regular staff meeting

Table 3. Participants' action rationales at Map radio.

5.1.3. Content

At Map radio, media content is decided on in collaboration with community members based on ‘what they want to broadcast’ (Interviewee 2, 2015; Interviewee 3, 2015). Most programmes are broadcast in the Shan language, accounting for 53 out of 77 hours of broadcasting per week, while programmes in Thai (20 hours), and programmes in Burmese (4 hours), are also broadcast. To better understand the content that is being broadcast, the programmes can be categorized in nine themes: religion, culture, health, migrant workers, youth, women, media, news, and other (see Figure 3). One programme, a women’s health program, can be categorized by two themes, women and health, and only this programme is included in two categories simultaneously (for definitions of categories and details on categorization, see Appendix V).

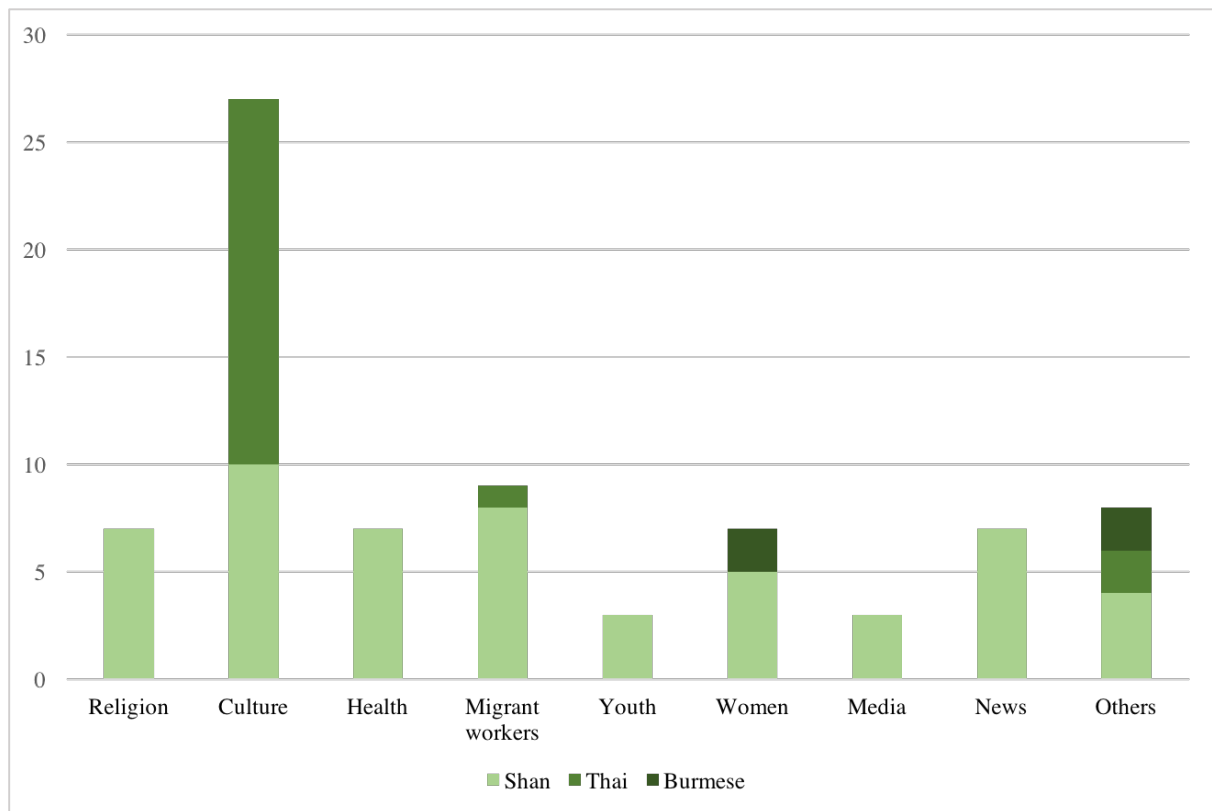


Figure 3. Broadcast hours per week according to theme and language

As seen in Figure 3, programmes on culture take up the largest share of broadcasting hours (27), followed by migrant workers (9), other (8), health (7), religion (7), news (7), women (6), youth (3) and media (3). Interestingly, cultural programmes broadcast in Thai have more broadcasting hours than those in Shan. This facet is discussed in the next section.

At Map radio, though broadcasters make efforts to stick to their themes, they are also flexible in terms of what they broadcast. One staff broadcaster responded ‘it is fine at least if they are related to the migrants’ livings in Thailand’ (Interviewee 4, 2015). As discussed by Carpentier (2011), community broadcasting adopts a maximalist approach to participation in the media sphere which emphasizes non-professionalism and the heterogeneity of participants as well as multidirectional participation. As the largest contributor to the operation of the radio station is commitment from volunteers (Girard 2007), one staff broadcaster mentioned ‘we cannot force other broadcasters to strictly follow the broadcasting subjects’ (Interviewee 3, 2015). Moreover, during my observation of *Shan Tea Table Programme* in which one volunteer and one staff broadcasters talk about recent news in Chiang Mai as well as the Shan state, the Shan singer Nang Hseng Lu from the Shan state was invited to the programme to celebrate the Shan New Year. Such flexibility was often observed during Shan festivals and other Shan community activities. Arguably, the content produced by Map radio is to a large extent culturally motivated with a strong focus on the Shan community.

Nonetheless, some of the content produced in Thai and Burmese also enables community members to experience a sense of multicultural belongingness in Thai society. These conditions manifest efforts of Map radio to remain a ‘counter-public’ rather than a ‘public sphericule’ (Fraser 1990; Lee 2013) through maintaining connections with other communities in Thai society. This also demonstrates the normative legitimacy of Map radio as an alternative public sphere characterised by an inclusive nature regarding varying ethnicities, as explained by Fraser (1990). However, at Map radio, political opinions cannot be expressed during broadcasting because of the strict censorship from the Thai military. Instead, only political news with exact sources can be broadcast. One staff broadcaster notes,

[...] we should follow Thai rules and policies since we are in Thailand. If not, we will be closed down. We just mention Thai policies related to migrant workers, not really opinions, just facts, exactly what happened. [...] (Interviewee 4, 2015)

In considering this sentiment, political discourses arising from Map radio are arguably unaccompanied by the formation of a public opinion, indicating the diminished political efficacy of Map radio as an alternative public sphere, as described by Fraser (2007). Furthermore, these rules diminish the potential for Map radio to be an influential and strong

public sphere in Thai society.

5.2. Articulating relationships in Map radio FM 99

In this section, the relationship among participants, as well as the relation between Map radio and contemporary Thai society, are analysed. First, the presence of Thai broadcasters at the station is examined along with the relationship between listeners and broadcasters. Second, analysis concerning the relationship between partnerships with Map radio and other CSOs is made. Third, the relationship between Map radio and the state radio station National Radio Thailand (NRT) Chiang Mai through a strategic alliance is discussed. In this section, I argue that while the presence of Thai broadcasters, relationships made through partnerships with CSOs, and a strategic alliance with the state media outlet demonstrate the willingness of Map radio to be connected with other communities and Thai society as a counter-public, its functions mainly turns inwards by facilitating Shan community discourses and horizontal growth among community members.

5.2.1. Relationship between listeners and broadcasters

The relationship between listeners and broadcasters is primarily created through phone-in programmes. All listeners interviewed discussed a preference for calling the radio station when they listen to the radio. Listeners typically comment on the topic being discussed and they request songs. Additionally, one listener responded that ‘I asked them to give educative advices to the Shan youth’ (Interviewee 16, 2016). Furthermore, interactions between listeners and broadcasters take place even while music is playing during the programmes. For this reason, it can be said that during broadcasts more focus is paid to communication between listeners and broadcasters than on the broadcasting itself. This aspect reveals Map radio’s support of two-way communication among participants as explained by Servaes & Malikhao (2005). Meanwhile, broadcasters described their relationships with listeners in three ways. First, they emphasize ‘their horizontal way of communication in sharing opinions, feedbacks and having conversation without hierarchy with listeners’ (Interviewee 7, 2015; Interviewee 8, 2015; Interviewee 10, 2015). Second, they are close to listeners ‘like friends’ (Interviewee 13, 2015) even though they have not met each other. Finally, their relationship is often concretized by meeting each other at Shan festivals, markets, or when listeners come visit the station (Interviewee 8, 2015; Interviewee 9, 2015; Interviewee 11, 2015). Thus, the relationships between participants often go beyond air-time and extend into their daily lives outside the

station, creating community bonds.

5.2.2. Thai broadcasters in Thai programmes

There are five programmes on Map radio that are broadcast in Thai. In total, five Thai volunteer broadcasters participate in broadcasting. One Shan staff broadcaster mentioned ‘we try to build our relationship between Thai and Shan and it is actually going well’ (Interviewee 3, 2015). For the Shan programmes, each Shan broadcaster is required to summarize the main topic in Thai at the end of the programme (*ibid.*). From the beginning of Map radio, a Thai broadcaster from *Thai Community Programme* has assisted in designing the broadcasting timetable with Shan community members. Her programme is currently broadcast 10 hours a week and is the biggest slot among cultural programmes as shown in Figure 3. When it comes to the participation of Thai broadcaster at Map radio, one staff broadcaster responded

Our Thai DJ can talk well and she can link migrant issues with the Thai community for listeners. Even though she speaks Thai, her information can be about the Shan, which is very good. (Interviewee 6, 2015)

In fact, Thai listeners, as well as Shan migrants, listen to *Thai Community Programme*. This is a fact I also gleaned from my observation of the listener panel. Because of similarities between the Shan and Thai languages, Shan migrants are willing to listen to Thai programmes (Interviewee 3, 2015). In addition to *Thai Community Programme*, one government official from the Thai immigration office broadcasts information regarding recent policy changes during *Immigration Programme* for 1 hour per week. In particular, this programme is helpful for participants’ living conditions because relevant legal information is delivered. One listener mentioned this programme, suggesting ‘this programme is so important for us so the Map radio should increase broadcasting time’ (Interviewee 16, 2016). This involvement of Thai citizens with the radio station shows the intention of Map radio to promote intercultural dialogue with Thai society.

5.2.3. Partnership with the Shan Woman’s Action Network

A number of partner organizations also broadcast from Map radio. As of writing this study, three partner organizations are associated with Map radio: the Shan Woman’s Action Network (S.W.A.N.), Workers’ Solidarity Associations (W.S.A.), and Tai (Shan) Literature & Cultural

Society⁵. All three are CSOs based in Chiang Mai. Although these partner organizations address different topics, such as women, migrant workers, and the Shan culture, all broadcasters are Shan migrants. This fact demonstrates their ethnic links and collective experiences as migrants. The S.W.A.N. in particular has been a long-term partner organization with Map radio⁶. In the times of Empowerment radio, Shan migrants from S.W.A.N. were also invited to broadcast on the station, especially on Women's day or Independence Day (Interviewee 10, 2015). The S.W.A.N. is connected to Map radio in terms of shared topics such as 'migrant workers, health, work permits, and Shan women and children' (*ibid.*). The S.W.A.N. encourages Shan women staff to participate in broadcasting as partner volunteers with the goal of helping them to be more confident while voicing their opinions in public (*ibid.*). In so far as Lewis (2008) claims collaborative partnerships with other CSOs are important in that they facilitate social gains associated with community radio, the argument can be made that at Map radio, through partnerships, this social gain is created by encouraging Shan migrants to be involved in producing media content and sharing opportunities for broadcasting. This can be described as 'horizontal growth within community members' (Carpentier et al. 2003).

5.2.4. Strategic alliance with the National Radio Thailand Chiang Mai

In early 1990s, the Shan community was excluded from the hill tribe program of NRT Chiang Mai (Interviewee 2, 2015). Under the control of the Public Relations Department (PRD) of the Thai government (Jirattikorn 2012), the NRT is one of Thailand's main broadcasting regulators (Lewis 2006). The hill tribe program was initiated primarily as an alternative tool for disseminating Thai policy-related information in minorities' languages with the purpose of assimilating these minorities into Thai society (Jirattikorn 2012). As the Shan migrant population increased in the mid 1990s, the Shan community requested the official addition of the Shan language to this programme (*ibid.*). This may be seen as resistance by the Shan community's towards their marginalization and as an effort to integrate into the public sphere. The request was accepted in 1996 and the Shan programme started being broadcast every day for 30 minutes (Interviewee 3, 2015). Now, every Monday and Tuesday, two staff broadcasters from Map radio broadcast the Shan Programme *Knowledge of Living* for Shan migrant workers

⁵ The Shan people call themselves 'Tai' which is their self-designation while the Burmese call the Shan 'Shan' (Jirattikorn 2012).

⁶ The S.W.A.N. is a community-based organization based in Chiang Mai, Thailand. This organization works on gender equality and justice for Shan women who suffer from political and social conditions in Myanmar.

for one hour at the NRT Chiang Mai radio station with one Shan broadcaster who works for NRT Chiang Mai (Interviewee 23, 2016).

While Map radio has a limited reach of 35 kilometres because of its use of Frequency Modulation (FM), the NRT uses Amplitude Modulation (AM) (1476 AM KHz) which has ‘a larger range’ capable of reaching more people and on a national scale (Chandler & Munday 2011). Often, this reaches some regions in Myanmar as well as China (Interviewee 22, 2015). Accordingly, this increases listeners’ chances for ‘access to’ and to ‘interact with’ media content as discussed by Carpentier (2011). Furthermore, this suggests that Map radio can possibly expand from its position in a local, micro public sphere to a meso or macro public sphere as Keane (1995) argues. One Shan broadcaster from NRT Chiang Mai mentioned,

Sometimes when I get new information on the Thai migration policies from the government officials, I gave them to the Map radio, which is important for people there. And when I have calls from listeners asking for some help while broadcasting, I let them know about the Map radio. (Interviewee 23, 2015)

For this reason, though Map radio and NRT Chiang Mai are different sizes, they are interconnected spheres for addressing migrant issues. This is made possible because they are constructed from ‘difference’ as Keane (1995) notes. This difference arises from the fact that ‘there are some things that NRT cannot say, but can be possible at the Map Radio, and also the other way around’ (Interviewee 23, 2015). While NRT Chiang Mai mainly broadcasts recent information on Thai migrant policy, it focusses more on delivering this information rather than facilitating public discussion (*ibid.*). On the other hand, although Map radio delivers relatively little in terms of information, it is more free to discuss issues with listeners. In other words, the relationship between the two is somewhat complimentary, considering the role NRT Chiang Mai plays as an informant and Map radio plays as a space for community discussion.

However, to participate in the hill-tribe language, Map radio is required to pay money to the Thai PRD. Concerning this issue, one staff broadcaster responded, ‘we had to stop the relationship with the NRT Chiang Mai for a couple of years, since we did not support their system due to the lack of transparency’ (Interviewee 3, 2015). This shows that the strategic alliance between the Thai government and Map radio was not beneficial for Map radio because

of a lack of respect towards Map radio from the Thai authorities. On the other hand, this also demonstrates Map radio's willingness to re-establish a relationship with NRT Chiang Mai, a process facilitated by the fluid and non-linear features of community media (Bosch 2008). In other words, even though a strategic alliance between Map radio and NRT Chiang Mai may promote Shan migrant discourse on a national level and disseminate relevant information, this alliance itself seems to have done little to diminish antagonism towards mainstream state media, as argued by Carpentier et al. (2003).

5.3. Articulating the agency of Map radio 99FM

As a mode of developmental intervention, participation in community radio empowers participants on individual and collective levels. This section examines the ways participants have been personally and collectively changed as social agents since their involvement with Map radio. In this section, I argue that information plays a critical role in empowering participants, specifically as an educative tool. I also argue that the formation of a collective identity and increased awareness of basic rights can lead to a social movement to establish CRSs in the Shan state in Myanmar as a manifestation of strengthened community cohesion.

5.3.1. Individual agency

At Map radio, all participants except for one responded that they have experienced personal changes after becoming involved in broadcasting. Some broadcasters mentioned that they have become more confident, for instance, when speaking in public, meeting people outside, and writing transcripts for broadcasting. Two broadcasters are employed or received offers for employment from broadcasting organizations. In this way, participation in Map radio may bring about socio-economic opportunities which enable participants to actively participate in Thai society. As argued by Carpentier (2011), this shows that participation in media ultimately leads to participation in a certain sphere of society. Furthermore, through interviews with broadcasters, I gathered that most of them consider information to be a key facilitator for broadcasting and for communicating with listeners. Because broadcasting is entirely managed by broadcasters themselves, broadcasters have the responsibility to search for information relevant to their programmes. One volunteer broadcaster responded,

I did not know much about Myanmar even though I have stayed in the border area.
For broadcasting, I have to research on what is happening in the Shan state and

Thailand and on migrants. I have a lot of information. We have to study even on Sundays. We have lots of knowledge, and international/Shan news. (Interviewee 10, 2015)

As this statement describes, the act of finding information for broadcasting can play an educative role for broadcasters. Moreover, information can also be obtained during interactions with listeners while broadcasting, because ‘listeners have lots of opinions’ (Interviewee 9, 2015). Moreover, interactions with listeners can make broadcasters feel empowered through sharing information with listeners, as explained by Jallof (2009). For instance, one staff broadcaster responded,

I found that information I talked during the broadcasting was so useful and important for migrant workers. I think I love that. I like the interactions with listener. I feel like I can help them. (Interviewee 5, 2015)

Arguably, frequent interactions with listeners may provide opportunities for empowering broadcasters. Additionally, as discussed, most listeners listen to Map radio to gain information about the Shan state in Myanmar as well as their life in Thailand. Interestingly, all listeners interviewed responded that Map radio is the only way they access information about Thailand. One listener responded that ‘when listening to the Map radio, I got to know that there is a learning centre in Chiang Mai and went to attend class’ (Interviewee 17, 2015). Furthermore, listeners mentioned that they often share information with their relatives, friends, and colleagues (Interviewee 15, 2016; Interviewee 16, 2016). This could be an example of the *influence* of empowerment as discussed by Khawaja (2005).

5.3.2. Collective agency

As I have discussed, Map radio currently has a 35 Kilowatts FM which only reaches the city of Chiang Mai. Since establishing Map radio, participants have wanted to expand their working area and the influence of the radio station beyond the Shan community in Chiang Mai. Several broadcasters noted a willingness to have an AM frequency and establish CRSs in the Shan state (Interviewee 2, 2015; Interviewee 3, 2015). Furthermore, broadcasters mentioned ‘we want to train Shan youth to make them become broadcasters of the Map radio’ (Interviewee 1, 2015).

Through the partnership with the S.W.A.N. and a shared agenda, Map radio has gained momentum to push forward these plans (Interviewee 1, 2015). This scenario reinforces arguments by Carpentier et al. (2003) who suggests that partnerships within community media with CSOs can facilitate social movements through shared goals. Regarding participants' collective changes, one volunteer broadcaster responded,

I think Thailand is quite liberal. But in the Shan state, we just started accepting the typical norms. Last time, in my programme, I talked about gender equality and discrimination. I knew that people have rights. [...] human, child, women rights. [...] I've learned this from the community, which made us change. (Interviewee 10, 2015)

As this sentiment demonstrates, such changes are made because of the realization by participants of their fundamental rights through experiencing relatively liberal social and communicative environments in Thailand as compared to the Shan state. Furthermore, one staff broadcaster noted, 'I want to invite other ethnic migrants like Karen, Lahu, Akha and include their own languages in our programmes' (Interviewee 3, 2015). Such a desire reflects a conception by most broadcasters of Map radio as a centre for migrant workers, especially from Myanmar. Arguably, this awareness of rights and a common social status as ethnic migrant workers strengthened participants' collective identities and can potentially facilitate collective movements in the future. In the following and concluding chapter, I attempt to answer the principal research question of the current study based on the analysis presented.

6. Conclusion on the role of Map radio FM 99 for the Shan migrant community

In this thesis, I set out to explore a range of social consequences from the practices of an ethnic migrant community radio station in the city of Chiang Mai, Thailand, namely Map radio FM 99. I undertook this task to understand the role of this radio station as an alternative public sphere for the Shan migrant community. I began by outlining how community radio has emerged, characterised by alternative and participatory natures, supporting two-way communication from a grass-roots level and coupled with development projects in recent decades which view both the individual and community as an 'agent of developmental power'

(Atton 2001). In this study, this line of thinking has unfolded through use of Howley's *articulation* theory as an analytical tool for examining Map radio through three dimensions: process, relationship and agency, placing community participation at the heart of the discussion.

In the first section of analysis, I argue that Map radio has emerged as an alternative public sphere because of an early marginalisation and exclusion of the Shan migrant community from Thai society. However, despite this alternative status, the content produced by participants of Map radio demonstrates that this community is attempting to strengthen relationships with Thai and Burmese communities, as well as Shan community, through the utilisation of diverse languages and a variety of multicultural programmes. For this reason, I have argued that Map radio should be understood as a counter-public rather than a public sphericule in the light of the formation of content. Nonetheless, Map radio content is also to a large extent oriented towards the Shan community with a strong focus on Shan culture. Furthermore, potential conflicts among participants with different action rationales exist, creating an environment which may have negative implications for community solidarity in the future.

In the second section of analysis, various relationships made within the practices of community radio and with external organizations are examined. In this section, I have argued that a strategic alliance with NRT Chiang Mai may offer Map radio the chance to expand from a local, micro public sphere to a meso or macro public sphere, implying the growth of this alternative public sphere. Nonetheless, since the Shan programme of NRT Chiang Mai is under the Thai government control in spite of the use of Shan language and its alternative position for ethnic minorities, whether it can be considered as a part of public sphere should be re-examined. In addition, as Schiller (2007) claims that the presence of multiple alternative public spheres (made through partnerships and strategic alliances) does not necessarily lead to conditions for social inclusion in a given society, the relationship of Map radio with partner organizations and the state media outlet likely strengthens Shan community discourse, supporting its characterisation as a 'public sphericule'. However, I would not extend this argument to suggest that Map radio operates entirely inwardly because their relationship with these organizations already demonstrates a willingness to be connected with Thai society, as is also seen in the content they produce. Furthermore, the presence of Thai broadcasters and Thai programmes at the radio station suggests that the meaning of *community* at Map radio can be understood more than as simply the Shan migrant community.

In the third section of analysis, I have argued that as a tool for emancipation, Map radio empowered participants on individual and collective levels. Individually, participants became more active, confident, and knowledgeable, in some cases increasing their socio-economic participation in Thai society. In particular, for listeners, information obtained from Map radio enabled them to adapt more easily to life in Thailand. On a collective level, through the formation of a collective identity, participants are expected to exert collective agency by establishing CRSs in the Shan state to achieve communication rights. In this regard, it becomes clear that Map radio operates simultaneously inwardly and outwardly for the Shan migrant community. However, while Map radio seems to actively engage in creating community solidarity and cohesion, thereby constructing buffers for new Shan migrants, it is not clear why it does not proactively operate outwards, beyond the community.

This may be partially explained through considering the current political environment in the country which can be characterised as threatening, along with migrants' challenging socio-economic statuses. As is also shown through my analysis, Map radio as an alternative public sphere is not accompanied by the formation of public opinion, which results in the loss of political efficacy. Although this restrictive political situation is also applied for other CRSs in the country regardless of which community they serve, I would argue that the relatively liberal political environment in the country along with the guarantee of freedom of expression and communication rights may favourably increase the presence of the Map radio as an alternative public sphere in Thai society. Arguably, this may further bring about positive effects on intercultural dialogues between this ethnic migrant community and current Thai society by supporting social participation of this community.

As the country has not recognized multiculturalism as a critical national agenda, and an independent community broadcasting landscape has not been promised, discussing the social consequences of community radio might be premature. Nonetheless, the case of Map radio provides an example of how this CRS has managed to serve the ethnic migrant community by operating their own radio station premised on community participation. Nonetheless, it remains to be seen whether this radio station can continue their inward or outward functions for this community in the long run. With this in mind, sustainability in relation to financial issues and the strategic management of participants, which may negate potential conflicts among

participants with different action rationales, seems to be imperative. Even though the future of Map radio remains unknown, it is clear that Map radio as an alternative public sphere can connect the Shan migrant community with Thai society by removing barriers and creating community cohesion.

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Appendices

Appendix I. List of respondents

Type	Categories	Name	Date	Recording	Language used	Programme Observation (Date)	Interview Location	
Semi-structured interview	Staff broadcaster	Interviewee 1	6 Jan 2016	Yes	English	Shan tea table programme (21 Dec 2015)	Map Radio	
		Interviewee 2	8 Jan 2016	Yes	English	-	Map Radio	
		Interviewee 3	4 Jan 2016	Yes	English	Multimedia (4 Jan 2016)	Map Radio	
		Interviewee 4	6 Jan 2016	Yes	English	Women health programme (12 Dec 2015) MAP media (16 Dec 2016)	Map Radio	
		Interviewee 5	8 Jan 2016	Yes	English	MAP media (16 Dec 2015)	Map Radio	
	Volunteer Broadcaster	Interviewee 6	6 Jan 2016	Yes	Shan-English	Shan culture programme (19 Dec 2015)	Map Radio	
		Interviewee 7	14 Jan 2016	Yes	Shan-English	Health communication (17 Dec 2015) Safety programme (23 Dec 2015)	Map Radio	
		Interviewee 8	4 Jan 2016	Yes	English	Shan tea table programme (21 Dec 2015)	Map Radio	
		Interviewee 9	4 Jan 2016	Yes	Shan-English	Shan poem programme (21 Dec 2015) Environmental programme (22 Dec 2015)	Map Radio	
		Interviewee 10	6 Jan 2016	Yes	English	Shan Women Action Network (23 Dec 2015)	Map Radio	
		Interviewee 11	10 Jan 2016	Yes	English	News Update Programme (23 Dec 2015)	Map Radio	
		Interviewee 12	28 Jan 2016	Yes	English	Evening market (23 Dec 2015)	Map Radio	
		-	-	-	-	Thai community programme (19 Dec 2015)	Map Radio	
		Listeners	Interviewee 13	2 Jan 2016	Yes	Shan-English	-	Map Radio
			Interviewee 14	2 Jan 2016	Yes	Shan-English	-	Map Radio
	Interviewee 15		17 Jan 2016	Yes	Shan-English	Listener panel (17 Jan 2016)	Map Radio	
	Interviewee 16		17 Jan 2016	Yes	Shan-English	Listener panel (17 Jan 2016)	Map Radio	
	Interviewee 17		17 Jan 2016	Yes	Shan-English	Listener panel (17 Jan 2016)	Map Radio	
	Academics	Interviewee 18	8 Sep 2015	No	English	-	Bangkok	
		Interviewee 19	11 Nov 2015	No	English	-	Bangkok	
		Interviewee 20	13 Jan 2015	No	English	-	Chiang Mai	
	Media activist	Interviewee 21	21 Jan 2015	Yes	English	-	Bangkok	
	Government officials	Interviewee 22	21 Jan 2015	Yes	English	-	Bangkok	
NRT Chiang Mai	Interviewee 23	12 Jan 2016	No	Shan-English	(12 Jan 2015)	Thai PRD Chiang Mai		

Appendix II. Interview and observation guides

Interview guide for the Map Radio	
Staff broadcasters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could you tell me about yourself a little bit? 2. When did you come to Thailand? Are you a Thai citizen? 3. How long have you worked for the Map Foundation? 4. Could you explain the Map Radio in general? 5. How long have you worked as a staff broadcaster at the Map radio? 6. Why did you become a staff broadcaster? 7. What are the challenges and good things of working as a broadcaster? 8. Could you tell me about your program? 9. How do you collect your materials for your programme? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do you choose them? 10. Who is your main listeners? 11. How do you usually interact with your listeners? 12. How would you describe your relationship with your listeners? 13. Have you experienced any personal changes after becoming a broadcaster? 14. How is the relationship with your partner organization and the NRT Chiang Mai? 15. How do you see the future of the Map Radio? 16. What does the Map Radio mean to you? 17. Do you have anything you would like to add more?
Volunteer broadcasters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could you tell me about yourself a little bit? 2. When did you come to Thailand? Are you a Thai citizen? 3. How long have you worked as a volunteer broadcaster at the Map radio? 4. Why did you become a volunteer broadcaster? 5. What are the challenges and good things of working as a broadcaster? 6. Could you tell me about your program? 7. How do you collect your materials for your programme? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do you choose them? 8. Who is your main listeners? 9. How would you describe your relationship with your listeners? 10. How do you usually interact with your listeners? 11. How would you describe your relationship with the Map Radio? 12. Have you experienced any personal change after becoming a broadcaster? 13. How do you see the future of the Map Radio? 14. What does the Map Radio mean to you? 15. Do you have anything you would like to add more?
Listeners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could you tell me about yourself a little bit? 2. How did you get to listen to the Map Radio? 3. How long have you listened to the Map Radio so far? 4. How often do you listen to the radio? 5. Why do you listen to the Map Radio? 6. Which program do you find it interesting and useful? 7. Do you have any broadcaster you like the most? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, why? 8. Are you happy with how the Map radio try to interact with the listener? 9. Have you thought about becoming a broadcaster? 10. Have you called in the program so far? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, what have you said to broadcasters? 11. Where do you get information in relation to living in Thailand? 12. Do you have anything you wish for the Map radio? 13. What does Map radio mean to you?
Interview guide for others	
Academics/ Researchers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you think of the current situation of community radio in Thailand (specifically, the city of Chiang Mai)? 2. What do you think of the biggest obstacles which hampers the development of community radio in Thailand? 3. How is the current status of the Shan migrant community in the city of Chiang Mai? 4. What do you think of the presence or influence of the Shan migrant community in the country in general?
Media activist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is the current status of community radio in Thailand? 2. Could you explain how CPMR has been initiated in 1990s? 3. How do you see the future of community radio?

	4. Do you see the importance of community radio in Thailand?
Government officials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is community radio defined in the context of Thailand? 2. What is the current status of community radio in Thailand? 3. How do community radio work in Thailand in relation to government regulations? 4. What do you think of community radio in the perspective of integrating different ethnicity and migrants into Thai society? 5. How do you evaluate the influence of community radio in general in Thai society? 6. Do you see the importance of community radio in Thailand? 7. How do you see the future of community radio in Thailand?
National Radio Thailand Chiang Mai	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could you tell me about yourself? 2. How long have you worked as a broadcaster at the NRT Chiang Mai? 3. Could you tell your programme at the NRT Chiang Mai? 4. Who is your main listener? 5. How do you collect your materials for broadcasting? 6. Do you know the Map Radio FM 99? 7. How would you describe the relationship between Map Radio and the NRT Chiang Mai? 8. Is there anything you would like to add more?
Observation guide	
Broadcasting programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the objectives and topics of this program? 2. How does the program consist of? (contents, music, phone-calls) 3. How is the program delivered to listeners? 4. Who is the broadcaster? Gender, age, years of experience 5. How are the relationships between broadcasters and listeners? 6. How much are listeners engaging in programs? 7. How many phone call does the broadcasters receive in their programs? 8. How is the reaction of broadcasters when getting phone calls? 9. Are there any questions and answers? 10. Are there any important remarks from listeners or broadcasters?

Appendix III. Listener panels questions

Questions on the minutes from the listener panel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of program do you listen? 2. What have you learnt? 3. How do you use that information? 4. What time do you usually listen to the radio? 5. Did you listen until the program finish? 6. What is the advantage of listening Map Radio FM 99? 7. What should we improve? 8. New program/info you like to listen in the future?
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Appendix IV. Timetable of the Map Radio FM 99

ဘဝါးယာမိး ဂူဝ်သျး ငလး ဝါင်းကွက်,လံးဂါဝင် မိပ်,ဂေုတီကူဝ် ကိပ်.ကိပ် 99 -						TIME TABLE OF MAP RADIO, FM 99 MHZ	
ခါးယာမိး ဝါင်း Day	ဝါင်းလင် / Mon	ဝါင်းကါင်းဂါင်း / Tue	ဝါင်းဂုတ် / Wed	ဝါင်းဖေတ်း / Thu	ဝါင်းသျှ်း / Fri	ဝါင်းသပ် / Sat	ဝါင်းကါးတီတ် / Sun
09.00-10.00	ထမ်,မတြး Shan Dhamma By Dj လံးလံး	လံးဂါမ်စဂီယာမ် Christian program By Dj လုင်းလီင်းဂိုင်း	လံးဂါမ်စဂီယာမ် Christian program By Dj လုင်းလီင်းဂိုင်း	လံးဂါမ်စဂီယာမ် Christian program By Dj လုင်းလီင်းဂိုင်း	ထမ်,မတြး Shan Dhamma By Dj လံးလံး	ဖှိုင်းထုင်းတံး Shan Culture program By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း	စေးသင်,သုမ်ကွမ်လီ Message for the Better Life By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း
10.00-11.00	သုမ်,လံးဂါမ် By Dj ထုင်းစမ်း	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai song	လံးဂါမ်စဂီယာမ် Christian program By Dj လုင်းလီင်းဂိုင်း	မိုင်းလါမ်ဆေး (ထံး) Northern Story	ထမ်,မတြး Shan Dhamma By Dj လံးလံး	ဖှိုင်းထုင်းတံး Shan Culture program By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း	စေးသင်,သုမ်ကွမ်လီ Message for the Better Life By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း
11.00-12.00	သီင်ထီဂိုင်း သုမ်,လံးဂါမ်	လုဂ်းကွမ်,မိုဂ်းဆဲ Today's children By Dj ဆွင်ဆိုင်	သီင်ထီဂိုင်း လုဂ်းကွမ်,မိုဂ်းဆဲ By Dj ထုင်းစမ်း	သီင်ထီဂိုင်း လုဂ်းကွမ်,မိုဂ်းဆဲ By Dj ထုင်းစမ်း	သီင်ထီဂိုင်း (စေးဝါမ်) Domestic Worker program By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း	သီင်ဂူမ်ဆုမ်, Youth Voice By Dj စမ်းကွမ်,	ဂိုင်းဂါမ်ဖှိုင်း W.S.A
12.00-13.00	သီင်ထီဂိုင်း ခွင်းဂါမ်သိုဝ်, MAP Media	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai community program By Dj Jan Tip	သီင်ထီဂိုင်း ပိုဆဲ,လုဂ်းပံးယူ,လီ By Dj လံးဂါမ်, ဂွါးဂိုင်း	သီင်ထီဂိုင်း လုဂ်းကွမ်,မိုဂ်းဆဲ By Dj ထုင်းစမ်း	သီင်ထီဂိုင်း (စေးဝါမ်) Domestic Worker program By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း	သီင်ဂူမ်ဆုမ်, Youth Voice By Dj စမ်းကွမ်,	ဂိုင်းဂါမ်ဖှိုင်း W.S.A
13.00-14.00	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai community program By Dj Jan Tip	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai community program By Dj Jan Tip	ဂိုင်းလုဂ်း (လုဂ်းဂါမ်သါမ် လုဂ်းအါင်းထီင်းတံး) SWAN's radio program	ဂိုင်းလုဂ်း (လုဂ်းဂါမ်သါမ် လုဂ်းအါင်းထီင်းတံး) SWAN's radio program	လင်ဆေးတံးတေးမေး Immigration program	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai community program By Dj Jan Tip	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai community program By Dj Jan Tip
14.00-15.00	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai community program By Dj Jan Tip	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai community program By Dj Jan Tip	ဂိုင်းလုဂ်း (လုဂ်းဂါမ်သါမ် လုဂ်းအါင်းထီင်းတံး) SWAN's radio program	ဂိုင်းလုဂ်း (လုဂ်းဂါမ်သါမ် လုဂ်းအါင်းထီင်းတံး) SWAN's radio program	ဝါင်လီဂ်းလံးအါင်းထီင်း (လံးဂါမ်မါမ်) Women Exchange program	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai community program By Dj Jan Tip	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai community program By Dj Jan Tip
15.00-16.00	ဂါမ်ထုဂ်,ဂွါမ်းတံး Shan poem program By Dj အါင်းဂိုင်းစမ်း	ဂါမ်ထုဂ်,ဂွါမ်းတံး Shan poem program By Dj အါင်းဂိုင်းစမ်း	သီင်ထီဂိုင်း ခွင်းဂါမ်သိုဝ်, MAP Media	ဝါးယူ,လီအါင်းထီင်း Women Health program By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း	ဝါင်လီဂ်းလံးအါင်းထီင်း (လံးဂါမ်မါမ်) Women Exchange program	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai community program By Dj Jan Tip	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai community program By Dj Jan Tip
16.00-17.00	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai song	သီင်ဝါမ်ဂွါမ်းထံး Thai song	မိပ်,ဂေုတီကူဝ် (မါမ်) MAP Radio, Live from Mae Sod radio station FM 102.5	ဂါတ်,ရှုဂ်စမ်း Evening Market	ဂွါမ်းတံးဝါမ်ဂပ်, Shan Folk Song	စေးတိုင်း,ဝါင်,ဖေဝ် Advice for the Better Life By Dj Kung	ဂိုတ်,ရှုဂ်လုဂ်းပံးယူ,လီ Open Heart 4 HealthCare By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း
17.00-18.00	သီင်,စီတ်လွမ် Environment Program By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း	ဂိုတ်,ရှုဂ်လုဂ်းပံးယူ,လီ Open Heart for the Health Care By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း	မိပ်,ဂေုတီကူဝ် (မါမ်) MAP Radio, Live from Mae Sod radio station FM 102.5	ဂါတ်,ရှုဂ်စမ်း Evening Market	ဂွါမ်းတံးဝါမ်ဂပ်, Shan Folk Song	စေးတိုင်း,ဝါင်,ဖေဝ် Advice for the Better Life By Dj Kung	ဂိုတ်,ရှုဂ်လုဂ်းပံးယူ,လီ Open Heart 4 HealthCare By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း
18.00-19.00	သီင်ဂိုင်းဂါမ် The voice of migrant worker	ဂိုတ်,ရှုဂ်လုဂ်းပံးယူ,လီ Open Heart for the Health Care By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း	ဖေးဂိုင်းဂါင် Safety Program By Dj လံးကွင်းထေး	သီင်,စီတ်လွမ် Environment Program By Dj အါင်းလါမ်ဖှိုင်း	ဂူမ်,စီတ်လွမ် voice of worker By Dj လံးသီင်ဝါမ်	ဂေုလီဂ်းလံးဂိုင်းမံ, Tai Literature & Culture Society, Chiang Mai	ဂေုလီဂ်းလံးဂိုင်းမံ, Tai Literature & Culture Society, Chiang Mai
19.00-20.00	ဝါင်ဆဲမိုင်းတံး Shan Tea Table Program Dj သီင်မိုင်း မုခ်းကွမ်,	ဝါင်ဆဲမိုင်းတံး Shan Tea Table Program Dj သီင်မိုင်း မုခ်းကွမ်,	သီင်စာပ်,တုဂ်းမိုင်း News update program	ဝါင်ဆဲမိုင်းတံး Shan Tea Table Program Dj သီင်မိုင်း မုခ်းကွမ်,	ဝါင်ဆဲမိုင်းတံး Shan Tea Table Program Dj သီင်မိုင်း မုခ်းကွမ်,	ဂေုလီဂ်းလံးဂိုင်းမံ, Tai Literature & Culture Society, Chiang Mai	ဂေုလီဂ်းလံးဂိုင်းမံ, Tai Literature & Culture Society, Chiang Mai

 သီင်တံး, Shan Program
 သီင်ထံး, Thai Program
 သီင်မါမ်, Burmese Program
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(Source: Map Foundation 2015)

Appendix V. Categorization of broadcasting hours according to themes and languages

Theme	Shan programme (hours)	Thai programme (hours)	Burmese Programme (hours)	Total		
Religion	Shan Dhamma Christian program	7	-	7		
	Shan Poem Program Shan folk song Shan culture program Tai literature & culture society Chiang Mai	10	Thai song Thai community program Northern story	17	27	
Health	Open heart for the health care Health communication *Women health program HIV/AIDS and Health	7	-	-	7	
	The voice of migrant workers Safety program Domestic worker program Safety at work Workers Solidarity Association (W.S.A.)	8	Immigration program	1	-	9
Youth	Today's children Youth voice	3	-	-	3	
Women	SWAN's radio program *Women health program	5	-	Women exchange program	2	6
Media	Map media	3	-	-	3	
News	News update program Evening market Shan Tea Table Program	7	-	-	7	
	Environment Program Message for the better life	4	Advice for the better life	2	MAP radio, live from Mae sot radio station FM 102.5	2
Total	24 programs / 53 hours	5 programs / 20 hours	2 programs / 4 hours		77 hours	

*Overlapping programme

- Religion: The programme on certain religion such as Buddhism and Christianity
- Culture: The programme on community, song, poem, literature, etc.
- Health: The programme on health issues such as HIV/AIDS and the preventions of cold
- Migrant workers: The programme on the safety at workplace and stories from migrant workers
- Youth: The programme engaged with the youth
- Women: The programme on gender equality, gender norms and feminism
- Media: The programme on how to listen to the Map Radio with the use of ICTs
- News: The programme on the news/issues taking place in the Shan state as well as Thailand
- Others: The programme on developmental issues which are not qualified for the categories