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The recording industry and 'regional' culture in Indonesia
The case of Minangkabau

To Nurlismaniar Mustafa, Raisa Mahesvara Niadilova, and Farel Darvesh Bramatias Suryadi,
with love.

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THE RECORDING INDUSTRY AND
'REGIONAL' CULTURE IN INDONESIA
THE CASE OF MINANGKABAU

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INTRODUCTION

This book is a study in diachronic perspective on the impact of recording technologies, more specifically cassette and video compact disc (VCD), on Indonesian local cultures and societies. It examines how modern reproduced sound, which is constantly proliferating and multiplying up to today through various (social) media, but initially facilitated by recording media technology through the agency of regional recording industries, has influenced the contours of Indonesian local cultures. The book relates Indonesia's first encounter with recording technology, examines the nature and cultural ramifications of the expansion of recording technology among Indonesia's ethnic groups, and looks at its engagement with other media. As a case study, the West Sumatran recording industry is explored, along with the commercial cassettes and VCDs it has produced. I examine the features, content, and socio-cultural meanings of mediated Minangkabau cultural expressions.

In this study my starting point is a local perspective rather than a metropolitan one. I focus attention on the outskirts of the nation: West Sumatra in the western part of Indonesia, a province inhabited mostly by the Minangkabau ethnic group. Exploring the use and consumption of recording media in this Indonesian regional context, and its effects on local culture and ethnicity, the study approaches the topic from the perspective of the region. I use the term *ethnicity* in this book, among various understandings and theories about it (see Yinger 1985; Banks 1996; Hutchinson and Smith 1996), to refer to 'the social construction of descent and culture, the social mobilization of descent and culture, and the meanings and implications of classification systems built around them' (Fenton 2003:3). Ethnicity is a highly elastic concept applied to groups who say they share or are perceived to share some combination of cultural, historical, racial, religious, dress, food, or linguistic features and also ancestral origins, by which the connection between its members is not conceived as a familial bond (Birch, Schirato and Srivastava 2001:163; Calhoun 2002:56). Of those elements, 'common descent and shared origin is central' (Verkuyten 2006:75). By applying such a region-centric perspective, this study provides a view of the multi-faceted and heterogeneous character of Indonesia's media industries, specifically its regional recording industries, thus complementing the predominantly national and metropolitan-centred approach of studies of Indonesia media and culture.

Indonesia's regional recording industries have not received much scholarly attention. Scholars of media and popular culture spend most of their energy studying the use and impacts of digital social media on urban societies, which is an important arena of contemporary ethnic cultural productions. The products of the West Sumatran recording industry, like the products of other regional recording industries in Indonesia, are an outstanding agency for the Minangkabau ethnic community to express their attitudes to a changing world. Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs chronicle the Minangkabau ethnic group's past and contemporary cultural dynamics in the engagement with the outside world, in which foreign and indigenous elements are constantly competing. I am not simply examining the effects of cassette and VCD technologies on the changing nature of the local music industry,

as has been studied by some experts (for example Manuel 1993; 2012); far beyond that, I argue that regional recording industries, through which the mediation of ethnic cultures has greatly increased and the (re)production of local cultural sounds has continued to accumulate since the early twentieth century, have moulded the traits and existence of ethnicities all over the contemporary world.

This dissertation asks how and to what extent recording media are used in regional cultural production in Indonesia and how recording media interact with ethnicity, Minangkabau in this context. In order to answer this principal issue, I formulated questions that guided me in collecting data and arranging the body of this book. The questions are: when did Minangkabau culture and society first engage with recording media and what were the cultural-historical circumstances that engendered such technology contacts? When did the regional recording industry connected to Minangkabau ethnicity emerge and what political, economic, and social factors stimulated that? What are the products of this local media industry and what are their characteristics? What aspects are involved in this media-based regional cultural production and who are its consumers? To what extent does the regional recording industry, as a manifestation of cultural mediation, bring about transformation of ethnic Minangkabau culture and society?

This dissertation thus focuses on two aspects. First, a chronological outline of the arrival of various types of sound recording technology in Indonesia and the recorded sounds they reproduced, from the phonograph to the VCD, and Indonesia's domestication of them; this gives us a historical depiction of the ongoing mediation of Indonesia's ethnic cultural expressions using recording media technologies. 'Sound technology', as Sterne (2003:7) remarks, 'offers a route into a field of conjunctures among material, economic, technical, ideational, practical, and environmental changes.' Second, the dissertation examines the use of the various types of recording media in a contemporary Indonesian local cultural context and its implications for the public, by taking the case of the Minangkabau ethnic group. Both aspects are closely connected to each other because, as I will elaborate in the following pages, recorded sounds from the past continue to resonate and, together with current reproduced sounds, influence the configuration of the contemporary modern soundscape which in turn influences how people are living now. I want to stress the cumulative effect of the capability of sound reproduction to keep the sounds of the past alive. With this in mind, in order to comprehend contemporary cultures and societies in the world – Indonesia in this context – one must consider the history of sound reproduction in the society and how it has influenced that's society's culture of listening.

Today we are seeing an immense production by Indonesia's recording industries, especially music, nationally and regionally, which is consumed all over the country and even distributed to neighbouring countries. Focusing on the Minangkabau ethnic group of Sumatra, this book explores how local communities in Indonesia have adopted recording media technologies and what impacts the domestication of such technologies have had on them. In this regard, it can be said that the West Sumatran recording industry can be seen 'as a site for the examination of how locality emerges in the globalizing world and of how global fact takes local form' (Appadurai 1996:18).

It cannot be doubted that reproduced sound has influenced the emergence and development of each nation in the course of time. A post-colonial nation-state like Indonesia is no exception. The early construction of Indonesianness in the late colonial era, and the sense of nationality among ethnic groups living in Indonesia in subsequent times, have also been influenced by sound recording and transmitting technologies. History was made not only by guns, *bambu runcing* (bamboo spears), and small-scale vernacular print media. For example, it was in late colonial times that the Indonesian patriotic song 'Indonesia Raya' ('Great Indonesia') and political speeches by Dr. Soetomo were made available on gramophone disc (Pewartu, 11-08-1933; Anon. 1932:138), and during the Indonesian struggle of independence radio played an important role in spreading the spirit of nationalism.¹ Indonesia, whose entire archipelago covers a distance equal to that from London to Moscow, and which became an independent country partly due to Soekarno's passionate political speeches using microphones, has an incredible ethnic, culture, and religious variety. Inhabited by hundreds of ethnic groups (large and small) with different physical appearances and cultural identities, and adhering to several different religions, the position of ethnic groups, their relations to each other, and their relationship with the nation-state are not simple, not easily understood. Although it faces many problems, politically, socially, and economically, the nation-state remains in existence. Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' (1991) explains a bit about such complex political and cultural realities. However, Anderson saw literacy as a prerequisite for being able to imagine a nation by way of reading (newspapers, for example). Therefore, his theories may not be entirely applicable to the situation in the Dutch East Indies, considering that until the end of the colonial period the number of Natives² who were literate (not to say living in literacy) was restricted to a small group of local elites living in urban areas, mostly in Java.³ Though there was a vernacular press on a small scale in late colonial times, people's language use remained strongly influenced by orality (Sunarti 2013). Even in modern Indonesia and the Malay world, an oral orientation is firmly entrenched in many aspects of life, including in education (Sweeney 1987; Teeuw 1994). In this regard, historians, as Susumu (2007) and Colombijn (2009) have pointed out, have paid no attention to the role of aural power (such as Soekarno's political speeches using microphones). Reproduced sound (such as gramophone discs and radio programs of local music; see Susumu 2006) could reach a wider audience than print media, and directly influenced the emotions of illiterate as well as literate Natives. In this 'new age, newspapers and radio open all the secrets', as was mentioned by A[boe] Hanifah and his colleagues from *Jong Sumatranen Bond* (Young Sumatrans Union) in 1928,⁴ suggesting that not only print but also electronic media influenced the Dutch East

1 Wild 1987 and 1991. See also 'Menjebarkan pidato dengan radio', *Pandji Poestaka*, No. 38, Tahun X, 10 Mei 1932, p. 578.

2 In this book I use the term native (from Latin 'nativus', innate, natural) to refer to a person born in a specific place or area. It has a similar meaning to 'indigenous' (from Latin 'indus' (in) and 'gena', generate) which means a person originating in a country or region (Ansell 2013:86-7). Though the concept of 'native' may be regarded as neutral, the term had been used historically in the context colonialism, as also reflected in the book's Part 1, when the European colonialists 'presumed native populations to be primitive, savage, and uncivilized' (Ansell 2013:87).

3 In 1924, the Indonesian communist leader Tan Malaka noted that the literate Indonesian Natives was no more than 5 to 6 percent (Malaka 1962:25).

4 'Zaman Baroe', *Pemoeda-Soematera: Soeara dari perkoempoelan: Jong Sumatranen Bond*, No. 2, Tahun kesebelas, September 1928.

Indies colonial society at that time. In a contemporary perspective, modern media, including national and regional recording industries, have contributed significantly to the ongoing formation of national identity in Indonesia and the dynamics of regional cultures.

Since this study deals with ethnicity and the nation-state, it is important to understand two Indonesian concepts in a cultural and political context which will appear repeatedly in the book: *budaya nasional* ('national culture') and *budaya daerah* ('regional cultures'). *Budaya nasional* denotes the culture recognized as being part of the identity of the Indonesian nation-state, which, according to the Indonesian constitution *Undang-Undang Dasar 1945* (UUD '45), is 'culture that arises as the product of the thought and character of the entire people of Indonesia' (Yampolsky 1995:702)⁵. *Budaya daerah* refers to the culture of ethnic communities in Indonesia. A provincial-level administrative region, and sometimes district, is often strongly associated with the ethnic majority living there, with their own particular culture, despite the fact that many members of that ethnic group may have spread over Indonesia and neighbouring countries and still practise the culture of their ancestors. So, in the multi-ethnic state of Indonesia, provincial boundaries are not necessarily identical with ethnic boundaries.

In an Indonesian cultural context, the concept *budaya daerah* overlaps with the concept of *budaya tradisional* ('traditional culture') which is associated, if not exactly equivalent, with English *tradition*. Defined anthropologically, *tradition* refers to persistent cultural patterns (including beliefs, customs, knowledge, and values) that evoke or testify to continuity with the past (Calhoun 2002:170). As Indonesia's ethnic groups have long been absorbing elements of foreign but non-European cultures, tradition in this context can be better seen as a process in which culture is continuously renewed with reference to the past (Hobsbawm 1983:4). But tradition is usually seen as opposite to modernity (see Grabun 2001:8), and modernity is associated by Indonesians with all things (both material and immaterial) of European culture encountered in Indonesia. And in the context of this book, I do not make a distinction between 'Great and Little traditions', as Robert Redfield suggests (Redfield 1956), because the distinction between elite or dominant records of cultural or religious tradition and its local, informal, and often oral manifestations associated with peasant groups, in my mind, does not apply to (regional) cultural expressions in Indonesia.

Recording media, the focus of this study, possess a distinctive character that matches the cultural reality of Indonesia, which is heterogeneous in nature. According to Peter Manuel (1993:3), recording media, especially the cassette, are grassroots-based media. Equally grassroots-based is the VCD. Introducing a dramatically new form of media culture in Indonesia and elsewhere, 'VCDs have clearly increased the sheer amount of popular music production, while enriching it with a visual element that can serve as a vehicle for

5 As described in Yampolsky's 1995 article, the concept of Indonesian national culture is a long-lasting subject of debate among Indonesian intellectuals, government officials, and cultural observers, since the birth of the nation-state right up till today. One definition of national culture that is well known and generally referred to is Ki Hadjar Dewantara's formulation: 'the national culture of Indonesia is all the peaks and essences [*sari-sari*] of culture that have value, throughout the archipelago, both old and new, that are national in spirit' (Dewantara in Yampolsky 1995:704).

local, decentralized creative expression' (Manuel 2012:234). Unlike 'old' media such as cinema, television, and radio, which are one-way, monopolistic, and homogeneous, cassette and VCD tend to be decentralized in ownership, control, and utilization patterns (Manuel 1993:2; Manuel 2012:234). Such decentralized media are popular in developing countries (see Wallis and Malm 1984), including Indonesia, where the political character of the state tends to be restrictive. Cassette and VCD are widely used in all regions of Indonesia and, more importantly, are commonly used to represent and mediate various aspects of regional culture (Yampolsky 2003; Hicken 2009).

Historically, in the Indonesian socio-political context, the nation-state tends to control (*membina*) regional culture, in a sense interfering with it. This can be recognized through many policies launched by the central government in Jakarta, both in the Soekarno and Suharto periods, and in the current Reformasi era. In the state's vision, regional culture as well as national culture must be supervised at every turn by the government (Yampolsky 1995:708; Yampolsky 2001:177). The ways an ethnic group represents itself through the media (recording media, in this context) reflect its reactions to the surrounding socio-cultural and political environments, including the state's interest in controlling it.

Minangkabau culture, the focus of this book, has the status of a *budaya daerah*, which in Indonesian cultural discourse is often associated with *budaya tradisional* ('traditional culture'), while recording media are considered a product of modern technology. Taking this somewhat ironic phenomenon – the representation of traditional regional culture in modern media – I want to comprehend how ethnic groups acclimatize to the modern globalizing world and the ongoing influence of new technological inventions, and how ethnic groups position themselves in the national context of the Indonesian nation-state.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

By investigating cassette and VCD culture in a regional cultural context, one can perceive how local people face modernity. As experienced by various communities in other parts of the world, *modernity* refers to a transformation of beliefs about the self, expectations of the future, and understandings of human potentialities as a consequence of the industrializing of the world and globalization, which have resulted in 'the secularization of society and the retreat of religious worldviews, and the development of a new fabric of selfhood rooted in concepts of individuality, autonomy, and freedom' (Calhoun 2002:110). By focusing on historical as well as contemporary (re)mediation of Indonesian regional culture, and taking as a case study the Minangkabau of West Sumatra, this study looks at changes over time. In the following sections I discuss some considerations and theoretical notions used in this study to investigate how the mediation of Indonesia's local cultures has had snowballing effects. It is important to understand what occurred in the past in order to understand later developments, as well as to identify resemblances and differences.

RECORDING TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF SOUND REPLICATION

Sound recording technologies – the phonograph (gramophone) and its successors – are inextricably linked with reproduced sound. No doubt these human creations have affected humans themselves. Through the use of recording technology, sound and hearing in the modern age were ‘reconceptualized, objectified, imitated, transformed, reproduced, commodified, mass-produced, and industrialized. Changes in sound, listening, and hearing happened bit by bit, place by place, practice by practice, over a long period of time’ (Sterne 2003:2). The replication of sound has amplified and extended sound and our sense of hearing across time and space, and ‘our experience of listening [...] is being transformed, and included in this transformation are the ideas we have about the world and ourselves’ (Ihde 2007:5). Though sounds of the past may no longer exist, but their footprints (on recordings) will never vanish. Several scholars (e.g. Bull and Back 2003; Weidman 2003; Sterne 2003) have shown how reproduced sound, thanks to the invention of recording technologies, has fundamentally affected the lives of humans, changing not only their perception of space, time, and reality, but also their identity and behaviour. Nevertheless, the effects of modern reproduced sound, made possible by the use of recording technologies invented in Europe, seem to have been overlooked in the study of Indonesian social history, including the colonial period. More than just the sound of recorded music, as generally perceived in many studies, I perceive *modern sounds* in this study as sounds which come into existence through the use of machinery, whether simple or sophisticated, originating in the nineteenth-century industrial West. Such sounds have strongly characterized the urban noise and soundscape, and have become ‘an inescapable element of modernity’ (Schwartz 2003:492).⁶

The act of separating sound from its physical source was to bring with it a whole new range of socio-cultural, economic, political, and emotional implications. Nowadays modern reproduced sound deeply influences human life, as can be seen in the higher dependence of young generations’ ears on earphones, which carry the sound of modern music to their brains and hearts. Modern people also use reproduced sound of particular kinds of music, animals or nature for psychological therapy. It has become a common sight that everywhere, especially in urban places, many of us ‘switch on the television set as soon as we enter home and many of us put [recorded] music on to lull ourselves to sleep at night’ (Bull and Back 2003:10). In our contemporary world, modern sound produced by modern machines, including recording technologies, have made it difficult to find silence. In the Indonesian soundscape, even in villages (*kampung*) in the countryside, reproduced sound is performed and heard as ‘audible dialogue with the world’ (Charles Hirschkind 2006:83).

6 So, the sounds of a crowing cock and bamboo leaves rustling in the wind have appeared on recordings and the sounds of an electric hair trimmer, a tram, church bells, and a digital keyboard, just to mention a few, are examples of ‘modern sounds’. In this book I use the term to refer to recordings of the sound of local repertoires, especially music, which I refer to as ‘modern reproduced sound’, usually associated with the Minangkabau culture.

The more important point to understand here is that reproduced sound, due to its ability to travel across time and space and its capacity to be replicated, has resulted in a cultural classification of human hearing. People began to categorize sound into 'high culture' and 'low culture', such as high quality music versus pop music. This was made possible by the nature of recorded sound to maintain the original sound, but at the same time, due to extensive replication and widespread availability, the 'aura' of authenticity of the original is eroded. In his essay 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction', Walter Benjamin (1970:219) notes that 'by making many reproductions, [the reproduced object] substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced.' This notion is manifest in the contemporary mass production of commercial recordings (also by other media like local television) of Indonesian regional cultural repertoires in Indonesia and elsewhere. As Jacques Attali mentions, 'mass production [...] signifies the repetition of all consumption, individual or collective, [which is manifest in contemporary material culture of humans, including] the spectacle by recording of it' (Attali 1985:128).

Like other aspects of human culture, modern reproduced sound carries cultural and personal meanings. Since the second half of the nineteenth century, modern humans have been characterized above all by their reliance on consumption of reproduced sound. Such modern sound has addicted humans, has made them dependent on reproduced sound. Modernity in the course of time has brought with it a vast reorganization of sensory including auditory experience (Hirschkind 2004:131). Through the invention of the phonograph (gramophone) and later recording technologies, the human voice gained a measure of immortality. Mechanical reproduction of sound changes the reaction of the masses toward sound. Recording technology has caused sound to become an object to be 'contemplated, reconstructed, and manipulated, something that can be fragmented, [...] and bought and sold' (Sterne 2003:9). 'Nothing excites the memory more strongly than the human voice, maybe because nothing is forgotten as quickly as a voice [thanks to recording technology]. Our memory of it, however, does not die – its timbre and character sink into our subconscious where they await their revival' (Rudolph Lothar in Weidman 2003:453). And 'memory seems to be at the very core of identity; it connects who we are to who we once were' (Storey 2003a:81). With the invention of technologies of sound reproduction, sound was no longer a quickly vanishing phenomenon. Sounds from the past continually tickle our ears and minds today. With their potential to preserve and reproduce sound, the various types of recording technologies allow people to hear the voices of the dead.

Modern reproduced sound has also affected human perception of reality. Sound recording technologies have enabled humans to store data other than writing and images. At issue was not simply that new technology expanded the possibilities of storage; what was stored through this new technology was thought of as fundamentally different from what was stored by writing. Amanda Weidman (2003:462, 464) mentions that 'the new stored material' preserved by the recording machine 'came to be experienced as "real"'. The phonograph offered a new kind of reality in which the purity of hearing alone was distilled. Indonesian

people have certainly experienced this phenomenon, as a consequence of the rapid spread of sound recording technologies in the country since the 1890s.

CASSETTE AND VCD REVOLUTION AND RECONFIGURATION OF LOCAL CULTURE

Paying close attention to the transformative impact of electronic media, it is no exaggeration to say that cassette and VCD technologies have shifted the characteristics of local culture in Indonesia and influenced people's lives. Cassettes and VCDs have transformed local cultures and people's images and stereotypes of these cultures. Public cultural discourses in Indonesia show increasing debate about authenticity among particular ethnic communities. In this book I use the notion of *authenticity* in relation to human character, the quality of being genuine or 'true to oneself' (Chandler and Munday 2014:18), 'the sentiment of being' that 'has become part of the moral slang of our day points to the peculiar nature of our fallen condition, our anxiety over the credibility of existence and of individual existence' (Trilling 1971:93). The debate about authenticity in Indonesia is undoubtedly fuelled by the extensive mediation of ethnic cultures today, by cassettes and VCDs, because the mediation of (local) culture by modern media tends to confirm stereotypes of cultural identity, exacerbating cultural differences between ethnic groups. Prior to the mediation of local culture using recording technology (and other kinds of modern media), ethnic communities' sense of their own culture was shaped primarily by symbolic content exchanged in face-to-face interaction. The increasing use of media technologies, including cassettes and VCDs, in Indonesia's regions has fundamentally changed this pattern. As individuals gained access to media products, they were able to take some distance from the symbolic content of face-to-face interaction and from the forms of authority that prevailed in everyday life (Thompson 1995:180). As I will demonstrate in this book, this phenomenon is represented in the distribution and reception of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs among the Minangkabau diaspora in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world.

Exploring the impact of diverse media technologies on music, Timothy D. Taylor (2001:7) says, 'Whatever music technology is, it is not one thing alone. It is not separate from the social groups that use it; it is not separate from the individuals who use it; it is not separate from the social groups and individuals who invented it, tested it, marketed it, bought it, or revived it.' Indonesian regional commercial recordings are not objects in a social vacuum. Taking as a case study the commercial production of Torajan ethnic music by local recording companies in South Sulawesi, Andy Hicken (2009:25) states that 'music has gone from an embodied and fleeting ritual practice, accessible only when musicians are physically present, to a disembodied, listening oriented, everyday practice that depends on recorded media.' In this regard, I would say that the extensive mediation and representation of Indonesian regional cultures on commercial cassettes and VCDs, as a consequence of the rise of regional recording industries, may have shifted the way people perceive them and also shifted the composition and the dissemination of local culture.

In Indonesia, cassettes and VCDs, unlike other modern media (television, film, etc.), are widely and extensively used to mediate and to represent local cultures. Characterized by a relative lack of state interference and able to reach all segments of local society, cassettes and VCDs, through regional recording industries, have allowed diverse ethnic groups in Indonesia to reinvent their own culture based on their own needs and perceptions. Peter Manuel, exploring the impact of cassettes on local music in northern India, says that the cassette revolution has brought about a dramatic restructuring and reorientation of the music industry, of the quality, quantity, and variety of popular music disseminated, and of dissemination and reception patterns (Manuel 1993:1). Furthermore he notes:

The impact of cassette technology, however, is by no means limited to the wealthy sectors of society. Like some of the other new media, cassette and tape players constitute a two-way, potentially interactive micro-medium whose low expense makes it conducive to localized grassroots control and corresponding diversity of content. Cassettes [...] can be used at the owner's convenience and discretion, they thus resist various forms of control and homogenization associated with the capital-intensive, monopolistic 'old' media of television, cinema, and radio. (Manuel 1993:2)

Just as cassettes and VCDs have contributed to transforming traditions, they can also generate cultural innovation and hybridization. This contradicts public discourses in Indonesia which tend to blame these media as modernizing agents causing declining interest in traditions. As Canclini (1995:2) says, 'the abrupt opposition between the traditional and modern does not work'. John B. Thompson argues that modern media have brought about what he calls a 're-mooring of tradition'.

The mediatization of tradition endowed it with a new life: tradition was increasingly freed from the constraints of face-to-face interaction and took on a range of new traits. Tradition was deritualized; it lost its moorings in the practical contexts of everyday life. But the uprooting of the traditions did not starve them of sustenance. On the contrary, it prepared the way for them to be extended and renewed by being re-embedded in new contexts and re-moored to spatial units which exceeded the bounds of face-to-face interaction. (Thompson 1995:180)

In this regard, it can be conjectured that the vast (re)mediation and accelerating (re) presentation of Indonesian regional cultures in the course of time in different media, especially recording media, must have transformed these cultures, shifting their characteristics, features, and nature.

RESEARCH METHODS

There are three domains that I searched for gathering data used in this book: 1) bibliographical explorations conducted in libraries at Leiden, The Hague, London, Jakarta, and Padang; 2) participating observation: interacting with West Sumatran recording industry practitioners and Minangkabau commercial cassette traders and consumers; 3) collecting as many as possible Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs of various genres. (I have been collecting since I worked on the VA/AVMI project, 1996-2001.) The last two domains were brought together

during my fieldwork in Indonesia and Malaysia. During the period of fieldwork, I also looked into ‘vernacular texts’ – to borrow the term of Jeremy Wallach (2002:4) – which include banners, posters, stickers, graffiti, and decoration on public transportation vehicles. I tagged the public response to Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs represented in the local press, radio, and television. I also attended seminars organized by universities and cultural centres (*taman budaya*) in Padang, where I had opportunities to talk with Minangkabau cultural observers and intellectuals and hear their thoughts about Minangkabau culture, its music, and the recording industry.

Officially, I spent three periods doing fieldwork in Indonesia and Malaysia during the summers of 2003, 2004, and 2005. Since this study was carried out while fulfilling my principal task as lecturer at Leiden University, I was only able to conduct field research during summer breaks. Nevertheless, after 2005 I collected additional data during my visits to Indonesia and Malaysia in order to speak at conferences.

In Indonesia I visited the principal city of West Sumatra, Padang, and other towns in the highlands and on the coast in order to observe *in situ* the cassette and VCD shops and stalls, and conducted interviews with their owners and with purchasers. I visited producers, singers, and songwriters of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs. I have a certain familiarity with the West Sumatran recording industry since I worked as a VA/AVMI research associate (1996-2001) before I commenced this dissertation project. I made visits to Jakarta to observe the business of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs in the capital of the Republic of Indonesia. I also closely observed the wedding festivities of a family of Minangkabau migrants in this city to see the musical performances at such events. I also made journeys to Pekanbaru, Riau, one of Minangkabau people’s principal *rantau* (place of migration) destinations, which I used as a case study to look at the reception of Minangkabau commercial recordings outside West Sumatra. For the same purpose, I did fieldwork in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur (especially the Chow Kit district), and in the Malaysian states Kuantan and Negeri Sembilan, where many Minangkabau migrants have become permanent residents, in order to see the production, trade, and reception of Minangkabau commercial recordings in these Malaysian states which have historical ties with Minangkabau. In short, I surveyed Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs everywhere I travelled in Indonesia and Malaysia.

My desire to write about Indonesian local cultures’ encounter with recording technology and the phenomenon of this cultural happening in Minangkabau culture was prompted by the special circumstances in which I found myself. Being myself a Minangkabau and an Indonesian, I have lived through a large part of the period under study, and I personally experienced the transformation of Minangkabau culture and soundscape from a situation which was relatively noiseless and lacking in ‘modern’ sound before the 1970s to today’s situation that is constantly noisy with the sounds of modern media like radio and audio cassette tapes. My involvement both as actor and witness in the process of such change has been one of the factors that stimulated me to carry out this study.

THE MINANGKABAU

My research takes Minangkabau as a case study, one of 1,072 ethnic and sub-ethnic groups living in Indonesia (Suryadinata, Arifin and Ananta 2003:10). Minangkabau is a prominent ethnic group that has become the subject of studies by many foreign scholars due to its distinctive culture combining patrilineal-based Islamic principles and matrilineality, and its welcoming responses to foreign ideologies and Western modernity. The Minangkabau have long been prominent in political, economic, and intellectual life in Indonesia (Graves 1981; Hadler 2008). It is no exaggeration when M.G. Swift (1971:255) in his article on Minangkabau and modernization says that ‘anyone who has studied Indonesia could hardly fail to form the impression that the Minangkabau are a special people [because] in most fields of modern endeavour Minangkabau have been prominent, either as individuals or as a group’.

The homeland of Minangkabau people is the province of West Sumatra,⁷ though traditionally it covered a far larger region. There are many *adat* communities in neighbouring provinces who culturally identify themselves as Minangkabau, such as those of Kampar and Kuantan in Riau province (Kato 1986; Kato 1997), Kerinci in Jambi province (Van Aken 1915; Jaspán 1973) and Mukomuko in Bengkulu province (Yondri et al. 2001). The Minangkabau vernacular, *Bahasa Minangkabau* (‘Minangkabau language’), is considered to be an old dialect of Malay (Moussay 1981). In the nineteenth century the British intellectual William Marsden stated that Minangkabau was the ‘ancestral home’ of Malays and the source of the oldest and purest form of the Malay language and culture (Marsden 1807:218, 223). Results of Indonesia’s 2000 census count just under 5.5 million Minangkabau people, or 2.72% of Indonesia’s total population of over 201 million in 2000, considered the fourth largest ethnic group in Indonesia after Javanese (41.2%), Sundanese (15.41%) and Madurese (3.37%) (Badan Pusat Statistik 2001).⁸

Minangkabau is the biggest matrilineal⁹ society that still survives in our contemporary world. Their traditional geopolitical system was organized in the form of ‘small independent republics’ called *nagari*.¹⁰ But the Minangkabau people embraced Islam which is patrilineally oriented in its doctrines. Islam penetrated Minangkabau during the first half of the nineteenth century through a conflict between a religious purification movement and the traditional

7 Though West Sumatra province is mainly inhabited by the Minangkabau majority, there are other ethnic minorities living there, among others the Nias living in Padang and Pariaman and the Pagai (*orang Pagai*) living in the Mentawai archipelago, which falls under West Sumatran provincial administration. Unlike the Minangkabau who embrace Islam, the Nias and the Pagai mostly embrace Christianity.

8 However, a recalculation carried out by Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin and Aris Ananta 2003:12-13 found that Minangkabau was the sixth largest ethnic group in Indonesia after Javanese, Sundanese, Malay, Madurese and Batak. As a comparison, they were the fourth largest ethnic group in the country according to the 1930 census, with less than 2 million, or 3.36% of the total population of 59 million at that time (Centraal Kantoor voor de Statistiek 1934 as quoted by Suryadinata, Arifin and Ananta 2003:12).

9 For further on the Minangkabau matrilineal system of kinship, see Kato 1978; Kato 1982.

10 There are more than 500 *nagari* in Minangkabau. In the past all *nagari* owed respect to the royal patriarchal family of Pagaruyung Kingdom situated in Luhak Tanah Datar, although politically not under their control. For more on Minangkabau *nagari*, see L.C. Westenek 1913. See also Harsja W. Bachtiar (1967) for the insights of a Minangkabau *nagari* named Taram in the Minangkabau highlands of Lima Puluh Kota.

nobility; known as the Padri War (1803–1837), the conflict ended after the Dutch colonial power intervened (Radjab 1954; Dobbin 1983). Since then, Minangkabau society has been characterized by both matrilineality and Islam, two partly opposing systems, because Islam follows the principle that descent and inheritance are through the paternal line. The integration of Islam into Minangkabau culture has influenced traditional Minangkabau art and literary life. The religious purification group introduced stories with Islamic morals adopted from the Middle East in an effort to marginalize the traditional Minangkabau oral stories (*kaba*) that they regarded as containing elements of paganism (see Wijk 1881:i-iii).

The ‘odd fusion’ between Islam and the Minangkabau matrilineal system of kinship has resulted in a ‘culture of paradox’, in the words of Jeffrey Hadler (2008:1). Many ethnologists have concluded that this ‘paradox’ distinctly characterizes the individual personality and culture of emotion¹¹ of Minangkabau people and their social behaviour. These special Minangkabau characteristics seem to have been generated by the tension between the matriarchate (which tends to be viewed as tradition, or *adat*) and Islamic law. This tension can be seen in Minangkabau songs and other Minangkabau cultural expressions. Nancy Tanner (1969, 1971, 1982) has examined how this paradox is represented in individual relationships in Minangkabau families. Istutiah Gunawan Mitchell (1969) has shown how the Minangkabau socio-cultural environment has caused mental disturbance among Minangkabau migrants. ‘Dualism’ (*keduaan*) is a main characteristic of the Minangkabau cultural personality, in the opinion of H.H.B. Saanin Dt. Tan Pariaman, who for many years has observed Minangkabau people’s behaviour, both in the homeland and in *rantau*. He states that Minangkabau people tend to be ‘individualists’ or even ‘super-individualists’. They suffer a culturally psychopathological symptom which he calls ‘Padangitis’. This unique cultural neurosis is characterized by the inclination to conceal one’s identity as a Minangkabau if caught making a mistake or committing a crime, or to escape from a problematical reality (Pariaman 1979). It has been suggested that the custom of leaving the homeland (*merantau*) is a manifestation of this neurosis (Naim 1973; Naim 1979; Kato 1982).

The Minangkabau custom of *merantau* is a socially and culturally institutionalized pattern of voluntary migration (Naim 1973; Naim 1979; Murad 1980). It is part of the Minangkabau traditional conception of nature (*alam*), as reflected in a philosophy of life that says ‘*alam takambang jadi guru*’, meaning the surrounding nature is the teacher (Navis 1984). The importance of *rantau* is reflected in the Minangkabau traditional geopolitical conception that divides the homeland into two parts: *luhak* and *rantau*. *Luhak* is the traditional heartland of the Minangkabau ethnic group (*darek*). *Rantau* literally means ‘place of migration’ and may be loosely translated as ‘foreign shores’. Geographically, *rantau* comprises all the Minangkabau expansion (migration) areas that are situated outside the *luhak*. Derivatives of the word *rantau* include the verb *merantau* (out-migrate) and the noun *perantau* (migrant). These three Minangkabau words – *rantau*, *merantau*, and *perantau* – which convey the dynamic mobility of the Minangkabau people, appear frequently in the pages of this book.

11 For more on the Minangkabau culture of emotion, see Heider 1991 and Heider 2011.

Functioning as a 'release valve' for the heartland (*luhak*), from where people from the four fertile basins of *luhak*¹² out-migrated to open new settlements, the initial destinations of the Minangkabau *rantau* were the adjacent lowlands on the west coast of Sumatra (Pesisir Selatan, Pariaman, and Pasaman) and settlements located along the three big rivers flowing to the east coast, that is Kuantan, Inderagiri, and Kampar (Kato 1997). One of the oldest *rantau* destinations of Minangkabau migrants was Negeri Sembilan on the Malay Peninsula (Newbold 1835). But since the 1920s *merantau* means to out-migrate to urban places outside West Sumatra, even abroad. Nowadays, the presence of Minangkabau *perantau* in various parts of Indonesia and neighbouring countries can be recognized especially through the presence of Padang food restaurants (*rumah makan Padang*), whose spicy culinary dishes are tasty to the tongues of many other ethnic groups as well (see Persoon 1982, 1986).

The *merantau* custom is intended to be a search for wealth, knowledge, or experience. With the exception of earlier pioneering migrations to acquire new lands, the Minangkabau *merantau* generally consists of farmers leaving home to seek non-agricultural occupations in *rantau*. Therefore, the contemporary Minangkabau diaspora tends to be found in urban places. Many *perantau* visit their home villages in West Sumatra for a short time (*pulang basamo*), especially during the days of celebration after the fasting month (*lebaran*), to satisfy their longing for their homeland, and to show off their economic success in *rantau* and to share their wealth with their matrilineal family and their fellow villagers. As I will discuss in Part III, West Sumatran recording industry products have played an important role in the emotional bonding of Minangkabau *perantau* worldwide with their homeland.

Like all societies, Minangkabau is continuously changing socially, and directly or indirectly the changes have influenced its matrilineal system.¹³ Such cultural change is represented in Minangkabau commercial recordings, the products of the West Sumatran recording industry. The *merantau* custom has drained the life out of villages, and brought many changes to traditional village social organizations (Naim 1985). The Minangkabau diaspora is becoming increasingly independent of and detached from their homeland. Young people are reluctant to stay in the countryside farming rice, and the older generations of *perantau* are not enthusiastic about returning to their home villages. When Minangkabau individuals have a turn holding traditional village positions as *penghulu* and *mamak*, they are absentee leaders (Chadwick 1991:80). The more intellectual among the *perantau* served as principal agents of change, bringing new ideologies and ideas of modernization to their homeland (Swift 1971). This made 'West Sumatra in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became an ideological breeder reactor' (Hadler 2008:180). During this period, there were two opposing groups of intellectuals in Minangkabau society: the *ulema* group had been produced by traditional Islamic schools in a Middle Eastern tradition, while the other group had been produced by a Western-style education and European university training. Many things of daily

12 They are *Luhak Agam*, *Luhak Tanah Datar*, and *Luhak Limo Puluah* (50) Koto. The fourth *luhak* was shaped later, named *Kubuang Tigo Baleh* (Navis 1984:104-5). These four regions are considered the traditional heartland of the Minangkabau ethnic group.

13 An important work that examines Minangkabau socio-cultural change is a collective volume edited by Lynn L. Thomas and Franz von Benda Beckmann (1985). See also Kato 1978 and Blackwood 2007.

life they relentlessly debated, including matters dealing with fashion (see Kaptein 2009). Today this ideological impact of *perantau* has been partly replaced by modern media such as television and Internet. Most of the younger generation feel closer to national and global cultures than to their own ancestral culture (Ronidin 2006). But others still follow Minangkabau customs (*adat*) and Islamic values in their lives (see Huda 2013), selectively adopting elements of global culture. Such conflicting cultural practices have characterized the lives of Indonesian people since the colonial era: local/national culture versus global culture, Islam influenced by the Middle East versus modernism imported from Western culture. Nowadays, the debates on mailing lists and Facebook groups, which involve both the Minangkabau diaspora and those living in the homeland, suggest that the contradictions between Islam and Minangkabau *adat* (which is associated with traditional matrilineality) remain a hot topic (see Bagindo *et al.* 2008; Suryadi 2012). However, so far, although some aspects of Minangkabau matrilineality have been eroded under the influence of foreign cultures and ideologies, its heart still functions, as manifested today in children's alliance with their mother's clan and the inheritance of *harta pusaka tinggi*, which is still passed down from mothers to daughters.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

As for the organization of this work, the book is divided into three main sections, nine chapters in all, plus an introduction and a conclusion.

Part I, 'Recording technologies encounter Indonesian local culture' (Chapters 1 to 3), describes the arrival of various types of recording media in Indonesia and the public response to them. It recounts the early mediation of Indonesian local repertoires on gramophone discs. Providing a historical perspective of the Indonesian people's encounter with sound recording technologies, this part recounts recording technology's effects on Indonesian local culture from the first days of its introduction in Java until the formation of the West Sumatran recording industry in the 1970s.

Part II, 'Insight into the West Sumatran recording industry' (Chapters 4 to 7), explores the complex features and socio-cultural significance of West Sumatran recording companies. It examines three categories of their products: *pop Minang*, Minangkabau oral literature genres, and the new genres that were shaped by media which I call media-bound genres, taking the example of Minangkabau children's pop music. This part also looks at what is involved in the production and distribution of the products, and their cultural meanings.

Part III, 'Modes of reception of Minangkabau recordings' (Chapters 8 and 9), surveys two modes of distribution and reception of the West Sumatran recording industry's products. First, it looks at the remediation of products of the Minangkabau recording industry in other media, and the actors involved in the electronic and virtual distribution of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs. Second, it looks at conventional ways of distribution and consumption of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs outside West Sumatra. It examines how West Sumatran recording industry products have been received by Minangkabau migrants in *rantau*, taking as examples neighbouring Malaysia and Pekanbaru (Riau province)

in Indonesia. It also looks at the consumption of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs among other ethnic groups in Indonesia.

The concluding chapter recapitulates the evidence and arguments that have been presented in the book.

PART I

RECORDING TECHNOLOGIES
ENCOUNTER INDONESIAN LOCAL
CULTURES



Balinese villagers of Bangli district listening to the sound of a gramophone. The photograph was taken by Gregor Krause during his tenure in Bangli between August 1912 and January 1914 (Source: http://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/25408271_krause-dr-gregor-baliesen-mit-grammophon-expedition)

CHAPTER 1

THE EARLY DAYS OF RECORDING TECHNOLOGY IN INDONESIA

Modern sounds, especially those produced by sound reproduction technologies, such as regional cultural repertoires stored on Indonesia's cassettes and VCDs – the focus of this study – have long been filling Indonesia's air.¹⁴ In this chapter I will recount how the phonograph Thomas Alva Edison invented in 1877 in New Jersey, the United States, and the replicated sound it produced were initially encountered by people in the Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia). The aim of this chapter is to look at how people living in the Dutch East Indies, including Natives, responded to the phonograph and the replicated sound it produced. I also survey the early path of the representation of Indonesian local cultures using this technology in Java, the principal island of the Dutch East Indies, after which time recordings of such local repertoires spread to ethnicities living in the outer islands, including Minangkabau in West Sumatra.

It is no exaggeration to say that the invention of sound recording technology in the nineteenth century was a modern miracle. Making possible the storage and preservation of sound across time and distance, which previously could only be dreamed of, this invention contributed significantly to the developing entertainment world. Thomas Alva Edison first realized this dream in 1877 (Chew 1967) when he invented the tin-foil phonograph, which then inspired other scientists to perfect and develop his invention. 'Of all my inventions, I liked the phonograph best,' he said.¹⁵ Edison mentions that this invention that most impressed himself allows its users 'to store up and reproduce automatically at any future time the human voice perfectly' (Edison 1989:444). During the last two decades of the 1800s, sound recording machines were exhibited outside the United States of America, first in Europe and then in Australia and Asia. In Europe the machine was first demonstrated at the Academy of Science in Paris on 11 March 1878, where a French professor named Bonjour accused Edison of cheating. He stated that Edison was a ventriloquist.¹⁶

The adoption of sound recording technology in Asia went through three phases, which applies to other modern media invented in the nineteenth century as well. The first phase was a period of exhibition in which a recording machine was demonstrated to the public in venues such as theatres and clubs, in the form of shows for which people had to buy tickets. In the second phase, people purchased sound playback machines and records, which became objects of prestige and status. In the third phase, European and USA recording companies appointed local agents in Asian cities and then established local recording facilities, usually in collaboration with local entrepreneurs.

14 This chapter is based on Suryadi 2006a with some additional data.

15 Thomas Alva Edison; quoted from <http://www.thomasedison.com/edquote.htm> (accessed 14-9-2004).

16 *Pedoman Masyarakat*, 12 January 1938, p. 36.

Focusing on the period of exhibition (phase one), this chapter investigates the initial experiences of the people of the Dutch East Indies with the early generation of recording machine inventions like the phonograph, graphophone and gramophone. The period covered is the last two decades of the nineteenth century. I describe important aspects of the exhibition of the ‘talking machine’ in the Indies: how demonstrations were carried out, the pioneer exhibitors and their motivations, the towns and venues exhibitions were held, the repertoires that were first recorded and presented to audiences, and the audiences’ response. I aim to identify the Dutch East Indies colonial society reactions, especially in Java, to the ‘talking machine’ exhibitions and their perceptions of this invention in the colonial environment, and especially in the urban entertainment world that was emerging in the nineteenth-century Dutch East Indies, including in major towns in Java.

THE FIRST DEMONSTRATIONS OF EDISON’S TIN-FOIL PHONOGRAPH IN JAVA

The first exhibition of the recording machine in the Indies was carried out by a Dutchman named A. de Greef. This name was mentioned in 1892 by Pieter Brooshoof in an article about the phonograph in the Semarang Dutch daily *De Locomotief*.¹⁷ De Greef was in fact an artist. He was the director of a *Fransch Opera-gezelschap* (French opera company) which first came to Batavia in 1865, and after that he went back and forth between Europe and Asia. In early February 1879 he arrived again in Batavia with a phonograph after sailing from Marseilles. He gave phonograph exhibitions in Batavia for about three weeks before continuing to Semarang on 22 February, then to Surabaya, Solo, Magelang, Purworejo, and Ambarawa.¹⁸ In Batavia De Greef gave phonograph exhibitions in the Schouwburg (Batavia Theatre) and also for the Governor General in his palace at Buitenzorg (Bogor).¹⁹ Quoting the Batavia press, a Singapore newspaper reported De Greef’s exhibition as follows:

On Saturday evening, the phonograph of Mr. de Greef was exhibited in the Theatre here, and proved a success. Those who have read the scientific descriptions of the phonograph in European scientific periodicals, and are aware of the peculiar imperfections of that machine must acknowledge that Mr. de Greef’s instrument was an excellent one. The phonograph uttered a feeble sound like the voice of a ventriloquist, but the rising and falling of the voice, the stress on some of the syllables and difference between the vowels, all these were faithfully reproduced. The consonants were audible but formed the weak side of the instrument. What was spoken, whenever reproduced by the phonograph, was, however, very intelligible, and the perfect fidelity with which it repeated the intonation of the spoken words, the pauses between them, and the stress on some syllables awakened repeatedly great laughter from its comic nature. By means of a paper speaking trumpet attached to the mouthpiece, the sound was very audible in the crowded hall of the theatre.²⁰

17 P.B. [Pieter Brooshoof], ‘De nieuwere phonograaf’ (*De Locomotief*, 3 June 1892). Brooshoof (chief editor of *De Locomotief*) wrote this article to welcome Professor Douglas Archibald, who visited Java to demonstrate the more recent phonograph perfected by Edison.

18 *Java-Bode*, 22 February and 5 May 1879. I thank Matthew Isaac Cohen for bringing several sources dealing with De Greef’s trip in Java to my attention.

19 *Java-Bode*, 22 February 1879. At that time the Dutch East Indies Governor General was Johan Wilhelm van Lansberge.

20 *Straits Times Overland Journal*, 1 March 1879, p. 5. A note says that ‘the following items of intelligence are

As the Singapore Straits Times Overland Journal writes: ‘M. DE GREEF, [...] was the first person to introduce the phonograph to the East. [He has spent a couple of months in Java with the phonograph,] giving exhibitions of this wonderful invention, one of the marvels of the age, and has been very successful in his practical illustrations of the working of the instrument.’²¹ The newspaper also reported De Greef’s plan to visit Singapore where he would hold an exhibition in the Town Hall, and ‘no doubt, many [there] will be curious to see such an extraordinary invention at work’.²² Unfortunately, I did not find any evidence that De Greef held a phonograph exhibition in Singapore as he had planned. Perhaps the machine developed a defect during De Greef’s tour around Java, forcing him to cancel his trip to Singapore.

It is quite astonishing that just two years after Edison invented the phonograph, the machine, thanks to De Greef, reached the Dutch East Indies. Described as ‘an instrument in the shape of a cylinder whereby any sounds may be recorded and reproduced exactly, at pleasure, merely by turning the cylinder’,²³ the machine soon become a spectacle for the elite ruling class of the colony. Evidently the phonograph demonstrated by De Greef was Edison’s tin-foil phonograph, which as a prototype was not yet perfected and had a poor recording quality.²⁴ Around six years later, in a report in the vernacular press issued in Semarang written by someone with the initials P.B – I suspect it is an abbreviation of Pieter Brooshooft – it is mentioned that a couple of years earlier he (P.B.) had paid 3 guilders for a ticket to watch a show about a new technology named the *Fonograaf*, which, I think, refers to De Greef’s show in 1879 at Semarang, which one can assume was also attended by Brooshooft because he was an important person in town due to his position as editor-in-chief of *De Locomotief*, the most influential newspaper in Semarang. P.B. mentions that the show was attended mostly by European *tuan-tuan* and *njonja-njonja* (lords and ladies) and one or two Javanese and Chinese notables.²⁵ At that time P.B. was already thinking about the benefits of the phonograph for the art world in the Indies (Java): 1) to record aloud the voice of a female dancer (*tandak*) so that her fans can listen to her recorded voice any time they like; 2) to record a funny puppeteer (*dalang*) so that his fans can enjoy his voice whenever they want; 3) to record the voice of a good reciter of Javanese poetry (*pembaca tembang*) so that people can enjoy it before sleeping.²⁶

translated from the N. I. Journals for the Straits Times’, and at the end it says: ‘Batavia Dagblad, 3rd Feb.’

21 Straits Times Overland Journal, 20 May 1879, p. 6.

22 Straits Times Overland Journal, 20 May 1879, p. 6.

23 Straits Times Overland Journal, 20 May 1879, p. 6.

24 In his essay, Brooshooft mentions a book entitled *De natuurkunde in onzen tijd* by B.C. Goudsmit (Zutphen: Thieme, Batavia: Kolff, 1896) which describes the technical workings of Edison’s first phonograph. Originally this book was published as *Physique populaire*, Paris: Marpon et Flammarion, 1891, by Émile Desbeaux; see also *De Locomotief*, 31 May 1892.

25 ‘Doeloe saja soedah membajar f 3 dapet satoe kartjis aken melihat satoe termasa, orang bilang *fonograaf* namanja. Maka jang dateng di tempat itoe hanjalah toewan-toewan dan njonjah-njonjah dan ada satoe doewa orang djawa dan tjina bangsawan djoewa adanja’ (*Tjahaja India*, 16 April 1885).

26 ‘Sehandeinja kita orang djawa pekakas jang demikian ini 3 perkara goenanja pada kita; 1e. saorang tandak jang njaring soewara-nja kita soeroeh gending satengah malem dalem trompet itoe, habis kaloe kita panggil sobat-sobat aken makan minoem, jang itoe sobat soeka soewara tandak, maka *Fonograaf* laloe kaloewarken soewaranja. 2e. Saorang dalang jang loetjoe kita soeroeh dalang moeloetnja dalem trompet itoe, habis kaloe kita panggil sobat-sobat jang soeka wajang maka kita kaloewarkan soewara dalang dari *Fonograaf* itoe; 3e. saorang pematja tembang jang baik, kita soeroeh membatja dalem trompet itoe[.] Kaloe kita maoe tidoer kita kaloewarken soewara itoe’ (*Tjahaja India*, 16 April 1885).

But all this was merely wishful thinking (*aken tetapi ini perkataan semoewa pertjoema*), because the price of a phonograph at that time was 3,000 guilders.

P.B.'s report in *Tjahaja India* is useful for what it tells us about the social significance of recording technology's introduction to the Dutch East Indies society in the 1880s. It even tells us something about the social structure of Dutch East Indies colonial society. P.B. wrote that to test the performance of the machine, a Dutch spectator was asked to speak into its horn (*trompet*), then a rich Chinese man, who spoke loudly and full of self confidence into the machine's horn, and finally a Javanese nobleman. Apparently, the Javanese was a bit ashamed and embarrassed, a common condition experienced by the Native's first encounter with Western technological inventions, hence the spectators laughed at him. The machine successfully replicated the voices of the first two people. But the replicated sound of the Javanese nobleman was not so clear. Whether coincidental or not, this difference accurately reflects the relative levels of prestige of the Dutch, Chinese, and Javanese languages in Dutch East Indies society at that time.²⁷ Furthermore, it suggests that sound technology contributed to cultural meaning and contestation of identity in the context of Dutch East Indies colonial society. P.B.'s comment that such a miraculous invention was God's gift to its inventor, after fifteen years of experimenting, suggests the people's disbelief about the invention. And P.B. predicted that the successors of the machine would be able to record even the quietest sound, such as the sound of the fall of a mosquito's wing.²⁸

By 1889 Edison and his engineers had succeeded in designing a new and better phonograph, which employed wax as its recording material. Edison had worked hard and put much money into his experiments, and hoped that the new phonograph would reach a world market.²⁹ Wax was first used as a recording material by Charles Summer Tainter and was then adopted by Edison. Because Tainter had a patent on this, the Edison Company had to pay 25 guilders to Tainter for every one of the new-style phonographs it sold.³⁰ Then, on 25 April 1889, the new Edison Company phonograph was exhibited at the Academy of Science in Paris.³¹

27 'Kalo orang mengisi soewara itoe: dimoeka deket trompet itoe. Maka bersama toewan jang poenja itoe pekakas Fonograaf berkata keras didepan dekat trompet itoe, katanja: "Mijnheer Fonograaf kan goed Hollandsch". Maka laloe dikaloewarkan soewara itoe dari dalem pesawat itoe ia ini: "Mijnheer Fonograaf kan goed Hollandsch". Sjahdan maka laloe sa'orang Tjina bangsawan berkata keras didepan trompet maka dikaloewarkan djoega soewara itoe kombali oleh Fonograaf itoe. Pengabisan sa'orang Djawa bangsawan djoega berkata didepan deket trompet itoe dan pengabisan perkataannja jang djaoeh, laloe ditambahi sorak dan ketawa. Sreta djikaloewarken (*sic*), maka segala perkataan dan ketawa itoe kaloewar kombali samoewa, dengan napasnja jang ada keras itoe djoega kadengeran kombali aken tetap[i] soewara itoe samoewa misih koerang terang adanja krana soewara itoe seperti soewara dalem dada adanja' (*Tjahaja India*, 16 April 1885).

28 'Adapoen itoe pekakas kata orang, orang Amerika jang mendapetken. Maka dia mentjari akal itoe 15 tahoen lamanja bahroelah toewan Allah mengoerniai dia. Maka sekarang saia ingin melihat pekakas aken mengerasken soewara, jang djatoehnja satoe sajak sa'ekor njamoek bolih kadengeran, terlaloe terang adanja' (*Tjahaja India*, 16 April 1885). P.B.'s predictions seem to have become reality in our contemporary modern world.

29 *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 21 May 1892; *De Locomotief*, 23 May 1892.

30 [Brooshooft] (*De Locomotief*, 3 June 1892).

31 [Brooshooft] (*De Locomotief*, 3 June 1892). For more about how Europe welcomed the 'talking machine', see Gelatt 1956:69-79.

In the same year, a British professor, Douglas Archibald, who claimed to be Edison's 'classmate and intimate friend' – a fact that would have enhanced his credibility – travelled around the world in order to introduce and exhibit the new Edison phonograph.³² In the middle of May 1892, he arrived in Java, where most people at that time regarded the recording of sounds as impossible.

DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE NEW EDISON PHONOGRAPH IN JAVA

On 16 April 1892, the steamer *Nerbudda* left Calcutta and sailed for Singapore via Rangoon. Among its passengers were the Irishman Douglas Archibald and his wife, with a new 'miracle' machine in their luggage.³³ Archibald claimed he was a representative of Thomas Edison's National Phonograph Company from the United States. The Indies was the last leg of the Archibalds' world trip, which had begun in 1889.

In early April 1892 the couple appeared in Calcutta, at that time a prominent city under British colonial control, which had become an important gateway in Asia for white travellers sailing from Europe. Apparently, Archibald had already visited some European cities and Australia before he arrived in India. He was one of many nineteenth-century European travellers with new technology departing from London, Amsterdam, or Paris – which at that time was well-known for its exhibits and promotion of all the new technologies – heading for the Orient to seek luck and fortune. In Calcutta Archibald demonstrated the new phonograph.

Apparently, Archibald had visited Asia previously. Born at Hampstead, England, in 1851, Douglas Edmund Archibald was the son of a judge, Sir Thomas Dickson Archibald, and Sarah Smith. He attended St John's College, Oxford University, from which he obtained a BA in 1874 and an MA in 1879.³⁴ He then went to India, and taught mathematics at Patna College in Bengal from 1877 to 1881. Returning to England, Archibald was principal of Grosvenor House, a private school at Tunbridge Wells (Fig. 1.1).³⁵

32 *De Locomotief*, 6 May 1892.

33 *The Straits Times*, 4 May 1892, p. 265.

34 In the academic system at Oxford University there is a tradition as follows: a bachelor's degree graduate is eligible, after seven years from matriculation and without additional study, to purchase for a nominal fee an upgrade of his bachelor's degree to a MA degree (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Oxford#History; accessed 12-3-2011). Archibald seems to have followed this system, so it is indeed possible that he got an MA from Oxford University in 1879, even though two years before he got that title, he had already left for India.

35 This information was obtained from Prof. Allan Everett Marble of Halifax, Canada, who is writing a book on the Archibald family, to which his grandmother belonged. Marble was unaware of Archibald's association with Edison's phonograph exhibitions in Southeast Asia. Marble mentioned that Archibald had married twice and had four children. One of his granddaughters, Prof. Isabel de Madariaga, aged 86, now lives in London (Marble, email, 18 and 21 September and 20 October 2005). Madariaga presented me with additional information about her grandfather (Madariaga, email, 24 October 2005). She mentioned that her grandmother (Archibald's first wife), Janet Helen Finlay (born at Glasgow, 1850), was the daughter of a wealthy cloth manufacturer in Glasgow. She was very badly treated by Archibald (he had other women) and she left him taking her four children soon after they settled in Grosvenor House, and went to live near her family in Glasgow. Archibald married again to a lady whose first name was Effie, probably short for Euphemia, a typical Scottish name, but she left him almost at once because of the same problem Finlay had had. It is uncertain whether it was Effie or

Archibald also claimed to have been a visiting professor at the University of Calcutta for three years.³⁶

In early May 1892 the Archibalds arrived in Singapore, where they remained for approximately one week and gave phonograph demonstrations. The first was held on the evening of 8 May 1892 at the Singapore Town Hall. *The Straits Times*, the prominent Singapore weekly, reported that Archibald had spent the preceding two or three years travelling around the world with a phonograph. The exhibition was preceded by a lecture in which he described the various efforts that had been made in the recording history of the world to capture and mechanically preserve sound. The lecture was closed with a brief recital of Edison's past achievements and present ambitions. Furthermore, *The Straits Times* writes:

Following the lecture came a number of phonographic recitals (if they may be so styled). Edison's Phonograph is a small instrument, regarded in connection with the volume of sound which it produces, and it may be noted that all genuine Edison phonographs are of similar size and pattern, that they are not on the market, and that this is the first phonograph that has been in the East, all other alleged phonographs being of the phonautograph class, and as inferior to the phonograph as the German concertina is to a grand organ. The selection last night comprised a cornet solo, by Levy (played in 1891); a masterly banjo solo, by Vane (1890); a remarkable bassoon solo, played in London in 1891 by E.F. James, of the Royal Italian Opera; a tin-whistle solo by an amateur, with various amateurisms fully accentuated; comic and sentimental songs; a Parsee song, which was remarkable for clearness; orchestral and brass-band selections; a typical specimen of Salvation Army 'worship'; a speech by Sir John Forrest (premier of Western Australia); and an extremely pretty xylophone and piano duet. Mr. Archibald also spoke into the instrument, which reproduced his utterances with wonderful fidelity immediately afterwards. A gentleman from the audience also sang into the funnel, but as he occasionally threw his voice outside the orifice of the instrument, the reproduction was not so clear. The entertainment was of reasonable length, and was thoroughly interesting in character. Professor Archibald's exhibitions are under the patronage of H.E. the Governor, who is expected to attend to-night; last night the Hon'ble W.E. Maxwell was present.³⁷

The second demonstration was held on 9 May in the same building. A number of new selections were presented, and the entertainment was again very satisfactory. The third and last exhibition was to be the following evening. It was also reported that Archibald would proceed shortly to Java, where he would be represented by Allan Hamilton as his manager.³⁸

another woman who travelled with Archibald to Asia in 1892, but it certainly was not Finlay. Madariaga does not think her grandmother went with her grandfather to Asia, because her mother (Finlay's daughter), who only met Archibald (her father) once after their separation, never told her anything about it. Finlay died in 1908. However, Allan Everett Marble recorded that Prof. Archibald married just two times: first in 1876 to Janet Helen Finlay and second on 6 August 1908 to Frances Elizabeth Dunn, daughter of Major Dunn (Marble 2008:261-3).

36 *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 14 June 1892. See also *De Locomotief*, 31 May and 2 June 1892.

37 *The Straits Times*, 10 May 1892, p. 274. This report was quoted in *De Locomotief*, 13 May 1892 and *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 16 May 1892.

38 *The Straits Times*, 10 May 1892, p. 274.



Figure 1.1: Photographs of Douglas Archibald. Left: Archibald as young man. The inscription below the picture indicates that it was made sometime during the years Archibald studied in Oxford before he obtained a MA from the University in 1879. Right: Archibald with his first wife, Janet Helen Finlay (1850-1908). The picture was taken between 1881 and 1889, when Archibald and Finlay were living in Tunbridge Wells, near London (Courtesy of family of Isabel de Madariaga in London).

In the second week of May 1892, Archibald and his wife made preparations to leave Singapore; their next destination was Surabaya in the Dutch East Indies. However, they had to delay their departure, probably due to lack of transportation, because only two vessels weekly served the Surabaya–Singapore route at that time. As a result, Archibald gave two additional demonstrations in Singapore on 10 and 11 May.³⁹ These were held at the regimental theatre in Tanglin district, the elite European compound and the British soldiers’ base camp in Singapore (near the current Orchard Road) (Makepeace *et al.* 1921, I:489; Isma’il 1924:17). Apparently, Archibald’s demonstrations in the regimental theatre were mainly intended for government officials, soldiers, and their families. The media released no reports about them.

Archibald’s phonograph demonstrations in Singapore, primarily attended by and intended for the white ruling class in the colony, support Jonathan Sterne’s notion that ‘sound-reproduction technologies represented the promise of science, rationality, and industry and the power of the white man to co-opt and supersede domains of life that were previously considered

39 *The Straits Times*, 10 May 1892, p. 276.

to be magical' (Sterne 2003:9). Based on *The Straits Times* reports, Archibald's demonstrations in Singapore were attended by upper-class white people. There is no indication that these demonstrations were attended by Natives or other Asian-race spectators. In those days, watching exhibitions of new technological inventions like the phonograph in the European colonies in Asia was a prestigious luxury reflecting the socio-economic and political segregation between the colonizers and the colonized subjects. As Michael Adas (1989) has shown, Europeans in colonial settings viewed technical differences as evidence of the superiority of Western over indigenous cultures, thus reflecting racist ideologies.

The Archibalds left Singapore after the second phonograph demonstration in Tanglin and sailed for Batavia on the *SS Godavery*, arriving there on 17 May. They soon continued their trip by steamer to the capital of East Java, Surabaya, on Wednesday morning, 18 May, arriving in the afternoon.⁴⁰

As *The Straits Times* reported, Archibald's phonograph show during his trip to Java was organized by Allan Hamilton, a professional manager from Surabaya.⁴¹ Hamilton, who sometimes appeared in newspapers with the title 'Professor' attached to his name, apparently was a freelance manager who was often contracted by foreign entertainment troupes to arrange their performances during their tours of the Indies.⁴² Archibald needed a professional like Hamilton: the machine was absolutely novel and just beginning to be incorporated into the urban entertainment world and it was unfamiliar to the public of Java. With Hamilton's assistance, Archibald could hope that many spectators would attend his demonstrations.

Archibald probably chose Surabaya for his first phonograph demonstration in the Indies because it was the largest and most prominent city of the colony at the time and because urban entertainment was increasingly evident there. In fact, urban entertainment blossomed in Surabaya more than in other cities of Java. In the late nineteenth century, it was 'a major theatre city. Surabaya theatre, located at Komediëplein, hosted touring English music-hall companies, Italian opera, French troupes performing *opéra comique* and *opéra bouffe*, and Dutch ensembles enacting farces and melodramas' (Cohen 2001:325). Opera and chamber music were enjoyed regularly by military and society clubs. Military music was often presented in the town square for public entertainment. Many European, Chinese, and Native performance groups, such as *wayang potehi*, *wayang kulit*, and *komedi peranakan*, performed in Surabaya frequently. Groups performing *bangsawan* theatre – an adaptation of the Parsi theatre of South

40 *Nieuws- en Advertentie-blad voor Probolinggo en Omstreken*, 18 May 1892.

41 *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 19 May 1892. The professional manager who could be contracted to organize art performances seems to have emerged together with the rise of urban entertainment in major Javanese towns in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. For the emergence of urban entertainment and popular culture in colonial Indonesia and Malaysia, see Milone 1966 and Wan Abdul Kadir 1988.

42 *De Locomotief*, 31 May 1892. In the weeks before he signed the contract with Archibald, Hamilton organized a tour of the European operetta troupe Ada Maven's Folly Company, owned by Frank Maven. The troupe travelled to the Orient, including Singapore and the Dutch East Indies, to perform dances, songs and comedy acts. On 6 May, Hamilton completed his contract with this group and announced that he would organize Archibald's phonograph demonstrations upon his arrival from Singapore. See *De Locomotief*, 6 and 23 May 1892; *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 9 May 1892.

Asia – travelled from the Malay Peninsula (Penang, Johor, Singapore) to Java, Borneo, and Sumatra (Cohen 2002a). Likewise, other Asian performing groups, such as Komedi India and Komedi Jepang, performed in Surabaya on their tours around the Indies. The musical box or *orgel*, which was developed in Switzerland before the phonograph (Mosoriak 1943; Clark 1979), had also been demonstrated to the European upper classes in Surabaya and other major towns in Java. Western circus groups on their tours to the Orient always stopped in Surabaya. Often there were two entertainment groups conducting performances in the city at the same time. The first *komedie stambael* group, a popular genre of urban theatre in the Indies, was established in Surabaya in 1891 (Cohen 2001:331-6), one year before Archibald's arrival. While the first commercial projections of moving pictures had been appeared in Surabaya on April 1897, brought by a French photographer based in Batavia by the name of Louis Talbot (Ruppin 2014:6). Undoubtedly, Surabaya could be expected to be receptive to the promotion of new media technology like Edison's phonograph.

Archibald's demonstrations in Surabaya were announced in promotional wording in local newspapers two days before he arrived: 'in the week ahead the *nieuwtje* ('novelty') and *laatste uitvinding* ('latest invention') the phonograph will be demonstrated in Surabaya'.⁴³ In advertisements in the Surabaya and Semarang press, Archibald stated that he had been directly asked by Edison to introduce his phonograph around the world. Archibald also claimed to have been the first to introduce the machine to the public in England, Australia,⁴⁴ New Zealand, Ceylon and India. He claimed his demonstrations had been attended by some 500,000 spectators in the preceding three years. Archibald's world tour aimed to make the wonderful invention better known and to inform the Edison Company about how it was received in the press. The announcements referred to his collection of clippings from 150 English, Irish, Scottish, Australian, New Zealand, British-Indian and Ceylonese newspapers which, almost without exception, expressed their admiration for the instrument.⁴⁵

To Archibald himself Java was not unfamiliar, because he had been a member of the Krakatoa Committee of the Royal Society of London, for which he had conducted extensive research on the impact of the Krakatau eruption in the Sunda Strait in 1883. In fact, he is on record as one of 13 members of this committee, which published a report on the impact of the eruption:⁴⁶ chapter 4 (313 pages) of this thick book was mostly written by Archibald. He also wrote other scholarly works, published in London and Calcutta.⁴⁷ Actually, his expertise was

43 Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad, 9, 11, and 14 May 1892.

44 Archibald visited Australia in 1890. His phonograph demonstrations at the Athenaeum theatre in Melbourne, just six months after its American debut, were attended by many spectators and were enthusiastically received by the local press (<http://www.exero.com/mastergate/secured/collectibles/edison.htm> ; accessed 28-10-2004).

45 See, for example, *De Locomotief*, 1 and 2 June 1892.

46 Symons 1888. See *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 14 May 1892; *De Locomotief*, 31 May 1892; *Java-Bode*, 12 July 1892. Symons et al. (1888) wrote Archibald's name as 'Douglas E[dmund] Archibald' – without 'professor'. As I describe below, his professorial title became a subject of debate in the local press following his confrontation with H.E. Eijssell, chief editor of *Soerabaija-Courant*.

47 I want to express my thanks to archivists Joanna Corden and Clara Anderson of the Royal Society, and Graham Barlett, library information manager of the British National Meteorological Library and Archive, for their useful information about Archibald's scholarly career in England and his scholarly publications (Corden, email, 13 September 2004; Anderson, email, 24 September 2004; Barlett, email, 15 and 20 September 2004).

in meteorological science, and he was a fellow of the British Royal Meteorological Society. In this connection he conducted observations in 1885 and 1886, for example, on the aerometer, and in 1888 he succeeded in an experiment with a kite which 'will have an important bearing on the future of [...] the science of military ballooning'.⁴⁸ Archibald also claimed to be a member of other scientific organizations. His book, *The story of the earth's atmosphere* (first published in 1897), for example, was reprinted several times between 1898 and 1918. In view of his academic work, it is clear that Archibald was not just a white adventurer promoting magical new European technology in the Orient in order to seek his fortune, as was common in the nineteenth century. Rather he seems to have been a scientist. Archibald's advertisements in the press stressed his academic credentials, and this was apparently meant to create the impression that the instrument he would demonstrate was a sophisticated technological product and, therefore, most appropriate to be appreciated by rational minds belonging to the educated classes.

The press in Surabaya and Semarang wrote enthusiastically of the new instrument that would be demonstrated by Archibald. 'For the first time people in Java can hear the recordings of Gladstone, the British Prime Minister, the famous singers Adelina Patti⁴⁹ and Stanley'.⁵⁰ This suggests that early phonograph recordings made in the 1880s and 1890s also recorded what Richard Bauman and Patrick Feaster (2005) call 'oratorical performance' of the world's leading politicians. Following the practice of foreign entertainment troupes at that time, which often went along the railways, shipping lines, and main roads connecting the main Javanese towns, Archibald prepared a road show. His next destinations would be Pasuruan, Probolinggo and Semarang, other important towns on the north coast of Java. The editor of the daily *De Locomotief* in Semarang, Brooshooff, wrote a long article entitled 'De nieuwere phonograaf' ('The newer phonograph') in which he described in detail the characteristics of the instrument that Archibald was to demonstrate. Brooshooff encouraged the public to see the exhibition in the following weeks at the Semarang Schouwburg. He also described the distinguishing features of the new type of phonograph and compared it with the one that had been demonstrated in Java previously by De Greef. He mentioned that the earlier instrument had had a lot of shortcomings; it was only a parody of the real voice (Brooshooff 1892).

The first advertisement of Archibald's phonograph demonstrations was in *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad* on 11 May 1892, less than one week before his arrival, and it was published continually throughout the week (*Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 11 to 21 May 1892, 'Advertentie' section; Fig. 1.2). The daily *Soerabaija-Courant* and Thieme's *Nieuw Advertentieblad* published the same half-page advertisement in their issues from 11 to 20 May. These advertisements announced that the newest Edison Company phonograph, 'the miracle of the nineteenth

For Archibald's scholarly publications available in the British National Meteorological Library and Archive, see record numbers 801391, 787570, 801394, 801390, 801393, 801392 and 801395 of the Library's collections.

48 See report 'Aerostatic experiment in Tunbridge Wells' in *Kent and Sussex Courier*, 18 May 1888, in which Archibald was called Professor. Thanks to Isabel de Madariaga for sending me a copy of this newspaper.

49 The Italian Adelina Patti was a famous singer in the late nineteenth century, particularly in England and the United States (Moore 1976:97-102). Patti, who studied with Gioachino Rossini, was a favourite of Queen Victoria (Gaisberg 1946:90-1).

50 *De Locomotief*, 6 May 1892.

century' (*wonder der 19e eeuw*) would be demonstrated by Professor Archibald in Surabaya on Friday 20 May and Sunday 22 May, and that the instrument was appearing 'for the first time in Java'. The demonstrations would begin at 9:30 p.m. in Surabaya's theatre, with admission between one and three guilders depending on the kind of ticket. The Surabaya public were reminded that Archibald would give only two demonstrations in their town and that he would be travelling in Java for only one month.

<h2>SCHOUWBURG TE SOERABAIA.</h2> <p><i>Met toestemming van den Resident</i></p>	
<p>Voorloopige aankondiging IETS BUITENGEWOONS VRIJDAG en ZONDAG 20 en 22 Mei <i>Aanvang te 9.30 wederen avond precies</i> EDISON'S LUID SPREKENDE PHONOGRAAF die op de meest verschillende punten van den schouwburg, duidelijk kan gehoord worden.</p> <p>Professor Douglas Archibald M. A. F. R. S. heeft de eer het Publiek te Soerabaia te be- richten, dat hij zal geven:</p> <p>TWEE VOORSTELLINGEN met de nieuwste Phonograaf van EDISON'S VINDING Bekend bij allen die hem gehoord hebben als het WONDER DER 19e EEUW De meest aantrekkelijke en unique ontspanning die immer aan het publiek werd aangeboden en die door ruim 250.000 Personen in Australië, Nieuw Zeeland u Indië met verwondering werd aangehoord. Meer bijzonder's in ons nummer van morgen</p>	<p>PROFESSOR ARCHIBALD zal slechts TWEE voorstellingen IN SOERABAIA GEVEN. Ten gevolge van zijn a. s. vertrek in Juni a.s. naar de tentoonstelling te Chicago</p> <p>Entrée: f 3.— f 2.— f 1.—</p> <p>Bespreken van plaatsen kan aan der Schouw- burg geschieden op en na den 19 Mei. <i>De Ondernemer voor</i> PROFESSOR ARCHIBALD } Allan Hamilton,</p> <p>Attentie Het zal Mr Hamilton aangenaam zijn met de <i>Directies van Socie-</i> <i>teiten</i> uit steden in den omtrek in onder- handeling te treden.</p> <p>PROF. ARCHIBALD ZAL SOERABAIA verlaten op den 25n Mei. en zal zijn Eerste voorstelling TE SEMARANG GEVEN OP DEN 5n JUNI. <i>Brieven enz te adreasseeren</i> ALLAN HAMILTON, <i>Hotel des Indes, Soerabaia,</i> 714</p>

Figure 1.2:
 Advertisement for
 Archibald's exhibition
 in Surabaya (Source:
 Soerabaiasch Handelsblad,
 14 May 1892)

In the middle of June Archibald was to sail for the United States to participate in the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The recordings to be presented were described as 'reproductions of every conceivable kind of sound from all parts of the world', including, as in Singapore previously, instrumental and vocal music as well as speeches by prominent politicians and religious leaders, especially British ones.

'PRESS STING' IN THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

On Wednesday evening, 18 May 1892, soon after Archibald and his wife arrived in Surabaya, Hamilton arranged for them to meet some twenty persons in the coffee room of the Surabaya

Schouwburg in Komedieplein.⁵¹ The meeting was to introduce Archibald to a number of distinguished guests, all high Dutch colonial officials and their wives, and journalists, while demonstrating the phonograph for them. The daily *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad* reported that:

Mr. D[ouglas] himself spoke into the tube and a few moments later the words came to us clearly. A sample [test] by Mr. H[amilton] from Surabaya failed because the sound of this gentleman was dull. After the end of the official performance a few gentlemen sang a song into the phonograph that was reproduced clearly as well. We confidently, therefore, recommend a visit tomorrow or on Sunday.⁵²

Meanwhile the *Soerabaija-Courant* drew attention to national identity by writing that Thomas Alva Edison, the inventor of the newest phonograph, was of Dutch ancestry. The writer mentioned that the performance of the phonograph was very impressive and wished Archibald success during his trip in the Indies.⁵³ Welcoming Archibald's first demonstration for the general public, to be held on Friday 20 May, H.E. Eijssell, chief editor of *Soerabaija-Courant* (Termorshuizen 2001:228-33, 329-30) wrote:

Edison's phonograph. I was notified that Mr. Hamilton (of the Phonograph Company Limited as I almost said) would honour my office with a visit this morning, to inform me, and with me my readers, that tonight at ten thirty in the Schouwburg, the first show will be held. A great many seats are already reserved, and therefore it looks like Archibald will have every reason to be happy that he did not bypass our city. The next performance will be given on Sunday and this will certainly be the last public show held here, because of previously made engagements.⁵⁴

The first public phonograph demonstration by Archibald was attended by Dutch and, not surprisingly, British immigrants of Surabaya. Apparently, the British were curious to hear the voice of William E. Gladstone, the leading politician and orator of their country of origin which, according to the newspaper reports they had read, could be heard here in Java through this new 'miracle' machine. Apart from that, the fact that the machine was to be demonstrated by a fellow British citizen surely attracted them. Unfortunately, the demonstration was not as successful as that of 19 May because of technical problems. The sound of the recordings of music and speeches it played was not clear, and the machine itself broke down after being turned on for one hour. This lack of success was caused by the fact that the machine was a crude model, so that it could not yet generate an ideal reproduction where 'the loudness of the reproduced sounds should be within the range at which the listener is accustomed to hear the original sounds' (Wilson and Webb 1929:15). As Archibald had only one phonograph with him, it was most unfortunate when it broke down. A member of the audience named F. de Hertog sent a letter to the editor of *Thieme's Nieuw Advertentieblad* (21-05-1892) in which he expressed his dissatisfaction.

51 For more about the Surabaya Schouwburg (with interior and exterior pictures), see Faber 1931:333-7.

52 *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 19 May 1892.

53 *Soerabaija-Courant*, 19 May 1892.

54 *Soerabaija-Courant*, 20 May 1892.

The second public demonstration was held on Sunday evening, 22 May. Alas, the machine was again defective. The several hundred spectators showed their disapproval, including Archibald's fellow British citizens in Surabaya who 'don't hesitate to call him "a real swindler"'. The spectators were charged 'one guilder extra on top of the entrance fee of three guilders – none too reasonable in itself – just for presenting Gladstone's voice and speech which, according to many Englishmen's feelings, quite literally doesn't have "anything like the Grand Old Man's voice"'. They had bought expensive tickets just to watch 'less than an hour and it showed not even one sixth of all the things in the programme'. Archibald was verbally abused during the exhibition and became the object of ridicule by Eijssell as reflected in his report published a few days later in *Soerabaija-Courant*. 'It would be wise for him not to return [to the Dutch East Indies] in the next 25 years, with or without phonograph or any other miraculous instrument to show', he said.

We are the kind of good-natured people who allow themselves to be cheated regularly year after year and to be taken in, in the worst possible way, by all kinds of exotic showmen, and 'professors', swindlers, and jokers, who relieve us of our money, with which they travel, laughing at us. But there will come a time when it all comes to an end, and that's what is happening right now. This Mr. 'Professor' can pride himself on having spoiled things here for many of those who come after him.

He can be sure that the audience won't put their trust in the good faith of such 'learned' gentlemen before having seen proof of it.

No title of 'Professor' or any learned, mysterious-looking letters like M.A. and F.R.S. after a name or on a card or poster will be of any help.

So we gladly call out a well-meant 'Adieu' to Mr. Professor, under the explicit condition he won't take it for an 'Au revoir'. We also hope that Mr. Allan Hamilton will take care from now on and won't pledge his word anymore without knowing the 'patron' well and having seen good and very trustworthy testimonials.⁵⁵

The tumult that took place on the occasion of this gathering of educated people was indeed unusual. The incident to a certain degree reflects the different characters of the British and other (white) groups of spectators in the colonies. But we should go further and consider what triggered this incident: a *phonograph* – a technology recently invented, which could reproduce sound and preserve it for all time – caused great amazement. To quote the press: it could 'speak', it was 'a miracle' and 'unbelievable!' The unpleasant incident could only happen because the audience's high expectations were disappointed: the words 'real swindler' suggest the audience's impression that the phonograph was just a conjurer's tool, and Archibald's performance was nothing more than an ordinary magic show; the technological and real capabilities of the machine, so strongly emphasized in the advertisements, were undermined by technical problems.

After reading the *Soerabaija-Courant's* negative report on him, Archibald and his wife visited Eijssell in his office at Huis Kali-Asin No. 429. Apparently there was a fracas between Archibald and Eijssell during the visit. Archibald gave Eijssell what was called an *Amerikaansche*

55 *Soerabaija-Courant*, 23 May 1892, as quoted in the Surakarta newspaper *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, 27 May 1892.

argumentatie: he hit Eijssell on the head, which resulted in bruising. Archibald's attack on Eijssell became hot news in the media of Java, and was even reported by the Singapore press.⁵⁶ For Archibald himself, the incident disrupted his tour. The demonstration for the Surabaya branch of the Concordia Military Club, which was booked for 25 May,⁵⁷ had to be cancelled. According to the media report, the engagement was cancelled because Archibald had received information that certain people intended to damage his phonograph during the demonstration:

We called Mr. Hamilton to find out what caused this [cancellation]. The answer was: Prof. Archibald had heard from different sources that there would be riots that night. It seemed that the 'Chinese church' [rumour] has done its duty? Prof. Archibald stayed away because he feared for his instruments.

We assured Professor Archibald that the visitors of Concordia are decent people. Because of the presence of ladies, they would not allow anything to happen.

But too bad, it was too late. The instruments were already removed. What a pity for the large number of ladies and gentlemen who showed up.⁵⁸

The cancellation gave Eijssell a further chance to criticize Archibald, and more harshly than before. Eijssell mentioned the physical injury he had received from Archibald. He accused Archibald of swindling the citizens of a Dutch colony, defrauding the public of Surabaya. 'Collegiality among the servants of the Queen of the World [Batavia] is rare, yet here every other feeling should have been pushed aside to make way for very justified indignation about an insult to the independent leader of public opinion who warned his fellow citizens of swindling,' Eijssell exclaimed.⁵⁹

The Archibald case led to a polemic in the press.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, while scrutinizing the press for news about himself, Archibald continued his trip to two other East Javanese towns, Pasuruan and Probolinggo. His manager had booked demonstrations in these towns on 26 May and 27 May respectively.⁶¹ Unfortunately, the public there were not so interested in seeing Archibald's phonograph demonstrations. This seems to have been due to the *Soerabaija-Courant's* negative reports of his unsuccessful shows in Surabaya, which were also published in the Probolinggo and Pasuruan newspapers.⁶² Consequently, Archibald's phonograph demonstrations in these towns had a low attendance, resulting in a financial loss for Archibald.

56 *Soerabaija-Courant*, 24 May 1892; see also *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, 27 May 1892; *The Straits Times*, 21 June 1892, p. 370.

57 *Soerabaija-Courant*, 24 and 25 May 1892.

58 *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 27 May 1892.

59 *Soerabaija-Courant*, 27 May 1892.

60 See, among others, *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, 27 May 1892; *De Locomotief*, 4 June 1892; *Soerabaija-Courant*, 7 June 1892; *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 7 June 1892.

61 Archibald's programs in Pasuruan and Probolinggo were advertised in *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad* for three days, from 23 to 25 May 1892 and in *Soerabaija-Courant* on 24 and 25 May 1892.

62 *Nieuws- en Advertentie-blad voor Probolinggo en Omstreken*, 25 May 1892.

De Locomotief published Archibald's self-defence against Eijssell's accusation and advertised his scheduled demonstrations in Semarang (Fig. 1.3). Archibald clarified that his title was not false:

Note. The *Soerab[aija]-Courant* unjustifiably attacked Prof. Archibald and the merits of the phonograph last May 23. Prof. Archibald thinks that he, being a stranger who displayed *one of the greatest inventions of this century*, only needs to appeal to the Semarang public in order to obtain an *unbiased opinion* about the merits of the latest invention of the genius Edison. Looking back at the personal attack by the *Soerab[aija]-Courant*, Professor Archibald deems it necessary to state that Lord Salisbury, England's Prime Minister in 1875, granted him the title 'professor', for which he still has evidence.⁶³

In *De Locomotief* Archibald complained that he had suffered losses from the 'personal attack' (*persoonlijken aanval*) by Eijssell and subsequent negative reports in the press. He had lost his credibility, and as a result the public had no interest in attending his demonstrations.⁶⁴

Apparently, Hamilton continued to make efforts to counter the negative publicity about Archibald generated by the *Soerabaija-Courant*. For example, he mentioned that Archibald had received letters of praise from the board members of the Phoenix Club in Kediri on 31 May, signed by 'Messrs. Schram, Bodemeijer, Noothout, Wijzelaar and Wolvekamp', which expressed their admiration for the new phonograph demonstrated by Archibald in Pasuruan and Probolinggo. They were satisfied, mentioned that the machine operated smoothly, and strongly recommended an acquaintance with this wonderful instrument.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, Eijssell's negative reports about Archibald in the *Soerabaija-Courant* had spread everywhere, even to Batavia.⁶⁶ Eijssell continued to publish harsh criticism of Archibald. From his place of recuperation in Malang, he commented that a 'professor' from abroad who committed acts of physical violence was disgraceful. 'Here in the Netherlands Indies,' he wrote, echoing the sensibility of upper-class Europeans in the colony's social hierarchy, 'it is only among the common people that such actions occur often.' Furthermore, Eijssell raised the question 'whether a dignitary like "Professor" Douglas Archibald could be touched by our law?' Satirically, he wrote: 'Poor, poor Yorick, alas! We must be careful! Soon we will get an English squadron here that will demand our professor and shoot us down! To be the boss in one's own home and to remain so with regards to the stranger who violates our laws, has already become an international crime!'⁶⁷ – a sarcastic comment suggesting national sentiment and rivalry between the English and Dutch colonials.

Surakarta's *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden* covered the Archibald affair by citing reports published by the *Soerabaija-Courant*.⁶⁸ The *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad* attempted to take a more neutral

63 *De Locomotief*, 31 May 1892.

64 *De Locomotief*, 4 June 1892.

65 *De Locomotief*, 2 and 3 June 1892.

66 *Java-Bode*, 23 June 1892.

67 *Soerabaija-Courant*, 7 June 1892.

68 *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, 27 May 1892.

Met toestemming van den Resident,
Semarangsche schouwburg
 voor enkele avonden slechts
 aanvangende
Zondag, 4 Juni a. s.
 's avonds 9 uur precies.

Het wonder van de 19e eeuw!
PROFESSOR
Douglas Archibald
 M. A.
 zal een vertooning geven van
EDISON'S
 Luid sprekende phonograaf,
 die duidelijk in al'e gedeelten van de zaal
 hoorbaar is.
 «Enige uren na heeren zullen uitgeoo-
 digd worden in het instrument te spre-
 ken of te zingen wat oomiddelk zal worden
 voorgegeven»
 De aandacht van het Semarangsche pu-
 blik wordt gevestigd op de volgende bijzon-
 derheden.
 1e Deze **WONDERY LEE** machine is
 direct van **EDISON** afkomstig.
 2e Prof. **ARCHIBALD** was de eerste, die
 deze machine in Engeland, Australië, Nieuw-
 Zeeland, India en Ceylon heket d maakte; in
 welke landen zij door meer dan
500.000 personen
 werd-gehoord, in de laatste verlopen drie
 jaren.
 3e Prof. **ARCHIBALD** is door **EDIS N**
 speciaal belast deze machine te vertoonen en
 ge-n andere gelijksoortige machine heeft ooit
EDISON'S werkplaatzen verlaten, om ten-
 toongesteld te worden.

Aanteekening.
 Een zeer o blijkke aanv. is gedaan door
 de Soerab Courant van 23 Mei, op prof
ARCHIBALD en op de verkiezen van
 de phonograaf. Prof. **ARCHIBALD** is-ent
 dat hij, als vermedel, een van de grootste
 uitvindingen van deze eeuw vertoonende,
 slechts een heroop heeft te doen op het
 Semarangsche publiek, teende een on-
 bevooroordeelds opinie 'te verkrijgen om-
 trent de verdiensten van de laatste uitvinding
 van den geniale **EDISON**.
 Nog eens terugkomende op den meest on-
 waardigen persoonlijk aanval door de Soer-
 Courant gedaan, vindt Prof. **ARCHIBALD**
 het noodig te verklaaren, dat hem 'den titel
 van «PROFESSOR» is verleend door Lord
 Salisbury, Engelslands oersten minister, in
 1876, waaraan de bewijzen zich in zijn
 heil bev. doen.
 Prof. **ARCHIBALD** wensch ook mede
 te deesen, dat hij door het Kon. Genootsch.
 van Gr. Briti. speciaal belast was, een Engels b-
 veraal te geven van de gedenkwaardige uit-
 barsting van de Krakatau.

Entreeprijzen f. 3. f. 2. f. 1.
 Militairen alleen in de derde rang;
 tegen half prijs
 Plaatsen kunnen besproken wor-
 den op Zondag morgen, in den schouw-
 burg, tuschen 9 - 12 uur.

3085

standpoint. It gave a balanced account of the Archibald–Eijssell affair, as reflected in the opinion article issued on 27 May 1892 under the title ‘De roeping der pers’ (‘The vocation of the press’) written by its chief editor, H.G. Bertelds. He criticized the unfavourable report written by Eijssell and deeply regretted that Archibald had resorted to violence after being represented negatively in a short newspaper column (*entrefilet*). He also wondered why Archibald did not make use of his right to respond in the press. Furthermore, Bertelds warned readers that the *Soerabaija-Courant* reports about Archibald might be coloured by the individual point of view of its chief editor.

The letters to the editor that rolled off the press in Surabaya and other towns caused serious trouble for Archibald. His demonstrations for the Yogyakarta Club on 1 and 2 June and then in Solo on 3 June all had to be cancelled.⁶⁹ On Saturday, 4 June 1892, Archibald arrived in Semarang to give phonograph demonstrations in the Schouwburg. But Eijssell’s sharp pen seems to have been effective: just a couple of hours after Archibald arrived in Semarang, the police arrested him. He was detained in prison overnight, and the next morning (Sunday, 5 June) he was taken back to Surabaya under police escort:

Mr. Douglas Archibald was taken by fast train to Surabaya on Sunday morning, under the escort of Wijber, the bailiff [*schout*], in a second-class carriage. It was the bailiff’s task to treat the prisoner courteously and politely as far as was possible, while keeping an eye on him. Mrs. A[rchibald] accompanied her husband, but she had to pay for herself.⁷⁰

After being confined to a prison cell at Surabaya, Archibald came to court on 28 June 1892.⁷¹ Archibald was accused of assaulting Eijssell resulting in physical injury. The British consul in Surabaya, Warren, was drawn into the

Figure 1.3: Advertisement for Archibald’s exhibition in Semarang with a clarification of his controversial professorial title. The exhibition was later cancelled (Source: *De Locomotief*, 31 May 1892)

69 De *Locomotief*, 28 May 1892; *De Locomotief*, 30 May 1892.
 70 De *Locomotief*, 7 June 1892; see also *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* 7 June 1892; *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden* 8 June 1892; *Nieuws- en Advertentie-blad voor Probolinggo en Omstreken*, 11 June 1892.
 71 *Soerabaija-Courant*, 27 June 1892.

case. He, together with a lawyer named Mounier, assisted the defendant. Two eyewitnesses, who seem to have observed the disturbance between Archibald and the British spectators, were presented at court. One was an Englishman named Weber, the other a Javanese individual whose name was not noted. Furthermore, an expert witness who had treated the victim, Dr. Fischer, also gave evidence. There was a sworn translator (named Versnel) arranged for Archibald because the defendant did not speak Dutch.⁷²

Consul Warren tried to get the defendant out on bail, but was unsuccessful, as the law of the land did not admit bail for such cases. He argued that his client's action had been unpremeditated. Considering that his client had been detained prior to the trial, Mounier asked the judge to commute the sentence.⁷³ Citing the Indies press, *The Straits Times* reported the decision of the Surabaya court:

The other day Professor Archibald was arrested at Semarang for having, so it was alleged, assaulted the editor of the *Surabaya Courant* who had adversely criticized his phonograph show. The case came before the Court of Justice at Soerabaya on the 28th of June and the public prosecutor urged the infliction of the penalty of two months imprisonment and costs. The counsel for the defence pleaded absence of premeditation, and, while acknowledging that the defendant's conduct called for some punishment, argued in favour of the lightest possible penalty, taking into account the long detention under arrest he had gone through.⁷⁴

After a heated exchange of arguments and counterarguments during the last session, on 30 June, the court delivered its verdict: 'The court could not assume that the act was premeditated and considering [that] the defendant had already spent three weeks in prison, the court sentenced Professor Archibald to a fine of 100 guilders.'⁷⁵

ARCHIBALD'S TRIP TO WEST JAVA

After the court of Surabaya decided his case, Archibald quickly left this town, apparently to continue his tour of Java. First, he wanted to return to Semarang, to give a phonograph demonstration in the Schouwburg, which had originally been advertised for the first week of June, but had now been rescheduled by his manager for Monday, 11 July, at 9:30 a.m.⁷⁶

Both Hamilton and Archibald with their wives travelled by the steamer *Van Diemen*, which left Surabaya on 9 July for Batavia, passing through Semarang. However, when the vessel transited in Semarang port, Archibald did not stop, and once again the phonograph demonstration in Semarang was cancelled. This second cancellation was announced in *De*

72 *De Locomotief*, 29 and 30 June 1892; *The Straits Times*, 21 June 1892, p. 370; *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, 1 July 1892.

73 *Nieuws- en Advertentie-blad voor Probolinggo en Omstreken*, 29 June 1892.

74 *The Straits Times*, 19 July 1892, p. 429.

75 *The Straits Times*, 19 July 1892, p. 429; see also *Soerabaija-Courant*, 27 June 1892; *De Telefoon*, 30 June 1892.

76 *De Locomotief*, 7 July 1892. This was the last advertisement of Archibald's demonstrations placed in this newspaper.

Locomotief, and attributed to the professor's health.⁷⁷ It seems that Archibald feared he would be unable to attract spectators after the trouble in Surabaya, which had become widely known through press reports.

So, together with their wives, the two men continued their trip to West Java on 10 July on the same vessel, arriving in Batavia on 11 July.⁷⁸ 'Professor Douglas Archibald, who arrived from Semarang yesterday, will show Edison's phonograph on Thursday 14 July at Buitenzorg and Tuesday 19 July here, with all the improvements that the famous inventor has applied so far', the *Java-Bode* wrote to welcome Archibald to Batavia.⁷⁹ The ticket price was decreased. Archibald was also to appear in Bandung and Sukabumi.⁸⁰

There are no reports about these demonstrations except the one in Batavia. Possibly the others were cancelled. Generally, the West Java press was not so enthusiastic about Archibald's tour. Apparently, the media's interest in Batavia was now focused on Filli's Circus from Italy, which gave performances in various parts of this city (including Koningsplein and Glodok) during most of July 1892. Almost every day, the prominent Batavian newspapers reported the circus's programs and performances.

Archibald's demonstration in Batavia was postponed: he appeared for the Harmonie Club on 25 July and was to appear at the Concordia Military Club Batavia branch on 26 July.⁸¹

The demonstration for the Harmonie Club seems to have gone quite smoothly, although the recording test with the audience was less successful. On the whole, the audience felt satisfied with the amazing recording machine. Regarding this demonstration, the *Java-Bode* wrote:

Last night, at the 'Harmonie', Professor Douglas Archibald demonstrated a phonograph, which spoke [sounded] very clearly, especially when it played music and songs. A number of gentlemen from among those present talked and sang into the instrument, but only 'Wien Neerlandsch bloed' [a patriotic Dutch song] came out well: the rest sounded either out of tune or were too short, so they could not be recorded on the cylinder recording. The demonstration was very surprising and enjoyable. We very much recommend that Concordia members visit Mr. Archibald's demonstration this evening.⁸²

The secretary of Concordia, F.C. Proper, noted that 'the exhibition is prohibited for young members [of the club], as stated in the very last paragraph of article 29 of the Club's regulations'.⁸³ There are no reports on the demonstration of 26 July. I suggest that it was cancelled, as had occurred at this club's Surabaya branch previously. The members of the

77 *De Locomotief*, 8 July 1892.

78 *Java Bode*, 11 and 12 July 1892; *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 11 July 1892.

79 *Java-Bode*, 6 July 1892.

80 *Java-Bode*, 12, 13, 15 and 16 July 1892.

81 *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 25 July 1892; *Java-Bode*, 26 July 1892.

82 *Java-Bode*, 26 July 1892.

83 *Java-Bode*, 26 July 1892. I speculate that modern technology was considered top secret, and that young people could not be trusted to keep the knowledge secret.

Batavia branch of the Concordia Military Club may have been preparing for their annual general meeting on 29 August 1892, and have been too busy to attend the event.⁸⁴

Apparently, then, the demonstration at the Harmonie Club was the only one Archibald gave in Batavia. No information indicates that he gave other demonstrations there. The failure of the only phonograph machine he owned to record the audience's voices in previous demonstrations had become a joke and may have led to the decision not to give more demonstrations in Batavia. Possibly, due to the long world tour and frequent use, the single phonograph machine he had with him had been irreparably damaged in Java. At the end of August 1892 Archibald disappeared from the Indies newspapers.

A PROFESSOR WITH A PHONOGRAPH FROM AUSTRALIA

About the same time, another professor, named G. Tesséro, arrived in Batavia from Melbourne, Australia, again bringing along an Edison phonograph. About one month before his arrival, the press reported his plans to visit the Dutch East Indies; his complete name was given as Giovanni Tesséro.⁸⁵ Tesséro's arrival following the disappearance of Archibald may have been coincidental 'moral support' for the Edison Company. Archibald and the Edison Company must have worried that the unfavourable criticism by the East Java press, and the legal trouble Archibald had encountered in Surabaya, would sully the reputation of the Edison brand in the Indies.

In Batavia, Tesséro's first demonstration at the Koninklijke Natuurkundige Vereeniging in Nederlandsch-Indië (Royal Association for Natural Sciences in the Dutch Indies) was free. He personally asked the Association's executive committee for permission to give a phonograph demonstration there (Notulen 1892:335). It was held on Friday, 26 August 1892 (Fig. 1.4).⁸⁶ Some high officials in Batavia, including the director of the National Botanical Garden in Buitenzorg (now Bogor), Melchior Treub, the first person in the Indies to own a phonograph privately,⁸⁷ came to see the demonstration. The *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* wrote:

After the demonstrations of Edison's phonograph by Mr. Archibald Douglas [*sic*] at this place, Mr. Tesséro, who just arrived here from Melbourne with a similar instrument, has timed his visit here badly. Immediately upon his arrival he was told that his shows would not attract many visitors.

So, Mr. Tesséro turned to the Board of the Koninklijke Natuurkundige Vereeniging to give a demonstration free of charge, with the aim of establishing a positive opinion of his instrument and the nature of its applications. After Mr. Figee and Mr. Onnen had written a very positive report on behalf of the Board about Mr. Tesséro's activities, the demonstration took place last night. This remarkable instrument is more fit for demonstrations with a small audience than for larger audiences. By using caoutchouc [rubber] audio-tubes the instrument is able to record the spoken word, which has a

84 *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 30 July 1892.

85 *De Telefoon*, 1 July 1892.

86 *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 25 and 26 August 1892; *Java-Bode*, 25 and 26 August 1892.

87 *Bintang Soerabaya*, 27 September 1892. See the picture of Melchior Treub in Chapter 2.

very surprising effect. Especially the declamation by Sarah Bernhardt,⁸⁸ which was recorded into the instrument in Melbourne, made a deep impression upon the audience. Also the nice tones by Very, the famous player of *cornet à piston* [trumpet], came out very clearly and cleanly.

We are of the opinion that the demonstration made a good impression upon all those present and we hope Mr. Tesséro's demonstrations at the [Masonic] Lodge, where he will also describe his instrument by using limelight [*kalklicht*] images, will attract large numbers of visitors.⁸⁹

Tesséro's next demonstration, organized by his advance agent Ch. de Hart, was held at the Masonic Lodge (Vrijmetselaars Loge) in Batavia (Fig. 1.4).⁹⁰ It was very well attended. Tesséro opened with a speech in French about the workings of the instrument, which was accompanied by images using 'kalklicht'. Furthermore, some musical instruments and

orchestral works, a declamation by Sarah Bernhardt, and finally a Dutch speech by Mr de Vick in Australia were played. All recordings were very understandable and could be heard very clearly.⁹¹

After Batavia, Tesséro continued his tour to Central Java, where his manager had scheduled demonstrations in Semarang and Solo. On the SS *Van Diemen* Tesséro left Batavia on 24 September 1892 for Semarang.⁹² In Semarang he gave phonograph demonstrations at three local schools during an eight-day school holiday.⁹³ The schools paid for the demonstrations. Tesséro clearly attempted to attract educated people to his demonstrations. The Malay daily *Bintang Soerabaia* commented:

KONINKLIJKE NATUURKUNDIGE VEREENIGING
in NEDERLANDSCH-INDIË.

Vrijdag 26 Augustus,
des-avonds ten 9 ure
in het lokaal der Vereeniging, Voorstelling met den
Phonograaf van Edison
te geven door den Heer G. TESSÉRO.
Toegankelijk, persoonlijk voor de Leden der **K. N. V.**
4081 De Secretaris, S. FIGÉE.

Met toestemming van den Resident.

Zondag 28 Augustus,
EDISONS PHONOGRAAF
de MEEEST geperfectionneerde, die nu de wereld bereist,
door **Professor Tesséro**
vertoond in het lokaal der **VRIJMETSELAARS LOGE.**
Van 's morgens 7 tot 's namiddags 12 vertooning der
Phonograaf.
Entrée 1 gulden per persoon.
Van 's avonds 9 tot 11 voordracht, uitlegging der
werking etc. etc. nadere verduidelijking door **KALK-
LICHT BEELDEN.**
Entrée f 1,50 per persoon.
4104 Ch. DE HART, Advance Agent.

Figure 1.4: Advertisements for Tesséro's phonograph demonstrations in Batavia (Source: *Java-Bode*, 25 and 27 August 1892)

88 Sarah Bernhardt (c. 22 October 1844 – 26 March 1923) (see Neve 1885; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Bernhardt; accessed 10-3-2011); in the nineteenth-century Indies press her name was spelled 'Sara Bernard' or 'Sarah Bernhart'. Sarah Bernhardt (born as Henriette Rosine Bernhardt) was a famous French stage performer and early film actress. News about her was often released in Dutch as well as Native newspapers in the Indies in the 1890s.

89 *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 27 August 1892.

90 *Java-Bode*, 27 August 1892.

91 *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 29 August 1892.

92 *Java Bode*, 24 September 1892; *De Locomotief*, 24 September 1892.

93 *De Locomotief*, 28 September 1892.

[...] this machine is not made into a show-like comedy or other spectacle, and hence is not street entertainment. Rather, it should be presented in respectable people's houses, where one may gather to see and listen to it. In short, if one wishes [to see it], one should discuss this with a number of friends, choose the house of one of them, and get about forty or fifty people to watch it. Of course it is a performance, but not a common performance. Its proper place is a gathering of respectable people in a house.⁹⁴

Tesséro also conducted a demonstration for the members of the Semarang branch of the Amicitia Club on 28 September.⁹⁵ The concert room of Amicitia, however, because of noise from other activities like billiard games and traffic, proved unsuitable for the performance.⁹⁶

Regarding this demonstration, *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden* reported that the audience was quite excited by the functioning of the machine.⁹⁷ The instrument worked well. De Hart showed Tesséro's testimonials to the audience, bestowed by Buitenzorg National Botanical Garden director Treub, Mr. Figeë, director of the Meteorological Observatory, and Dr. Onnen, mathematics and science teacher in Batavia; they all praised the instrument highly. So, like Archibald, Tesséro in his demonstrations emphasized the phonograph's scientific aspects. For this reason, he chose to hold exhibitions for members of a scientific association, a Masonic Lodge, social clubs, and school students. Tesséro's lecture was again delivered in French (like Archibald, it seems he could not speak Dutch). A detailed explanation was designed to offer the audience a clear insight into the functioning of the machine.

Tesséro was in Semarang until 30 September 1892. He did not continue to Surabaya, but did go to Solo. No one in Surabaya was willing to invite him, presumably as a result of the Archibald–Eijssell affair.⁹⁸ In Solo, Tesséro gave a demonstration in the Harmonie Club on 2 October with an admission price of two guilders. The opening lecture by Tesséro was again delivered in French.⁹⁹ The spectators attending these demonstrations – just as was the case at Archibald's demonstrations – were people of the white upper-class minority. They were the type who became members of societies and clubs and usually spent their weekends in club buildings (*rumah bola*) with billiards, Western music, and alcoholic drinks. Below we will see that other phonograph demonstrations were attended by some noble-class Natives as well. Apparently there were certain spectacles which could be attended by both Europeans and Natives, each group seated in separate areas. Other performances, opera and chamber music for instance, were intended exclusively for Europeans. In the colony, the entertainment world reflected class segregation, which was enforced by colonial authorities.

94 *Bintang Soerabaia*, 27 September 1892.

95 *De Locomotief*, 26-28 September 1892.

96 *De Locomotief*, 29 September 1892.

97 *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, 30 September 1892.

98 *Bintang Soerabaia*, 30 September 1892.

99 *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, 30 September and 3 October 1892.

As had happened with Archibald's demonstrations in the East Javanese towns of Probolinggo and Pasuruan in the hinterland, Tesséro was not successful in Solo. His demonstration at the Harmonie Club, for instance, was attended by only fifteen persons.¹⁰⁰

On 4 October Tesséro gave a phonograph demonstration at the Masonic Lodge of Solo and at the Palace (Keraton) on 5 October.¹⁰¹ Unfortunately, I have found no press reports of these demonstrations.¹⁰² He then appeared in Yogyakarta, where he gave demonstrations at the club (*sociëteit*) on 7 October and at some schools on following days.¹⁰³ Afterwards there are no further press reports about him.

There is some indication that Tesséro wanted to sell his phonograph. When he was in Semarang Tesséro advertised that he would sell his phonograph if the ruler of Solo or Yogyakarta was interested in buying it, as reported by the vernacular newspaper *Selompret Melajoe*:

Because none of this newspaper's readers here invited him [to give a phonograph demonstration], he [Tesséro] wants to depart for Solo the day after tomorrow. Therefore, it is to be deeply regretted that nobody wants to listen [to the machine], because if one tries to listen just once, one certainly wants to listen again, because the machine is so very strange. Last night we were requested to listen for a short while, and now we must say that this machine is not just an ordinary plaything. We were also presented with music which had been played some months before in America; it sounded as if it was still new. Additionally, Sundanese *tembang*, which had been performed perhaps one month earlier, was presented, with audible lyrics. What makes this machine even more useful is that anyone who has been given a demonstration just two or three times should be able to maintain and operate all its components. If a person of standing in Solo or Yogyakarta wants to buy [this machine], he [Tesséro] will certainly sell it [Hanja djika pembesar di Solo atawa di Djogja hendaq membeli tentoe sadja didjoealnja].¹⁰⁴

The article suggests that *Selompret Melajoe* readers, who were mostly of Chinese descent or indigenous locals, were not very interested in inviting Tesséro. Perhaps this was due to Archibald's unsuccessful phonograph tour in East Java and the disgraceful court case he had faced. Besides, the phonograph demonstration, from the outset, had been closely associated with the colony's white upper class, while the Natives had had little access. Nonetheless, like

100 *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, 5 October 1892.

101 *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, 3 and 5 October 1892.

102 The media seemed more interested in the *Sekaten* celebration in Solo, which began the same day (5 October): in the evening Sri Padoeka Kandjeng Goesti Pangeran Adipati Anom and Queen Kandjeng Ratoe Anom were pleased to attend the celebration. But bad luck for the queen, she lost a diamond pin worth 3,000 guilders when the royal chariot passed through the crowd. This scandal was broadly reported in the media (for example, *Bintang Soerabaia* 3 and 8 October 1892). Regarding Tesséro's demonstration in the palace at Solo, Nancy K. Florida has suggested to me that it was probably noted in the palace diary entitled 'Ngrengreng serat babad pmut ing Nagari Surakarta, angka XI, awit cariyos 1 Sura Je 1822 dumugi cariyos 26 Rejeb Je 1822' [= July 1892 – February 1893] (Florida, email, 25 September 2004). Florida (1993:105) identified this as 'History of the Keraton Surakarta (July 1892 – February 1893)'. Unfortunately, I have had no access to this source.

103 *Mataram*, 10 October 1892.

104 *Selompret Melajoe*, 27 September 1892.

the Europeans, the Natives were astounded by the wonderful machine, as suggested in the *Selompret Melajoe* journalist's comment quoted above: 'kerna djika mentjoba sekali sadja, tentoelah ingin mendengar lagi, sebab anehnja ietoe soedah tiada boleh dikata lagi' ('because if one tries to listen just once, one certainly wants to listen again, because the machine is too strange for words').

The above article also informs us that Tesséro recorded a fragment of an Indonesian traditional genre to show the capability of this technological miracle to the public, namely the Sundanese musical genre *tembangan pasienda* (*tembang Sunda*; see Van Zanten 1989). Thus, Sundanese music seems to have been the first Indies local repertoire recorded for the 'talking machine'.¹⁰⁵

A FAMOUS MAGICIAN AND A FEMALE ENTERTAINER WITH A PHONOGRAPH IN JAVA

There is no indication where Tesséro went after giving his demonstrations in Yogyakarta. In the second week of October 1892 he disappeared from the newspapers. The press instead reported on another European entertainer travelling around Java with Edison's phonograph, a man named J. Calabressini. And a couple of years later a female entertainer named Miss Meranda also appeared in Java with a phonograph.

The earliest evidence that Calabressini was travelling in Java with a phonograph dates from 3 October 1892. In an article about Tesséro's demonstration in Surakarta, *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden* mentioned that 'those who expected to see an instrument [Tesséro's phonograph] exactly the same as Calabressini's were mistaken'. Clearly, Calabressini with his phonograph (apparently an earlier version) was well known in Central Java at that time. It is unclear where and from whom Calabressini obtained his machine.

It seems that Calabressini had travelled across Java sometime after 1870. It is not known when he first left Europe for Asia, or which Asian countries he visited before his arrival in the

105 Sundanese genres were again recorded on phonograph disc for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 (see Johnson 1897-1898). In this exposition the Dutch East Indies was represented by 'The Java Village', which was sponsored by E.J. Kerkhoven and G.C.E.W. Mundt from the Java-Chicago Syndicate, who had also participated in the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1889 (Cohen 2010:15). Visited by some 82,000 people during the exposition, the site exhibited a replica of a Sundanese village from the Priangan regency of West Java. The performances presented were dance troupes and a set of *gamelan* instruments from Parakan Salak near Sukabumi, West Java. Ethnomusicologist Benjamin Ives Gilman recorded the Parakan Salak *gamelan* during the Exposition in Chicago. With his colleagues Jesse Walter Fewkes, Frans Boas, John Comfort Fillmore, and Alice Cunningham Fletcher, Gilman made 101 wax cylinder recordings of the world's exotic music at the exposition (see Carter-De Vale 1977:91). The Java Village's music recordings (cylinders 11-44) with other recordings are now kept in the Archive of Folk Song of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C. (Carter-De Vale 1977:91-99, 255-67 [Appendix K]). The Sundanese genres recorded on the cylinders are the standard classical Sundanese dance form *tandak* (cylinders 13-16), *wayang topeng* (cylinders 16-26), and singing by a Sundanese woman (cylinder 40) (Carter-De Vale 1977:93-4). Previously, a set of *gamelan* instruments from Parakan Salak had also been exhibited at the Amsterdam International Exposition (1883) and the Paris International Exposition (1889) (see Bloembergen 2006 on the expositions). There is no evidence that this *gamelan* was recorded on the 'talking machine' on any other part of its European tours.

Indies. Nor is there evidence that he went on an international tour like Archibald and Tesséro. He seems to have worked only in Java; in his magic shows he combined conjuring tricks with a demonstration of recently invented European technologies. Quoting Surakarta's *De Vorstenlanden*, Anthony Day (1982:217, 266) mentions that Calabressini astounded his colonial audience with his electricity, galvanism, and magnetism at a *soirée amusante* held at the Surakarta Komodie (theatre) on the evening of 26 December 1870. On 29 June 1883 he held magic shows in Surabaya.¹⁰⁶ One month later he again held shows in this town: on 7 and 8 July he played at the Rumah Komedi Besar (theatre) and again between 13 and 16 July in the *alon-alon* (town square). Admission was one guilder for first class and fifty cents for second class. The highlights were European card tricks (*permainan kartu Ollanda*) and 'a horrific beheading'.¹⁰⁷ Calabressini's performances at the Rumah Komedi Besar were attended by some 200 to 250 spectators, both Native and Dutch.

Apparently Calabressini, although he had adopted the title 'professor' following the trend at the time (Cohen 2001:327), was widely known in the Indies as a magician (*goochelaar*). Unlike Archibald and Tesséro who, in their phonograph demonstrations, presented themselves as scientists and attempted to cultivate close relations with the colony's white upper class, Calabressini seems to have been on close terms with local Indies entertainers and often conducted magic shows with them jointly. This must have influenced spectators' perceptions of the recent European inventions demonstrated in his shows, including the phonograph. In August 1891, for example, together with Yap Gwan Thay, Calabressini gave a magic show of 'conjuring, magnetism, and metempsychosis' in the Kapasan Schouwburg, Surabaya. He gave a magic lantern show in this same Schouwburg in March 1892.¹⁰⁸ In July Calabressini appeared in Surabaya with a sensational night show called 'Metempsychose of zielsverhuizing' ('exchange of souls'), or 'pengganti jiwa' in Malay (Cohen 2006:151). There is no indication that he had a phonograph at that time. At the end of that year he was on the scene in Batavia with some technological instruments, like a magic lantern and Edison's phonograph, and gave magic shows in various parts of the city.

From Batavia, Calabressini and his manager, Molbylasini, sailed on the steamer *Speelman* to Cirebon.¹⁰⁹ As a prominent urban town on the north coast of West Java, Cirebon was regularly visited in the nineteenth century by local as well as foreign entertainment troupes (Cohen 2002b). Calabressini arrived there on Saturday, 3 December 1892, coinciding with the celebration of the *Sint-Nicolaas feest* (Feast of Saint Nicholas, a traditional Dutch holiday).¹¹⁰ Calabressini's first magic show in Cirebon, which welcomed 'young and old, straight and bent, beautiful and ugly' and was not exclusive like Archibald's and Tesséro's demonstrations,

106 *Bintang Timor*, 9 July 1883.

107 *Bintang Timor*, 7 and 14 July 1883.

108 Cohen 2006:151. Calabressini's magic lantern, which was regularly used in magic lantern shows for children in 1892-1893, was purchased by Yap Gwan Thay for 600 guilders (Cohen 2006:34). Apparently urban entertainers bought and sold equipment from each other.

109 *Tjerimai*, 26 November 1892.

110 *Tjerimai*, 3 December 1892. In the colonial period, Saint Nicholas Day came to be a public festival celebrated in the Dutch Indies by both Natives and Europeans (see Helsloot 1998, 2006).

was held on Tuesday, 6 December, at the Schouwburg (Fig. 1.5).¹¹¹ He demonstrated Edison's phonograph. Using a magic lantern, the show also presented portraits of the Dutch royal family, Stanley's expedition in Africa in forty colourful images displaying the sophistication and superiority of white men vis-à-vis wild African tribal groups, some tricks with cards and eggs and quick-fingeredness, and hypnosis. There were only thirteen spectators, including two children. The weekly *Tjerimai* commented about the phonograph: 'Then Edison's truly famous instrument was allowed to speak; she turned out to be in particularly good form (she was a bit hoarse) [...]. It was enjoyable to hear this instrument discourse [*redeneeren*].'¹¹²

Calabressini and Molbvasini's second show was held on 8 December in the *sociëteit* (club) of the town from 9 p.m. to midnight. It was visited by more people than the previous show, probably due to the reduced entrance fee (adults paid 1.50 guilders, children 0.50). Everybody listened attentively to Edison's phonograph, and it received lots of applause. Calabressini also showed sensational images of the beheading, which caused many in the

J. CALABRESSINI.

De bekende vriend der Kinderen,
alhier gearriveerd, zal op
Dinsdag den 6 den December
in het Societeitsgebouw alhier eene goochel-
voorstelling geven. Geheel nieuwe kunsten.
Drie bedrijven goochelkunst.

De Phonograaf van Edison
Zeer interessant voor iedereen.

De Sciopticon Voorstelling.
werkende door middel van kalklicht.

Na vooraf ons Vorstelijk Huis te hebben voorgesteld,
De Stanley Expeditie
door de wildernissen van Afrika in 40 tafereelen met een breed-voerige voordracht.

JONG en OUD, RECHT en KROM, MOOI en
LEELIJK, worden *zeer bekeerd* doch *dringend*
verzocht deze voorstelling bij te wonen; zoo iets
ziet men niet alle dagen, dus;

**Profiteert van deze gelegenheid, al regent het
keisteenen!**

Gereserveerde plaatsen te bespreken in de
toko naast het hotel.

Entrée voor een Heer of Dame f 2.50
 » » Kinderen f 1.
 » » Bedienden. f 0.50

De Directeur,
MOLBVLASINI.

(367)

Met toestemming van den Heer Resident
van Batavia.

Theater National,
op Tanalapang Glodok,
op Vrijdag avond den 11 Januari,
Zaterdag 12 en Zondag 13.

Eerste groote Voorstelling
van Goochel-Kunst, Magnetimus,
Phonografen Animatograf. Levende
Photographie en prachtige gezichten
van de Wereld

te geven door den beroemden Prestidigitateur
illusionniste

J. CALABRESSINI
en Zijn Gezelschap.

Entrée:
Eerste Rang f 1.—
Tweede idem „ 0.50

Aanvang ten 9 uur. 198.

Figure 1.5: Advertisements for Calabressini's demonstrations in Cirebon and Batavia (Source: *Tjerimai*, 3 December 1892; *Java-Bode*, 10 January 1901).

¹¹¹ *Tjerimai*, 3 December 1892.
¹¹² *Tjerimai*, 7 December 1892.

audience to feel sick. The audience loved the dissolving views by Molbvlasini: the ‘kampong’ at the World Exhibition in Paris, Stanley’s journey through Africa’s dark jungle, and scenes of the Eighty Year War (which were not shown in chronological order) were viewed eagerly by both young and old.

Unfortunately, I have no evidence on where Calabressini went after the success of his magic shows and phonograph demonstrations in Cirebon. Possibly he left Cirebon and moved on to other towns in Java. Apparently, Calabressini had a long career as a magician in the Indies. This excellent and highly popular magician – as the press mentioned – was still travelling around Java until at least 1901: in January 1901 he performed a big magic show at National Theatre at Tana[h]lapang Glodok, Batavia. The show ran from 11 to 13 January, and demonstrated the art of conjuring and some new Western technology including magnetism, the animatograph, photography, and the phonograph (Fig. 1.5).¹¹³

Until the end of the nineteenth century, ‘talking machine’ exhibitions in the Dutch East Indies were mostly still held in Java. During the years of Calabressini’s demonstrations with the phonograph, there was a female entertainer who also held demonstrations with a similar machine. Her name was Miss Meranda. She travelled around Java in 1897 and 1898, conducting shows in various locations with a graphophone,¹¹⁴ scenimatograph, and xylophone, combined with acrobatic and gymnastic presentations. The press reported that she was a British citizen who could speak German but not Dutch.¹¹⁵ It seems that Miss Meranda started her shows in July 1897 in Surabaya and continued to Semarang, Yogyakarta, Batavia, Bandung, Tegal, and Cirebon. The characteristics of her shows are similar to Calabressini’s shows: they were intended for the general public, not limited to intellectual communities. In 1899 she turned up again in Batavia at the end of the year. Miss Meranda’s shows demonstrating European technologies other than the graphophone were successful in attracting spectators, as indicated by the extensive press coverage of her shows.¹¹⁶

113 *Java-Bode*, 10 January 1901.

114 This was the name and trademark of an improved version of the phonograph invented at the Volta Laboratory established by Alexander Graham Bell in Washington, D.C. Developed by Alexander Graham Bell and Charles Summer Tainter, the graphophone substituted a layer of wax for the tinfoil covering the cylinder, and altered the design of the stylus that transmits sound vibrations onto the cylinder during the recording process (Tschmuck 2006:4). Its trademark was acquired successively by the Volta Graphophone Company, then by the American Graphophone Company, afterward by the North American Phonograph Company, and finally by the Columbia Phonograph Company (later to become Columbia Records), all of which either produced or sold graphophones. For a historical account of the invention and commercialization of the graphophone, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphophone> (accessed 13-3-2011).

115 *Advertentieblad Tegal*, 11 December 1897.

116 See among others *Soerabaija-Courant*, 22 and 26 July 1897; *Thieme's Nieuw Advertentieblad*, 22 and 27 July 1897; *Soerabaiaasch-Handelsblad*, 27 July 1897; *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, 2 and 6 August 1897; *Semarang-Courant*, 16 August 1897; *De Preanger-Bode*, 16 and 25 November 1897; *Advertentieblad Tegal*, 11 December 1897; *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 10 December 1897, 30 November 1898. I thank Dafna Ruppin for bringing these sources to my attention.

CONCLUSION

Rudolf Mrázek (2002:xv) talks about ‘incessant [European] culture invasions and innumerable combinations of resistance [in Indonesia]’. Exploring the first encounters of the people of the Indies with European recording technology, which a few decades later was to influence their lifestyle and beliefs, this chapter has focused on the initial phase of the invasion including the public’s reactions. Edison’s tin-foil phonograph, although only a crude model, went to Southeast Asia, to the Dutch East Indies in particular, very early in its history. This chapter has described the recordings, the figures behind the demonstrations, the audiences and their responses, the towns and venues of exhibition, and the procedure of the phonograph shows.

Involving male as well as female exhibitors, the phonograph demonstrations in the Dutch East Indies in the late nineteenth century can be put into two groups: first, those that emphasized the technological and scientific aspects of the machine; and second, those that emphasized its use to provide enjoyment and amusement. Each type of demonstration led to certain emotional effects in the audience and influenced how the public perceived the machine. To the first group belong De Greef’s, Archibald’s, and Tesséro’s demonstrations, which featured the phonograph exclusively, and which consisted of three parts: a lecture, just for adults, on the history of the machine and the technical procedure required to operate it, a presentation of recordings, and a test section in which either demonstrators or spectators were given the opportunity to speak or sing into the instrument (often with flawed results). In their exclusivity – admission tickets were quite expensive, the opening lectures were delivered in English or French, languages unfamiliar to most Natives, the exhibitions were held in venues like clubs which were closely associated with upper-class people – De Greef’s, Archibald’s and Tesséro’s demonstrations were well beyond the reach of the indigenous public. To the second group of demonstrations belong Calabressini’s and Miss Meranda’s shows, which welcomed Natives as well as Europeans, including children, and common people as well as the elite. Calabressini’s phonograph exhibitions and Miss Meranda’s graphophone shows were set up as part of a magic and entertainment show: there was no opening lecture as in Archibald’s and Tesséro’s demonstrations, and the phonograph was exhibited together with other European inventions alongside conjuring tricks. Consequently, spectators tended to view the machine as a miraculous rather than a scientific reality, as reflected in the Tjerimai reporter’s comment (7 December 1892) that ‘it was enjoyable to hear this instrument discourse’; as if it had its own soul, emotions, and ideas. As the entertainment shows of exhibitors like Calabressini and Miss Meranda were open to members of the non-European ruling class in the colony, such shows contributed significantly to the introduction of the prototype of recording technology to Indonesian Natives. The shows unlocked a small space for Indonesian Natives to become acquainted with the technology in its early years, and facilitated its introduction in Dutch East Indies colonial society at a time when European ‘high’ technological inventions were mostly accessible only to the colony’s white ruling class.

It is likely, furthermore, that the Natives' belief systems also influenced their acceptance of new European inventions like the phonograph.¹¹⁷ The same thing applies, of course, to public reception of new inventions in the countries where they were invented. In nineteenth-century urban entertainment, European technologies like the magic lantern and galvanism were more often associated with magic and the supernatural than with rationality and reality. Acoustic technologies like phonography and telephony derived part of their meaning from nineteenth-century European spiritualism (Connor 2000). As Stephen A. Connor asserts, local beliefs in spiritualism contributed to the 'ghostliness' of these technologies, and they were linked with older traditions of the ventriloquial voice (Connor 2000).

Summarizing the Dutch East Indies colonial society's reception of the phonograph during the period of exhibition in Java, there were divergent reactions by the public to this new technological invention. The successful exhibitions of the phonograph aroused spectators' admiration. Conversely, unsuccessful exhibitions of the phonograph, because its early design was still far from perfect, drew criticism. The exhibitor Douglas Archibald even faced harassment and physical violence. As reflected in press reports, this new technology seems to primarily have given rise to amazement among spectators because for the first time they could see with their own eyes a machine that was able to record and immortalize sound, which previously had been no more than a human fantasy.

Although this historical account is not quite complete due to incomplete access to all contemporary newspapers, I have attempted to reconstruct the course of events of three European 'professors' who pioneered in introducing sound recording technology in the Dutch East Indies. It is expected that further research will expand or fill out what is still lacking. The story of De Greef and his phonograph demonstrations in Java in 1879 is far from complete. The disappearance of Archibald and his phonograph at the end of August 1892 is still a riddle. There is no indication that Archibald attended the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago as he claimed he would in the Surabaya press in May 1892. Likewise it seems that Tesséro, who appeared in Batavia at the end of August 1892, disappeared in early October. Calabressini appeared with his phonograph in Batavia around November 1892, but it is not known where he travelled to after his successful shows in Cirebon in early December; he was, however, in Java at least until 1901. Likewise many questions remain about Miss Meranda, who was still performing for the public in Java at least until the end of 1898.

Archibald returned to England for retirement after his voyage around the world with Edison's phonograph (1889–1892). In fact, journeys like Archibald's to the Orient were primarily intended to make money, not to settle there permanently. Archibald died in Middlesex, England, on 1 December 1913 aged 63.¹¹⁸ After travelling in Java with the phonograph for around twelve months, De Greef seems to have returned to his initial career as head of

117 On the magical and religious manifestations of the application of modern European technological products in Indonesia, media technologies in particular, see, for example, Snouck Hurgronje 1900 on the gramophone (sound recording). On the camera and photography, see Spyer 2001, Pemberton 2003, Strassler 2010, and also <http://hantu.blogdrive.com> (accessed 30-5-2005).

118 Allan E. Marble, email, 18 September 2005.

production of opera stages, and remained in Java. Sometimes he put on opera shows with a combination of local and foreign artists. His additional job was as a singing teacher, as often advertised in newspapers. Regrettably, I do not know what became of Tesséro, Calabressini, and Miss Meranda. Possibly they returned to their fatherlands, as every traveller wishes to do, but maybe they chose to live in the colony forever, spending their final hours there, because the colonies had captured their souls for good.

In the following chapter I will recount the expansion of the ‘talking machine’ and disc consumption in the Indies and their cultural significance due to the rising interest of Dutch East Indies society in this new technology. I will particularly recount what happened in West Sumatra, providing the reader with a historical overview of the first encounter of Minangkabau culture and society with sound recording technology.

CHAPTER 2

THE DISC ERA: CIRCULATION, UTILIZATION, ACCEPTANCE

After the phonograph became an object of public exhibition in Java during the last two decades of the nineteenth century (the first phase; see Chapter 1), this technology then went through the second and third phases: the use and the production of local recordings. This chapter deals with these last two phases, covering the period from 1900 to the 1950s. During this period the ‘talking machine’ and records business in the Dutch East Indies expanded significantly and, directly or indirectly, inspired Native entrepreneurs in the colony to produce commercial records of local repertoires.

Three main points will be elucidated in this chapter: first, the complex nature of the ‘talking machine’ business in the Indies during the first half of the twentieth century and the parties involved; second, the production of early commercial records of Indonesian local repertoires, both in Java and the outer islands, and the parties and individuals involved in this new business; third, responses of Indies colonial society to this technology and to the modern sound of the early commercial records of local music. Special attention will be paid to West Sumatra: I will look at Minangkabau’s first encounter with recording technology and the mediation of Minangkabau culture on discs.

I argue that increasing consumption of the ‘talking machine’ in the Netherlands East Indies during the late colonial period gave a positive impulse to local music. ‘Gramophone recordings stimulated fusion, stylistic borrowing and localization [in music]’ (Tan 2013:459). I also argue that the penetration of records (and radio broadcasting) played an important role in the development of musical culture in the Indies, shaping the foundation for the formation of regional recording industries in Indonesia in the late 1960s.

THE ‘TALKING MACHINE’ IN THE INDIES: FROM PUBLIC EXHIBITION TO PRIVATE RECEPTION

Despite the inauspicious introduction of the ‘talking machine’ to the Dutch East Indies, epitomized in the unpleasant Archibald–Eijssell incident in Surabaya discussed in Chapter 1, the phonograph would come to be increasingly prominent in Indonesian society, first supplementing and eventually supplanting certain attributes and functions of live performance. A widening public recognition of the role of ‘talking machines’ is reflected in the Malay-language names given by Indies Natives to the phonograph or gramophone: *mesin bitjara* or *mesin berkata* (‘talking machine’).

During the initial period when the phonograph was still an object of public exhibition, only one distinguished person in the Indies owned a phonograph for private use.¹¹⁹ He was Melchior Treub, director of the National Botanical Garden in Buitenzorg (present-day Bogor) (Fig. 2.1). Other people could only enjoy the sound of the wonderful machine in its limited public exhibitions. But after 1895, public phonograph exhibitions in the Indies, particularly in Java, seem to have decreased. In urban areas, ‘talking machine’ demonstrations no longer captured the attention of the public because the number of people who owned phonographs had increased. The sound of recorded music from the ‘talking machine’ was no longer something bizarre. People began to anticipate the next innovation: ‘Perhaps there will be other astonishing items to come to this Archipelago (*insulinde sini*).’¹²⁰ One of the next innovations would be silent film.

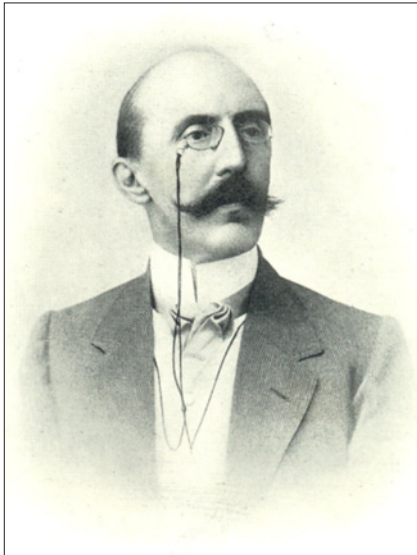


Figure 2.1: Melchior Treub (1851–1910), director of the National Botanical Garden (Kebun Raya) in Buitenzorg (Bogor), the first person in the Dutch East Indies to privately own a ‘talking machine’ (Source: Went in 1911: facing p. 48 [333])

Advertisements for the ‘talking machine’ began to appear in Indies newspapers, offering consumers the opportunity to purchase a gramophone¹²¹ for home entertainment¹²² from the Edison Company or competitors. The major international ‘talking machine’ companies – Columbia, Pathé Frères, Odeon and the Gramophone Company – competed with each other to market their products in the Indies. For example, the American Climbing Monkey gramophone is one of the items imported from Europe offered for sale in an 1895 newspaper advertisement by H. Willems & Co. published on 28 July 1895 in the Cirebon-based Dutch-language newspaper *Tjerimai*. Other European suppliers of the ‘talking machine’, including

119 *Bintang Soerabaia*, 27 September 1892, quoting from *Slomporet Melayoe*.

120 *Primbun Soerabaia*, 16 August 1900.

121 Invented in 1888 by the German-American Emile Berliner (1851–1929), the name ‘gramophone’ was an inversion of the name ‘phonograph’ invented by Edison. In early advertisements in Dutch-language newspapers in Java, it was sometimes written *grammophoon* (Fig. 2.2).

122 Though some showmen or magicians, such as J. Calabressini (Chapter 1) and W. Noordhoorn (*India-Olanda*, 5 September 1896) still conducted demonstrations of phonographs and other new European technologies, they seem no longer to have been interesting enough to attract much public attention.

A

Graphophones à f 60.---

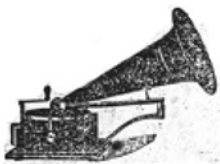
LEEGE ROLLEN f 9.— per dozijn.
 VOLLE ROLLEN » 12.— per dozijn.
 RECORDERS (om zelf rollen te vullen) » 12.50

Bij elke graphophone 12 rollen muziek gratis.

In voorraad bij
ANGLO-JAVA TRADING COMPANY LIMITED.
Batavia — Bandoeng.

1221 (18 r.)

B



Nieuwe aanvoer mooie uitgezochte
 2.— Gld. **GRAMMOPHOONPLATEN.** 2.50 Gld.
GRAMMOPHOONS thans f 80.— contant.

W. NAESSENS & Co., Batavia-Soerabaia-Den Haag.

C

Weder ontvangen:
 de gewilde Amerikaanse
GRAMPHONE'S
 met Eboniet platen.
BEKKER-LEFEBRE,
 1342 Rijswijk.

D

GRAMOPHONES
 met 12 platen
f 80.— contant.

Extra platen. f 1.25
 Waarrollen bespeeld. » 1.—
 onbespeeld » 0.75

ANGLO JAVA TRADING CO. L^{MD}
Batavia.

5765

Figure 2.2: Early advertisements for the 'talking machine' in the Dutch colonial press in Java (Sources: A. Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad, 20 January 1900; B. Java Bode, 6 November 1900; C. De Locomotief, 31 March 1900; D. Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad, 10 July 1900)

the graphophone, appeared in subsequent years, such as Bekker-Lefebvre and the Anglo-Java Trading Company Limited, both situated in Batavia, and W. Naessens & Co., with headquarters in The Hague and branch shops in Batavia, Bandung, and Surabaya (Fig. 2.2).¹²³ W. Naessens & Co. offered various models of the Victor Talking Machine from the USA, for prices of 75, 85, 130, 160, and 200 guilders, including 12 discs.¹²⁴ Gramophone needles were sold for

123 Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad, 28 June and 10 July 1900; Java-Bode, 18 and 28 February 1900.

124 Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad, 4 September 1903.

0.75 guilder per box.¹²⁵ In June 1903, the firm of S. Bosman advertised that the Gramophone brand, manufactured by Gramophone & Typewriter Limited (London), was available in Batavia. A Monarch gramophone, including 16 discs (recordings of European singers and orchestras) and 400 needles, was offered at the price of 150 guilders.¹²⁶ Gramophone owners required many needles because a single needle had a very short life, with manufacturers recommending that the needle be changed every 15 minutes of playing time. Connoisseurs changed the needle after playing just one disc. Therefore gramophone owners had to have the money to buy needles.¹²⁷ In the same year, 1903, F.W.Js.V.B. Wortman, director of the Gramophone Company for Belgium, Holland, and the Colonies (with offices in Amsterdam and Brussels), placed advertisements in Batavia's newspaper *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*.¹²⁸

Chinese competitors then entered the 'talking machine' trade in the Indies. By 1902, for instance, Tan Hoe Lo & Co.'s Batavia department store¹²⁹ in Pintu Besar offered Edison's phonographs for sale (Fig. 2.5). One recorded cylinder was offered for 1.10 guilder and one blank cylinder for 0.40.¹³⁰ Other Chinese competitors followed, for example, Tio Tek Hong in Pasar Baroe, Weltevreden (Fig. 2.5). His shop, in February 1904, was the first to offer phonographs manufactured by the (USA) Victor Talking Machine Company.¹³¹

Advertising of the 'talking machine' in the vernacular press starting in the first decade of the 1900s indicates that the instrument was also attracting Native people's attention. The 'talking machine' had become a luxury good that was affordable for European, Eurasian (*Indo*), Chinese, Arab, and Indonesian Native upper-class families (Fig. 2.3). However, the marketing of the 'talking machine' remained concentrated in Java. Surabaya was the first city to compete with Batavia in offering the phonograph for sale. The pioneer phonograph supplier in this city was De Bont & Co. in Bergdwarstraat (opposite Baume & Co.). In 1903 it offered for sale products from both the Gramophone and the Edison phonograph companies.¹³² In subsequent years a competitor, W. Burghard & Co. in Gemblongan, appeared.¹³³

125 *Java-Bode*, 28 October 1903. A box (*pax*) contained 200 needles.

126 *Java-Bode*, 22 and 29 June 1903, 7 July 1903. Bosman was manager of the British Gramophone and Typewriter Limited agency in The Hague. The company also supplied optical materials, magazines, and photographic materials.

127 To save money, or perhaps because of the scarcity of needles, 'talking machine' owners, as a Minangkabau whose relatives once owned a gramophone in the late 1950s told me, sharpened needles blunted by frequent use by grinding them on stones (Abraham Ilyas, age 66, pers. comm. 13-3-2011). Tens of millions of needles were produced during 1920-1940 and were manufactured worldwide. With the last of the 78-rpm gramophone records being recorded in the early 1960s, the production of needles was reduced to just a trickle.

128 See Wortman's advertisements in *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* on 22 August 1903, 7 and 21 September 1903, 3, 17 and 19 October 1903. Wortman's standing was apparently higher than that of a local agent and more like that of a branch manager of the Gramophone Company (it changed its name to the American Import Company in 1906). 'Discs were pressed in Europe, sent to Wortman in Holland, and then shipped by Wortman to his agent in Batavia, W.H. Hassellbach, who then distributed them further' (Yampolsky 2013a:91).

129 The firm sells various goods, from syrups and jewelries to music instruments (see *Bintang - Barat*, Monday 2 July 1894 and subsequent dates).

130 *Bintang Betawi*, 25 January and 12 March 1902.

131 *Java-Bode*, 29 February 1904.

132 *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 18 August 1903 and after.

133 *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 25 February 1904.

In these early years of the twentieth century the gramophone was starting to be assimilated into Indonesian life, as evidenced by the use of the phonograph in rural central Java by an Islamic functionary (*mudin*) to proselytize his faith.¹³⁴ He played Quran recordings for religious adherents in the prayer house. Apparently such recordings of the Quran, which were still a novelty at that time, attracted the attention of many Muslim *ulema*. The evidence indicates that ‘talking machines’ and records had spread into the Javanese countryside in the first decade of the 1900s, and that they were accepted by moderate Muslims. Later, as Chalid Salim writes in his autobiography, the gramophone was even used as a means of entertainment for political internees at the Digoel camp in the New Guinea jungle in the 1930s (Salim 1973:141-2). In Java, the demand to own ‘talking machines’ increased, and the marketing of the machine was extended outside Java. The phonograph was initially priced out of reach of most people except elite members of society, but as more brands came onto the market, including some cheaper brands, the machine could be offered for sale more broadly. As a consequence, its use was no longer dominated by Europeans, but crossed racial and class lines.

Along with the spread of the ‘talking machine’ in the Indies, local sound entered a period of commoditization, which had manifold implications for society, economically, culturally,



Figure 2.3: The *Indische* (Indo) Franken family in Rembang in 1903 enjoyed the gramophone during their leisure time, during the years when the ‘talking machine’ was a showpiece for European and *Indische* upper-class families in the Indies (Source: Nieuwenhuys 1998:114)

134 Tjerimai, 23 July 1902. It reminds me of the use of gramophones by Buddhist priests for their preachings (*bana*) in late-colonial Sri Lanka (Wickramasinghe 2014:88-90).

socially, and even psychologically. The ‘talking machine’ factories in Europe and the United States assigned representatives to conduct recording expeditions to Asia, Africa and Latin America in order to record local music. The master recordings were sent back to Europe to be replicated for commercial purposes. The first recording expedition from Europe arrived in the Malay world in 1902-1903; that was Fred Gaisberg’s¹³⁵ first ‘far eastern’ recording tour for the British Gramophone Company (established in London in May 1897), assisted by George Dilnutt. They recorded some Malay and Javanese genres in Singapore, one of the cities they visited during their tour in Asia (Gaisberg 1946:64; Kinnear 1994:xvii, 9-14; Tan 1996/1997:2) before continuing to East Asia where they made recordings of Japanese traditional songs and verbal arts (see Miller 1996). In Singapore Gaisberg made recordings of some local repertoires by recording local artists from the British East Indies (present-day Malaysia and Singapore). He also invited some Javanese artists from the Dutch East Indies to Singapore to be recorded, mentioning that he experienced difficulties reaching Batavia which was under the control of the Dutch East Indies authorities. Three years later, in 1905-1906, the expedition to the Orient of the German firm Beka was led by Heinrich Bumb. The team, which consisted of Willy Bielefeld, William Hadert, and Bumb himself, made recordings in Constantinople, Cairo, Calcutta, and Rangoon before heading for Singapore. From Singapore, they made a two-day visit to Batavia. In two days they recorded a number of ‘stamboul’ (*stamboel*) songs and a series of Javanese songs with the characteristic ‘gamelang’ (*gamelan*) accompaniment (Want 1976). In subsequent years the Beka Company made recordings in Java and Bali. During the years before World War I, Beka and Odeon were acquired by the Carl Lindstrom Company, consolidating German recording activity in one company. Between the 1910s and 1930s Beka and Odeon made many commercial discs of the songs of urban popular genres such as *krontjong* and *komedie stamboel*, predominantly by some leading artists like Eurasian actor-singer Willem Cramer and *stamboel*’s prima donna Miss Riboet.¹³⁶ In 1928 Beka representatives made a legendary trip to Bali, ‘along with Odeon, making the only Balinese gamelan recordings from the era, although the Balinese records were commercial failures at the time’.¹³⁷ And in the early 1930s the company also signed a contract for six years with the most prominent Chinese-descent musician Oei Tiang Kiet (born in Surabaya in 1874) with his famed genuine Chinese music group Jang Kiem and Pat Iem (Soers 1939:7).

In 1904 the first advertisement for commercial recordings of local repertoires appeared in an Indies newspaper at Surabaya. In it, De Bont & Co., the first ‘talking machine’ supplier in Surabaya, offered for sale recordings of ‘Pantoen Tjinta Nona’, ‘Pantoen Tanem Melatie’, and ‘[Pantun] Nina Bobo’ (‘Love with a girl’, ‘Planting jasmine’, and ‘Lullaby’). These were the delightful *krontjong* (‘*keroncong*’ in modern Indonesian spelling) songs popularized by performances of *komedie stamboel* (Istanbul-style theatre) at that time (Heins 1975; Yampolsky

135 On Gaisberg’s gramophone business, see Moore 1976.

136 Sin Jit Po, 24 November 1925. Peter Keppy 2013:459 refers to information from Jaap Erkelens, a collector of Indonesian early commercial recordings, who mentioned that Miss Riboet recorded approximately 140 songs of *dongengan* (‘topical singing’) for Beka between 1927 and 1932.

137 See: <http://hajimaji.com/category/indonesia/> and <http://www.dust-digital.com/se-asia/> (accessed 6-10-2013). The website was made by David Murray, who launched the project *Longing for the Past: The 78 rpm Era in Southeast Asia*, which includes an extensive survey and provides a kaleidoscopic collection of 4 CDs with 90 tracks of music from Southeast Asia spanning six decades (1905-1966).

2010). The lullaby had also been recorded by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje on wax cylinder (for the phonograph) along with some other Dutch East Indies repertoires between 1905 and 1909 (see Van Zanten forthcoming). Since these *krontjong* songs that accompanied *komedie stamboel* performances were so popular at that time, in Java as well as outer islands (see Pandji Poestaka, No. 62, Tahoen V, 5 Augustus 1927:1068), therefore they were recorded on commercial discs.¹³⁸ It is very possible that these recordings were part of the Malay repertoires recorded by Gaisberg in Singapore in the previous year, since there is no evidence of anyone else using the newly invented gramophone to record local Malay repertoires earlier than Gaisberg. These first commercial recordings must have been quite popular as all the discs were sold out in less than one month.¹³⁹ In July of the same year Tan Hoe Lo & Co. in Batavia offered phonograph cylinders of local music including *krontjong* songs, songs accompanying *bangsawan* theatre performances, as well as other Asian genres like music accompanying *wajang Tjina Makaw* performances.¹⁴⁰

For the world as a whole, the early twentieth century marks the emergence of a new era of music in which the invention of the phonograph had made it possible for music to be heard outside of the physical presence of musicians. As McNeil notes, the act of disembodied music from its physical source was to carry with it a whole new range of cultural, social, and economic implications for the practice and patronage of music (McNeil 2004:315). The invention of the phonograph, which coincided with other innovations in printing, radio, and loudspeakers, led to the creation of a new mass culture in the Indies. It marked the beginning of a ‘musical revolution’, to borrow a term from Hughes (2007:445), in Asian countries, including the Dutch East Indies.

In the first decade of the twentieth century the ‘talking machine’ business in the Indies was still dominated by Europeans,¹⁴¹ Dutch in particular, though they had some

138 *Stamboel* songs are typically songs of 16 bars, played in a fast tempo. There were three groups of *stamboel* songs during the era called *Tempoe Doeloe* (‘Old Times’) or Time of *Stamboel* Songs (1880-1920): *Stamboel I* consisted of three songs, ‘Nina Bobo’, ‘Potong Padi’, and ‘Soleram’ (the recordings marketed by De Bont & Co. contained these songs); *Stamboel II* consisted of two songs, ‘Si Jampang’ and ‘Jali-Jali’; and *Stamboel III* consisted of the song ‘Kemayoran’ (see Poll n.d.). The Malay *pantun* style of quatrain verses is essential in *krontjong* song lyrics (Keppy 2008). Other musical intermezzos used in *komedie stamboel* performances were marches, polkas, and waltzes. *Stamboel* songs were used as musical intermezzos between the scenes in *komedie stamboel*, performed by touring comedy troupes of Eurasian (*Indo*) actors that provided folk entertainment and were very popular around the end of the nineteenth century (1891-1903), especially in East Java (Cohen 2006).

139 *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, 16 May to 6 June 1904.

140 *Bintang Betawi*, 27 July 1904. *Krontjong* is a hybrid music genre that originated in Batavia in communities of freed Portuguese slaves in the sixteenth century (Yampolsky 1990:2). *Bangsawan* is a type of traditional Malay opera that was very popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Tan 1993). *Wajang Tjina Makaw* is Chinese opera, which, according to Matthew Isaac Cohen in a personal communication, ‘consists of some female performers, but not all-female troupes’. As suggested by its name, the genre originated from southern China’s Macau, but not all troupes hailed from there. Performed by performers wearing thick make-up that resembled as mask, it was very popular among Chinese communities in Java from the middle of the nineteenth century (Boachi 1856:299-300).

141 In this chapter I give only a concise sketch of the ‘talking machine’ business in the Dutch East Indies. My concern is the socio-cultural effects of the growing consumption of the technology in the colony, especially in West Sumatra. For more on the business of the ‘talking machine’ and gramophone records in the Dutch East Indies and the Straits Settlements until 1942, see Yampolsky 2013a.

Chinese competitors. Based in cities in the Netherlands like Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, Dutch traders dominated the business, shipping ‘talking machines’ to the colony. These companies included F. Kirchman & Co., Firma Gerding & Co. and Pijttersen and Nieuwenhuizen in Amsterdam.¹⁴² They tried to find local dealers in the Indies to expand their business network. Van Veen & Co., for example, wrote in one of its advertisements: ‘Looking for well-established traders in major cities of the Indies to become principal agents for the sale of high-quality discs and Gramophones.’¹⁴³ The ‘Toean2 Pijttersen & Nieuwenhuijzen’ Firm in Amsterdam also advertised Malay song discs for sale in 1912,¹⁴⁴ confirming that recordings of local Indies genres had already been produced at that time.

During the 1920s ‘talking machine’ technology was transferred to Asia through the establishment of local factories and partnerships (Gronow 1981). The German Max Birckhahn (1881–1945) was the first ‘talking machine’ engineer to work in the Dutch East Indies. In 1928 he recorded some local repertoires including *tandak Kedah*.¹⁴⁵ During these years, advertisements for ‘talking machines’ and records in the vernacular press increased, indicating a rise in demand for this technology among non-European communities in the Indies. The disc labels offered were more diverse and some of them were regionally manufactured products, like the Angsa, Gadjah, Singa and Koetjing¹⁴⁶ labels. Recorded music on discs had become part of home entertainment among the upper classes. Though some phonograph showmen still conducted public exhibitions, they now moved to the outskirts of cities or to villages, as suggested by a postcard dated 1916 produced by Tio Tek Hong, a ‘talking machine’ trader in Weltevreden, showing West Java villagers enjoying a gramophone exhibition (Haks and Wachlin 2004:201) (Fig. 2.4). In Bali, Dr Gregor Krause, medical officer of the Netherlands East Indies army, took a photograph showing the Balinese villagers looking with amazement at a gramophone. The picture was taken by Krause during his tenure in Bangli, at the middle of Bali Island, between August 1912 and January 1914.¹⁴⁷

Krontjong and *stamboel* songs were the most popular genres recorded for the gramophone in early local production.¹⁴⁸ Previously these songs sung for the local theatre genres *bangsawan* and *komedie stamboel* had attracted the attention of Fred Gaisberg of the Gramophone Company and Heinrich Bumb of the German firm Beka, who had both made recordings of such music

142 Pewarta Boemi, 29 February 1907, 11 August 1908, 14 June 1910.

143 ‘Mentjahari saudagar jang koeat pada negeriz besar di tanah Hindia boeat mendjadi kapala wakil akan mendjoel papan lagoe dan Gramophoon jang terlaloe baik.’ (Pewarta Boemi, 28 February 1908).

144 The advertisement reads: ‘Sedia papan lagu Melayu’ (‘Malay song discs are available’). See Pewarta Boemi, 23 January 1912.

145 See <http://hajimaji.com/category/indonesia/> and http://www.recordingpioneers.com/RP_BIRCKHAHN1.html (accessed 5-10-2013).

146 Singa and Koetjing were two Malay labels appearing in Singapore during the rise of the recording industry in Malaya prior to World War II. They were started by two of the biggest local agents of the Gramophone Co.: the Koetjing label (Tjap Koetjing) belonged to S. Moutrie and Co., the sole agents of the Gramophone Co., which imported HMV records, whereas the Singa label (Tjap Singa) belonged to ME & T Hemsley & Co., a major distributor of HMV records in Singapore (Tan 1996/1997:9).

147 See http://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/25408271_krause-dr-gregor-balinesen-mit-grammophon-expedition (accessed 10-2-2014). I thank Georges Breguet for bringing this source to my attention.

148 Another genre that was very popular in colonial times is *gambang kromong* (Yampolsky 2013b).

in Singapore and Batavia. *Krontjong* and *stamboel* songs were mostly sung by female singers.¹⁴⁹ Some *krontjong* music groups were invited by institutions abroad to be recorded on disc, like *Solosche Nachtegaal* and *Krontjong Artisen Indonesiërs* from Solo, with their two famous blind Javanese female singers. They travelled to Singapore, where they were taken under the wing of a European family, to perform and to be recorded on the gramophone.¹⁵⁰ Other local genres like Javanese *ketoprak* and *ludruk* had been recorded on disc in the 1920s. One of the big suppliers (*hoofd-agenten*) of such products in Central Java was ‘Bazaar Securitas’ shop in Solo.



Figure 2.4: Gramophone demonstration for villagers in the Indies in the early twentieth century. This picture was taken in Buitenzorg (Bogor) around 1916, produced in the form of a postcard by Tio Tek Hong Company, Weltevreden (Source: Haks and Wachlin 2004:201; see also Merrillees 2012:225)

As the indigenous music industry continued to thrive in the 1930s, local businessmen, collaborating with European experts, began to produce gramophone records (*papan lagu*, *piringan hitam*) under local labels. By the 1930s, gramophone sound had appeared in the

149 Some famous *krontjong* singers at that time were Miss Toeminah, Miss Noni, and Miss Jacoba Seger from Surabaya; Miss Soeprapti from Tegal; Miss Soelami and Miss Toerminah from Semarang; Miss Tioe from Yogyakarta; Miss Boentari from Solo; Miss Tiem from Cilacap; Miss Lely and Miss Euis from Bandung; ‘Toean [Mr.] Krontjong’ Speenhoof and the leading lady Miss Annie Landouw from Batavia (*Sinar Sumatra*, 3 March 1930, 17 November 1937). Annie Landouw seems also to have performed in Bandung (*Sunday Gazette*, 31 July 1938) and starred in some earlier Indonesian films produced by Tan’s Film Company (*Sinar Sumatra*, 1 July 1940 and subsequent dates). The Eurasian Annie Landouw was a famous singer of the new-style *krontjong* rumba music group named Rumba Tamang Mango (Susumu 2006:145). Other male and female *keroncong* singers popular at that time include Miss Riboet, Miss Alang, Leo Spel, Louis Koch, and R. Koesbini (Yampolsky 2013a:331-34; Yampolsky 2013b:31, 64; *Pemandangan*, 27 and 29 May 1937).

150 *Sinar Sumatra*, 31 December 1929.

soundscape of most major towns of the Dutch East Indies. Performers of popular Native entertainments at that time, including those from outside Java, were increasingly engaged to make recordings. Despite this indigenous interest, ethnic Chinese occupied a much greater role in the retailing of the phonograph and the production of local recordings (and this continues to be the trend today). Tio Tek Hong Studio,¹⁵¹ Lie A Kon Studio, Tan Tik Hing & Co, Jo Kim Tjan Record, and Hoo Soen Hoo's firm and his recording company named Canary Record were among them.¹⁵² They pioneered the establishment of the first commercial recording companies in the Indies. The Hoo Soen Hoo (Canary Record) Studio in Surabaya, for example, recorded local singers from Java and other Indies islands.¹⁵³ Seemingly, Canary was established in late 1938 or early 1939.¹⁵⁴ In the 1940s this company very actively produced records of regional songs of various ethnic groups and *peranakan* Chinese (Indonesians of mixed Chinese descent), including the leading singer Hoo Eng Djie from Makassar. Canary Record made recordings of 'Celebes Volksliederen' (Sulawesi folk songs) sung by Hoo Eng Djie in 1938, 1939, and 1940 (Sutton 2002:210). Likewise, the prominent firm of Tio Tek Hong in Batavia; this Chinese middleman pioneered in producing recordings of local repertoires for commercial purposes.¹⁵⁵ Such recordings were marketed not only in the Indies but also in British Malaya (Tan 1996/1997:7). These developments can be seen as the birth of Indonesia's national recording industry. As elsewhere with the emergence of mass musical culture, in the Indies too the growth of a mass culture in music had manifold consequences, among which were innovation in music and the reconfiguration of social hierarchies of music genres.

During the 1930s and 1940s, many recordings were broadcast on radio, including Western music as well as local music. It can be said that this was the first experience of media convergence in Indonesia. At that time it was just a simple strategic alliance between the radio medium and a recording medium (gramophone disc): radio stations broadcast the commercial recordings of local genres popular with audiences.

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- 151 In his memoir (2006:24), Tio mentions that his firm in Pasar Baroe first imported phonographs and discs from Europe in 1904, but his business decreased due to World War I. The Tio Tek Hong was also known as an early theatre businessman (Tjasmadi 2008:8). His firm trades various products, from clocks and radios to guns (Pandji Poestaka, No. 62, Tahoen V, 5 Augustus 1927, p. 1070; Pandji Poestaka, No. 85, Tahoen V, 25 October 1927, p. 1528 and subsequent issues; *Pemandangan*, 19 and 23 June 1937). The firm also produced postcards showing people of the Dutch East Indies and local scenery. Some of these postcards are still in existence and are sold today as antiques. See <http://www.bataviabooks.com/Catalogue%202055A%20web.htm> (accessed 12-10-2006).
- 152 See <http://dennysakrie63.wordpress.com/2013/09/22/tio-tek-hong-label-rekaman-pertama-di-indonesia/> (accessed 15-11-2012); see also Tio 2006 and Wolf 2011.
- 153 Yang 1949:27; Yampolsky 2013a:145-6. See also Hamonic and Salmon 1983:158. Hoo Soen Hoo's firm had branches in Semarang and Batavia.
- 154 Apparently, until 1937 Hoo Soen Hoo was still working for His Master's Voice (HMV). Among the discs of 'His Master's Voice' brand sold by him were 'Lagoe Krontjong', '[Lagoe] Stamboel', 'Leloetjon', 'Wajang Orang', 'Ketoprak', 'Lagoe Soenda', 'Lagoe Djawa', '[Lagoe] Arab', 'Lagoe Kasida dan Gamboes', and Lagoe Hawaiian' which were sung by many singers like R. Koesbini, Ali Albar, Rehana, Soendari, [Miss] Toeminah, Sech Albar, Moh. Joesoef, Saoda, the Sundanese singer Menir Moeda, and S. Abdoellah, the leading singer of Arabic songs and also a famous *keroncong* singer (Poestaka Timoer No. 16, 15 September 1935, p. 27 and subsequent issues; *Pemandangan*, 21 May and 19 June 1937; Pandji Poestaka, No. 62, Tahoen XV, 3 Augustus 1937, p. 1206; Pandji Poestaka, No. 80, Tahoen XV, 5 October 1937, p. 1573; *Insaf*, Tahoen ke 2, No. 4, April 1938 – Safar 1357, p. 58; 'Kesenian dalam Masyarakat Baroe', *Sinar Matahari*, 7 April 1943; *Garuda* 7, 17 February 1952, p. 7).
- 155 See for example Tio Tek Hong Record's advertisement in Pandji Poestaka, No. 64, Tahoen IV, 13 Augustus 1926, p. 1519 and subsequent issues.



Figure 2.5: Tan Hoe Lo (left) and Tio Tek Hong in his old age in the late 1950s (right), two leading Chinese competitors in the early ‘talking machine’ trade in the Dutch East Indies (Sources: *Bintang Hindia*, *Taohoen kedoea*, No.1, 1904:9; Tio 2006:i)

I found no evidence that radio stations paid royalties to producers of the recordings and the singers they used for their broadcasts. However, what is clear is that radio, which was established in the Netherlands East Indies later than recording media,¹⁵⁶ immediately took advantage of the emergence of commercial gramophone discs. Radio and gramophone recordings introduced a new mode of cultural reception for Natives in the Netherlands East Indies. The development of radio broadcasting in the Indies in the 1930s was supported by the growth of the recording industry. ‘Radio broadcasting became an important mediator between record producers and consumers and an essential medium for the advertisement of records. At the same time, recorded music was the indispensable resource with which radio broadcasters could build stable programs’ (Susumu 2007:3).

The colonial government’s NIROM (Nederlandsch Indische Radio Omroep Maatschappij, ‘Netherlands Indies Radio Broadcasting Company’) had taken a leading role in this process of recirculation of the content of recordings (Yampolsky 2014). It broadcast local music in addition to Western music, taken from commercial recordings. Of the local music genres broadcast by NIROM, six were dominant: *kroncong*, Melayu music, Arabic music, Javanese music, Sundanese music, and Chinese music (Susumu 2007:7-8). *Kroncong* was the most

¹⁵⁶ The radio was first introduced in the Indies in the early 1920s. In 1925 the first radio station, *Bataviaasche Radio Vereeniging* (BRV), was established in Batavia. The government-owned radio company NIROM began broadcasting on 31 March 1934. NIROM started with four stations and increased to 20 after operating for 18 months. At the beginning of 1939 the number of NIROM’s transmitters was 27. The 19 transmitters that broadcast programs for European residents of the colony got their modulation from the Batavia key station by means of telephone lines having a total length of 800 miles or 1,270 kilometres. This technology immediately affected Dutch East Indies Natives, as reflected in early modern Indonesian literary works (Suryadi 2011a). For the history of radio in Indonesia, see Kementerian Penerangan – *Jawatan Radio Republik Indonesia* 1953, Witte 1992, Witte and Tondowidjojo 1994, Lindsay 1997, and Witte 1998, especially for the history of NIROM.

popular (Susumu 2006:145; Susumu 2007:12). In 1938, NIROM, which had 25 stations with 60,000 listeners, had 15,000 disc recordings,¹⁵⁷ which may have included recordings on discs like 78 rpm, 45 rpm, 44 rpm, and 33 1/3 rpm. Susumu's research on the magazine *Soeara NIROM* from 1936 to 1942 found that the *kroncong* music discs acquired by NIROM came from various labels, including Beka, Odeon, Columbia, and Gramophone (Susumu 2006:189).

The extensive recording of local repertoires on commercial discs seems to have enriched radio programming. According to Susumu (2007:10), by 1936 the number of local music genres broadcast on NIROM stations increased from eight to twelve. Among the latter were Sumatra-based music from Batak, Aceh, and Minangkabau, which was accompanied by a decrease in the popularity of *kroncong*. By 1939, NIROM devoted 80 per cent of its broadcasting time to music, of which three-quarters was played from gramophone discs (Witte 1992:29).

In Batavia [radio] [...] Chinese music had the highest frequency. Arabic and Melayu music had increasing frequency, and *Kroncong* and Javanese music had increasing frequency. Eight kinds of local music could be confirmed, with Batak, Gambang Kromong, and Minangkabau music played most frequently.

In West Java [...] Sundanese and Chinese music had the highest frequency and Sundanese the highest number of program hours. The frequency and hours of *Kroncong* and Melayu music decreased, while the frequency and hours of Arabic music increased.

In Central and East Java [...] Javanese and Chinese music had the highest frequency and Javanese music had an exceptionally high number of program hours. The frequency and hours of *Kroncong* music were decreasing, while the frequency of Arabic music compared to other regions was higher. Seven kinds of music were programmed, with Minangkabau, Ambon, and Batak music played most frequently.

Musical programming at Medan station was the highest. [A]s at other stations, regional characteristics can be seen, with Melayu music having the highest frequency and number of hours. *Kroncong* music had almost the same number of hours, with Arabic music following. Hawaiian and Batak music had higher frequency and hours than Chinese, Sundanese, and Javanese music. Five kinds of local music were programmed, three Sumatran plus Ambon and Gambang Kromong, Indian music was more prominent than on other stations, reflecting the comparatively high number of Indians resident in Medan. (Susumu 2007:10-11)

Susumu's findings suggest that, apart from Batavia station, the genre most popular on other stations corresponded to the ethnic majority inhabiting the region where the station was located. However, facilitated by recordings and radio, some genres became popular outside of their ethnic homeland. Among them were Sumatran-based genres including Minangkabau. Records and radio broadcasting enabled people of a particular ethnicity to enjoy music genres of other ethnicities. This must have increased people's awareness of other ethnic groups and led to more understanding among them. This growing awareness fostered a sense of togetherness among the diverse ethnic groups in the colony, as distinguished from the Dutch as colonizers. I conjecture that this – along with printed materials – contributed to the initial formation of nationalism and a national Indonesian culture as well.

157 'Beberapa tjetatan tentang penjiaran radio di Hindia', *Pandji Poestaka* No. 33, Tahoen XVI, 26 April 1938, p. 631.

There are no definitive data available on the number of discs distributed in the Indies in the late colonial period. Pekka Gronow (1981:274) estimates some 50,000 to 100,000 titles of Oriental music had been recorded commercially by diverse European and American recording companies from 1900 to 1930. In fact, the history of the Indonesian recording industry in this period remains obscure and in need of further study, especially the role of *peranakan* Chinese in transferring the new recording technology to the country. Philip Yampolsky (1999:14) states that 15,582 sides of 78-rpm discs (75 percent of the companies' estimated production) were distributed in the Dutch East Indies and Malay Peninsula markets from 1903 to 1942. Yampolsky does not account for other types of gramophone records, such as 45 rpm, 44 rpm, and 33 1/3 rpm, which also circulated in the Dutch East Indies and in British Malaya. By comparison, Canary Record in Surabaya produced some 20,000 discs of Sulawesi folk songs between 1938 and 1940 (Sutton 2002:210). Presumably, during the height of the gramophone era in Indonesia between 1900 and the 1950s, there were thousands of records of local repertoires distributed in the country as well as abroad.

THE 'TALKING MACHINE' COMES TO WEST SUMATRA

West Sumatra's capital of Padang was among the first cities of the outer islands to be touched by the 'talking machine'. The first advertisement for the phonograph in West Sumatra appeared in the Padang-based Dutch-language *Sumatra-Courant* on 30 August 1898, with the text 'Edison's, Home Phonograaf. Wordt bij gelegenheid der kroningsfeesten te Padang ten gehoor gegeven' ('Edison's Home phonograph will be demonstrated on the occasion of the coronation festivities in Padang'). This was the general public's first encounter with recording technology in Padang, shortly after the new machine began to be advertised for sale in Java's press. Historically, Padang was the most prominent town on the west coast of Sumatra until it lost this role in the 1920s after shipping lines moved to the east coast of Sumatra due to the significant development of Singapore and Medan.

Historically, Padang was the first Sumatran city to encounter 'modernity'¹⁵⁸ and the city's urban entertainment developed earlier than in other towns of Sumatra. Reading the *Bentara Melajoe*, the second indigenous newspaper published in Padang in the 1870s,¹⁵⁹ one gets a picture of the dynamics of Padang in terms of economy and culture due to a good sea transport network between this city and regional and international ports, including Batavia, capital of the Dutch East Indies. Padang developed significantly after the colonial government built a railway network and a port, Emmahaven (now Teluk Bayur), in the 1890s. Urban culture emerged in the city, which was characterized by a diversity of performing arts – European, Native, and other Asian (see Paulus et al. 1919:235) – which frequently came together in a single large-scale popular cultural event called the *pasar malam* ('evening fancy fair'), which was often initiated by top Dutch colonial officials.¹⁶⁰ Providing an opportunity

158 For more on Padang city and its history and development, see Amran 1986 and Colombijn 1994, 1996.

159 On the history of the indigenous press in Padang in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Adam 1975.

160 L.C. Westenenk, assistant-resident of Oud Agam, Tanah Datar and 50 Kota, West Sumatra residency, was one of these officials. In 1907 he initiated the first *pasar malam* event in Fort de Kock (Bukittinggi) which was subsequently held annually. See Westenenk et al. 1907.

for the participation of all ethnic groups, *pasar malam* venues seem to have been a melting pot for cultural integration, music and theatre in particular. As Barendregt notes, urban entertainment in Padang in the first quarter of the twentieth century was lively and varied.

The musicians performing here [in Padang] were usually affiliated with particular theatrical troupes. They played what was called *musik hiburan* (entertainment music), *musik populer* (popular music), and *kroncong* (a popular Portuguese-influenced genre of songs with violin, banjo and guitar accompaniment, which was immensely popular with Europeans [and Eurasians]). Western and indigenous music was also performed at the regular *kermis* (fair) and the annual Oranjebal, held on the [Dutch] queen's birthday. Other Europeans also had an influence on music in the Indies. Russian and Italian musicians in particular are known to have formed their own orchestras in the late 1920s, playing a genre of music that soon came to be known as *hiburan* (entertainment). *Hiburan* was partly influenced by American entertainment genres, in which small combos accompanied dancing. (Barendregt 2002:422)

In this period in Padang, Dutch theatre (*tonil*), which was performed in theatres and clubs (*rumah bola*) for European inhabitants, indirectly influenced indigenous performing arts (Kerckhoff 1886:304; Cohen 2003). Other ethnic groups that had migrated to Padang had brought their traditional arts repertoires too; for example, the ex-slave community of Niasians from the island of Nias had a dance named *balanse madam* (Indrayuda 2009) which became widely popular. European circus troupes sailed from Batavia to Padang during tours to the Indies, such as Komedi Koeda Abel & Klear, which gave performances in Padang and Padang Panjang during December 1892.¹⁶¹ *Bangsawan* theatre, which had been performed frequently in Padang since the 1880s, inspired local music and theatre groups. The travels of *bangsawan* theatre troupes from Penang, Johore, and Singapore, where *bangsawan* initially emerged (Tan 1993), to Java and Sumatra fundamentally altered the genre, as well as changing the face of the popular theatre scene in the Dutch East Indies. Local performers were used for *bangsawan* performances and local stories were integrated and adapted to suit local tastes.¹⁶² At the same years *komedie stamboel* from Java also reached Sumatra Island. A source mentions that the Malay theatre *bangsawan* and *komedie stamboel* were introduced in West Sumatra by a certain Si Nong who brought them from Riau to Padang.¹⁶³

By the first decade of the twentieth century an urban culture was becoming more evident in the coastal city of Padang. Populated by various ethnic groups – indigenous, European, and other Asian ethnicities – the city had acquired almost all the characteristics of a ‘modern’ city, such as insurance companies, hotels, Masonic lodges and executive clubs, and cinemas as part of its urban entertainment.¹⁶⁴ Other performing groups, owned by Europeans, also

161 *Bintang - Barat*, 29 December 1892, quoted from *Pelita Ketjil*.

162 For the spread of *bangsawan* theatre in the Dutch East Indies, see Cohen 2002a.

163 ‘Tooneel Melajoe’, *Pandji Poestaka*, No. 24, Tahun II, 12 June 1924, p. 458. Ch. E.P. van Kerckhoff (1886:304) mentions that Si Nong was the son of Raja Burhanuddin (see also Cohen 2003:217), a Minangkabau officer appointed by the Dutch East Indies Colonial Government as the head of Batavia's district of Tanah Abang (*Bintang Hindia*, No. 15, Tahun jang pertama, 12 July 1903, p. 159; see also <http://niadilova.blogdetik.com/index.php/archives/1137>; accessed 1-8-2013).

164 Among the first cinemas established in Padang were the Royal Excelsior Bioscope, Biograph Bioscope, Scala-Bio[scope], and Cinema Theatre (Suryadi 2011b).

performed in Padang. These included *Moderne Bangsawan Juliana* owned by W.F. Hunter, and the opera and theatre group (*toneelgezelschap*) *Wilhelmina* owned by M. Hoogveen.¹⁶⁵ *Peranakan* Chinese opera troupes like *Tjoe Ban Lian* also held performances in this city.¹⁶⁶ It is clear that by this time Padang had become a vibrant city in the western part of the Indies, where a variety of urban entertainment – presented by local peoples, other Asians, and Europeans – was performed, similar to the experience of the East Javanese city of Surabaya two decades earlier.

The development of music in Padang in the late nineteenth century was closely related to the role of Eurasians (*kaum Indo*).¹⁶⁷ Generally speaking, *kaum Indo* played a significant role in introducing hybrid music in the urban areas of the Dutch East Indies in which elements of both Western and local music were incorporated, a nice reflection of Eurasians' own genetic inheritance (mixed European and Native blood). The *Indo* community of Padang had a *kroncong* music club which often performed at the *pasar malam* fair and also at the city's European social clubs (*societeiten*), like *De Eendracht* and *Matahari*. One such *kroncong* club named *Petit Advendo* had a membership including *Indo* and other Asian races (Fig. 2.6). *Indo* music groups also inspired indigenous musicians in Padang. The communities living in Sumatra's west coastal towns were receptive to foreign influences in music, as seen in the hybrid music genre of *gamad* as found in Padang, or *katumbak* music as found in Pariaman (see Chapter 5).

The cultural and economic climate of Padang had attracted European traders and their Chinese competitors to expand their 'talking machine' and disc businesses there. In early 1911, A. Jesinowski's shop in Padang offered for sale gramophones and discs with prices ranging from 40 to 80 guilders (for a gramophone) and 2.50 to 3.50 guilders (for a disc).¹⁶⁸ Other distributors were J. Boon Jr's *Tuinenburg* shop in *Tanah Lapang Alang Lawas*,¹⁶⁹ *N.V. Warenhuis-Tokra*, and the *City Magazine* shop, both situated in *Pondok*.¹⁷⁰ *Fort de Kock* (now *Bukittinggi*) was another major town in the highlands of West Sumatra that sold 'talking machines' and discs at an early date.

As had occurred in Java, in West Sumatra ethnic Chinese traders soon went into the 'talking machine' business, competing with European pioneer traders. The leading ones among them were *Siauw Beng Tjoan's* shops in *Kampung Tionghowa* (*Pondok*) and *Kampung Jawa* (Fig. 2.7), *Public Shop*, *Lie Sam Tjoen Shop*, and *Madju Shop* in *Kampung Jawa*, all three in Padang, *Minangkabau shop* and *Toko Anti Mahal* (*Anti-Expensive shop*) in *Fort de Kock*.¹⁷¹ The latter was owned by a *Minangkabau* merchant.¹⁷² Records marketed in Padang contained European compositions like music by *Schubert*, *Schumann*, *Chopin*, and *Mendelssohn*, as well

165 *Bintang-Tiong Hoa*, 21 January and 12 June 1915.

166 *Tjaja Sumatra*, 8 October and 8 November 1917.

167 Except for some large cities in Java, perhaps Padang was the city with the largest *Indo* community. *Indo* people in Padang were engaged in business, like press and trade, and as colonial civil servants (*Amran* 1986:32-52).

168 *Pertja Barat*, 31 January 1911.

169 *Oetoesan Melajoe*, 31 March 1916.

170 See *Sumatra-Bode*, 10 July 1929, 19, 21, 22 and 25 October 1929.

171 *Sumatra-Bode* 25 June 1929; *Pewarta*, 3 May, 22 July, and 11 August 1933.

172 *Sinar Sumatra*, 8 July 1940.



Figure 2.6: A music club named Petit Advendo in Padang in the early twentieth century (Source: KITLV Leiden)

as popular Malay songs of the *keroncong* and *stamboel* genres,¹⁷³ suggesting that the consumers of such records were not only Europeans but also Natives. However, during the first quarter of the twentieth century the consumers of ‘talking machines’ and discs in West Sumatra were still predominately Europeans, as is clearly indicated by the many auctions of gramophones and discs (*platen*) advertised in Dutch-language colonial newspapers in Padang.¹⁷⁴

In the 1930s, some Minangkabau genres like *saluang* and *simarantang*¹⁷⁵ were available on commercial records of the Beka, Odeon, and Tjap Angsa labels. Likewise some Islamic genres like *gambus* songs and Quranic recitation. By the following decade people were able to buy Minangkabau records under labels such as Angsa Minangkabau, Koedo-koedo, Polau Air, Odeon Minangkabau, Tjap Singa, and Tjap Koetjing, at an average price of 1.35 guilders each.¹⁷⁶ The Angsa label was exclusively produced by the Anti-Expensive shop (Toko Anti

173 Sumatra-Bode, 10 July, 19, 21, 22 and 25 November 1929.

174 In 1916 alone, based solely on notices and reports of auctions presented in a Padang newspaper, I found fourteen Europeans living in the city who had gramophone machines (and up to 60 discs each) in their houses. They were J.A. van der Bijl (in Blok No.12; he was an agent for a packet boat service), Admiraal (in Terandam), Bellman (in Terandam), J.F. Bakker (in Emmahaven), Stanley Price (in Hiligoo), Ed Pfenigwerth (in Pondok), De Puijl (in Kandang), W. Perquin (his address was not recorded), Sergeant Majoor V.J.A. Vlinders (near Bataljon 17), J.C.A. Alting Siberg (in Balai Baroe), Van der Dussen (in Kampoeng Djawa), Ch. L.G. Brugman (in Nipa[h] laan), J.B. Schrooijesteijn (in Hiligoo), and Wouters (in van Bossestraat). Based on auction advertisements in *Sinar Sumatra* 3 January, 2 and 9 February, 10, 11 and 30 March, 10 May, 4 July, 26 September, 2, 5 and 10 October, and 14 November 1916.

175 *Simarantang* is a traditional Minangkabau open-air theatre from the Pariaman rantau region of Sumatra’s west coast (Phillips 1981:5).

176 *Sinar Sumatra*, 8 and 9 July 1940.

Mahal) in Fort de Kock, as stated in its advertisements in a local daily: ‘Don’t forget to seek out Angsa-label discs, which are exclusively produced by and use the name of the ANTI-EXPENSIVE shop of Fort de Kock’¹⁷⁷ (Fig. 2.7). Unlike other disc labels, the Angsa had a collar inside so that it would not easily break if it fell, and it was durable.¹⁷⁸ Toko Anti Mahal’s strong competitor was Toko Minangkabau (‘Minangkabau shop’), which was the exclusive seller of the Gajah label of Odeon discs. This shop was the top supplier of Odeon discs in West Sumatra.¹⁷⁹

Some Minangkabau artists were recorded by local producers.¹⁸⁰ Toko Anti Mahal was one such leading Minangkabau producer in West Sumatra in the 1930s and 1940s. Situated on Bioscoopstraat 31 in Fort de Kock (now Bukittinggi), the shop had its own music group, Anti Mahal Orkes, with its much-loved female vocalist Roekiah. Toko Anti Mahal also made commercial recordings under the Angsa label of music groups like Gamboes Boestanoel Ichsan

Toko Anti Mahal.
Diorksa oleh lanegaraan.

Tapaso oentoeak pamanoechi karandak langganan-langganan dan
oerang banjak kami adokan

DJOEL MOERAH JANG SPECIAAL

Moerah dibalik nan moerah, Soek basoco larang batamoe djoeat moerah nan saroe-
po nanke, Ho basa ADIAK, AGIAH, BAD ESANAK DJO MAMINTAK. Bilalo djo
djoel moerah nan soedah soedah. Sagalo barang, barang kain, barang kromangan dan
plaat gramophone didjoea dengan harga nan sargat moerah. Tapi kaha-dak langga-
nanke tjoeama depek dipanoehi dari TANUJAL 31 MEI SAMPAI TANGGAL 6 JUNI
sado.

Ko' indak datang mambali nan takaliko ditangoeng maoepok manjasa gadang.

Harago plaat gramophone:

Krontjong F 1.25	Pase F 1.—
Gamboes F 1.25	Po uair F 1.—
Odeon Minangkabau . F 1.35	Kordo soen F 1.30
Angsa Minangkabau . F 1.25	Tja Slago F 1.15
H. M. V. F 1.5	Tjad Krontjong F 1.15

Oentoeak oerang nan mambali labih dari 6 boeah dipotong 5 pCt dari harago nan
tasorek, diaheko.

Toko Anti Mahal
915 FORT DE KOCK.

A

**Soeda lama di Toenggoe,
Baroe sekarang kloeat.**

Lagoe-lagoe baroe dengan njanjian
Opannie electrisch Zangers & Zangeressen
dari plaat pilihan



Jang tjoeama bisa dapat dengar diatas plaat BEKA

No. 2010	(Serenade Solo	Miss Tioe
" 2011	(Souvenir Pasar-Gedee	" "
" 2514	(Alie2-Matane Looroo	" "
" 2527	(Tjahaja Vorstenlanden	" "
" 2528	(Tjindra Wasi (extra)	Riboet
" 2531	(Itam Poetih	" Tioe
" 2532	(Souvenir Paser Gedee	" "
" 2533	(Tjahaja vorstenlanden	" "
" 2534	(Palestina (krontjong)	Amat
" 2535	(Djeroek Poeroet Bandoeng	Toemina
" 2536	(Gebroken Hart	Amat
" 2537	(Baroe Ketemoe (stamboel)	Amat & Toemina
" 2538	(Tjinta Publik	Miss Ida
" 2539	(Persie Pasar Senen	" "

Masi banjak jang soeka, maskipoen darie kloeatan lebi deloe:

No. 2515	(Riboet Malaise (krontjong)	Miss Riboet
" 2516	(Lalap Ketimoen (extra)	" "
" 2517	(Tawon Goela (extra)	" "
" 2518	(Midjiti Ketoprak (lagoe djawa)	" "

FIRMA SIAUW BENG TJOAN
Kamp. Tienghoer—Padang—Telefoon 107
TOKO PUBLIC
Kamp. Djawa—Padang—Telefoon 140

368

B

Figure 2.7: Two advertisements for the ‘talking machine’ and commercial recordings of indigenous repertoires in the vernacular press of Padang in the 1930s and 1940s (Sources: A: *Pewarta*, 9-6-1933; B: *Sinar Sumatra*, 1-7-1940)

177 ‘Djangan loepa mentjari plaat tjap ANGSA jang dikeloearkan speciaal oleh dan memakai nama toko “ANTI MAHAL” Fort de Kock’ (*Sinar Sumatra*, 22 September 1939 and subsequent dates).

178 ‘Plaat tjap Angsa sengaja diberi karah didalamnja soepaja tahan djatoeh dan boleh poela tahan lama’ (*Sinar Sumatra*, 22 September 1939). According to Philip Yampolsky, the local Angsa label in the 1930s and the 1940s seems to have been distributed only in Sumatra (pers. comm., 3-12-1998).

179 ‘Agen gadangnjo sagalo palat-palat Odeon di Minangkabau’ (*Sinar Sumatra*, 7 July 1939).

180 Besides Minangkabau, music of other Sumatran ethnic groups appearing on commercial discs in the 1930s were Aceh and Batak (Susumu 2007:10). For example, in mid 1937 a producer from Java recorded the Batak vocalist Essau Simanungkalit from Simalungun on the Odeon label. Another Batak vocalist and composer named S. Dis and his manager named Bakri were invited to Japan to make recordings there (the names of the companies are not mentioned) (*Persamaan*, No. 168, 13 May 1937).

and also songs accompanied by Minangkabau traditional musical instruments (Fig. 2.8). The vocalists were selected from various parts of Minangkabau and sang in local dialects. Among these singers were Oedin, who lived in the Kajoe Poetih district of Padang; Rapiroen from Mandiangin (Fig. 2.8); Galia who sang in the Batu Palano and Singgalang dialects;¹⁸¹ and Hadji Moein from Lintau district in the Padang highlands who specialized in *qasidah* songs.¹⁸²

In the following years, the number of Minangkabau songs recorded on disc increased. Philip Yampolsky (1999:14) mentions that 170 out of 15,582 sides of 78-rpm discs



Figure 2.8: A commercial gramophone disc of Minangkabau songs under the *Angsa* label produced by Toko Anti Mahal in Bukittinggi in the 1930s (Photograph courtesy of Philip Yampolsky; see also Yampolsky 2013a:148)

181 Other singers at that time were Kasim from Kamang, Taher from Bukit Ambacang, Noeriah Sjam from Suliki. See *Sinar Sumatra*, 15, 18 and 19 February 1937 and 6 August 1939.
 182 *Sinar Sumatra*, 15, 18 and 19 February 1937, 6 July and 22 September 1939, and subsequent dates.

distributed in the Dutch East Indies and Malay Peninsula markets from 1903 to 1942 were of Minangkabau genres. Of the sales of outer islands regional musics, Minangkabau music scored second highest (after *keroncong* and *stamboel* songs, which were usually associated with Malay),¹⁸³ indicating that Minangkabau recordings were favourably received by consumers. Advertisements of such records of local music appeared more frequently in the vernacular press, and some of them were written in regional languages other than the lingua franca Malay. For instance, Toko Anti Mahal advertised its products in a Padang daily in the Minangkabau language. This clearance sale advertisement (Fig. 2.7a) read:

In an attempt to satisfy demands of customers and public, we have to sell our products cheaply, the cheapest. A clearance sale similar to this one is rarely found. We, the owner, offer a 'family price', which is really inexpensive. All products, including clothes, sundries, and gramophone discs, are sold at a very cheap price. The discounted products are available only from May 31 to June 6 [1940]. It is guaranteed that you will feel sorry for not purchasing our store's products.¹⁸⁴

The fact that Toko Anti Mahal used the Minangkabau language for its ads indicates that the consumers they envisioned were Minangkabau people.¹⁸⁵ A June 1940 advertisement of records under the Beka label produced by Firma Siau Beng Tjoan in Padang (Fig. 2.7b) illustrates how extensive the recording of local songs on gramophone disc was in those days. The advertisement includes a Beka record number 2532, containing the *kroncong* songs 'Tjinta Publik' and 'Persie [versi] Pasar Senen' sung by Miss Ida. If we assume that Beka numbered its records consecutively, and that records containing Western music and those containing local music were distinguished in different series of numbers, then we can conclude that: within a period of 35 years since the Beka label was introduced in the Dutch East Indies (if calculated from the arrival of Heinrich Bumb's Beka expedition in Batavia in 1905), more than 2,500 records of local songs were produced under the Beka label alone. This of course does not include records with local content under other labels so that, unfortunately, the total number is difficult to determine.

Effects of the gramophone presence in Minangkabau society, thus, were unavoidable. In the 1930s, recordings of Minangkabau music on disc raised questions about authenticity. The local press reported that buyers of Minangkabau gramophone discs complained that the voice of a singer often did not match the song he sang, because his accent did not correspond to the dialect of Minangkabau in which that song originated. People also complained that the singer's voice in the recordings sounded fake, suggesting that human voices mediated through modern media create a variety of images. The daily *Sinar Sumatra* in Padang published

183 Referring to his discography-in-progress of recordings made in the Dutch East Indies market before World War II, Yampolsky 2013b:62 mentions that he has entries for 1,538 *keroncong* recordings, but he estimates there are another 5,400 recordings (of various genres) not yet listed. He estimates there are some 18,500 unique commercial recordings (sides, not discs – most 78-rpm records had recordings on both sides) were issued for the Dutch East Indies before 1942, not counting recordings made initially for other markets (such as Europe, Egypt, or the USA) and sold in the Dutch East Indies. He states that he has identified some 13,100 sides, or 71% of the estimated total for the Dutch East Indies (see also Yampolsky 2011).

184 *Sinar Sumatra*, 1 July 1940. The original text of this advertisement is displayed in Figure 2.7a.

185 See also *Sinar Sumatra*, 8 and 9 July 1940.

a letter sent by a reader who conveys his impression that the recordings of Bandar X songs from Surantih, Kambang, and Air Haji (now in Pesisir Selatan regency) aired by the NIROM radio station sounded ugly because, as the writer of the letter suspects, the singer originated from another Minangkabau dialect other than Bandar X. In the reader's opinion, the songs of a particular region of Minangkabau should be sung by singers who are fluent in that region's dialect. He urges the producer to re-record Bandar X songs by using singers who are fluent in the Bandar X dialect of Minangkabau.¹⁸⁶ This case suggests how the awareness of difference was raised and how the notion of authenticity was triggered as an effect of the mediation of ethnic culture, Minangkabau in this case, in modern media.

As in other parts of the Indies, 'talking machines' and discs became a symbol of modernity among Minangkabau people, even for those who lived in West Sumatra's countryside. For them, these media represented industrial production and capitalism, which came from outside their own cultural environment. The choice to use modern media will certainly influence a person's views on religion, tradition, norms, and daily habits. Such changes are considered by scholars (for example, Calhoun 2002:110) to be the heart of modernity. In the early twentieth century, a new elite class emerged in the Minangkabau homeland due to West Sumatra's economic development and *merantau* tradition. This new class, as depicted in many Minangkabau oral narratives (*kaba*) and early Indonesian novels written by Minangkabau authors from the 1920s to the 1940s (Aeusrivongse 1976; Freidus 1977), worked mainly as colonial government employees and merchants. This new Minangkabau elite equipped the interiors of their houses with imported Western products. The 'talking machine' thus became a showpiece in traditional Minangkabau 'big houses' (*rumah gadang*). 'There are no family dwellings in the neighbouring islands, Ceylon, India, or Southeast Asia, which approach these buildings in originality of design or richness of decorations', asserted the American feminist Carrie Chapman Catt who visited the West Sumatra highlands in the 1910s. Regarding the interiors of the Minangkabau *rumah gadang*, she wrote:

In the houses of rich families there are bedsteads and mattresses, covered by overhanging sheets edged with crochet-work, which is seen in every Dutch home in the East Indies. Tables, chairs, hanging-lamps, clocks, framed pictures, sewing machines, and *gramophones* are frequently found. In one house where we were unexpected visitors refreshments were served on dainty French china and each guest was provided with a finger bowl. These European accessories give a modern air to these quaint dwellings, but the presence of the primitive loom, spinning wheel, and embroidery-frame signifies that the bridge has not yet been burned between the old time and the new. (Catt 1914:741; my emphasis)

Catt's account conveys the popularity of the gramophone among the Minangkabau at that time, and it increased significantly during the following decades. But no later than the 1950s the 'talking machine' wonder declined in West Sumatra, and in other parts of the Indies, due to the invention of other technological 'wonders'. This can be seen in the 1940 Toko Anti Mahal ads, discussed above, offering records of Minangkabau folk songs for a very cheap price (*didjoea dengan harago nan sangat moerah*). This suggests that by the 1940s gramophone

186 'Lagoe-lagoe Minangkabau', *Sinar Sumatra*, 27 September 1939.

discs no longer caught public attention. With the rapid spread of cassette technology (see Chapter 3) in the 1970s, old gramophone discs hung with family portraits on the walls of West Sumatran houses, evidence of those families' wealth and high social status in the past.

NATIVE RESPONSES TO THE 'TALKING MACHINE'

As occurs everywhere, the adoption of a new communications technology in the Indies invariably generated a variety of responses. A general criticism of the 'talking machine' was that its reproduction of sound was inferior to the sound quality of face-to-face communication. As the Archibald case in Surabaya indicates (see Chapter 1), the invention of sound recording technology affected human perception of reality. What was stored on gramophone records was thought of as fundamentally different from what was stored in writing. 'This new stored material came to be experienced as the "real"' (Weidman 2003:462), because reproduced sound plays an important and complementary role in the development of our sensory apparatus and gives us a general idea of the environment we are in. However, the recorded sound (cylinder recordings of Gladstone's voice) exhibited by Archibald was not perceived as 'the real', because the quality of the recordings was poor due to their being produced by using a crude type of phonograph, technologically still far from perfect. Another example of how transmitted sound is considered as 'the real', can be suggested from the case of telephone technology in the Indies in its early years:¹⁸⁷ Native authorities and their subordinates made obeisance to the telephone handset when they rang, because they knew their Dutch superiors would be speaking through it (Fabricius 1949:185). They regarded the machine as representing the physical bodies of their superiors, suggesting how Natives perceived technologized sound at that time (Fig. 2.9).

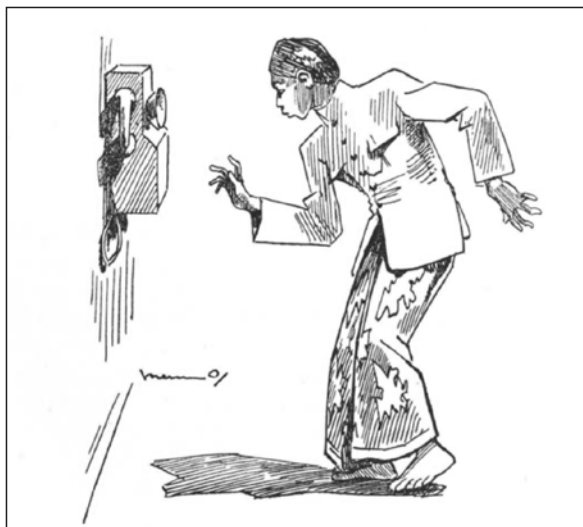


Figure 2.9: Drawing depicting the reaction of a Native subordinate who receives a telephone call from his European master during the early years of the telephone in the Dutch East Indies. He lowers his eyes and gestures respectfully to the telephone as if he were meeting his master face to face (Source: Fabricius 1949:185)

¹⁸⁷ The first Dutch East Indies telegraph line was built in 1856 between Weltevreden and Buitenzorg, and in 1918 the first direct wireless communications system was established between Malabar Hill in West Java and Blaricum in the Netherlands (Mrázek 1997:3-5).

The Archibald case suggests the initial mixed reaction of Dutch East Indies colonial society to sound reproduction technology. This mixed reaction became more and more complex, acquiring religious and socio-cultural dimensions, during the following decades along with increased use of the ‘talking machine’, a technology that had the ‘potential to preserve the voices of dying cultures’ (Sterne 2003:311). Undoubtedly, indigenous belief systems also influenced the reception of new European inventions such as the gramophone. This was known to European exhibitors like W. Noordhoorn, who targeted local spirit beliefs to attract people’s attention to his phonograph demonstrations in Batavia in 1896. He placed a notice in a local newspaper claiming: ‘It can imitate human sounds, a cough, a laugh, crying; although we do not see the person, as long as we know the person, we can recognize who it is. It truly is like a machine that has a demon [setan] inside.’¹⁸⁸ Though I have lived many years, I have only now for the first time seen such a demonic machine.’¹⁸⁹ This new wonder machine held special appeal for status-conscious, aesthetically inclined ethnic Chinese. A 1900 advertisement from Surabaya’s Go Hing Pho Chinese shop, for a phonograph with 72 Chinese opera pieces, states that ‘whoever hears these, will nearly lose their energy, as though they had flown to CHINA’.¹⁹⁰ This comment suggests the changes in human perception of distance and time due to innovations in recording technologies. Of course records were not a complete replacement for live performances of Chinese opera. Following a 1901 ban on Chinese opera performance in Surabaya, one newspaper report admits that ‘the phonographic recordings of Chinese opera songs are pleasing and melodious’ but listening to them caused the writer to feel ‘great regret that the Surabaya authorities refuse to grant permission for Chinese opera to be performed here’.¹⁹¹ The machine was continually perceived with wonder throughout the early years of the twentieth century, as suggested by the Native response in a Javanese village which reflects the local recognition and respect for technology, science, and ideologies of Western dominance.

A man from Semarang with a phonograph or talking machine brought it to a village head’s house, which was rarely visited by Europeans. It hummed some Javanese and Malay songs.

Having looked at and listened to the machine that can sing, of course all the villagers – men and women, old and young – were very surprised and stood dazed because they had never seen a singing machine before.

The villagers said, ‘There is certainly someone inside the machine, it can’t sing without someone within it.’

How dull the villagers are, who said: ‘Londo gaweannee werna werni, pienterannee oradjamak’, meaning ‘white men have made so many things, their cleverness is boundless’.¹⁹²

188 In nineteenth-century urban entertainment, European technologies like the sciopicon and galvanism were more often associated with magic and the supernatural than with rationality and reality. On the spiritualism associated with technologies such as the phonograph, see Connor 2000:386-90.

189 *India-Olanda*, 5 September 1896. I thank Matthew Isaac Cohen for providing me quotations from *India-Olanda* and *Primbon Soerabaia*, referred to in this and following paragraphs.

190 *Primbon Soerabaia*, 22 September 1900.

191 *Primbon Soerabaia*, 8 January 1901.

192 *Satoe toean di Semarang, jang ada poenja ponograaf atawa machine bitjara, soeda bawak ponograaf itoe di roemahnja satoe loerah di satoe desa di mana djarang datang orang bangsa Europa, dan soeda kasih denger bebrapa lagoe njanjian Djawa dan Melajoe.*

A Minangkabau named Abraham Ilyas from nagari Tanjung Sungayang (now included in the West Sumatran regency of Tanah Datar) recorded the ill treatment by Indonesian army soldiers (*tentara pusat*) sent by President Soekarno to West Sumatra to quell the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) rebellion (1958–1961) (see Zed and Chaniago 2001). Writing his memories of the war in the *syair* (verse) form, Abraham recalls how *tentara pusat* abusively destroyed the gramophone cherished by his relatives because they thought it was a radio set used to listen to broadcasts aired by rebels. He writes:

Memakai sepatu masuk rumah	Entering the house wearing shoes
Tentara Pusat datang menggeledah	Soekarno's soldiers come to raid
Disertai bentakan marah-marah	Accompanied with angry growls
Lemari terkunci langsung dipecah	Locked cupboard is directly broken
Pesawat radio penerima informasi	Radio set as the information receiver
Harus disimpan di hutan sepi	[It] should be kept in quiet forest
Benda terlarang untuk dimiliki	Thing forbidden to be possessed
Dicari tentara ketika operasi	It was searched for by the soldiers
Ganasnya tentara perintah Soekarno	How ferocious the army commanded by Soekarno
Kotak Gramophon mirip radio	Gramophone box like radio
Langka jualannya di toko toko	Extraordinary merchandise in shops
Kini dipecah oknum sembronon	Now it is broken by reckless persons
Kotak Gramophon benda antik	Gramophone box is an antique
Untuk mendengar rekaman musik	To listen to music recordings
Barang berharga hak milik	It is a valuable possession
Kini dipecah dicabik cabik ¹⁹³	Now it is broken and torn apart

Abraham remembers this incident, which happened in late 1958, when he was 13 years old. He was very shocked when one of Soekarno's soldiers destroyed his gramophone, because he doted on the machine. He was astounded by the machine that could play songs with no singers physically present. The machine had been bought by his mother, who worked as a nurse in Batusangkar. Abraham says that the soldier destroyed his happy kid feeling. Abraham recalls that he often played the machine, whose speaker was located inside the box. To play his vinyl records he had to crank the machine. Apparently, his gramophone was an HMV portable model produced from 1925 to 1958 by the Gramophone Company in the

Tiada perloe di tjeritakan lagi, jang pendodoek di antero desa itoe, lelaki prampoewan, toewa moeda, soeda lihat dan denger itoe mechine, jang pande menjanji dan masing masing amat heran sambil berdiri bengong, sebab belom pernah marika itoe mendapeti satoe machine pande menjanji.

Orang-orang desa itoe bilang, temtoe ada orang di dalam machine itoe, kaloe tiada nistjaja tiada bisa bersoewara.

Begitoe boetek pikirannja orang desa, jang lantas berkata: 'Londo gaweanee werna werni, pienteranee oradjamak' artinja: 'Orang koelit poetih perboewatannja matjem matjem, kapinterannja tiada kepalang.' (Primbon Soerabaia, 25 August 1902, which was quoted in Bintang Soerabaia, 26 August 1902)

193 Quoted from <http://td73.nagari.or.id/tanjungprri.php> (accessed 4-3-2011).

United Kingdom. Abraham said his mother preferred records of vernacular songs. One record Abraham liked very much was of *simarantang* songs. The sound of the gramophone could be heard far away, because at that time the air was still unpolluted by the noisy sounds of modern vehicles and machinery. If the gramophone was played, neighbours came to Abraham's mother's big house (*rumah gadang*) in order to listen to the records. This was free of charge. The machine was put on a table placed in the middle of the house. The listeners sat around, no prancing or contorting their bodies like people do today when listening to music. As far as Abraham remembers, the machine was never played at night.¹⁹⁴

In reminiscing about his childhood, a Minangkabau intellectual named Khaidir Anwar recalled how village people would gather at a respectful distance from the Tuan Controleur (Dutch colonial official) and his retinue when they came to the village on an inspection tour. Khaidir remarks that while his fellow villagers praised Western technological inventions, they still felt sorry for the Dutch because of their persistence in refusing the message of Islam, and they thought that the Dutch would end up in hell-fire when they died. Khaidir's father was one of the villagers who 'greatly admired the Dutch for their technical achievement particularly in making clocks (the knowledge of which they had learned from the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad) and for their gramophones. He and his fellow villagers believed that it was someone in debt and short of money who invented the gramophone. The person invented a device through which he was able to tell his creditor that he could not afford to pay him' (Anwar 1974:61). Anwar does not mention where his father obtained this story. It is very likely that this story was derived from the funny story 'Hikajatnja Satoe Phonograph' ('The story of a phonograph') issued in *Bintang Soerabaia* on 14 April 1902.¹⁹⁵ Very possibly Khaidir Anwar's father read the story directly in *Bintang Soerabaia* or else he read a reprint of the story published in a Padang newspaper. What I want to say here is that Abraham Ilyas's recollections of his gramophone and Anwar's father's story both provide a picture of how new European-invented technologies other than weaponry led to admiration and respect for Europeans and a tendency by Indies Natives to regard Europeans as superior.

During roughly six decades of the use and reception of the 'talking machine' and discs in Indonesia, from the 1900s to the 1960s, the perceptions and reactions to these technologies were manifested in various ways. One reaction is seen in the debates among the Native Muslim majority in the Dutch East Indies and British Malaya about Quran recordings, the most controversial of recorded religious repertoires at that time. The main questions asked by

194 The 66-year-old Minangkabau migrant Abraham Ilyas now lives in *rantau* in Palembang, South Sumatra. Like many other Minangkabau men, he had fled West Sumatra to avoid the civil war following the outbreak of the PRRI rebellion against the Soekarno regime. His memories of his childhood with the gramophone described above are based on emails he sent to me dated 3 and 4 March 2011.

195 This funny incident about a phonograph occurred in Germany. An unlucky young German medical doctor named Helmers falls in love with Anna Goldheim, daughter of the banker Goldheim. He sends a disc recording to the girl in which he expresses his love and proposes marriage to her. But he is negligent in making the recording: his conversation with a bank creditor who comes to his house to collect a debt was also unintentionally recorded on the disc. Helmers was almost bankrupt and greatly in debt to the bank. But he had always claimed to Anna that he was a rich man and wanted to marry her. After she listens to the recording Anna realizes that Helmers has lied to her. She then refuses Helmers's marriage proposal. Helmers curses his carelessness in using the phonograph.

ordinary Muslims were: Is it allowed to record the holy Quran on gramophone discs produced by European ‘infidels’? and, Do those who listen to such Quran recordings acquire a reward (*pahala*) from God? (Hurgronje 1900; Witkam 2007). Perceptions and reactions to the ‘talking machine’ were also reflected in the use of these technologies by Indonesian intellectuals and political leaders to foster a sense of nationalism in their campaign to eject the colonizers.¹⁹⁶ Narratives of early modern Indonesian novels (see Maier 2004:312-13) are another lens through which one can see Native intellectuals’ reactions to this technology in particular and to modernity in general in late colonial times. In sum, the availability and dissemination of reproduced sound thanks to the ‘talking machine’ raised the question of identity among Natives and shifted their perception about their own cultures and religions.

ATTRACTION AND IRRITATION OF MODERN SOUND

Starting in the mid-nineteenth century the Dutch had brought Western technologies to the Indies in order to maintain and strengthen their colonial power. The colonial subjects in the colony were then confronted by the astounding sounds produced by factory engines, motor cars, trams, and so on – all important signs of technological modernity. Many old photographs document Native children of the Indies running behind cars, as they were fascinated by the sound of their engines. Children imitated the sound of car engines saying ‘*brom... broomm... broooooom*’ while playing games using discarded car or motorcycle tires, as I myself experienced during my childhood in a Sumatran village in the late 1960s. Such sounds of machines represented the sounds of modernity (Colombijn 2009), and this was supplemented in the early twentieth century by recorded sound on phonograph cylinders or gramophone discs. Inevitably, these sounds of modernity became part of the soundscape of the Indies, and also disturbed cosmologies of local belief. John Pemberton illustrates this in his fascinating article (2003) about how Javanese labourers at the Tjolomadoe sugar mill in Central Java in the 1930s responded to a bad accident at the factory which killed several workers. They placed an offering, consisting of the heads of white cows, in the sugar machinery, in order to prevent further accidents. They believed that there were spirits in the machine, and that the factory with its noisy machines had disturbed the peace of the ghost of the lady who had lived there before the factory was built, making her angry (Pemberton 2003). This instance suggests how Natives in Indies colonial society perceived some of the sounds of modernity: as odd, outlandish, and likely to bring about trouble. Indeed, the industrial revolution introduced a multitude of new sounds with often unhappy consequences, obscuring unmediated sounds of humans and nature. Finding a way to listen to unmediated sound in daily life is now difficult. Today the world suffers from an ‘overpopulation’ of sound with so much acoustic information that little of it can emerge with clarity (Schafer 1977:71).

196 Anon. 1932:8; Putra 2011:104-5. An advertisement by the Crown store in Kramat Gantoeng 87 Surabaya contains the text: ‘[K]ita ada sedia plaat lagoe “**Nasional Indonesia**”, seperti: P.B.I. Marsch pakai njanji dan tidak njaji, G.N.I. Marsch pakai njaji dan tidak njanji, **Ir. Soekarno** Marsch tidak njaji, Njanjian **Dr. Soetomo** pakai njaji, “**Indonesia Raja**” pakai njaji dan tidak njaji, harga f 2.50 per stuk’ (*Soeara-Soerabaja*, No. 18, 1 July 1932 and subsequent dates).

Yet other sounds of modernity produced by new media technologies like radio and the ‘talking machine’ were incorporated into the Dutch East Indies urban soundscape. Penetrating the public and private domains, the new sound media of the gramophone and other modern European technologies of sound reproduction changed not only the soundscape but also the conceptualization of sound in urban areas of the Indies. In the 1930s, for example, newspaper reports in Padang, West Sumatra, mention that playing the gramophone in the evening was prohibited. Gramophone shops that demonstrated a ‘talking machine’ after 9:00 p.m. faced prosecution.¹⁹⁷ The reason behind this regulation is that Dutch colonial authorities worried that the modern sound of gramophone records could disrupt public order during the night. It can be imagined that the modern sound coming out of a gramophone could attract the attention of many people. Since there were still limited numbers of Natives who possessed a gramophone and records at that time, those who owned the machine were usually visited by neighbours in order to listen to recorded songs played by the machine. Likewise the shops that sold gramophones often gave demonstrations free of charge for their customers to attract their attention to this product. Natives flocked to listen to the gramophone late at night, but the sound of the gramophone in this context was considered by Dutch colonial authorities as a potential threat to public order. Therefore they passed a regulation prohibiting people playing the gramophone at night.

In sum, the prolific amount of gramophone music that was played and heard at certain times and places changed the Indies urban soundscape, brought about disharmony, and caused an unpleasant atmosphere, though in the course of time it would come to be regarded as normal and routine. Certain parties, especially conservative Muslim groups, criticized people’s disrespect when they continued to play gramophones during prayer hours. In Singapore, the Legislative Council even passed an amendment to the Minor Offices Ordinance in 1934 dealing with ‘post-midnight noises in the colony’, which prohibited among other things the playing of the gramophone and wireless music after midnight unless there was written permission from the police (Tan 1996/1997:14-15). I suspect that the regulation was also intended for maintaining public order, which was very important to the colonizers to maintain their hegemony in the colonies. Actually, it is not the regulation itself that is important in this context, but the social occurrence behind it: what people did with the concept of the gramophone and how it changed their understanding of space and time.

Early modern Indonesian literary texts are another important cultural site for observing the feelings of Natives about the ‘talking machine’ and discs. They represent Natives’ recognition and reception of these technologies. Characters in novels of this period – both serious and popular novels – are described as being passionately involved with the sweet voices emanating from the gramophone and radio, reflecting the change in the domestic soundscape in the houses of the upper classes of Indies society due to the new sound media. For instance, medical doctor Soekartono, the protagonist in Armijn Pané’s *Belenggoe* (‘Shackles’), a leading early modern Indonesian novel, becomes addicted to the voice of the famous *keroncong* singer Siti Hajati on gramophone records. This voice belongs to none other than his secret girlfriend

197 See Sinar Sumatra, ‘Memboenjikan gramophone malam hari’, 19 December 1939.

Jah, who hides behind a number of pseudonyms – Miss Eni, alias Rohjati alias Siti Harjati. This illicit relationship causes his marriage with Tini to break up (Pané 1940:65-7). Armijn Pané, like other Native intellectuals in colonial Indonesia of the 1940s,¹⁹⁸ admired the European technologies which were bringing modernity to their fatherland.¹⁹⁹ In *Belenggoe*, the sense of modernity is evoked not only by the telephone, but also by the radio and the gramophone. H.M.J. Maier mentions that the important theme in *Belenggoe* – revealed in the confusion of its protagonists Tono and Tini – is the problem of the pribumi's identity in the wake of the modernization signalled by the consumption of new technology, taking their minds off their material problems.

The telephone is, of course, a symbol of modernity; it is also an icon of the lifestyle of the elite of the late 1930s Batavia in which *Belenggoe* is situated, along with the cars, streetlights, and parties. Tini and Tono are a well-to-do couple without material problems. Unlike the protagonists in Balai Poestaka tales of that time, they are not concerned with money, tradition, and status, but rather with individual problems and personal communication. In *Belenggoe* this modernity is evoked not only by the telephone, but also by the radio and the gramophone. Tono needs all three of them to survive and make sense of his life – and all three of them are instruments that foreground the indirectness of communication as well as the absence, the invisibility, of the voice's source. (Maier 2004:312-13)

Belenggoe reflects the excesses of a modernity ushered in by the advent of Western technology – telephone, radio, and gramophone – in the Dutch East Indies. Other novels of early modern Indonesian literature, including popular novels, also encapsulated the social and psychological effects of gramophone and radio on Natives in the Indies during late colonial times (see Suryadi 2011a).

CONCLUSION

The extensive trading of several brands of 'talking machines' and gramophone discs in the Dutch East Indies during the first half of the twentieth century enabled groups of people other than Europeans to gain access to these technologies. During the early years of the twentieth century this business was no longer monopolized by European traders; there were ethnic Chinese and Native competitors. The selling of 'talking machines' and discs expanded outside

198 Another Native intellectual who admired the 'talking machine' was Haji Agoes Salim, as suggested by a postcard picture of him at age 25 taking pleasure in wax phonograph recordings in the Dutch Consulate in Jeddah, dated 20 February 1909 (Leiden University Library Cod. Or. 26.365: OI D.47; the historical context of this postcard can be read in Laffan 2003). In the early 1940s Salim's religious sermons on disc under the *Tjap Koeda Doea* label were available commercially, possibly produced by Toko Delima in the Senen district of Batavia (Salim 1941: back cover; *Radja Timoer* no. 7, 1 May 1939:21 and subsequent issues; *Poestaka Timoer* no. 11, 1 July 1939:26 and subsequent issues). His religious sermons were often aired on radio, like on the VORO (Vereeniging Oostersche Radio Omroep, 'Association for Eastern Broadcasting') station (Salim 1935; Salim 1941). According to the historian Jeffrey Hadler, discs of political speeches by Haji Agoes Salim were available commercially in the 1930s in the Indies, including in West Sumatra, his homeland (pers. comm., 7-2-2006).

199 Armijn Pané was the Indonesian intellectual who pioneered translating European books on technology into Malay. In 1937 his Malay translation of the Dutch version of S. Kostyurin's *Handleiding voor radio-amateurs in de tropen* (1932) was published in Batavia. Its Malay title is *Tentang hal radio* (see References). It is known as the first book on radio to appear in the Malay language (*Pandji Poestaka*, No. 58, *Tahoen XVI*, 22 July 1938: back cover).

Java and, as a consequence, the use of these technologies expanded both geographically and socially, and Natives had greater access to them than during the period of exhibition (Chapter 1).

The variety of uses of ‘talking machines’ and discs in the Indies epitomized Indies Natives’ complex attitudes toward technology. The modern mechanical sound produced by these technologies gave rise to problems. The domestication of ‘talking machines’ and discs affected the lives of Natives in the Indies, both socially and individually, and gave rise to questions about their own culture, religious beliefs, and identity. The mediation of Indonesian local cultures on disc recordings in the gramophone era led to Natives having new perceptions of their own culture: certain elements of culture were now seen as more authentic and higher in value than other elements. On the one hand gramophone recordings were associated with the idea of modernity, but on the other hand the modern sounds were a nuisance, causing trouble both socially and individually. It is no coincidence that along with this rising ‘annoyance’ of modern sounds, the debate between those oriented toward ‘Western modern culture’ and proponents of ‘indigenous culture’ sharpened in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

The rise in local use of gramophones and records projected reproduced sound with a modern nuance into the domestic realm of Natives and changed the urban soundscape of the Indies. Indigenous music became more widely available on disc, and at the same time radio stations in the Indies also used gramophone discs for their music programs. As a consequence, records allowed specialized musical traditions to be presented to a much wider audience, and Natives now had another way to hear and appreciate local music. This led to new modes of distribution, dissemination, storage, and appreciation of local music in the Indies.

Growing consumption of the ‘talking machine’ and discs in the Netherlands East Indies during the first half of the twentieth century prompted local entrepreneurs, including ethnic Chinese middlemen, to make commercial recordings of local repertoires. This new business popularized certain local genres, and they became even more popular after radio stations used such recordings for their music programs. A musical culture based on recording media initially developed in Indonesia with the introduction of records and radio broadcasting, which increased the popularity not only of indigenous genres but also of music of other Asian races or cultures like Chinese and Arab. While the recording of local repertoires became more diversified in terms of genre, local musics expanded geographically to ethnicities in the outer islands, including the Minangkabau in West Sumatra. This was in fact the foundation for the formation of regional Indonesian recording industries, including in West Sumatra, which were established and developed later, after the gramophone disc had been totally replaced by cassette technology and its more sophisticated subsequent competitors, as I will discuss further in Chapter 3.

POST-DISC ERA AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE WEST SUMATRAN RECORDING INDUSTRY

Compared with other electronic media, innovations in recording technology occurred rapidly. In just one century, many innovations were designed, with inventions originating in Asian as well as Western countries. After surviving for about 70 years, by the late 1960s gramophone disc technology was largely obsolete and had been replaced by cassette technology, which triumphed for some two decades. Although old gramophone discs remained in use by certain people and to a limited extent by radio stations until the mid-1970s, new gramophone discs were rarely produced anymore, while most American and European companies that produced gramophone players and discs were in their twilight years. In the early 1980s the compact disc (CD) was invented. Soon after that, less than one decade later, new sophisticated inventions came into view: the video compact disc (VCD) and the digital versatile disc (DVD). Today these two latest inventions are widely used by the music industry worldwide.

Such rapid innovation has had significant cultural implications for local societies. Gramophone disc technology spanned seven decades (1880s–1960s) influencing world culture, but its successors have been around just four decades (1970s–2000s), and have had far-reaching socio-cultural implications. Along with the vast dissemination of cassette technology, followed by other more sophisticated recording technologies, there has been immense mediation of local culture worldwide. In Indonesia, the post-gramophone era saw the rapid and extensive mediation of a variety of genres of local culture of ethnic groups. The extensive use of new recording technology in the last twenty years, especially cassette and VCD, has even altered the features of local genres. Garrett Kam (1987) and Andrew Noah Weintraub (2004), for example, have shown that the mediation of Javanese traditional dance and Sundanese *wayang* in commercial recordings has caused a significant adjustment of their present repertoires. New generations of performers of these genres have also used commercial recordings for learning, partly replacing conventional teachers. With the rise of the new media, star performers have emerged that have become very popular and therefore marginalize and cause jealousy in other performers. This has also happened in Minangkabau cultural genres (see e.g. Phillips 1991). The profound penetration of new recording technology into Indonesia's ethnic cultures has also engendered new cultural genres. As mediation essentially stands for representation, we may assume that the extensive recording of local culture has consequently changed every ethnic community's image of their own culture as well as changed other ethnic communities' images of them.

In this chapter I discuss how post-gramophone-disc recording technology was introduced to Indonesian society, increasingly accelerating the mediation of Indonesian local cultures,

and engendering Indonesian regional recording industries, including in West Sumatra. So, in this chapter, I will look at Indonesians' experience with post-gramophone technologies since the early 1970s. My focus will be on cassette and VCD because those technologies are particularly popular in Indonesia. This chapter, thus, sketches the development of recording technology in Indonesia, helping to comprehend the distinctions between the gramophone era and the more recent era dominated by cassette and VCD.

Unlike in colonial times, the penetration of foreign technologies in Indonesia after it gained independence and became a sovereign nation-state has been strongly affected by state policies. As a consequence, the national and local socio-political ambiance might have influenced the dissemination and public acceptance of the products of Indonesian recording industries, national as well as regional, that use various forms of recording technology. I look at the national and regional socio-political factors that allowed extensive dissemination of cassette and VCD technology in Indonesia and the factors that influenced the formation of the West Sumatra regional recording industry in the early 1970s. I argue that the cassette, because of its larger capacity for storing data (compared to the gramophone), stimulated the mediating of a wider range of local genres and generated new genres that were dependent on such this medium. I want to look at this phenomenon in the context of cassette and VCD consumption in West Sumatra. Though cassette and VCD culture in Indonesia exhibits many affinities with its counterparts elsewhere in Asia, Indonesian people's response to these technologies shows particular patterns due to the domestication of media technology that was influenced by the socio-political and religious environment and other unique cultural characteristics.

ARRIVAL OF THE CASSETTE IN INDONESIA

Like the phonograph (see Chapter 1), cassette technology arrived in Indonesia not so long after it was invented in Europe and the United States. In 1962 the Philips Company of the Netherlands invented the first compact audio cassette that soon reached Indonesia. This continued the tradition of Indonesian adoption of the Netherlands' technological inventions. Since colonial times, the general public in the Dutch East Indies were familiar with electronic products of the Netherlands' well-known Philips Company, like *radio Philips* and *lampu Philips*, which brought a wave of modernity to the colony (see Maier 1997).²⁰⁰ The first compact audio cassette manufactured by Philips used high-quality polyester 1/8-inch tape produced by BASF.²⁰¹ Recording and playback was at a speed of 1 7/8 inch per second. The next year (1963) sales began in the United States of the Norelco Carry-Corder dictation machine that used the new cassette tape. The ensuing high consumer demand for blank tape used for personal music recording had not been not anticipated by Philips.²⁰²

200 On the influence of other European modern technologies in the Netherlands East Indies in colonial times, see Mrázek 2002.

201 Headquartered in Ludwigshafen am Rhein, BASF (the acronym stands for Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik) is one of the largest multinational chemical companies, founded in 1865 by Friedrich Engelhorn. For the history of BASF, see Schlenk 1965.

202 See <http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blsoundrecording.htm> (accessed 26-11-2004).

In the early 1970s radio-cassette tape and cassette technology reached Indonesia, and soon had dramatic effects on national and regional pop music. Indonesia, the most populous country in Southeast Asia, was certainly a large potential market for this and other products of recording technology. Unlike gramophone discs, which were only accessible to the upper class, cassettes reached the lower classes widely. Cassette technology facilitated the spread of recorded 'sonic modernities' – to borrow the title of Bart Barendregt's new edited volume (2013) – among the common people, even in Indonesia's rural areas. Peter Manuel (1993:xiv) remarks that 'the lower costs of [cassette] production enabled small-scale producers to emerge around the world, recording and marketing music aimed at specialized, local, grassroots audiences rather than at a homogeneous mass market.'

According to Yampolsky (1987:2), the cassette entered Indonesia in the late 1960s, soon followed by the emergence of amateur private recording companies that produced recordings on cassette for commercial purposes. Almost all of them were pirate companies, meaning that they copied and reissued recordings which existed previously on gramophone discs without acknowledging the copyright. This was the time when pirated recordings first appeared in Indonesia, which suggests that the 'pirate culture' has a long history in the Indonesian recording industry. The pirates illegally reproduced discs in cassette format and the price of such pirated cassettes was far cheaper than the price of gramophone records. It would seem that it was cassette technology that generated the pirate culture in Indonesia. Pirating had not been known in the gramophone disc era. Low price was an important factor in Indonesians' enthusiasm for the cassette: the majority of people were very weak economically, and the cassette was a medium that was financially accessible at the grassroots level.

As had been the case with the introduction of the gramophone (Chapter 1), Java was the first Indonesian island to encounter cassette technology before it spread to other islands. The following paragraphs discuss Indonesian recording companies that pioneered the use of the cassette in Java. I confine myself to those that contributed to promoting Minangkabau music and the role played by Minangkabau migrants in this cultural episode.

The use of cassettes in the Indonesian recording industry was pioneered by two early recording companies in Java: the state-owned Lokananta and the privately owned Irama Record. Both companies were set up in the late 1950s, when gramophone and disc technologies were at their peak before becoming defunct a decade later due to the introduction of the cassette. Java's two pioneer recording companies produced music recordings in Indonesian as well as local languages. One of the regional languages was Minangkabau.

Lokananta was established in 1956,²⁰³ located in Surakarta, Central Java. In the early stages, it functioned as a recording stockpile for Indonesian National Broadcasting, Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI, 'Radio of the Republic of Indonesia'). Master recordings were

203 Lokananta means 'gamelan of heaven (*kayangan*) producing sound without drummers' (Theodore KS 2013:28). Darmanto 2009 mentions that Lokananta was initially tried out in 1950, led by the head of RRI Surakarta branch station, R. Oetojo Soemowidjojo, assisted by technical head R. Ngabehi Soegoto Soerjodipoero. The company was officially announced by the Minister of Information R. Soedibjo on 29 October 1956.

produced by RRI stations all over the country, and then sent to Lokananta's studios in Surakarta to be made into gramophone discs. Next the recordings were sent back to RRI stations throughout Indonesia to be used in their broadcasting programs. The early Lokananta recordings used discs with the label Indravox; these were not available for purchase by the general public. Discs with a different label, Lokananta, started appearing in 1958 or 1959. Discs with this new label were offered for sale through radio stations (Yampolsky 1987:2). Lokananta manufactured discs until 1973.

In 1961 Lokananta was detached from RRI and became a state company (*perusahaan negara*), subordinate to the General Directorate of Radio, Television and Film (Direktorat Jenderal Radio-Televisi-Film) under the Department of Information (Departemen Penerangan). Lokananta bore three responsibilities: 'to encourage, establish, and disseminate national arts that are considered to belong to the nation of Indonesia, although they contain elements of the culture of particular ethnic groups; to produce income for the state; to cooperate with other government agencies in programs involving sound recording' (Yampolsky 1987:2). In the late 1960s, with the prestige of the phonograph waning, Lokananta began to produce recordings in cassette format.

Irama Record, established in 1954, was a private recording company with a commercial orientation since its inception. It was Indonesia's first independent record label. Founded by Budi Chen, Nick Mamahit (the pioneer of Indonesian jazz), and an air force commander named Suyoso Karsono (well known as Mas Yos), Irama was originally just a small two-track recording studio in the garage of a house in Menteng, Central Jakarta, before a permanent studio was built in the Cikini district of Jakarta (Munir 1998; Leo 2000). In the late 1950s and the 1960s, Irama released many albums on vinyl, before it switched to cassette. Irama was noted as the first Indonesian private recording company to produce long-playing (12-inch) discs. Its first recording on this type of disc was instrumental music played by Nick Mamahit, which was released in 1957. During that decade pop music began to rise in Indonesia: pop songs occupied the front line alongside other genres like *keroncong*, *seriosa*, *gambus*, and *Hawaiian*²⁰⁴ that had been popular for many decades. The *Hawaiian* genre was also called *Irama Lautan Teduh* ('Pacific Ocean Rhythm') in a music program broadcast by RRI in the 1950s. Irama can also be credited with contributing strongly to the popularizing of an earlier generation of Indonesian national artists in the 1960s, like Bing Slamet, Lilis Suryani, and Titiék Puspa. As in the disc era, Irama's commercial cassettes included songs in the Indonesian national language as well as in regional languages, including Minangkabau.

In 1956 Lokananta for its own purposes recorded songs by Gumarang, a Minangkabau orchestra based in Jakarta. Since coming under Alidir's leadership in 1954, Gumarang frequently appeared on RRI's 'Panggung Gembira' music program and soon successfully captured listeners' attention. This caused Gumarang to become very popular in Indonesia. In this popularity of the Gumarang music group, Irama Record saw a business opportunity.

204 *Hawaiian* first became popular in Indonesia in the 1930s, thanks to Tjoh Shinsu and Emil Shinsu, who founded the first *Hawaiian* music group in Batavia (present-day Jakarta) named *Synkopators* (Pasaribu 1986:72).

Mas Yos, the founder of the company, became interested in recording Gumarang's songs (Theodore KS 2013:41). In 1964 Gumarang's first commercial disc was released by Irama, called *Ayam den Lapeh* ('My hen has run away'). The disc became a hit, which was a significant factor bringing about Gumarang's popularity in all of Indonesia and neighbouring countries. The success of Gumarang's first disc prompted Irama to release several more Gumarang albums.

The spread of the cassette encouraged the emergence of other private recording companies. By the early 1970s another recording company named DIMITA Record was established in Jakarta. Headed by Dick Tamimi, it was located in Bandengan Selatan, Central Jakarta. Like Irama, DIMITA contributed significantly to developing the Indonesian pop-song genre. DIMITA also produced several albums by Minangkabau pop singers. This suggests that Minangkabau music, thanks to Gumarang, was one of the regional musics most popular nationally in the 1950s. Using simple recording equipment, DIMITA remained active until 1975.

There were two other private companies in Jakarta in Indonesia's early cassette period that produced Minangkabau albums: Metropolitan Record and Remaco Record. Like DIMITA Record, they produced recordings by Minangkabau singers like Ernie Djohan, Elly Kasim, and Oslan Husein. Remaco promoted music groups like Bimbo, D'Lloyds and The Mercy so that they became well-known nationally (Leo 2000). Remaco Record was noted as the largest private recording company in the early cassette period, but it collapsed in the 1980s. Metropolitan Record changed its name to Musica Studio, and under this new name, along with other companies like Perindu Record and Suryaman Musica, it continued to produce Minangkabau albums. Metropolitan Record (Musica Studio) thus came to dominate Indonesia's commercial recording market.

The late 1970s and the first half of the 1980s were the peak of success for the commercial cassette in Indonesia. This means that in one single decade Indonesia adopted a 'cassette culture', and this widely influenced the country's musical life. As in India (see Manuel 1993:xiv), the low cost of cassettes rendered the medium accessible to rural and lower-income groups in Indonesia. Therefore, recording companies, many of them with only a small capital,²⁰⁵ flourished significantly, and used mainly the cassette medium to produce commercial recordings. Even international recording companies like Sony Music, EMI and Warner Music entered Indonesia, competing to make money in Indonesia's music industry. Initially, they were required to affiliate with local counterparts. EMI, for example, had Aquarius Record as its local counterpart in Indonesia starting in the early 1980s, while Warner Music had entered Indonesia earlier – in the 1970s – through its affiliated firm Atlantic Record, which invited some local recording companies to join them, among them Log Zhelebour. The reason Warner Music used this arrangement was because at that time Indonesian regulations did not allow foreign companies to invest directly in Indonesia. They were required to affiliate with local companies. But in 1996 the Indonesian government issued new regulations, which

205 See Chapter 5 for further description of the status of regional recording companies in terms of capital.

enabled foreign recording companies to freely set up business in Indonesia (Sopiann 2002). As a consequence, competition in the market of recording industry products in Indonesia was increasingly cut-throat, which led to the creation of more diversified market segments of domestic commercial recordings, nationally and regionally.

EMERGENCE OF THE WEST SUMATRAN RECORDING INDUSTRY

Though the pioneer recording companies such as Lokananta, Irama, and Dimita that were located in Java did produce some Minangkabau albums, it cannot be said that the West Sumatran recording industry started at that time. That is because these Java-based companies did not focus exclusively on producing recordings of Minangkabau repertoires. The historical course of Indonesia's regional recording companies shows that they developed in the provinces, not in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta. Unlike Indonesia's national recording industry, whose beginnings were in the late years of the gramophone era in the 1950s (as pioneered for example by Lokananta, Irama Record and Dimita Record), its regional counterparts, including the West Sumatran recording industry, only emerged following the arrival of the cassette in the early 1970s.

Initially developed in Java and Bali (see Toth 1980; Sutton 1985; Williams 1989/1990; Putra 2005), regional recording industries then spread to other ethnic groups in the outer islands. Java and Bali were exceptionally lucky because the towns of Jakarta and Denpasar were the two main gates for foreign technology entering Indonesia. One reason for this was the popularity of these cities among foreigners. Hence, recording technology like the cassette was introduced there earlier than in other parts of Indonesia.

In other parts of Indonesia, outside Java and Bali, regional recording industries emerged among certain ethnic groups before the 1980s.²⁰⁶ In the western part of Indonesia, the Minangkabau in West Sumatra was the first, followed by the Batak of North Sumatra, making Padang (capital of West Sumatra) and Medan (capital of North Sumatra) the leading Sumatran cities in the development of regional recording companies. In other provinces, such as Aceh, Riau, Kepulauan Riau, Jambi, South Sumatra, Bengkulu, and Lampung, we find far fewer regional recording companies. I conjecture that the Minangkabau took advantage of the mediation of their music earlier than other ethnic groups thanks to the musical activities of Minangkabau migrants in *rantau*, triggering the establishment of the West Sumatran recording industry soon after the introduction of the cassette in Indonesia. Considering the cumulative effects of recorded sound, I conjecture that the earlier recording technology reached an ethnic group, the more extensively it influenced local culture.

The year 1971 can be seen as the beginning of the West Sumatran recording industry. In that year an amateur company of unknown name released a recording of 'Kaba Hasan Surabaya' ('The story of Hasan of Surabaya') (5 cassettes) from the Minangkabau oral literature genre of *rabab Pesisir Selatan* with the singer Syamsuddin (see Chapter 6) (Junus

206 See, for example, Sutton 2002, describing the history of the regional recording industry in South Sulawesi.

1994a:109; 1994b:410). This was an innovation, because previous commercial recordings of Minangkabau songs, especially during the gramophone disc era, had mostly been made in Jakarta by non-Minangkabau recording entrepreneurs who also produced recordings of other ethnic musics or of songs sung in the Indonesian language. This 1971 recording in West Sumatra was followed by the release of other recordings of Minangkabau repertoires. The PT. Semen Padang music group Lime Stone appeared on commercial cassettes presenting the Minangkabau music genre of *gamad* (see Chapter 5 on this genre) with the legendary singer Yan Juneid. These cassettes were produced by Tanama Record, which had established its headquarters in Padang in 1975. Initially Tanama was a small company established by Alimar Ahmad's family in Jakarta. Later, other recording companies were established in West Sumatra that competed with Tanama Record, including Sinar Padang Record, Edo Record, and Ganto Minang Record.²⁰⁷

The emergence of the West Sumatran recording industry in the early 1970s seems to have been conditioned by the improved political atmosphere in the region at the time the cassette was first introduced in Indonesia. At that time, Central Sumatra, the homeland of the Minangkabau people, was no longer suffering from the political turmoil of the PRRI (Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia) civil war (1958–1961). Under the leadership of Governor Harun Zain, who replaced Kaharoeddin Dt. Rangkayo Basa (Chaniago and Jasmi 1998), Minangkabau society which had been tragically torn by the civil war began the process of rebuilding. Many Minangkabau of the old generation remember Harun Zain, who reigned for eleven years (1966–1977), as a charismatic leader. He successfully restored Minangkabau people's self-confidence, which had declined drastically after they were defeated in the PRRI revolt. Harun Zain called on the many Minangkabau intellectuals who had fled to Java and other places during the PRRI uprising to come back home and help rebuild West Sumatra from the ruins of war (Yusra 1997). Harun Zain's administration improved West Sumatra's economy and social order, and successfully attracted many Minangkabau migrants to return home.

Compared with other Asian countries, the cassette entered Indonesia far earlier. Peter Manuel (2012:224) says: 'The cassette revolution had commenced in the 1970s in [...] Indonesia, but had been delayed in India due to restrictive import regulations.' The rapid Indonesian acceptance of the cassette was certainly influenced by the contemporary Indonesian political atmosphere. This was in the early years of the New Order, when the Soeharto administration was in the process of consolidating political power. Unlike the preceding Old Order, during which Soekarno's government aligned itself with world communist powers led by Peking and Moscow and was strongly anti-Western, the New Order under Soeharto was strongly pro-Western, and ended its relations with communist countries. The New Order was supported by the West, and Indonesia was opened to Western technological and cultural products. As a result, there were no obstacles to the import of cassette technology to Indonesia, and other Western cultural products like Hollywood film and pop music

207 <http://www.padangkini.com/index.php?mod=mozaik&id=6810> (accessed 12-10-2011). Among those recording companies that commenced in the 1970s, Tanama Record and Sinar Padang Record still survive today. Minangkabau cassette producers are discussed further in Chapter 4.

genres. The New Order regime opened Indonesia to Western culture in order to reduce the influence of the communist ideology of the Eastern/Soviet Bloc. The cultural activists who were affiliated with Manikebu (Manifes Kebudayaan, 'Cultural Manifesto') under New Order patronage successfully destroyed their chief socialist-oriented rivals who were affiliated with Lekra (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, 'Institute of People's Culture'), which had supported former president Soekarno.²⁰⁸ So, the emergence of the West Sumatran recording industry was concomitantly driven by the spread of cassette technology worldwide and by national and regional political factors in Indonesia early in the rule of the New Order.

By the 1980s West Sumatra had become the main hub of the recording industry in western Indonesia, and it promoted the life of regional culture, music in particular, in surrounding areas. More and more local artists from neighbouring provinces, such as Riau, Jambi, and South Sumatra, produced their own albums by using rented studio facilities in West Sumatra. In cassette shops and sidewalk cassette stalls of neighbouring provincial and regency towns like Pekanbaru, Bangkinang, Palembang, Muara Enim, Jambi, and Lubuk Linggau one can easily find local pop cassettes with the labels of West Sumatran recording company names on their covers. By holding this central position, the West Sumatran regional recording industry influences regional cultural dynamics, especially in music. For example, Malay sub-communities, such as Kampar and Melayu Deli, have been stimulated to produce their own cultural expressions, music in particular, on commercial recordings. Using the West Sumatran studio facilities located in Padang and Bukittinggi, they have each produced their own local pop albums for commercial purposes. These albums have been distributed in their own communities and have become new icons of cultural prestige and cultural distinction. Besides that, the West Sumatran recording industry also attracted non-Minangkabau pop singers to join in producing Minangkabau pop song albums (see Chapter 4). In local daily newspapers published in West Sumatra like *Singgalang*, *Haluan*, and *Padang Ekspres* we often find advertisements of new Minangkabau commercial recordings, suggesting that the West Sumatran recording industry continues to evolve, stimulated by political decentralization in Indonesia's cultural policies as a consequence of the political reform (Reformasi) following the fall of Soeharto's authoritarian New Order regime in 1998.

CD AND VCD

In 1979 the prototype of compact disc (CD) technology was demonstrated in Japan. Sony and Philips moved quickly to develop this technology, releasing it in 1980.²⁰⁹ The technology was introduced into the United States in 1983,²¹⁰ but it was adopted rather late by the Indonesian recording industry: in the late 1980s. This new invention soon competed internationally with the cassette. But the CD itself very soon had to compete with the even newer inventions of video

208 For more on cultural life in Indonesia during the later period of Soekarno's Old Order (1950s and 1960s) see Lindsay and Liem 2012.

209 See <http://pages.emerson.edu/courses/faloo/in115a/DC.site/Digital%20Culture%20Fileshistory.htm>; accessed 6-1-2005).

210 In this year, it is reported that some 30,000 CD players and 800,000 CDs were sold in the USA (see <http://pages.emerson.edu/courses/faloo/in115a/DC.site/Digital%20Culture%20Fileshistory.htm> ; accessed 6-1-2005).

compact disc (VCD) and digital versatile disc (DVD). The VCD format, which accommodates moving pictures and sound, was created in 1987 and introduced onto the market in 1993 by JVC, Philips, and Matsushita, whereas the DVD format was released in 1997 and quickly hit the consumer market (Pohlmann 1992). These two recording technologies rapidly changed the face of electronic entertainment.

But the world's acceptance of these new inventions is not everywhere the same. In Indonesia the CD never became popular and never successfully replaced the cassette. Producers in the national and regional recording industries preferred to make commercial recordings using cassette rather than CD because the production cost for making recordings on cassette is cheaper than on CD. Cassette-tape players also have a lower price than CD players. This is the reason why CDs are not so popular in Indonesia, a country where most of the population have limited financial resources. The European product of DVD is also not so popular in Indonesia, as its price is quite expensive for most Indonesian people. Conversely, the VCD is very well liked, both nationally and regionally. The key to the VCD's phenomenal growth is the low cost of VCDs and the VCD player. This is certainly appropriate for a developing country like Indonesia: many people with low incomes can afford to buy VCDs. In his article on the VCD market in Asia, Darrel William Davis (2003:170) mentions that 'the "cheapness" of VCD – easy to produce, to reproduce, to consume, to swap, to keep or to throw away – make it a favourite format in Asia, the Subcontinent and Latin America.'²¹¹ In Indonesia, the majority of VCDs and VCD players used are imported from Japan, China and Taiwan, and they are sold at lower prices than DVD players made in Europe or the United States. This seems to be the main reason why the DVD has not become so popular in Indonesia or in developing countries in general.

Since the early 2000s the VCD has significantly influenced the development of Indonesian national and regional musics. Its popularity now surpasses that of all other recording technologies. According to Chandra Ghazali, chief editor of *Audio Video* magazine, the VCD is preferred by middle- and lower-class families, while the upper classes seldom use it. The upper classes prefer to use a 'CD Compo' that is equipped with both VCD and DVD players (*Kompas*, 9-8-1999). These days the VCD is an entertainment device commonly found in Indonesian rural as well as urban areas. VCD technology has enabled the Indonesian lower classes to enjoy various kinds of pop music. Pirated recordings in VCD format, sold by sidewalk cassette vendors in many Indonesian towns at low prices, can be obtained easily. Jeremy Wallach (2008:88) notes that not all Indonesian musicians he interviewed were opposed to piracy. If one's work was pirated, it was a sign that one's music had achieved a measure of mass acceptance. So, some artists are actually proud if their songs have been frequently pirated. VCD rental shops (*tempat penyewaan VCD*) have spread to towns and smaller settlements all over Indonesia. Offering a variety of genres, from imported to domestic films, from porn to religious films, VCD rental shops can even be found in the small weekly sub-district markets far from provincial towns.

211 On the VCD in Latin America, see Stobart 2010.

Because of having both audio and visual facilities, VCD technology has changed the nature and the image of regional music. The ‘war of images’ in local culture borne by modern media such as VCDs certainly gives rise to questions about identity. Regional VCD clips and covers are a means through which aspects of global culture are transmitted to audiences in Indonesia’s regions. As Yampolsky (2003) has noted, clips of Indonesian regional VCDs represent a wide variety of scenes and backgrounds, ranging from local to overseas. The singers wear traditional dress as well as sexy clothes that give a seductive effect, which gives rise to fierce debate in local society (see Naafs 2010). The visual elements used on regional VCDs form a medium through which common people all over Indonesia receive impressions of foreign peoples and foreign cultures. In contrast, the audio track is mostly local regional sound. This has an impact on people’s thinking about their identity, as reflected in public discourse about the pros and cons of being exposed to foreign influences. Some groups regard regional VCDs as a useful way of increasing their awareness of their traditional culture and perpetuating local identity, while other groups believe such VCDs are a threat to local values.

When I travelled to several cities in Indonesia, as far as Bau-Bau in Southeast Sulawesi and Bima in West Nusa Tenggara, I got the impression that almost every ethnic group now has its own local pop music, which is produced by local recording companies in VCD format. It also seems there are more and more verbal arts genres and traditional performers appearing on regional VCDs (see Chapter 6). In the province of Southeast Sulawesi, for example, one can find pop Buton VCDs, pop Muna VCDs, and pop Tolaki VCDs, representing the three largest ethnic groups that inhabit the province. Likewise, in South Sulawesi province, one can find pop Toraja VCDs, pop Makassar VCDs, pop Mandar VCDs, and pop Bugis VCDs, representing that province’s main ethnic groups. This example can be extended to all parts of Indonesia, such as pop Sasak VCDs, pop Manado VCDs, pop Bali VCDs (see Putra 2004), and pop Sunda VCDs. Undoubtedly, the VCD culture has changed the contours of Indonesia’s regional music landscapes.

THE WEST SUMATRAN RECORDING INDUSTRY ENTERS THE ‘VCD CULTURE’

By the time VCD technology was introduced to the Indonesian people in the early 2000s, this ‘developing’ country had advanced. The New Order legacy left a relatively good infrastructure in most of Indonesia’s major regions. As a result, the spread of VCD technology to provincial towns, including West Sumatra’s capital of Padang, did not take long once it had reached the major cities of Java. The VCD spread enormously and much faster than the cassette had done. Not long after it was introduced in Indonesia in the early 2000s, the country, like other Asian countries, had entered the ‘VCD culture’ – to borrow Peter Manuel’s phrase (2012:226-7) – which, much more so than the ‘cassette culture’, has ‘its own characteristic genres, content conventions, distribution locales, and consumption practices.’ VCD technology, which is commonly associated with Asia (Kelly 2005), has radically transformed the features and social aspects of Indonesia’s national and regional musics.

As in India, the introduction of VCD technology in Indonesia soon affected both national and regional recording industries. Though since the 1990s Indonesia’s regional

recording industries had shown significant growth (Bangun *et al.* 1999; Bangun 2001), their development accelerated following the extensive use of VCDs in the early 2000s (Barendregt and Van Zanten 2002). Since then, commercial VCDs released by various regional recording companies containing local repertoires from different ethnic groups can be found in many provincial towns, from the westernmost Indonesian town of Banda Aceh to the town of Jayapura in Papua (Yampolsky 2003). Today most Indonesian ethnic groups have their own commercial pop music produced in VCD format. Even relatively small ethnic groups like the Toraja in Central Sulawesi and the Nagi in Flores have pop music albums recorded on both cassette and VCD (Hicken 2009; Bos 2005:152-55).

The West Sumatran recording industry soon adopted the VCD and it rapidly replaced the cassette. In contrast, the CD was never used widely in the West Sumatran recording industry. The first Minangkabau commercial VCDs appeared in 2001, produced by Tanama Record. In subsequent years many other companies switched to VCDs. VCD technology, which contains audio and visual elements, provides a greater opportunity for regional performers to carry out experiments with local music genres. After the introduction of the VCD, recording companies produced recordings in both VCD and cassette formats. But more than cassette, VCD has stimulated new forms of local pop song genres and has introduced modern elements in traditional verbal arts, as can be seen in the clips of commercial VCDs of Minangkabau oral literature (see Chapter 6). Likewise, newly created Minangkabau pop music on VCD has emerged that emphasizes humour and joking in hilarious lyrics as well as comical video clips which, of course, are impossible to present on cassette. So, VCD technology has generated a diversification of regional musical styles. As elsewhere, most recent commercial recordings from Minangkabau have produced VCDs in karaoke format. This enables consumers to orally mimic the songs while they play them. This means that innovations in regional music, resulting from the widespread use of VCD technology, have also changed the ways in which consumers appreciate the recent products of regional recording companies.

PROLIFERATING MEDIATION OF LOCAL GENRES

Cassette technology, which is far more versatile than the gramophone disc, allowed people to record a variety of genres other than music. Similarly, VCD technology has served to stimulate saleable production of various local genres that were never previously marketed in such fashion. These technologies have been used to record a variety of cultural and religious repertoires, in national as well as regional contexts, such as poetry accompanied by music (*musikalisasi puisi*), traditional literature of particular ethnic cultures, and religious sermons which now appear in regional as well as national languages.²¹² It is possibly unique to Indonesia that cassettes are also used in the cultivation of swallow's nests, which are sold commercially to China and elsewhere. People even invest money to construct buildings (sometimes old buildings are

212 For more about the use of cassettes in religious sermons and Quranic recitations in a national context see Gade 2004 and Rasmussen 2010, and Watson 2005 on the *ulema* Abdullah Gymnatsiar and his religious sermons. For more on such phenomena dealing with religious genres and other genres in an Indonesian regional context, see Bowen 1993:284, 289 on the context of Islamic rituals in Aceh and Arps 1994 on Javanese literature on audio cassette.

used) to cultivate swallow's nests (*merumahkan walet*). The buildings are provided with only small holes in their walls to allow entry only to birds. A recording of swallow sounds, which can be bought at bird markets, is played inside the building to encourage wild swallows to make a nest inside the building. In European countries recordings of bird songs are used for psychological therapy, while in Indonesia people use them to cultivate swallow's nests. These are just a few examples of using cassettes and VCDs beyond the field of music.

It is interesting to look at such phenomena in the context of the West Sumatran recording industry. These days, Minangkabau genres other than Minangkabau pop music, the main product of the West Sumatran recording industry, have been appearing on commercial cassettes and VCDs, such as various kinds of Minangkabau traditional theatre and verbal arts. Many producers offer their recordings in both cassette and VCD formats (see Chapter 6). Another genre is religious sermons using the Minangkabau language. Although in the gramophone era Islamic Quranic recitations (in Arabic) and religious sermons (in the Malay language) had been recorded on gramophone discs, there were no such recordings using the Minangkabau language.

Cassettes and VCDs have extended the mediation and representation of Minangkabau repertoires. As a consequence, the (re)production of Minangkabau pop music has proliferated. Recording companies compete to release albums that offer something distinctive, if not to say new, in terms of music and lyrics, in order to capture consumers' attention. In this way, cassette and VCD technology have stimulated innovation and experimentation in regional pop music. As has occurred in other ethnic cultures, the introduction of cassette and VCD technologies has transformed the reception of many genres in the Minangkabau cultural repertoire: mediated forms of many Minangkabau genres are now widely available.

Cassettes and VCDs have also generated 'media-bound' genres, genres that are closely linked with the media on which they are recorded, and whose existence depends on those media. One example is *drama Minang moderen* ('modern Minangkabau drama'). This genre was created as a result of the Minangkabau encounter with cassette technology. It did not exist previously in Minangkabau culture before the cassette era. The word 'modern' in the title indicates that it is considered a new genre. These modern Minangkabau dramas reflect socio-cultural problems in contemporary Minangkabau society. They were very popular in the 1980s, especially among Minangkabau living outside their homeland. Another new Minangkabau media-bound genre is Minangkabau children's pop music. Unlike modern Minangkabau drama, which was produced in cassette format only, Minangkabau children's pop music is produced in both cassette and VCD formats. It started appearing in the early 2000s. This media-bound genre is discussed further in Chapter 7.

CONCLUSION

In the late 1960s, the audio cassette started to replace the gramophone record, which was first exhibited in Java around 1882. After being introduced in the late 1960s, cassette technology was soon consumed throughout Indonesia. Its early arrival and vast distribution in

the country was facilitated by the contemporary political atmosphere, as Soeharto's Western-oriented New Order took over Indonesian politics, terminating Soekarno's Old Order regime that had a political policy of anti-capitalism. Thanks to cassette technology, Indonesia's modern national and regional recording industries developed, and, after the technology had spread throughout Indonesia, the number of national as well as regional recording companies increased significantly. The use of the audio cassette by national recording companies in Jakarta was soon followed by their regional counterparts in the outer islands, including the island of Sumatra.

In West Sumatra, it was in the early 1970s that the audio cassette was first used to record Minangkabau repertoires. This can be considered the birth of the West Sumatran recording industry, followed by the establishment of other recording companies in Padang. This occurred after West Sumatra had recovered socio-politically and economically from the bloody PRRI civil war (1958–1961). It is true that prior to that, during the last decade of the gramophone disc era, some recording companies situated in Jakarta had produced commercial albums of innovative Minangkabau music. But this cannot be considered as part of the West Sumatran recording industry because those Jakarta-based recording companies also produced recordings of national pop and songs of some other ethnic groups. So their market segment was far larger than one particular ethnicity.

For some three decades cassette technology dominated Indonesia's recording industry, until it was superseded in the 1990s by the newer and more sophisticated recording technologies of CD, VCD, and DVD. In Indonesia, cassettes and VCDs have been used more than just for the music business. Cassettes and VCDs are also used for matters dealing with politics, religion, and other aspects of Indonesian society. Indonesia's national and regional recording industries have burgeoned following the spread throughout the country of these recording technologies. The VCD has been accepted widely in Indonesia and has surpassed the cassette in popularity. VCDs are accessible to the majority of the public in Indonesia, from urban to rural areas. However, unlike the gramophone record, which was totally replaced by the audio cassette, CD and VCD, although widely consumed starting in the 1980s, did not completely wipe out cassette technology. The cassette is still used in Indonesia today, alongside the CD and the VCD, although the numbers are declining. The VCD is becoming more and more popular and seems to be gradually replacing the consumption and use of the cassette.

In the cassette and VCD era, Indonesia's regional cultures have undergone vast mediation and representation. Cassette and VCD technologies have facilitated the production of recordings of a variety of local genres other than music. They have also driven musical innovation and aesthetic experiments in regional pop music, and encouraged the creation of new genres that are closely tied to these technologies. This also happened in Minangkabau culture, where the West Sumatran recording industry used both technologies to produce commercial recordings of Minangkabau repertoires.

Since its emergence in the early 1970s, the West Sumatran recording industry is continuing to survive. Like other businesses, it is driven by a particular system that involves a number of elements linked with each other. The following chapter explores the organization of the West Sumatran recording industry, so that we can comprehend the configuration and internal workings of this regional media business.

PART II

INSIGHT INTO THE WEST SUMATRAN
RECORDING INDUSTRY

Rabab Dije 4



Siril Asmara
Igus Sikumbang

New creations of pop Minang songs inspired by the verbal art genre of rabab Pesisir Selatan: Siril Asmara and Igus Sikumbang, Pak Dukun; Rabab Dije (VCD karaoke), Vol. 4, Sinar Padang Record, 2012

CHAPTER 4

ACTORS AND VENTURES IN THE WEST SUMATRAN RECORDING INDUSTRY

The features of the West Sumatran recording industry, and Indonesia's regional recording industries more generally, are distinctive but under-studied. Barendregt (2002) has investigated some aspects of Minangkabau pop songs, the main product of the West Sumatran recording industry, but does not pay much attention to its other products, such as recordings of Minangkabau oral literature and the cassettes and VCDs of Minangkabau children's pop music (see Chapters 6 and 7) and who and what is involved in their production and circulation.

Diana Crane (1992:4) notes that it is impossible to understand the nature and role of recorded culture in contemporary society without examining the characteristics and conditions in which it is produced and disseminated. Put another way, cultural products, including musical recordings, take the shapes they do in part because of the nature of the system that produces them (Peterson 1976:10). In this chapter I look at what local socio-cultural and political circumstances have influenced the West Sumatran recording industry. I will focus primarily on the elements involved in the production end of this business and not its consumption and consumers. In Indonesia the production of recorded media is part of a system involving many parties and individuals that are connected with each other in an intricate relationship that is influenced by local conditions. I explore this complex process in the context of the Indonesian regional recording industry. My conclusion is that the West Sumatran recording industry is rather different from other Indonesian regional recording industries, and that Indonesia's regional recording industries are very different from their national counterpart, in terms of features and business patterns.

To provide evidence for these assertions, this chapter delves into the West Sumatran recording industry. It aims to describe the structure and socio-cultural landscape of the industry. I seek to demonstrate how this business has successfully generated and converted the cultural and social capital of Minangkabau ethnicity. I want to know what type of business a regional recording company is, and where it can be situated in the media business in Indonesia. To do this, I describe the parties, government as well as private, and individuals involved in the West Sumatran recording industry and the patterns in producing, distributing and circulating its products. I also look at economic aspects, especially issues of royalties for local artists, in order to comprehend the complex relationships among the parties involved.

THE PRODUCTS

Since its emergence in the 1970s the West Sumatran recording industry has produced recordings of Minangkabau music genres, popular as well as traditional ones. In recent years, its

products have shown significant diversification in terms of genre and musical style, while the number of recordings has greatly increased.

The products of the West Sumatran recording industry can be categorized into three types. First, Minangkabau pop music which is called *pop Minang*. Second, traditional genres associated with Minangkabau oral literature or traditional verbal arts. Third, genres that have been shaped by the use of recording technology itself, whose existence firmly depends on the media: media-bound genres.

Pop Minang is noticeable as the largest corpus of the West Sumatran recording industry's products. It is a flexible genre, constantly changing in terms of its music, lyrics, and aesthetics, which has developed primarily through the media of cassettes and VCDs. Many new albums are produced every year and many new local artists have appeared over the last twenty years. Most are newcomers to the scene, though some are old favourites who appear again and again. The development of *pop Minang* inevitably involves other contributors – musicians, composers and talent hunters as well, all of Minangkabau descent.

Minangkabau oral literature or verbal arts consists of many genres (Amir, Zuriati and Anwar 2006). But not all genres have been recorded on commercial cassettes or VCDs. Some genres had even appeared on recordings during the gramophone disc era. Some genres were produced at one time in commercial recordings but if sales were not high, they were no longer reproduced, while other genres are often reproduced. Producers' decisions whether to reproduce certain genres or not are strongly determined by market demand.

Media-bound genres, those that are closely linked with recording media (cassette and VCD in this case), are limited. Two such prominent genres are modern Minangkabau cassette dramas and Minangkabau children's pop music. The former is available only in cassette format, while the latter is available in both cassette and VCD formats.

Three categories of West Sumatran recording industry products will be discussed further in the following chapters: *pop Minang* in Chapter 5, Minangkabau oral literature or verbal arts in Chapter 6, and one media-bound genre, namely Minangkabau children's pop music, in Chapter 7.

THE PRODUCERS

As the hub of the regional recording industries in western Indonesia, West Sumatra is the province with the largest number of recording companies. In the early 2000s there were some 50 recording companies situated in West Sumatra (Barendregt 2002:324) and the number has increased significantly since then. Since the emergence of this sector in the early 1970s, many new companies have been established, while some earlier competitors still survive. The producer and song composer Agus Taher (Fig. 4.1)²¹³ states that there were 65 producers in

213 Dr. Agus Taher or Agusli Taher owns the recording company named Pitunang Record and the production house

West Sumatra in 2008. In addition there were 33 recording studios, 16 production houses, and hundreds of *orgen tunggal*²¹⁴ music businesses, making West Sumatra one of Indonesia's main centres of the music industry after Jakarta (Taher 2008:5). Appendix 1 lists the producers of Minangkabau commercial cassettes in West Sumatra as of 2008, based on data registered with the West Sumatra branch of ASIRINDO (Asosiasi Industri Rekaman Indonesia, 'Association of the Indonesian Recording Industry'), and additional data I found while conducting fieldwork in West Sumatra. According to local media reports, still other new producers have been established since 2008.

The majority of West Sumatran recording companies are situated in Padang, the capital of the province. Other companies are in Bukittinggi, the main city of the Minangkabau highlands (*darek*), Padang Panjang, Pariaman, Payakumbuh, Sawahlunto, and Solok (see Appendix 1). The ASIRINDO data used for Appendix 1 understate the real number of recording companies in West Sumatra, because not all companies become members of ASIRINDO since it is not the only organization of recording companies in Indonesia. Some recording companies that initially became ASIRINDO members later left the organization.²¹⁵ A comparison of the ASIRINDO data displayed in Appendixes 1 and 2, and Table 4.1 indicates that other new recording companies became ASIRINDO members after 2006. I found names of new recording companies written on the covers of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs that I purchased every summer after 2006.

Institutionally, the businesses of the West Sumatran recording industry can be categorized into five types:

- 1) Recording companies that directly act as producers. They have their own recording studios (see Appendix 2) that are primarily used to produce their own albums, but they also rent their recording studios to producers who do not have their own studios (the fourth type).
- 2) Recording companies that have recording studios in addition to production houses which provide video shooting and editing services for commercial purposes (see Appendix 3). Some of them use the same name for both the producer company and the production house, as in the case of Tanama Record and Sinar Padang Record, while others distinguish the two, as in the case of Agus Taher's Pitunang Record (which also

named My Own Productions. He is a leading Minangkabau pop-song composer of the second generation, first appearing in the 1980s. He has composed *pop Minang* song lyrics for adults as well as for children (see Chapters 5 and 7). He is a former general secretary of ASIRINDO (Asosiasi Industri Rekaman Indonesia, Association of the Indonesian Recording Industry), West Sumatra branch.

²¹⁴ For more on *orgen tunggal* music in West Sumatra, see Aulia 2010.

²¹⁵ The ASIRINDO West Sumatra branch was established in Bukittinggi on 6 May 2004 by the recording industry practitioners of this province. It has two secretariat offices: in Bukittinggi and in Padang. ASIRINDO has its own statutes and its own regulatory organization. The association aims to work for the benefit of its members, for example, combating piracy and promoting artists' rights. Every two years, the head of ASIRINDO is elected by vote by the owners of West Sumatran recording companies registered as members of the association. These companies pay an annual fee to the association.

has its own recording studio; see Fig. 4.2) and his production house named My Own Productions.

- 3) Production house companies that provide video shooting and editing services only for individuals or other parties that might need their services, such as for the making of videos for wedding parties and other festivities (see Appendix 3). They do not produce or sell albums.
- 4) Producers that do not have their own recording studios, such as Ghita Record, Planet Record, Sentral Record, and Scorpion Record. To release their albums, such producers have to rent a recording studio of the first type or of the fifth type.
- 5) Companies that only operate recording studios with no intention of acting as producers of music albums, such as Nover Studio and Sony Studio. These companies tend to rent their studios to producers that do not have their own recording studios (the fourth type).

The majority of West Sumatran recording companies with their own studios are situated in Padang. The rest are dispersed over Bukittinggi, Padang Panjang, Pariaman, and Solok (see Appendix 2). Likewise the production houses (see Appendix 3). The main products of these companies are commercial cassettes and VCDs of *pop Minang*, whose characteristics will be discussed further in Chapter 5. Before the 1980s, recording companies and production houses were all located in Padang. But since the 1980s, recording companies, with or without their own recording studios, as well as production houses, have also been established in other towns of West Sumatra.

Most recording studios are quite basic. Figure 4.2 shows images of Pitunang Record's recording studio in Tabing, Padang, owned by Agus Taher. It was built in a room adjoining Agus Taher's main house. The room is partitioned into two parts: one part is used to store



Figure 4.1: Dr. Agus Taher, owner of Pitunang Record (photo by Suryadi, 2005)

musical instruments and computer equipment, while the other part, which is soundproof, is used for recording singers. Those in both parts can see each other, since the wall in between is made of glass. The musical instrument used is a digital keyboard, which has a software program that produces rhythms and chords by means of MIDI²¹⁶ electronic commands. Other important devices are an instrument to control the singer's voice and a set of computers used to make the master recording of the voice. Cotok Production House in Bukittinggi has a similar type of studio: the studio is also situated in part of the owner's house. The old competitors Tanama Record and Sinar Padang Record have bigger recording studios.



Figure 4.2: Pitunang Record's recording studio and its recording equipment (photographs by Suryadi, 2005)

216 MIDI (abbreviation of Musical Instrument Digital Interface) is an industry-standard electronic communications protocol that enables electronic musical instruments, computers and other equipment to communicate, control and synchronize with each other in real time.

Pitunang Record not only produces its own albums but also rents its recording studio to producers who do not have their own studios (type 4 above). Agus Taher told me that his recording studio was rented not only by producers located in West Sumatra, but also some located in neighbouring provinces such as Riau, Jambi and Bengkulu. He also said that some people came to him to make their albums by renting not only Pitunang's recording studio but also the name of his company. These are people who want to try their luck and fortune in the world of the regional music industry, often with a mediocre ability to sing. Influenced by global popular music trends, such as the television program *Idol*, the occupation of artist has increasingly attracted young people in Indonesia, nationally and regionally, and is regarded as an way to become instantly famous and rich, and feel modern. But Agus Taher is very selective in taking on such clients, since he does not want Pitunang Record's reputation to suffer. He said that he must maintain the quality of the albums produced by Pitunang Record, including those that rent its name (pers. comm., 5-8-2005).

The growing number of West Sumatran recording companies indicates that the regional recording industry continues to be an attractive business, even since the economic crisis that hit Indonesia in 1998. Entrepreneurs of the West Sumatran recording industry remain confident in investing their money in the West Sumatran cassette industry, though, like all Indonesian music practitioners, they are anxious about the damage caused by piracy and the economic recession. Pioneers in this business, Tanama Record and Sinar Padang Record, still exist right up to the present. They succeeded in surviving through economic fluctuations and have been able to compete with many new competitors, many of whom have produced pop Minang albums in new musical styles (see Chapter 5). Some of these new competitors, such as Anjungan Record and Minang Record (situated in Bukittinggi), produce recordings with new aesthetic styles. So, it appears that the regional recording business generates profit, and offers sturdy resistance to economic crisis. The owner and managing director of Tanama Record, Alimar Ahmad, when I interviewed him (8-6-2005), acknowledged this. Tanama has always been the foremost player in the regional recording business of West Sumatra. Its leading position has never been displaced by newcomers. Data from ASIRINDO show that in the period 2005-2006 Tanama Record released 35 titles in cassette format and 33 titles in VCD format (with some titles appearing in both formats), making it the most productive company among ASIRINDO members (Table 4.1).

The data in Table 4.1, presenting the numbers of commercial cassettes and VCDs produced by recording companies that are members of ASIRINDO, allows us to formulate several observations. Evidently, until 2006 at least, West Sumatran recording companies still produced more cassettes than VCDs. Based on my interviews with producers, the factors behind this phenomenon are as follows. First, the cost of making cassettes is cheaper than the cost of making VCDs. Second, the producer tends to produce a recording in cassette format initially in order to test market demand. If consumer demand is high, then the producer will produce the recording in VCD format. Third, strong producers whose brands are already well known to consumers, such as Tanama Record, Sinar Padang Record, Planet Record, and Minang Record, dare to produce large quantities of VCDs. Some new competitors tend to

Table 4.1

Number of albums (in cassette and VCD formats) produced from June 2005 to December 2006 by recording companies that were ASIRINDO members

No	Company name	Product format	
		Cassette	VCD
1	Ananda Record	1	1
2	Antero Musik Record	1	-
3	Arta Record	1	-
4	Balatif Record	29	2
5	Danau Kembar Record	1	-
7	Deras Record	2	-
8	Fadilla Record	5	1
9	FH Entertainment	5	3
10	Gemini Record	2	-
11	Ghita Virma Record	24	6
13	Klas Manang Record	1	1
14	Kreatif Musik Record	4	3
15	Marina Musik Sentral	3	-
16	Mianti Arta Record	3	-
17	Minang Record	24	13
18	Nada Musik Record	4	3
19	Pasaman Wulan Record	1	-
20	Pitunang Record	8	7
21	Planet Record	48	14
23	Sentral Musik	7	7
24	Sinar Padang Record	15	12
25	Talao Record	6	-
26	Tanama Record	35	33
27	Utama Mandiri	1	-
28	Venoni Musik Record	1	-
29	Wahana Musik Persada	1	-
	Total	234	106

Source: ASIRINDO (2006)

produce just one or two cassettes or VCDs, but most of them do not produce VCDs, because they do not want to take the risk of suffering a loss.

Following the introduction of VCDs by the West Sumatran regional recording industry in the early 2000s, producers have generally produced the same recordings in cassette as well as VCD format, usually making the cassette version first. It was rare for a company to produce a recording in VCD format initially. Table 4.1 also suggests that some companies, which are generally new competitors, do not regularly produce cassettes and VCDs every year.

The West Sumatran recording industry is more than a matter of business enterprise alone; it also relates to ethnic consciousness. This is indicated among other things by the fact that West Sumatran recording companies are mostly in the hands of Minangkabau entrepreneurs, and the other parties involved in this business (song composers and artists, for example) also mostly belong to the Minangkabau ethnic group. They belong to a Minangkabau generation born in West Sumatra, who grew up with familiarity with their ethnic cultural environment; they were not born in *rantau*, outside the region. In my interviews with producers and artists, they told me time and again that their involvement in the regional recording business is driven not only by economic motives but also by cultural sentiments, a wish to continue the existence of Minangkabau music. At the same time, the West Sumatran recording industry expresses enthusiasm for entering the new world of electronic society. To borrow H. Yuskal's words, his involvement in the West Sumatran recording industry is a 'cultural mission', without denying a concurrent economic motivation (pers. comm., 23-8-2007).

Thus ethnicity is both maintained and represented in the West Sumatran recording business. A survey of Industri Rekaman Bahasa Nusantara (recording industries in local languages) conducted by the Indonesian Academy of Science and the Ford Foundation (see Pasaribu 1999) in the majority of Indonesian provinces – but not in West Sumatra – shows that ethnicity continues to be a matter of significance for most regional recording entrepreneurs.²¹⁷ The survey shows that regional recording industry entrepreneurs tend to be closely associated with their ethnic group. Generally speaking, producers affiliated with a particular ethnicity are not eager to produce regional recordings of other ethnic groups. It is rare, for example, for those from the Riau Malay sub-ethnic group to be involved in the Minangkabau recording industry in West Sumatra, or for producers from Aceh to engage with the Batak recording industry in North Sumatra. I suspect such patterns apply in all the regional recording industries in Indonesia's various provinces. An apparent exception is Chinese (Indonesians of Chinese descent) entrepreneurs, who seem to have been involved since colonial times in the business of regional recording industries in Central Java associated with Javanese music (Sutton 1985:28) and in West Java with Sundanese music (Jurriëns 2004:71), but this can be understood because *peranakan* Chinese were native speakers of Javanese and Sundanese, and largely assimilated to the Javanese and Sundanese cultures. Local cultural factors also influenced Chinese capitalists' relative lack of involvement in the recording business in West Sumatra. As Minangkabau traders commonly remark, the Minangkabau and the Chinese have a similar talent for business. Both are well known as *bangsa pedagang* ('trader folk'). In West Sumatra, *peranakan* Chinese businessmen always face strong competition from their Minangkabau competitors.

Another example of how ethnicity strongly influences the West Sumatran recording industry is that producers tend to produce almost exclusively Minangkabau genres. They have

²¹⁷ An exception seems to be ethnic groups who have embraced Christianity. As Andy Hicken 2009 notes, producers of Torajan music cassettes and VCDs come not only from the Torajan ethnic group but also from the Batak ethnic group of North Sumatra. Both produce Christian spiritual music (*lagu-lagu rohani*) because both ethnic groups have embraced Christianity. Recordings of such music are also produced in Jakarta. Christianity seems to be a larger factor than ethnicity for this genre.

recorded a wide variety of Minangkabau genres – popular and traditional-folk – as well as creating some new cassette genres. Recently one or two albums produced by West Sumatran recording companies have appeared in the Indonesian language, but this is not strange, considering that most Minangkabau are bilingual (speaking their mother tongue as well as Indonesian) and considering the historical fact that Minangkabau were important proponents of adopting modern standard Malay as the national language of Indonesia (Anwar 1976).

Some surrounding Malay subgroups have put their own pop music on the market under the label of a leading West Sumatran recording company. But these initiatives did not come from the Minangkabau producers. Rather, it came from the neighbouring Malay artists. For example, some albums in cassette or VCD format in the North Sumatran Deli Malay dialect, which has a cultural affinity with Minangkabau, such as *Bunga Tanjung*, *Melayu Deli Memandang Bulan*, and *The Best of Melayu Deli*, were produced in Padang by Tanama Record (Pasaribu 1999:32-33). Likewise, some albums by local pop singers from neighbouring provincial towns in Riau, Jambi, South Sumatra, and Bengkulu provinces, which have a cultural affinity and religious similarity with Minangkabau people. In this case it seems the neighbouring singers preferred their albums to be produced by a leading West Sumatran recording company in order to attract customers' interest. Tanama Record, Minang Record and Sinar Padang Record, for example, have recorded pop song albums sung in several Malay subgroup dialects in Sumatra – Palembang, Jambi (Fig. 4.3), Kerinci, Deli, and Kampar Malay.

Cultural and religious similarity seems to have been an important consideration in this case: people of these regions have a cultural closeness with the Minangkabau. Besides that, there are historical connections, as the Muslim Malays of Riau (Kato 1997), Jambi, South Sumatra and Bengkulu (Navis 1984) have enjoyed close cultural relations with Minangkabau in contrast to poor relations between Minangkabau and the predominantly Christian Batak of



Figure 4.3: Two non-Minangkabau pop albums in cassette format from Jambi and Palembang, produced by Tanama Record

North Sumatra and other ethnic groups in the regions (as reflected in works of scholars from these regions; see Parlindungan 1964; Harahap 2007).

Perhaps technological and economic factors are also involved: compared with other provinces of Sumatra, recording companies in West Sumatra are quite advanced in terms of technology and, due to the bulk of their production, are more competitive in terms of cost. Moreover, the West Sumatran towns of Padang and Bukittinggi, where most of these recording companies are situated, are not too far from neighbouring provincial centres like Pekanbaru and Bangkinang (Riau), Kerinci and Jambi (Jambi), Muara Enim and Palembang (South Sumatra), Muko-Muko and Bengkulu (Bengkulu). People in these neighbouring provinces are familiar with products of the West Sumatran recording industry because many Minangkabau migrants live in the urban areas of these provinces. Apparently, this is also the marketing strategy: affiliating with a leading West Sumatran recording company name like Tanama or Sinar Padang Record will be an advantage for local artists of neighbouring provinces rather than releasing an album under a new unknown label which perhaps will not appeal to local consumers. Conversely, the Minangkabau migrants, who normally can speak the local Malay dialect of the neighbouring province they live in, will also be interested in buying such commercial recordings.

THE SINGERS

Like the producers, the local artists involved in the West Sumatran recording industry are predominantly Minangkabau. Most of them were born in West Sumatra (their homeland), not in *rantau*. This differs from the national recording industry, which involves performers and practitioners from various ethnic backgrounds across the country.

Generally speaking, the history of *pop Minang* singers has passed through three generations: the 1950s–1980s generation, the 1980s–1990s generation, and the current 1990s–2000s generation. This categorization is not airtight. Some artists have survived beyond the limits of their generation. The following paragraphs describe representatives of the three generations.

The prominent Minangkabau *pop* singer Elly Kasim (Fig. 4.4) is an extraordinary example of the first generation, most of whom emerged in *rantau*. Born 27 September 1943 in Tikau, Agam Regency, West Sumatra, her debut as a Minangkabau *pop* singer was in 1958, after winning three times the student star song competition organized by the RRI Pekanbaru branch in the region to which she and her parents had migrated. Two years later, in 1960, she won the trophy of the singing contest organized by RRI Jakarta headquarters. She then joined forces with the Kumbang Tjari band led by Nuskan Sjarif in Jakarta and become the well-known female guest star of the legendary Gumarang band (see Chapter 5). After that, many recording companies invited her to make albums. In 1969, Philips Co. from Singapore, which produced her albums, sent her for recording to Hong Kong, making her the first Indonesian singer to do that (Sardono et al. 1983:174). She went on to become a female *pop Minang* legend, unequalled to this day, and a symbol of *pop Minang* itself.



Figure 4.4: Singer Elly Kasim (Source: Yurnaldi 2001a)

Elly Kasim's pseudonym is *kutilang Minang* ('Minangkabau bulbul'), a bird that has a sweet sound and loves singing (Yurnaldi 2001a). She continued to release albums until 2007 and has produced some 103 albums during her career as the most legendary singer of Minang pop music.²¹⁸ She was first recorded on gramophone disc in 1961, and her albums have always been favourites of all Minangkabau generations. Between 1961 and 1969 she produced 21 LP albums. Her classic albums have been produced by national recording companies situated in Jakarta, such as Irama Record, Indah Record, Dimita Record, Mesra Record, JSP Record, and Fontana Record.²¹⁹

Besides releasing solo albums, Elly Kasim also released albums in which she paired in duets with male artists such as Yuni Amir, Syamsi Hasan, Yan Bastian, Tiar Ramon, and Nuskan Sjarif, especially the latter two, who are well known as the leading male singers of the first generation of *pop Minang* artists. Tiar Ramon (born in Pariaman in 1941, died in Pekanbaru, 21 October 2000; Fig. 4.5) had a baritone voice. He started his career as *tukang dendang* (vocalist) of traditional sung poetry *bagurau* (see Chapter 6). His albums were mostly characterized by sorrow and lamentation;²²⁰ most of them tell of the destiny of Minangkabau men the *rantau*. His *pop Minang* albums and *lagu-lagu Melayu Deli* ('Deli Malay songs') albums released in duet with Elly Kasim are well known as far as neighbouring Malaysia. Nuskan

218 See newspaper report 'Elly Kasim: dari Tiku ke Ibukota', *Singgalang*, 5 June 2014; 'Peluncuran biografi Elly Kasim meriah: pengobat rindu, bintang sepanjang masa', *Singgalang*, 16 June 2014. For more on the life and musical career of Elly Kasim, see Basir (2014).

219 See <http://mazef.multiply.com> (accessed 31-1-2008).

220 Hearing the news of his death, a Minangkabau migrant named Sjamsir Sjarif living in the United States wrote a comment on the global Minangkabau mailing list rantau-net@rantaunet.com dated 22 October 2000 (accessed 2-10-2003): 'Ambo indak panah basuo jo baliu doh, tapi lagu-lagu baliu dalam kaset-kaset nan sampai acok bana ambo danga sahinggo alah sabagian dari mangana kampung jo halaman' ('I never met him, but I frequently listen to his cassette albums here [in the United States], through which I can partly imagine my homeland [West Sumatra]').

Sjarif (born in Tebing Tinggi, North Sumatra, 4 January 1935, of Minangkabau parents from Pesisir Selatan, died in Jakarta, 12 February 2007) was well known as a singer as well as a composer. He composed more than 200 *pop Minang* songs, some of which are very famous up to the present, such as ‘Pasan Buruang’ (‘Birds’ messages’), ‘Ginyang Mak Taci’ (‘Aunt Taci’s caprice’), and ‘Si Nona’ (‘Lass’) – just to mention a few titles. He used his ability to mimic many voices to become the first *pop Minang* singer to introduce humour or joking into Minangkabau music, as can be seen in his album in duet with Elly Kasim entitled *Duo Legend: Kamari Pentang, Bakucantang, Basiginyang*²²¹ (Tanama Record 1996) (Fig. 4.6). Together with Zaenal Arifin, who formed the Taruna Ria band in the 1950s, he was known as the first local musician to adapt the Western rock ‘n’ roll musical genre in Indonesian music. He was also the leading figure in the legendary Minangkabau music group Kumbang Cari.²²²



Figure 4.5: Singer Tiar Ramon (Source: <http://www.last.fm/music/Tiar+Ramon/+images/70384528>; accessed 10-9-2012)

Many of Elly Kasim’s albums have been reproduced or pirated by unidentified producers. Never out of print, her albums in gramophone-disc format were reproduced on cassettes and CDs in the 1980s and the 1990s, then more recently on VCDs. In June 2007 Elly Kasim launched her album number 100, produced by Anastra Record.²²³ In this album, Elly Kasim presents a duet with the male singer Ian Anas. Thus, Elly Kasim is one Minangkabau artist who has experienced the peak days of the gramophone, cassette, CD, and VCD eras. Some *pop Minang* songs she popularized, like ‘Bareh Solok’ (‘Solok’s rice’), ‘Ayam den Lapeh’ (literally ‘My hen has run away’, meaning ‘My honey left me’), ‘Sala Lauak’ (‘Fried fish’), ‘Lansek Manih’ (‘Sweet yellow fruit’), ‘Main Kim’ (‘Playing kim²²⁴’), and ‘Mudiak Arau’ (‘Arau river’s

221 In this context the Minangkabau words *kamari pentang*, *bakucantang*, and *basiginyang* are used in a joking manner, with the respective meanings ‘in a dilemma [in relation to love]’, ‘quarrel [with spouse]’ and ‘sulking’. This humorous content matches the image on the cover of this album, as seen in Fig. 4.6, which presents Elly Kasim and Nuskan Sjarif in an exaggerated style of make-up and hair styles.

222 Theodore KS 2005; ‘Sang Maestro Nuskan Syarif telah tiada’, *Padang Ekspres*, 14 February 2007.

223 ‘Album ke-100 Elly Kasim Diluncurkan Senin Ini’, *Singgalang*, 4 June 2007.

224 Kim is a genre combining songs which have lyrics in *pantun* form and a kind of game with prizes. See Chapter 5.



Figure 4.6: Cover image of Nuskan Sjarif and Elly Kasim's cassette *Duo Legend: Kamari Pentang, Bakucantang, Basiginyang*, Tanama Record, 1996

upstream') are frequently reproduced and retain an audience right up to the present. These songs have been frequently and eagerly sung again by the young generation of pop Minang artists. Some of Elly Kasim's albums released in the Malay language find an audience as far away as Malaysia.

Since 1960 Elly Kasim has lived in Jakarta, where she established a dance studio named Sangrina²²⁵ Bunda, which promotes Indonesian culture and Minangkabau culture in particular, internationally (Yurnaldi 2001a). She and her husband, Nazif Basir, are exemplary entrepreneurs involved in the business of Minangkabau weddings for Minangkabau *perantau* (migrants) in Jakarta and other cities in Java (Fraser 2011). They have had this business since the late 1970s (Basir and Kasim 1997:ix).

Elly Kasim has been honoured with various awards for her significant contributions to the development of Minangkabau pop music. For example, in 2007 she was honoured with an award by the Malaysian government as a legendary singer (*penyanyi legendaris*), and in 2008 she received the *Tuah Sakato* award from the West Sumatra provincial government, the highest award for the sons and daughters of Minangkabau for career achievements that bring fame to Minangkabau on the national and international stage. Elly Kasim is an outstanding

225 Sangrina is the abbreviation of *Sanggar tari nasional* (national dance studio).

example of an Indonesian local artist from West Sumatra who achieved a stellar career as a regional pop singer.

As the first generation of pop Minang singers, Elly Kasim and her comrades like Tiar Ramon, Nurseha, Nuskan Sjarif, Syamsi Hasan, Lily Sjarif, Asbon, Yan Juneid, Feddy Ferdian, and Anas Yusuf constitute the symbols of standard pop Minang or *lagu Minang asli*. Their songs draw heavily on traditional Minangkabau verbal arts. Accompanied by music dominated by traditional Minangkabau musical instruments like the *saluang* (long bamboo flute) and *talempong* (small kettle gong), the lyrics of the songs sung by Elly Kasim, such as those mentioned above, are mostly composed in the form of *pantun*, a traditional genre of poetry that uses a lot of allegory and metaphor. Elly Kasim and other pop Minang artists of her generation had a tremendous impact on the development of pop Minang, and were responsible for the introduction of pop Minang at the national level. Some of these artists migrated to Jakarta in the late 1950s, established bands, and became popular among Minangkabau migrants dwelling in the capital.

In the early 1980s a new generation of pop Minang artists sprang up. They came onto the scene as the use of cassette technology became common in Indonesia, which gave a significant boost to regional recording industries, including that of West Sumatra. The leading persons of this generation are Asbon, Fetty, Efrinon, Rosnida YS, and Zalmon. Their albums are still regarded as standard pop Minang because their lyrics are still dominated by *pantun* verse, which is full of allegory and metaphor. Zalmon (Fig. 4.7), who has a baritone voice, is probably the most successful singer among them. He started his career as an amateur regional singer in the mid 1970s. Zalmon's first album was released in 1974, and afterward he released many albums, which were mainly produced by Sinar Padang Record and Pitunang Record. Zalmon's albums made him a favourite singer in the 1990s. One of his most famous and best-selling albums is *Kasiak Tujuh Muaro* ('Sand from seven estuaries'; see Fig. 4.7), for which he received the HDX Award²²⁶ (*Kompas*, 7-4-2002). The album, produced by Pitunang Record in 1993, caused Zalmon's name to soar in the world of Minangkabau pop music. Circulating mainly in West Sumatra and in *rantau* communities, Zalmon's songs are characterized by sorrowful lyrics depicting the despondency of a Minangkabau man who has left his beloved mother and relatives back in his home village to go try his luck in *rantau*, or else the theme is pain caused by betrayal in love when a poor man has to watch his sweetheart falling for someone more successful. Other songs sung by Zalmon, such as 'Nan tido Manahan hati' ('Irritated heart'), 'Aia mato Mande' ('Mother's tears'), and 'Ameh jo Timbago' ('Gold and copper'), also became popular hit pop Minang songs in the 1990s.

Zalmon died on 21 May 2011 at the age of 56, after suffering illness since the severe earthquake that rocked West Sumatra in September 2009 that destroyed his house and many

226 The HDX Award is the prize awarded by the international company that produces cassettes of the HDX brand to singers whose albums are considered hits and best-sellers. A similar award is also given by the competitor, BASF manufacturer, which is called the BASF Award. These awards are undoubtedly intended to promote the companies' products.

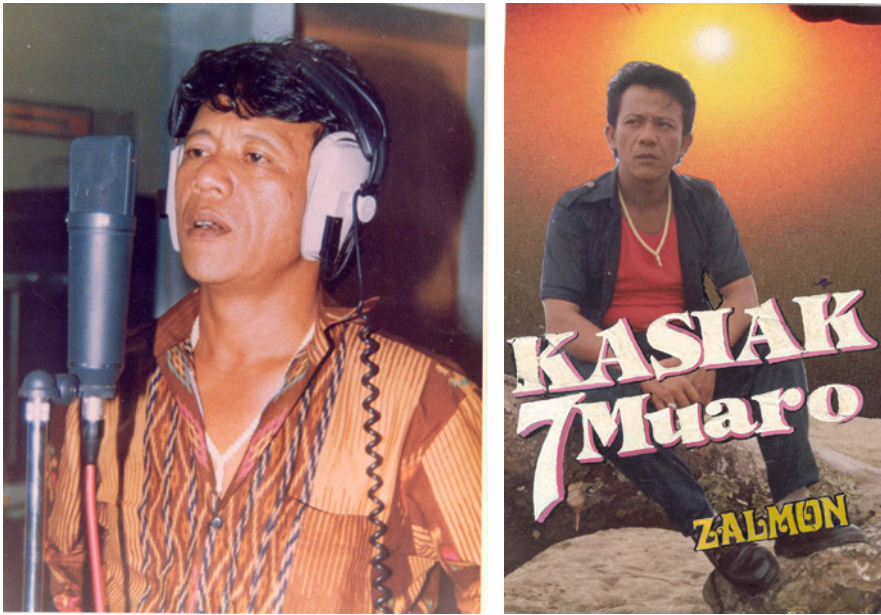


Figure 4.7: Singer Zalmon with hit album *Kasiak Tujuh Muaro* (“Sand from seven estuaries”) (Sources: Photograph by Agus Taher, 1993; Zalmon cassette *Kasiak 7 Muaro*, Pitunang Record, 1993)

other houses in the region.²²⁷ He died in misery in a temporary house in the Gunung Pangilun district of Padang city. During his lifetime, Zalmon released no less than 120 albums. Reporting his death, the leading Indonesian newspaper *Kompas* stated that the passing away of Zalmon means that Minangkabau has lost one of its great sons in the world of music, and that the lovers of his songs are not confined to the people of West Sumatra, but also include fans in neighbouring Malaysia.²²⁸

Times and seasons change: as Asbon and his generation grew old, a new group of Minangkabau pop singers came into view in the 1990s. They began their careers in the CD and VCD era, and their number is greater than that of the previous generations. There are many new competitors; some disappear after releasing just one album, while others survive the intense competition among regional artists, sometimes by developing an alternative aesthetic. The most popular figures among them are Edi Cotok and his wife Yuma Sukaisih, Santi Martin, Nedi Gampo (who is also a composer), An Roys, Ratu Sikumbang, Ucoc Simbara, Lisna Ariani, Dewi Asri, and Ajo Andre (Andria Adhan). They have brought change to the aesthetics of *pop Minang*: the lyrics of their songs are mostly no longer inspired by traditional Minangkabau *pantun* metaphors, allegories, and idioms. The language style of their song lyrics is more direct, more simple. Edi Cotok, Nedi Gampo, and Andria Adhan also

227 This catastrophic natural disaster has been encoded in the lyrics of some recent Minangkabau pop songs; an example can be found in Jennifer Fraser’s ‘The art of grieving: West Sumatra’s worst earthquake in music videos’ (2012).

228 ‘Penyanyi legendaris Minang Zalmon wafat’ (‘Minang legendary singer died’), <http://oase.kompas.com/read/2011/05/21/20022257/Penyanyi.Legendaris.Minang.Zalmon.Wafat> (accessed 2-9-2011).

use humour in their albums, through gestures as well as lyrics. Traditionally, Minangkabau humour is expressed through language using allegories and metaphors, not through gestures (Hadi 2013).

Since the early 2000s the world of *pop Minang* music is also populated by some *penyanyi cilik* (child singers). Actually, children's pop music is a new phenomenon in the Minangkabau language community. A Minangkabau children's pop album was first produced by Tanama Record in early 2003 and quickly sold out.²²⁹ Tanama Record's success prompted other companies to produce recordings in this new media-bound genre (see Chapter 7), among them Pitunang Record, Minang Record, Planet Record and Sinar Padang Record. Recently many Minangkabau children's cassettes and VCDs have appeared on the market. Several Minangkabau child singers have been popularized by recording companies, notably Marce Utari and Yogi Novarionandes. Both have released albums of this kind that, thanks to the popularity of the singers, have been distributed as far afield as Malaysia.

It seems singers from other ethnic groups also like to sing *pop Minang*, an indication of how the West Sumatran recording industry influences surrounding ethnic groups. Perhaps this is related to its early appearance on the national scene: the seed of *pop Minang* was planted in Jakarta in the mid 1950s, the earliest non-Javanese regional music to become popular nationally, which enabled it to become known and popular with other ethnic groups in the country. Since the 1990s some nationally known singers from the Batak ethnic group of North Sumatra have released cassettes (and later VCDs) of *pop Minang* songs (see Fig. 4.8). There are also Malaysian artists who perform Minangkabau pop songs (Barendregt 2002:420) –

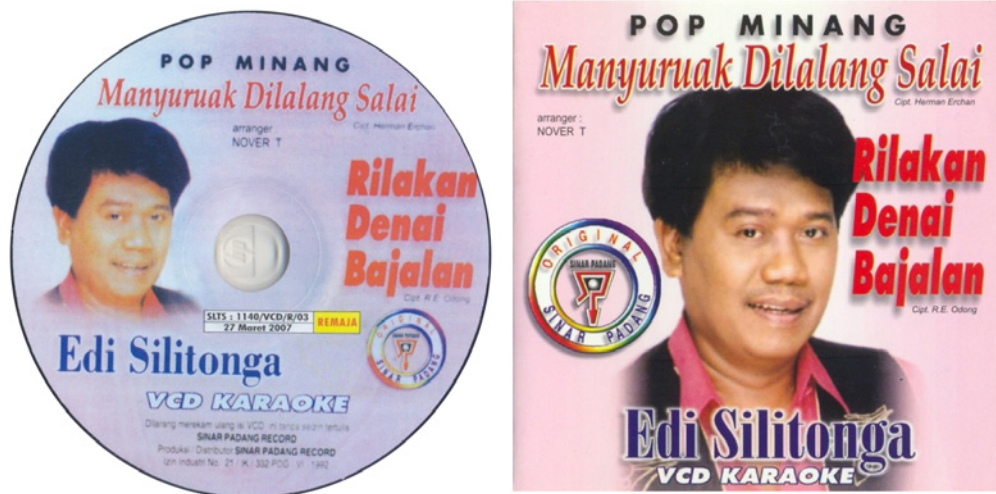


Figure 4.8: A *pop Minang* album in VCD format sung by Edi Silitonga, a prominent Batak singer of North Sumatra, an example of a *pop Minang* commercial album by a non-Minangkabau singer

229 'VCD 'Kisah Yatim Piatu Trio Sarunai Diserbu', Padang Ekspres, 11 December 2003.

understandably, since *pop Minang* recordings are among the most popular types of Indonesian regional pop music in Malaysia.

As a result, the thriving regional media industry, particularly the recording industry, inspires many Minangkabau youth to seek their luck and fortune as regional artists. There are always new singers appearing who launch new albums. They come from a variety of professional backgrounds, such as politician, wife of politician, businessman or businesswoman, or government employee. Such singers usually only produce one or two albums, then they disappear from the Minangkabau pop music scene. But the majority of *pop Minang* singers enter the world of pop music to build a career as an artist. In Indonesia, to become a famous artist promises popularity (as a public figure) and economic success. Those who succeed in the arena of *pop Minang* come from various parts of West Sumatra. Besides the economic rewards, perhaps more important is the desire to make one's presence felt in the virtual world: media representation of Indonesian (local) culture encourages a trend towards a sense of group identity and feelings of modernity in people's minds.

The spreading consumption of *pop Minang* recordings in the homeland and in *rantau* impacted the singers. Nowadays many *pop Minang* singers like Andria Adhan, Edi Cotok and Nedi Gampo are frequently invited by Minangkabau migrants in *rantau*, in such places as Bandung, Bogor, Jakarta, and Palembang, to present live musical performances for wedding parties or for gatherings of Minangkabau migrants in the cities. New social media like mobile phone and Facebook have made contact between singers and inviters in *rantau* easy.

FINANCIAL REMUNERATION OF SINGERS

In the West Sumatran recording industry, producers have a strong position, while artists and musicians have a weak bargaining position compared to the producers. As an illustration, recording companies have unlimited rights to reproduce the master recording of an album with no obligation to pay additional royalties to the singers. This is due to the contract system usually used, which is called in Indonesian *jua putuih* or *jual putus* ('outright sale') or *jua master-master*, which means that a producer buys the master recording of an album in perpetuity, and can reproduce it as he sees fit. The artists have no right to receive additional royalties or remunerations. This system is also followed for recording folk genres: storytellers or traditional performers receive payment only for the initial recording of the master. Thus the *jua putuih* contract is exceptionally beneficial for the producer. In fact, recording companies usually reissue *pop Minang* and folk albums several times. The result is that we seldom hear of a regional recording company going bankrupt. Well-established recording companies like Tanama Record (established 1975) and Sinar Padang Record (established 1978) have a particular advantage with their extensive backlists, which they can reproduce as often as they like, without any additional costs.

The *jua putuih* contract, used by most West Sumatran recording companies, allows the proprietor of the recording company to preside over all phases of production, from selecting the singers and musicians to contracting the composers, to arranging the recording process,

and finally to marketing the product. The payments to singers, composers and musicians can be negotiated. The cost of producing an album ranges from fifteen to forty million rupiah (roughly US\$ 1,500 to 4,200). A large part of initial production costs is payments to the singer(s), composer and musicians contracted by the producer: the more professional and well-known they are, the higher the payment. Recently, competition among recording companies has intensified; each competes to sign contracts with popular singers and makes efforts to block them from signing contracts with other recording companies. They are enticed with higher remunerations and bonuses. This is most frequently practised by recording companies with strong capital backing, like Tanama Record and Sinar Padang Record. The new competitors, especially those with a smaller capital, respond by hunting for talented young amateur singers, who can be nurtured (*dibina*) and popularized and will sign long-term contracts with their producers.

The singer Andria Adhan or Ajo Andre has now released four albums, all produced by Sinar Padang Record. He estimates that the production cost of each of his albums was about Rp 40 million (roughly US\$ 4,200), and in accordance with the *jua putuih* contracts he signed with Sinar Padang Record, the production company is responsible for all costs. Andria has lost money on the deal, because his albums have sold very well, possibly because of a new style he introduced, alternating songs and humorous stories (more on this in Chapter 5), and Sinar Padang Record has reissued Andria's albums several times. Nevertheless, Andria has not stopped working with Sinar Padang Record because it offers him higher remuneration than other recording companies. He received Rp 20 million (roughly US\$ 2,000) from Sinar Padang Record for his fourth album, *Basiginyang 4*, in which he performs a duet with Santi Martin (pers. comm., 12-2-2006). This album was released in late 2005 in a first edition of five thousand copies in cassette format and ten thousand copies in VCD format. Andria is an example of a newcomer who has quickly gained great success: he has migrated to Jakarta, where he also stars in a *sinetron* (television soap).

Some singers, especially newcomers, regard the *jua putuih* system as disadvantageous to artists, since they do not receive royalties when their albums are reissued. For this reason they may seek alternative means of producing their albums. One such alternative is for the singers to self-finance the production of their own albums, by renting a recording studio, including its digital keyboard facility, and by renting the label of a well-known recording company. They pay royalties to the song composers when their songs are used by them. If they are successful, this arrangement can be more beneficial to the singer than an ordinary *jua putuih* contract. As more artists prefer to self-produce their own albums, the demand for contract recording studios has increased. The situation is constantly changing, especially after the West Sumatran recording industry entered the VCD era in the early 2000s, and because of rampant piracy, which means leading recording companies cannot always afford to pay high royalties to singers. More and more singers release their albums under new producer names, mostly established by themselves or financed by other people. So, some singers, or members of their families, have become producers as well. Some cassette/VCD retailers have entered the market as well, producing albums themselves.

The market segment of regional recording industry products is well defined: principally, it is the community speaking the language of that particular ethnic group. In a young nation-state like Indonesia, ethnicity is still a more considerable symbol of identity than nationalism, and is reflected in various sectors of everyday public life – socially, economically and politically. Though the global music industry continues to penetrate the national music industry of developing countries, including Indonesia, it has not been able to weaken Indonesia's regional recording industries. As long as Minangkabau remains a significant identity, *pop Minang* will retain its market segment. Viewed from the reverse side, as pointed out by Barendregt (2002), the dynamics and development of the West Sumatran recording industry have also been credited with reinventing the sense of Minangness. The producer Agus Taher (pers. comm., 4-8-2005) emphasizes that, in addition to being a good investment, the West Sumatran recording industry helps to promote a love of Minangkabau culture, and helps people hold onto a sense of togetherness as an ethnic group.

THE SONG COMPOSERS

Pop Minang songs recorded on commercial cassettes and VCDs are composed by local composers. They are different from Minangkabau storytelling called *kaba* which is anonymous in terms of creation (see Chapter 6). Like the producers and singers, all these composers of *pop Minang* songs are Minangkabau natives, though they come from different dialect areas of the Minangkabau language. Inevitably, due to the keen competition between producers, composers try to present individual characteristics. Older composers differ from those of the younger generation in their choice of words for their song lyrics. It seems that in forging new aesthetic and stylistic expressions, Minangkabau song composers have explored the wide range of possibilities available in their mother tongue. Some composers are musicians as well as singers, while others are solely composers, often contracted to a particular recording company, though nevertheless remaining independent and free to sign contracts with more than one recording company.

Syahrul Tarun Yusuf (Fig. 4.9), often called Satayu, is the best-known and most prolific *pop Minang* song composer. His compositions have become a benchmark for the latest generation of Minangkabau composers and artists. One contemporary popular singer, Andria Adhan, says that Satayu is his favourite composer (email, 29-1-2006). Satayu, a son of Datuak Lelo Marajo (father) and Nurani Gani (mother), was born in Balingka, Agam regency, on 12 March 1942. He was educated up till senior high school (*sekolah menengah atas*, SMA) in West Sumatra and then, like most Minangkabau men, temporarily migrated to the *rantau*. He has composed some 400 *pop Minang* songs (see his 50 top song compositions in Appendix 4). Muchsis Muchtar St. Bandaro Putih, the editor of Satayu's biography *Syahrul Tarun Yusuf: alam takambang jadi guru* (2008), mentions that the composer is not as popular as the songs he has composed; generally Minangkabau people are familiar with Satayu's songs, which are all included in the standard *pop Minang* repertoire, but not many people know that he is the composer of those songs.²³⁰ Satayu's career peaked during the 1960s and 1970s with

230 See 'Biografi Tarun Yusuf, Malam ini Diluncurkan', *Singgalang*, 7 June 2009.

dozens of compositions like ‘Kasih Tak Sampai’ (‘Unrequited love’), ‘Minang Maimbau’ (‘Minangkabau calling’), and ‘Ayah’ (‘Father’) that served to enhance the reputation of the Minangkabau pop singers Elly Kasim, Lily Sjarif and Tiar Ramon who made those songs famous.

Satayu’s compositions have been frequently reproduced up to the present day: his composition ‘Bugih Lamo’ (‘Old fashion’), for example, has been reproduced eleven times and won him an HDX award in 1996. Satayu is the leading composer of what is called standard *pop Minang*. It is through his compositions that the regional genre of *pop Minang* became known at the national level. ‘Bugih Lamo’ is also well known in Malaysia and Brunei. According to the Minangkabau cultural observer Edy Utama, it is evident from Satayu’s song lyrics that he has a sensitive appreciation of Minangkabau culture: his compositions gain power from his use of symbolism drawn from nature. His compositions can be said to reflect the collective consciousness of the Minangkabau people. It is not surprising that his songs make such a memorable impression in people’s hearts (Yurnaldi 2002).



Figure 4.9: Songwriter Syahrul Tarun Yusuf
(Source: Yurnaldi 2002)

Another leading composer of *pop Minang* is the late Yusaf Rahman (1933-2005; Fig. 4.10). With his wife Syofyani, Yusaf established Sanggar Tari dan Musik Syofyani (Syofyani Dance and Music Studio) in Padang in the 1970s, and was known as a leading composer of standard *pop Minang* songs and dances. His songs such as ‘Indak ka Barulang’ (‘Will not be repeated’), and ‘Usah Diratok’i’ (‘It should not be mourned’) – just to mention two examples – are very popular and became standard *pop Minang* songs. Likewise the dances created by him with his wife, including ‘Tari Piring’ (‘Plate dance’) and ‘Tari Saputangan’ (‘Handkerchief dance’). The songs and the dances strongly express the essence of Minangkabau culture.²³¹ Yusaf Rahman is also well known for pioneering the use of the diatonic music scale (*tangga nada*) for the traditional Minangkabau musical instrument *talempong* (a small kettle gong), which originally

231 See ‘Yusaf Rahman hidup kembali’, *Singgalang*, 2 April 2009.

used a pentatonic music scale and was only used to accompany traditional Minang music. Use of the diatonic music scale has enabled the instrument to be used to accompany newly created Minang music such as *pop Minang* (Sjarif 2007:113). During his lifetime, Yusaf Rahman and his wife frequently went abroad as West Sumatra's art ambassadors (*duta wisata Sumatra Barat*), among others to Malaysia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, and Greece (Basir 2007:273-5).



Figure 4.10: Songwriter Yusaf Rahman (Source: Basir 2007)

Folk genres too are commercially recorded in cassette and VCD formats, and thus some traditional performers and storytellers are also involved in the recording industry. Many traditional storytellers have signed contracts with producers to produce commercial recordings of Minangkabau verbal arts. The number of storytellers engaged by recording studios is far less than the number of regional pop singers. The commercial recordings of Minangkabau verbal arts and the structural and socio-cultural consequences thereof will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION

West Sumatran recording companies promote their products in the local press and on private radio stations. Local newspapers are published in Padang and Bukittinggi, the most prominent being *Singgalang*, *Padang Ekspres*, *Haluan*, and *Post Metro Padang*. Local journalists often report on new albums released by Minangkabau pop singers as a way of promoting West Sumatran recording companies' products.²³² Yessy Tri Putri, manager of Talao Record, says she promotes albums produced by her company in local newspapers as well as on the radio. Big companies like Tanama Record and Sinar Padang Record always promote their new products in a local daily such as *Singgalang*, *Padang Ekspres*, and *Haluan*. In 2006 a new album was usually advertised in local dailies for one or two weeks. The cost of advertising in a local

232 For example, 'Trio Ucok Simbara, Nedi Gampo dan Edi Morgen', *Padang Ekspres*, 17 November 2005; 'Fenny Launching Album Kedua', *Padang Ekspres*, 23 March 2006.

newspaper every day for one month amounts to Rp 1,500,000 (roughly US\$ 150), compared with Rp 500,000 (roughly US\$ 50) for an advertisement broadcast three times daily for one month on radio (pers. comm., 22-2-2006).

As can be seen in Figure 4.11, the ads of West Sumatran recording industry products in local print media are quite simple: the VCD cover is displayed, with a few additional words of promotion, usually: ‘Dapatkan di toko kaset terdekat di kota Anda’ (‘Get it at a nearby cassette store in your city’). These simple forms of ads are certainly related to the cost: the more space of a newspaper page is used, the greater the cost. As small-scale businesses, West Sumatran recording companies have no big budget for promotion. In 2011, the cost of advertisements was more expensive. The newspaper *Singgalang*, for example, charged Rp 400,000 (roughly US\$ 40) for a one-day publication (Khairul Jasmi [chief editor *Singgalang*], pers. comm., 10-8-2011). Since the cost of promotion is quite high, only established companies – Tanama Record, Sinar Padang Record, Pitunang Record, and Minang Record among them – frequently advertise their new products in the local press. New competitors rarely advertise in the local press. Instead, they tend to promote their products on the radio because it is cheaper than in newspapers.

West Sumatran recording companies tend to limit their expenditures on promotion. According to Indonesian official terminology, they are classed as small-scale businesses (*industri kecil*).²³³ Subject to government regulations, nationally and above all regionally at the



Figure 4.11: Advertisements for Minangkabau VCDs in the local press in West Sumatra (Source: *Haluan*, 18 and 19 January 2011)

233 This is a classification in Indonesia based on number of employees. A small-scale business employs 5-19 employees. Other categories are: *industri rumah tangga* (‘household business’) employing 1-4 employees, *industri menengah* (‘mid-scale business’) employing 20-99 employees, and *industri besar* (‘large-scale business’) employing 100 employees or more.

province and regency levels, West Sumatran recording companies with a small capital²³⁴ have to pay some taxes, which means they have to manage their expenses, including promotion costs. Promotion tends to rely heavily on traditional ethnic-based networks in *rantau* rather than modern ways of newspaper and radio advertising.²³⁵

Many producers use the content of their VCDs to promote their products. It is a smart way to advertise their products without having to spend extra money. For example, if we play VCDs of Minangkabau oral literature produced by Sinar Padang Record, we can see the following advertising phrases on the TV screen: 'Produced by Sinar Padang Record [which has a distributor outlet] in Pasar Raya Padang, Blok A, Floor 1, No. 1B Padang, phone (071) 23168, West Sumatra, [and a distributor outlet] in Jakarta, Glodok City, AKS 121, phone (021) 632546. Also look for Minangkabau songs [albums] produced by Sinar Padang Record.'²³⁶

Some big recording companies like Tanama Record, Sinar Padang Record, and Talao Record have wholesale outlets in Padang. These shops supply the company's cassettes and VCDs to retailers coming from regency and sub-district towns all over West Sumatra and neighbouring provinces. In Padang itself there are many cassette retailers and sidewalk cassette vendors (Fig. 4.12), and in the eight regency towns of West Sumatra, cassette shops and sidewalk cassette vendors are numerous. But in fact, Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs are also sold at weekly markets scattered over the sub-districts of West Sumatra. Leading recording companies' wholesale outlets also engage in retail sales in Padang and some regency towns. Other recording companies, mostly those operating on a smaller capital, have a different means of distributing their products which seems more aggressive: their agents deliver their products directly to retailers in many towns, in and outside West Sumatra. Retailers do not pay cash in advance for the products; they are called *barang titipan* (on consignment). Once the products are sold, the retailer has to put aside the money to repay the agent, who returns to the retailer periodically to collect the money while delivering new orders or new products. When selling on consignment, retailers profit from a commission.

Cassette is the medium that has brought regional music to the Minangkabau diaspora worldwide. Minangkabau migrants might forget their songs and customs when they move to cities outside West Sumatra, but cassettes serve the purpose of educating and reminding

234 According to some producers I interviewed, by investing some Rp 100 to 150 million (roughly US\$ 10,000 to \$ 10,500) one can establish a regional recording company.

235 To establish a regional recording company, the entrepreneur should obtain a license from the Department of Industry and Trade, called Surat Izin Usaha Perdagangan ('Business Trade Permit'). The government will issue such a license if the applicant has fulfilled certain requirements like producing a notarized document (*akta notaris*) issued by a local notary (*notaris*) and a Business Location Permit (Surat Izin Tempat Usaha [SITU]) issued by the municipality or regency government. Officials of the Department of Industry and Trade provincial or regency branches make spot checks in the field to make sure that applicants do not misuse the permit for other kinds of businesses. The license is always displayed on the cover of any cassettes, CDs or VCDs produced by a license entrepreneur by noting 'Izin Perindustrian no...' ('Industry license number...').

236 'Produksi Sinar Padang Record Pasar Raya Padang Blok A Lantai 1 No. 1B Padang Tlp (071) 23168 Sumbar / Jakarta Glodok City AKS 121 Jakarta Tlp (021) 632546 Dapatkan juga lagu-lagu Minang produksi Sinar Padang Record.' Quoted from Sinar Padang's *rabab Pariaman* VCD 'Raun Sabalik: Dendang Panjang' (Vol. 2, 2011) with performers Monen and Mayur.



Figure 4.12: A cassette shop and a sidewalk cassette vendor in Padang (photographs by Suryadi, 2005)

them, especially those born in *rantau*, of their regional musical culture. According to Alimar Ahmad, director of Tanama Record, sales increase during the days of celebration at the end of the fasting month (Idul Fitri or Lebaran). This is a time when many Minangkabau migrants come back to West Sumatra for a visit. Lebaran or Idul Fitri, which runs for one to two weeks, is a special holiday for Minangkabau migrants. As Muslims, their custom is to return to their home village in West Sumatra a few days before the fasting month ends to celebrate Lebaran in the village. Migrants who originate from the same village (*nagari*) may come back in a large group, a practice referred to as *pulang basamo* (literally ‘coming back home together’). Most then return to the *rantau* one or two weeks later. In 2003, for example, more than one million Minangkabau *perantau* journeyed home to celebrate Lebaran in West Sumatra.²³⁷ Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs – *pop Minang* as well as traditional genres – are one of the favourite items taken by Minangkabau migrants from their homeland to the *rantau* for their own consumption (Alimar Ahmad, pers. comm., 8-6-2005).

To distribute and sell their products outside West Sumatra, with Minangkabau migrants as the main target, certain West Sumatran recording companies have established branch outlets. For example, to distribute their products outside Sumatra, two leading recording companies, Tanama Record and Sinar Padang Record, have each opened their own outlet in Jakarta, situated at Jalan Gajah Mada No. 219D and Glodok Harco 2nd Floor, Bloc C, No. 353 respectively. Both shops are located in the Glodok shopping complex of Central Jakarta (Fig. 4.13). Glodok is part of Jakarta’s old town. In the colonial era it was Batavia’s Chinatown. Nowadays Glodok is known as one of Jakarta’s biggest centres for the electronics trade, and the majority of the traders there are of Chinese descent.

According to Ilfan, manager of Sinar Padang Record’s outlet, most of his retail customers are Minangkabau migrants living in Jakarta, while his wholesale customers are retailers mainly from various parts of Jakarta and other towns in Java. Java is important for marketing Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs because of the many Minangkabau migrants that can be found in the provincial and regency towns of the island. Ilfan also mentioned that some people belonging to non-Minangkabau ethnic groups like to buy Minangkabau cassettes. Among these, the most numerous are the Butonese from Southeast Sulawesi and Chinese Indonesians (pers. comm., 16-7-2005). Butonese bought recordings for their own consumption (see Chapter 9), but Chinese seemingly bought them solely for commercial use. From Ilfan I got the information that these Chinese buyers also brought recordings to Malaysia (see more on the Malaysian Chinese business of Minangkabau recording in Malaysia in Chapter 9). Of the more than seven million Minangkabau migrants Indonesia-wide, some three million live in Jakarta. By comparison, there are only 4.2 million people living in the West Sumatra homeland (*Kompas*, 18-11-2003). Most of the Minangkabau migrants in Jakarta are small and middle traders. This makes the capital of the Republic of Indonesia a large potential market for Minangkabau commercial cassettes.

237 See ‘Sejuta Lebih Perantau Minang di Jawa dan Bali “Pulang Basamo”’, *Kompas*, 18 November 2003.



Figure 4.13: Name boards of wholesale outlets for the products of Tanama Record and Sinar Padang Record situated in Glodok Shopping Complex in Jakarta (photographs by Suryadi, 2005)

Some West Sumatran recording companies cooperate with national companies in the distribution and marketing of their products. For example, Talao Record of Padang partners with the national firm Anastra Record located in Jakarta. Talao Record serves as an agency for distributing Anastra's products in Sumatra, while Anastra Record is licensed to distribute Talao's products in Jakarta and surroundings. The cooperation is only for marketing, not for production.

Minangkabau cassettes, though in small numbers, are offered in many cassette shops in metropolitan towns like Jakarta, Bandung, and Surabaya. They are displayed along with cassettes of national and international genres. A similar situation can be found in many towns in the provinces of Sumatra where Minangkabau migrants dwell. Indonesia's third largest city, Medan, capital of North Sumatra province and homeland of the Batak ethnic group, is one clear example. It has been a multi-ethnic city since its beginnings as a plantation centre built by the Dutch in the 1920s. Since the 1930s it has received large numbers of Minangkabau migrants (as reflected in Hamka's *Merantau ke Deli*, 1939). Nowadays one can easily find Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs in various parts of Medan, especially the Sukaramai district, which is inhabited largely by Minangkabau migrants. In Palembang, the capital of South Sumatra province, the main cassette shop offering Minangkabau cassettes is Toko Gumarang, located at Pasar 16 and at Pasar Burung. Similarly, in other neighbouring provincial and regency towns like Pekanbaru, Bangkinang, Dumai, Jambi, Lubuk Linggau, and Kerinci, Minangkabau cassettes are readily available in shops and from sidewalk vendors.

Minangkabau people in *rantau* can often buy Minangkabau cassettes in 'Padang restaurants' (*restoran Padang* or *rumah makan Padang*, the term is usually used by other ethnic groups in Indonesia to denote a restaurant specializing in Minangkabau cuisine). These are well known all over Indonesia and can be found across the country, a sign of the widespread migration of Minangkabau outside their homeland. In Yogyakarta, for example, several Minangkabau restaurants sell Minangkabau commercial cassettes. There are many other such restaurants in other towns like Medan, Pekanbaru, Palembang, Bandar Lampung, Bandung, and Surabaya, which, besides selling Minangkabau meals, also sell Minangkabau cassettes

and sometimes also books, magazines and newspapers from Padang. Thus, Minangkabau cultural institutions in *rantau* like the Padang restaurants play a role in facilitating the dissemination of Minangkabau cassettes to Minangkabau migrants living outside their homeland. The distribution and marketing of Minangkabau cassettes even reaches the neighbouring country of Malaysia, where many Minangkabau migrants dwell. The reception of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs by Minangkabau *perantau* outside West Sumatra, including in Malaysia, will be discussed further in Chapter 9.

SURVIVING THE SIEGE OF PIRACY

Commercial recordings of regional music, including Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs, are not immune from piracy. And today many *pop Minang* songs are available on YouTube. Pirated cassettes and VCDs of Minangkabau music have been distributed not only in West Sumatra, but also in *rantau*, even in neighbouring Malaysia. Reaching a level among the highest in the world – 85-95% of music sales in the country are estimated to be pirated – the culture of piracy in Indonesia is as bad as the culture of corruption. The huge Indonesian market remains dominated by retail piracy of all copyrighted materials, whether motion pictures, business software, entertainment software, records and music, or books. The International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA) report of 2005 continued to place Indonesia on its priority watch list. The music market in Indonesia is dominated almost completely by pirated CDs, VCDs, and DVDs, and regional markets are flooded with pirated regional VCDs.

The association of regional recording industries estimates that seven of every eight sound recordings on the market are pirated. An increasing number of pirated VCDs on the Indonesian market are produced domestically. Prices for pirated products continue to be unbelievably low; for example, in 2005 at the wholesale market at Harco Glodok, Jakarta, a pirated VCD could be had for Rp 2,000 (roughly US\$ 0.20) without the box (just in a plastic case), and Rp 3,000 (roughly US\$ 0.30) with the box. These exceptionally low prices are part of a ‘price war’ that has erupted among retailers of pirated VCDs. This of course has a negative effect on the legitimate VCD market. Nationally, Tubagus Sadikin Zuchra, head of PAPPRI (Persatuan Artis Penyanyi, Pencipta Lagu dan Penata Musik Rekaman Indonesia, ‘Indonesian Association of Song Singers, Song Composers and Arrangers of Recorded Music’), estimates that the state suffers a financial loss of tax revenue amounting to Rp 11 to 15 trillion per year due to the pirating of music recordings.²³⁸

Pirated Minangkabau VCDs can be found easily among the pirated music recordings offered in Jakarta’s worst hot spots for retail piracy, Mangga Dua, Ratu Plaza, and Harco Glodok Market. In my investigation at Harco Glodok Market in August 2005, I found cassette retailers openly displaying many pirated Minangkabau VCDs for Rp 3,000 each, in a simple plastic case. Characteristics of pirated VCDs: they are in a simple plastic case and decorated with an imitated cover sometimes copied from the original cover, a practice that lowers the price; the names of the singers are often not written on the cover, and of course there is no

238 See ‘Pembajakan Kaset Rugikan Negara Rp.11 Trilyun’, *Kompas*, 30 October 2002.

producer's name, VAT sticker, or other official sticker on the cover. The quality of the pirated VCD covers is often poor. Pirated cassettes can be recognized promptly: the distance between the edge of the copied cover and the edge of its plastic case is quite wide. Figure 4.14 shows the white blank space to the right of a photocopied VCD cover. Besides that, the photocopied cover of a pirated VCD often does not correspond with its content. Many covers show an image of female singers wearing sexy fashions, and sometimes a photograph of Western girls in bikini. This is aimed to attract customers.

As happens with national cassettes and VCDs, it is the best-selling pop Minang albums that pirates tend to copy illegally. Some albums are pirated compilations of top hit songs. Wallach (2008:88) states that 'one advantage the pirated compilations had over legitimate hits collections was that they could combine songs released by different recording companies, since they were not bound by copyright restrictions. Thus, pirated hits compilations were not only cheaper but also more likely to contain every hit song popular at a particular time.'

Though to a certain extent pirating has directly and indirectly helped to popularize Minangkabau music, even among other ethnic groups, West Sumatran recording companies have cooperated with relevant institutions to try to eradicate piracy. Nevertheless, raids under the copyright law rarely lead to effective prosecutions, and almost never result in convictions of pirates or imposition of deterrent sentences; the court system remains largely ineffective. Since 2005 the Indonesian police have increased raids against pirate retail outlets, street vendors, distributors, and production facilities. The raids have been extended to provincial and regency towns, including Padang and other West Sumatran towns. A variety of campaigns have been launched against piracy. For example, Minangkabau music albums may have a song reminding the audience not to buy pirated cassettes or VCDs. The lyrics of such songs mention that by purchasing an original copy of the album, and not a pirated copy, the audience will save (local) artists' careers from possible detriment. This is actually a creative campaign by local singers to combat piracy. Since piracy became rampant in Indonesia, one more word – strangely, an English word – has been added to cassette and VCD covers: 'Original'. With this word consumers are reminded not to buy a pirated copy. Other producers include a warning on the cover such as '*Pembajakan adalah kejahatan. Teliti sebelum membeli!!!! Produk asli selalu dilengkapi dengan stiker PPN dari Dirjen Pajak yang ditempel*' ('Piracy is a crime. Be careful before buying!!!! Original products are always complete with a VAT sticker issued by the Directorate General of Tax which is stuck [to the VCD cover]').

According to Nofi Sastera, head of the West Sumatra branch of PAPPRI, West Sumatra is a potential market for pirated records and music, and the institution he leads has cooperated with ASIRINDO and the police to intensify raids against the trade in pirated records in this province. Nofi states that Minangkabau artists, particularly members of the association he leads, have suffered serious financial losses due to piracy.²³⁹ There is, however, no indication yet that pirate companies have been set up in West Sumatra itself; pirated Minangkabau music albums seem to originate from outside West Sumatra. According to Agus Taher, the

239 See 'Bongkar Mafia Pembajakan', *Padang Ekspres*, 8 April 2006.



Figure 4.14: Front cover of two pirated Minangkabau VCDs, identifiable as pirated especially by the white space to the right of the cover

suspicion is that the production facilities and main distributors of pirated Minangkabau VCDs are situated in Jambi and Jakarta (pers. comm., 14-7-2005).

Piracy is regarded as a cancer in the capitalistic world economic system. Experts like Chesterman and Lipman (1988) and Coombe (1998) have summed up piracy's negative effects as criminality and erosion of property rights, and its function as a pathology of information processing, parasitically reducing legal media flows. World-wide, no government has been wholly successful in eradicating piracy, because piracy develops its own structures of reproduction and distribution, both external and internal to the state economy. In the case of Indonesia, piracy is especially difficult to combat because members of the state bureaucracy and the police are also involved, for example by receiving bribes from the pirates.

Though the Indonesian government enacted its own copyright law in 1982, which was revised in 1997, to protect the copyright on music, lyrics, performances, broadcasts and other creative expressions (Tunggal and Tunggal 1997), its implementation seems not to have been effective at the national level, and even less so regionally. In practice, Indonesian regional song composers' compositions are easily pirated, nationally and internationally, and there is no adequate legal protection for them. The production and trading of Minangkabau music recordings in Malaysia is an example of the international extension of the piracy of Minangkabau cassettes: dozens of Malaysian recording companies have reproduced Minangkabau music VCDs illegally. They did not seek permission from or notify the producers of these albums in West Sumatra and never pay royalties on the albums they have pirated. The Malaysian government legalizes distribution and trading of these pirated Minangkabau music VCDs throughout the country by permitting a legal distribution sticker to be placed on every copy of these albums. In the words of Andria Adhan, one of the Minangkabau singers whose albums have been pirated in Malaysia, this is an example of the legalization of music piracy by the state. He says Indonesia's law on property rights is unable to restrain this action (pers. comm., 10-12-2005). Likewise, international law on property rights seems mostly concerned with the violation of Western property rights by developing countries. International organizations

reporting on property rights are similarly focused on the violation of Western property rights internationally. The report on piracy in Indonesia released by the International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA), for example, quantifies the violation of American property rights in the country, while not touching at all on violation of Indonesian property rights by other countries. United States authorities consider Indonesia a net importer of intellectual property. Indonesia has been accused of being the world's number one exporter of pirated audio and video recordings (Uphoff 1991:27).

Although Indonesia has two legal instructions dealing with intellectual property, the 2002 copyright law and the Intellectual Property Protection and Use of Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions,²⁴⁰ they have not been able to protect and defend the rights of traditional performers across the country. Indonesia also has national organizations interested in property rights like YKCI (Yayasan Karya Cipta Indonesia, 'Indonesian Foundation of Creative Works'). But YKCI tends to focus only on national-level song composers and artists rather than regional ones. Regional music practitioners often express their complaint in the media that the YKCI does not concern itself with the fate of regional music practitioners. The YKCI, founded by artists, art critics, and government officials in 1990, is concerned with pop music, and also concentrates on the performing rights of artists other than musicians, like actors and dancers. The YKCI is a non-profit organization, but used thirty contributions it received to cover administration costs (Jurriëns 2004:73).

Though the YKCI ideally covers both national and regional arts workers, as the use of the word 'Indonesia' in its title would suggest, in fact it does not help regional composers and artists; rather it works for the interests of composers and artists in the capital Jakarta and a few other major towns in Java. YKCI does no work in other islands, which are more difficult to access, and Minangkabau song composers complain that it is difficult for them to become YKCI members.²⁴¹ Up to the present, YKCI still has no branch in West Sumatra. As an alternative, West Sumatran recording industry practitioners fend for themselves in combating piracy.

To ensure the survival of the West Sumatran recording industry, producers under ASIRINDO have actively organized campaigns and actions to combat piracy. They have cooperated with police and other organizations to conduct *razia anti bajak* ('anti-piracy raids'). In November 2010 H. Musfar St. Pamuncak, acting head of ASIRIONDO, released a circular letter (*surat edaran*) to all cassette and VCD shops and retailers in which he appealed to them not to sell pirated Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs. The circular letter also states that as of 1 November 2000 the price of VCD-ekonomi was raised, becoming Rp 12,000 (roughly US\$ 1.30), due to increasing production costs.

To a certain extent, the circular letter suggests how practitioners of the local recording industry view piracy. For ASIRINDO the recordings that most need to be protected from pirates

240 See Aragon and Leach 2008 for an extensive analysis of these documents.

241 See 'Seniman daerah pencipta lagu-lagu Minang mengeluhkan sulitnya menjadi anggota Yayasan Karya Cipta Indonesia [YKCI]', *Kompas*, 7 March 2000.

are the KI (Karya Indonesia, 'Indonesian creations'), meaning recordings of Minangkabau and other regions in Indonesia, as well as national recordings. Regional and national products should have priority in being protected. Pirated cassettes and VCDs of foreign works seem to be excluded from ASIRINDO's concern.

CONCLUSION

Emerging in the early 1970s, following the political and economic recovery of Sumatra from the PRRI civil war in the previous decade, the West Sumatran recording industry continued to show significant development into the 2000s, supported by three generations of singers, musicians, and song composers, while producers increased in number. Early contenders among the producers have survived for four decades, challenged by many new competitors appearing since the 1980s. These commercial cassette and VCD producers are no longer concentrated in the capital of West Sumatra, Padang, but have spread to district towns. Likewise, the products of the West Sumatran recording industry have been marketed not only in the homeland but also in *rantau*.

Closely linked to Minangkabau ethnicity, the West Sumatran recording industry is mostly in the hands of Minangkabau practitioners. Among the singers, however, surrounding ethnicities are represented as well, indicating that the West Sumatran recording industry has become a hub that attracts other ethnic groups. Similarly, pop music albums of some neighbouring ethnic groups have been produced by West Sumatran recording companies.

West Sumatran recording companies are categorized as small-scale businesses (*industri kecil*) and are more strongly influenced by local factors than by national or global ones. The Minangkabau ethnic identity is not only translated into products that include commercial recordings of *pop Minang*, Minangkabau verbal arts, and media-bound Minangkabau genres, but also used in the distributing and marketing of these products in the homeland (West Sumatra) as well as in *rantau*. Producers play the dominant role in the industry: they control the singers, the musicians, and the song composers, as reflected in the *jua putuih* ('outright sale') contract system by which singers are required to transfer full rights to the producer to reproduce their albums without any obligation to pay additional royalties.

Like other regional recording industries, the West Sumatran recording industry has a clearly defined group of consumers – those of Minangkabau ethnicity – even though its products may also be popular with people from other ethnic groups. Due to their well-defined ethnic base of consumers and because they are more independent in terms of capital, West Sumatran recording companies are more autonomous than their national counterparts. This has enabled them to show a stronger resilience in the face of economic fluctuations and to survive in spite of the invasion of pirated cassettes and VCDs.

In the next chapter I will discuss the main product of the West Sumatran recording industry: *pop Minang*. How and when did *pop Minang* emerge? How has it developed since the 1970s and what fundamental aspects have changed? How do we interpret the physical

and non-physical aspects of this major product of the West Sumatran recording industry to understand the cultural dynamics of Minangkabau ethnicity during the last decades of the twentieth and the early decades of the twenty-first century? These considerations will be examined in depth in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

POP MINANG: ITS FEATURES AND SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

This chapter looks at the cultural position, functions, and meanings of *pop Minang*, the foremost product of the West Sumatran recording industry, in the context of Minangkabau music and ethnicity.²⁴² I try to comprehend the characteristics of *pop Minang* by looking at three aspects: its linguistic and aesthetic elements, the history of its emergence, and the surrounding discourses. I seek to demonstrate what the aesthetic characteristics of *pop Minang* are, and how these characteristics have transformed due to social changes in Minangkabau society. From the historical review we want to learn when the genre emerged, why and how? While by analysing the surrounding discourses the aim is to comprehend what cultural function *pop Minang* has and what its meaning is for the Minangkabau ethnic community. I argue that *pop Minang*, like pop culture in general, is an arena of cultural struggle, ‘the arena of consent and resistance’, to borrow the words of Stuart Hall (1981:239), through which the contestation between modernity and authenticity continually draws attention to ethnic identity. Most publicly accessible and widely disseminated, *pop Minang* cassettes and VCDs increase agency by presenting powerful Minangkabau encodings of the problematic and complex world people face today.

Pop Minang has been scrutinized by Bart Barendregt in his article ‘The Sound of “Longing for Home”: Redefining a Sense of Community through Minang Popular Music’ (2002) in which he describes the development of *pop Minang* and the sense of Minangness expressed in its aesthetic elements. He also discusses the extensive mediation of *pop Minang* from locally embedded music to mass-mediated regional music and its effects on the Minangkabau community as a whole, both in the homeland and in *rantau*. But it is not my intention, nor is it the aim of this chapter, to repeat Barendregt’s article. Rather this chapter goes beyond the points he discusses, shedding new light on some relatively unexplored areas. I follow the aesthetic development of *pop Minang* since the 1950s up to 2006 and the Minangkabau community’s responses, by summing up public comments, discussions and debates that appeared in local media and other lively public discussions. Beyond examining the pop music phenomenon in a regional context, I also want to look at what are the influences that have shaped *pop Minang*. I will also discuss *pop Minang* cassette and VCD covers, which did not get much attention from Barendregt, and I provide cultural interpretations for them.

POP MINANG: A CULTURAL DEFINITION

In the field of Indonesian music, *pop Minang* is categorized as *pop daerah* (‘regional pop’), while *pop daerah* in turn is classified as a type of regional music (*musik daerah*), ‘a catch-all category

242 This chapter is partly based on Suryadi 2003.

that includes every style of music sung in regional languages, from the most westernized pop to the most stable indigenous performance tradition' (Wallach 2008:34). *Pop daerah* is 'the label given to music in regional language or dialect that contains non-traditional elements' (Wallach 2008:21). *Pop Minang* is a type of Indonesian *pop daerah* that refers to non-traditional regional music associated with Minangkabau-speaking communities. It includes some genres or subgenres which are innovative and which selectively adopt elements of global music. In other words, *pop Minang* is a term that refers to a mixture of traditional Minangkabau music or verbal arts and national or foreign musical influences, with song lyrics in the Minangkabau language written by local songwriters and sung primarily by local vocalists. Language is the main differentiating factor here: *pop Minang* lyrics are by definition in the Minangkabau language, though its music and melodies might adopt elements of foreign music.

The term *pop Minang* itself indicates that there is something new and modern in its features, whereas this genre of music is categorized as a *budaya daerah* repertoire, which is associated with conventionality or something that is traditional. So, by helping to build agency, *pop Minang* supports cultural progress and modernity in a local context without a loss of local colour. But its aesthetic aspects and musical syntax, including rhythm, melody, tempo, and formal structure, differ from traditional Minangkabau music genres. The composers of *pop Minang* songs are certainly known, whereas the composers of traditional genres are anonymous. Each occupy different language domains: the traditional Minangkabau verbal arts genres (Chapter 6) tend to use local Minangkabau dialects, while Minangkabau popular genres tend to use the dialect that is regarded as the most common one, called by some linguists Bahasa Minangkabau Umum (General Minangkabau). It is used for communication among speakers across dialects in major Minangkabau towns like Padang and Bukittinggi (Arifin 1980; Nadra 2003). Whereas devout Muslims favour genres like *qasidah* or *gambus*, which have long been known in Minangkabau because its people are adherents of Islam, such genres have never been considered part of *pop Minang*. Since its beginnings, one hallmark of *pop Minang* is its novelty, as I will describe in the following section.

POP MINANG: BORN IN RANTAU, GROWING IN THE HOMETOWN

Pop Minang originated in *rantau*, especially Jakarta, by Minangkabau migrants. It was associated with the Orkes Gumarang, which was founded in 1953 by some young Minangkabau *perantau* in Jakarta. They were Alidir, Anwar Anief, Dhira Suhud, Joeswar Khairudin, Taufik, Syaiful Nawas, and Awaluddin Djamin (the latter later became head of the Indonesian Police, 1978–1982). Orkes Gumarang became famous when it was led by Asbon Madjid (Fig. 5.1).²⁴³ Born in Sibolga on 8 May 1926 to a Minangkabau migrant couple, Asbon was familiar with musical instruments before he was twelve years old. He was active in 'Smiling Hawaiian' music in Padang in the 1940s, which made tours to several towns in North Sumatra, and he played in the army music corps in West Sumatra during the Japanese occupation (1942–1945) before migrating to Jakarta and joining the Gumarang band (Sardono et al. 1983:160). Through

243 Asbon led Orkes Gumarang starting in May 1955. Before that it was led by Anwar Anief and by Alidir (Madjid 1997:xviii). Gumarang's performers are Nurseha, Syaiful Nawas, Dhira Suhud, Anas Yusuf and his wife Ingrid Michel from Germany, Asbon Madjid (as head), and guest star Elly Kasim (Madjid 1997:xix).

Gumarang, Asbon Madjid pioneered in synthesizing the elements of Latin American music with Minangkabau music. Thus, the musical colour and rhythm were a synthesis of traditional Sumatran music like Minangkabau *gamad* and Malay *joged* beats and Latin America's beguine, rumba, mambo, and cha-cha-cha (Barendregt 2002:424).

Gumarang's music rhythm was strongly influenced by the beat of Latin American songs like 'Melody d'Amour', 'Besame Mucho', 'Cachito', 'Maria Elena', and 'Quizas, Quizas, Quizas'. Performing such synthesized music in Minangkabau-language *lagu Melayu* (songs using Minangkabau language but cheerful Malay melodies), Gumarang specially emphasized the percussive element through the use of maracas, piano, guitar, bass *betot* (stand-up bass), and bongo drums along with Minangkabau traditional musical instruments like idiophones *talempong*, aerophones *saluang* and *bansi*, chordophones *rabab*, and membranophones *gandang*. The *rantau* was definitely a good place for experimenting with ethnic music, as was done by Gumarang performers and those of other music groups formed by Minangkabau migrants. The *rantau*, which is associated with modernity, offers cultural, aesthetic, and ideological aspects that are unavailable in traditional customs in the homeland. The *rantau*, where people from different ethnic groups and races dwell, was a suitable place for launching innovations in ethnic music brought from the homeland (West Sumatra).

By 1956 Orkes Gumarang's songs began to be recorded on gramophone disc by National Recording Company Lokananta, followed by private companies like Remaco Record, Mesra Record, Suara Mas Record, Dimita Record, Indah Record, Perindu Record, and Irama Record (Madjid 1997:xvii), making this band nationally famous. Gumarang's album *Kampung Nan Djaauh di Mato* ('My distant village'), produced by Irama Record, became a hit and further popularized the name of the band. Other Gumarang songs then became hits and rocked the country, among others 'Urang Talu', 'Laruik Sanjo', and 'Upiak lah Gadang'. Gumarang's beautiful female singer Nurseha was a strong symbol of this band (Fig. 5.1). In 1958 her name shot to the top after the song 'Ayam den Lapeh' sung by her and released by Irama Record became a hit. 'Along with Gumarang, her voice dominated the musical scene, boosting the popularity of Minang songs to the top, while also shaping the appreciation of regional music throughout the country' (Sardono et al. 1983:161). Gumarang, whose name is taken from a magic horse in the Minangkabau oral story (*kaba*) *Cindua Mato* (see Toorn 1886; Abdullah 1970), is credited with introducing Minangkabau songs throughout Indonesia and neighbouring Malaysia. The personnel of this orchestra were sent abroad by the Indonesian government to participate in Indonesian cultural events, including the New York World's Fair in 1964 and the EXPO Fair in Osaka, Japan, in 1970 (Madjid 1997:xix-xx). Orkes Gumarang is still remembered with fondness by the older generation of Minangkabau. Its national achievements and popularity are proudly remembered by Minangkabau people of all ages.

Besides Gumarang, there were four other *rantau*-based bands that contributed to the hybridization of Minangkabau music in the 1950s and 1960s, namely Orkes Sjaiful Bahri (founded 1951) led by Sjaiful Bahri, Orkes Taruna Ria (founded 1959) led by Oslan Husein, Orkes Zaenal Combo led by Zaenal Arifin, and Orkes Kumbang Tjari founded in 1961 by Nuskan Sjarif. These music groups retain their 'Andalas style' (*tjorak Andalas*), meaning



Figure 5.1: Singer Asbon Madjid and Nurseha (Sources: Sardono et al. 1983; Madjid 1997)

the Minangkabau musical characteristics.²⁴⁴ Decades later, *pop Minang* songs were played predominantly in 4/4 metre, often with a typical counterbeat, while their melodies were largely adapted from a vast repertoire of traditional songs with free improvisations and extra ornamentation (*bungo*). These music groups became famous not only among Minangkabau people but also nationally. Gumarang was the prominent one among them. It became the pride of Minangkabau communities, both in *rantau* and in the homeland.

In fact, there had been other music groups started by Minangkabau *perantau* prior to the generation of the legendary Gumarang. For example, in the 1930s and 1940s ‘Oostersche uitzendingen’ (‘Oriental broadcast’) programs of NIROM for West Java headquartered in Bandung broadcast the performances of a Minangkabau Orkes called Penghiboer Hati, led by St. Perang Boestami. The singers in this musical group included M. Siti Soelastri alias Siti (Ni) Soeltje (daughter of M. Soemarta Atmadja from Bantam/Banten), Oetika, and Meni.²⁴⁵ Penghiboer Hati was considered pioneering modern Minangkabau songs.²⁴⁶ By 1942, following the Japanese occupation of Java, the Indonesian-language Radio Bandung had programs of Minangkabau music sung by another Minangkabau band called Sri Minang led by St. Sjariff.²⁴⁷ Another Minangkabau music group whose songs were broadcast by this radio station was Orkes Minang Saijo led by Rozen Bahar. There was yet another Minang music band, called Sinar Sumatra (Thio 1939a). In its programs the radio station used the terms *lagu-lagu Minang modern* (‘modern Minangkabau songs’) and *lagu-lagu Minang aseli* (‘traditional Minangkabau songs’).²⁴⁸ No further information is available on how the

244 ‘Tjorak Andalas’ yang disusun ‘selalu “ber-dendang2” membawa pada kita kenangan pada suasana tari pajuang dan tari piring atau kaparinjo. Lagu2 gubahan dan musik susunannja dikenal sebagai modernisasi musik Minangkabau’ (‘Orkes Sjaiful Bahri’, *Garuda*, No. 40, 7 January 1951, p. 12). Andalas is another name for the island of Sumatra.

245 *De NIROM-Bode*, 1 April 1939; *Tjahaja*, 13 January 1943.

246 ‘Orkes Gumarang yang dikenang’, *Kinantan*, Edisi 04, Juli 1995: 12-13.

247 Information found in the vernacular press shows that during the Japanese occupation Minangkabau songs were broadcast by radio stations in major Javanese cities like Bandung, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Surabaya. See for example ‘Siaran radio’ in *Pembangoen* (Jakarta) 24 September 1943, p. 4.; *Sinar Matahari* (Yogyakarta), 11 October 1943, p. 2; *Poestaka Radio* (Surabaya), 1 March 1944, p. 24.

248 Information in this paragraph is drawn from the Bandung daily *Tjahaja*, especially August and September 1942 editions, in the column ‘Programm Siaran Radio Indonesia’. Yampolsky (2014:65) mentions in 1938, VORO

songs were broadcast, but apparently the bands performed live in studio and were directly broadcast. It was common at that time that radio stations broadcast live as well as recorded music (Yampolsky 2014:49). Among the NIROM and PHOHI (Philips Omroep Holland-Indië 'Philips Broadcasting in the Dutch Indies') programs at that time was what was called 'muziek gramofoon' or 'Lagoe gramofoon'.²⁴⁹ Minangkabau songs were broadcast by Radio Bandung because there was a large audience of Minangkabau migrants living in Bandung. Since the early 1900s Batavia (Jakarta) and Bandung have been the favourite destinations of Minangkabau migrants moving to Java.²⁵⁰ I could find no evidence on where the Minangkabau music groups Orkes Minangkabau and Orkes Minang Saijo came from, but I believe they, like the Jakarta-based Gumarang, Taruna Ria, and Kumbang Tjari, were music groups established by Minangkabau migrants in Java. Similar music groups were established by Minangkabau migrants in Medan (Yampolsky 1987), the most developed city in Sumatra where pop culture had grown significantly since the 1930s. Minangkabau migrants in Jakarta and other *rantau* locations actively performed and promoted Minangkabau music at various events.²⁵¹ This shows the important role played by Minangkabau migrants in *rantau* in the first half of the twentieth century in modernizing Minangkabau music that, facilitated by gramophone disc technology, planted the seed of *pop Minang*.

In the mid 1970s, during the early years of cassette consumption in Indonesia, *pop Minang* began to grow in its own homeland. It developed significantly during the following decades, facilitated by the West Sumatran recording industry, which initially arose in West Sumatra following the socio-political and economic recovery of the region after the bloody PRRI civil war. During the 1980s, *pop Minang* development vastly accelerated, which was crucial for the expansion of Minangkabau pop music in the following decades. Not only did the numbers of musicians, singers, and producers increase explosively, but the genre diversified and its musical aesthetics were enriched. As a consequence, the quantity of *pop Minang* songs increased, which in turn encouraged the emergence of new styles in terms of musical syntax. It can be concluded that the West Sumatran music industry did not just respond passively to an emerging popular demand for a new genre, but actively participated in stimulating this demand in order to exploit the potential of the new medium and the new genre. So the popularization of Minangkabau music had consequences both aesthetic and sociological.

The above historical review suggests that the origin of *pop Minang* was the innovation of Minangkabau music by Minangkabau *perantau* living outside the homeland, which led to the music becoming popular publicly thanks to gramophone disc technology facilitated by earlier

(Vereeniging voor Oostersche Omroep, 'Association for Eastern Broadcasting') in Batavia also broadcast '*lagoe-lagoe Minangkabau aseli*' ('old-style Minangkabau music') performed by the perkoempoelan A.S.A. under the direction of Tamimi gelar Soetan Roemah Tinggi, which was intended to the Minangkabau migrants in Batavia.

249 See 'Siaran radio' column in *Sinar Sumatra*, 2 Juli 1935; *De NIROM-Bode*, 1 April 1939; 'Penjajaran radio' column in *Pemandangan*, 14 May 1937 and subsequent dates.

250 In 1942 there were some 100 Sumatran youth (*pemuda Sumatra*) living in Bandung (Tjahaja, 9 September 1942); among them, it is believed, were Minangkabau.

251 See for example the activity of a group named Pantjarian Kesenian Minangkabau in Jakarta in 1943. To celebrate Ied (Lebaran) at the end of 1943, the group performed Minangkabau art (*kesenian Minangkabau*) in an orphanage house in the Kramat district of Jakarta (see *Pembangoen*, 12 October 1943, p. 3).

national recording companies as described in Chapter 3. After germinating in Jakarta, this music was brought to its homeland in West Sumatra in the 1970s, where the genre acquired its label *pop Minang*. Its existence continued to be supported by the successors of the gramophone disc.

POP MINANG AS AN ASSORTMENT OF GENRES AND SUBGENRES

As a broadly defined genre of popular music with lyrics in the Minangkabau language, *pop Minang* is not at all homogeneous in terms of aesthetics. Rather, it contains several genres and subgenres. Among the different genres of *pop Minang* are *gamad*²⁵² and *kim*. *Gamad* is a genre unique to Padang that has adopted many elements of overseas music. It was a product of the urban culture that emerged in Padang in the late 1800s.²⁵³ In its hybrid character it is similar to the national music called *keroncong*. Like *keroncong*, *gamad* was reputedly brought to the west coast of Sumatra by the Portuguese. Accompanied predominantly by Western musical instruments such as saxophone, guitar, violin, accordion, and *ketipung* (a small drum adopted from India), *gamad* also incorporates elements drawn from the Indian (*Keling*), Niasan, and Minangkabau communities in the port of Padang. The Niasans contributed to the genre a special dance brought from their home island (Nias), namely *balanse madam*, often performed with *gamad* music. It can be said that the genre is a historical footprint of urban culture generated in the late nineteenth century by the multi-ethnic society that existed in Padang, the most important seaport on the west coast of Sumatra.

A favourite among the older generations, *gamad* always has a duet between a male and a female singer, who follow Islamic requirements by avoiding physically touching each other. Its song lyrics are mostly composed in allegoric and metaphoric *pantun* verses, and tend to be romantic and nostalgic in character. Some songs are melancholy, while other songs are



Figure 5.2: Cover of a *gamad* VCD

252 Minangkabau people pronounce it *gamaik*.

253 See 'Gamaik, Musik akulturasi Barat dan Minang', *Kompas* (24 January 2001); *Anatona* 2003.

cheerful. As an example, the following transcription of a *gamad* song represents the sad feelings of a girl who is left behind by her sweetheart who found another girl in *rantau*. The song is ‘Rosmani’ (a girl’s name) sung by Rosnida YS on her VCD album *Aneka Gamad Millenium 2* (Sinar Padang Record, 2005).

<i>Ujuang Tanah aianyo dareh, Daulunyo tapian mandi, Maso di kampuang janji diikek, Manga di rantau kasiah bajadi? (2x)</i>	Ujung Tanah has a river with huge water, It was once a bathing place, When we were still in the village we pledged allegiance, But why did you fall in love again in <i>rantau</i> ?
<i>Rami urang pai ka pakan, Pulang baliak di hari sanjo, Jikoknyo tau Uda ko anggan, Eloklah denai mailak sajo. (2x)</i>	Many people go to market, Back home at sunset, If you dislike me now, dear, I would be better off avoiding you.
<i>Jodoh bana nan indak ado, Bakeh cinto kito baduo, Di hati lai apo ka dayo, Marano badan kasudahannyo. (2x)</i>	It is not our destiny to be paired with each other, For uniting our love, I love you deep in my heart but I am powerless, I am suffering at the end.
<i>Paik pariyo alah diraso, Indak sapaik raso ampadu, Sakik bacinto alah dicubo, Sakik ndak ado tampek mangadu. (2x)</i>	I have tasted how bitter momordica is, yet less bitter than bile, I have felt how painful a broken heart is, A pain I can share with no one.

Gamad VCD covers and clips always show the singers wearing traditional fashions (Fig. 5.2). The performance of *gamad* tends to be presented in duet with a romantic shade: the male and female singers sing with slow dances and flirt with each other (sometimes waving a handkerchief in their hands as a symbol of flirting). Some recent *gamad* VCDs show clips presenting singers and dancers with a background of landscapes of Minangkabau nature like beaches and parks around Padang. The most famous *gamad* songs are ‘Kaparinyo’, ‘Sarunai Aceh’, and ‘Perak-Perak’. The *gamad* singers – the famous ones among them are Yan Juneid, Rustam Raschani (who is blind; Fig. 5.2), and Rosnida YS – are not accustomed to sing other genres of pop Minang.

Kim is a combination of game and song. Therefore the genre is called *main kim* (‘playing kim’; Fig. 5.3). Introduced first in coastal Padang and Pariaman, *kim* proceeded to become famous throughout Minangkabau, even in *rantau*. When Minangkabau *perantau* hold parties in *rantau*, *kim* is a favourite type of music to enliven such parties. Usually performed in the evening, *kim* is also performed at weddings and various other festivities. The genre has a faster rhythm and cheerful character, but it does not require dance. Such a game-music performance provides prizes for the audience, like radios, kerosene pressure lanterns, and bicycles, even motorcycles (Fig. 5.3). *Kim* is performed at night. The spectators are both male and female.



Figure 5.3: Commercial disc, cassette, and VCD covers of kim game music

It is not clear where the word kim originated. The game is similar to the European bingo game but I have found no evidence that kim was inspired by bingo. According to the singer and song composer Edi Cotok, kim is an acronym of Kesenian Irama Minang (Minangkabau rhythm art). Some people of the post-independence generation whom I interviewed recalled that kim emerged in the 1960s and was initially pantun-style songs without accompaniment by musical instruments. Later musical instruments were added. In becoming popular among the ethnic Chinese communities of Medan and Padang, kim was further transformed into game music. It is interesting to note that the Chinese involvement in this music genre is expressed in songs that imitate Chinese melodies. When the singers sing these songs, they also imitate the sounds of the Chinese language. It is not surprising, therefore, that some early kim albums

contain songs about Chinese gamblers, such as a song entitled ‘Tan A. Kong’ (see Fig. 5.3). But *kim* songs usually contain humorous elements, which are presented in the lyrics or the melodies by imitating Hindustani/Indian or Chinese music melodies. In the 1970s *kim* was popularized in Jakarta by a hotel businessman from Minangkabau named Ilham Rajo Bintang, who presented a performance of *kim* at the Jakarta Fair. Hence the audience supposed he was the founder of the genre, as reflected in the lyrics of Nedi Gampo’s song ‘Kaleng Kuncang’ (‘Shaking the tube’): ‘Kim game, the entertainment of Minangkabau people, founded by Mr. [Ilham] Rajo Bintang’²⁵⁴. Nowadays *kim* is a favourite genre among Minangkabau *perantau* in various cities outside West Sumatra. As prizes are provided and *kim* is always performed in the evening, some groups in Minangkabau society, especially those with religious labels, look upon *kim* as being associated with gambling. Hence *kim* acquired a negative stigma as gambling music. But others state that *kim* is just a form of public entertainment: ‘Kim is not gaming and gambling, *kim* is just for treating worried hearts’²⁵⁵, says the singer Nedi Gampo.

In live performances of *kim*, the songs are usually sung by a solo singer (often male), accompanied by digital keyboard. Some commercial VCDs of *kim* produced by Sinar Padang Record and Gita Virma Record seem to have been recorded from live performances, suggesting that ‘live performance now incorporates the technology of reproduction [and the way] in which mediatization impinges upon live [musical] events’ (Auslander 1999:158). The singer sings while shaking a tube containing a kind of dice (Fig. 5.3). The audience hold papers with numbers that are in blocks. These papers are distributed to the audience before the performance begins. The singer takes out one of the dice and calls out the number written on it by singing. The spectator must circle or mark a cross on the number mentioned by the singer. A spectator who has the numbers in one block matching those already mentioned by the singer will come out as the winner. One will win a prize if getting five numbers in a horizontal line which match those mentioned by the singer (Fig. 5.4). The winner will receive a prize directly, and then the singer will move on to another song.

The main source of *kim* song lyrics is Minangkabau *pantun*. The singer can make various improvisations following the melody of the song being sung. Whatever *kim* songs, *pantun* is their basis. *Pantun* in *kim* songs are mostly full of jokes and humour. When the singer takes a numbered dice from the tube, he (or she) will directly insert that number in the *pantun* verse he is singing by spontaneously composing a line whose end rhyme is adjusted to the end rhyme of other lines of the verse. This can be seen in the transcription below of the *kim* ‘Dendang Lamo’ (‘Classic chanting’). The underlined parts of the lyrics refer to the numbers of the dice taken by the singer from the tube.

254 ‘Main *kim* hiburan urang Minang, Ciptaan Pak [Ilham] Rajo Bintang’, quoted from Nedi Gampo, *Kaleng Kuncang, Nedi Gampo Bandendang*; Album *Kim Terbaru* (VCD karaoke) (Padang: Gita Virma Record, 2012): song no. 1: ‘Kaleng Kuncang’.

255 ‘Kim kim kim bukan ampok bukan judi; Kim kim kim paubek rusuah hati’, quoted from Nedi Gampo, *Kaleng Kuncang, Nedi Gampo Bandendang*; Album *Kim Terbaru* (VCD karaoke) (Padang: Gita Virma Record, 2012): song no. 1: ‘Kaleng Kuncang’.

Layang-layang batali banang,
 Banang datang nan dari Baso,
 Lah sudah buah diguncang,
 Hati-hati Mamak manjago.

Kite has thread
 Thread came from Baso,
 After the dice was shaken,
 Maternal uncle, be careful to guard it.

Babiduang badayuang sampan,
 Lah pasai dilamun ombak,
 Dima indak ka kuruih badan,
 Adiak sayang cowoknyo banyak.

Go boating, rowing dugout,
 Misery overwhelmed by waves,
 How could my body not be skinny,
 My dear sweetheart has many boyfriends.

Tujuh puluh lapan angkonyo,
 Hati-hati Sanak manjago,
 Ganefo nan di Jakarta,
 Anam puluh tigo kalua.

78 is its number,
 Friends, be careful to guard it,
 Ganefo was launched [by President Soekarno] in Jakarta,
 Number 23 appears.

Tanang-tanang riak Siboga,
 Kapa marapek ka muaro,
 Pasanang hati urang tingga,
 Kami bajalan jo untuangnyo,

Sibolga sea is calm,
 Ships dock in estuary,
 Be glad those who left,
 We go away bringing our destiny.

Parapat di Danau Toba,
 Ampek puluh duo jan tingga,
 Duo hari kurang sabulan,
 Cari duo puluh salapan.
 [...]²⁵⁶

Prapat in Lake Toba,
 Number 40, do not forget;
 Two days short of a month,
 Seek number 28.



Figure 5.4: Piece of paper with numbers in blocks held by kim spectators at a live performance of kim on the 52nd birthday anniversary of Minangkabau businessman Basrizal Koto in Pekanbaru, capital of Riau province, on 10 October 2011; photograph by Eko Yanche Edrie, 2011)

256 Transcribed from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8h4OrBE3o_U (accessed 14-6-2011).

Kim commercial recordings have been made since the gramophone era. One of them was produced by Mesra Record in Jakarta with the singer Elly Kasim (Fig. 5.3). Kim music is recorded outside the studio, because its songs need audience participation, hence it is impossible to make the recording in a studio. The company that has most often produced kim commercial recordings is Sinar Padang Record. In the late 1970s it produced two volumes of kim cassettes with the singer Mans Anur (Fig. 5.3). A new kim VCD produced by Sinar Padang Record appeared in 2005 with the singer S. Effendi Koto (Fig. 5.3). As written on the cover of this VCD, kim is identified as ‘Pantun & Lagu’ (‘verse and song’), meaning the songs are totally composed in *pantun* (verse) form. The clips of this VCD show that the concert was conducted in the yard of Haji Yuskal’s house, the owner of Sinar Padang Record, in the Simpang Haru district of Padang. The concert was held in the evening and directly recorded by Sinar Padang Record, which then appeared in cassette and VCD formats.

Elements of Minangkabau traditional verbal arts genres like *rabab Pariaman*, *rabab Pesisir Selatan* and *saluang jo dendang* (literally ‘flute with song’) or *bagurau* (‘jollity’) have certainly long been incorporated in *pop Minang*, and these traditional genres are the source of the tone of sorrow and misery that have come to characterize *pop Minang*. Jennifer Fraser’s recent study of the representation of the powerful earthquakes that rocked West Sumatra in 2009 on Minangkabau music videos (2012) shows how local VCD producers used the mournful sound of the *saluang* to represent the severe suffering experienced by Minangkabau people due to the catastrophic disaster. *Pop Minang* thus accommodates a wide variety of musical experiments in the context of Minangkabau ethnicity. Not only different musical forms are combined, but also many songs are recycled and reproduced. ‘A given song will be introduced by one singer and then imitated or reinterpreted by others; a given singer will produce a number of albums within one genre and then branch out to another genre; a successful song or composition will be translated into new genres or idioms’ (Yampolsky 1995:717). Listening to *pop Minang* music, one can recognize adopted or recycled aspects of Malay music, *dangdut*, Indian music, rap, reggae, house – but not Islamic music – whether in the melody, the rhythm, or the sound of musical instruments.

As a cultural expression, *pop Minang* reaches other aspects of Minangkabau society, including local politics. As can be found in a national context, political albums under a *pop Minang* label have appeared in West Sumatra. For example, we can find the VCD entitled *Membangun Padang Piaman* (‘Develop Padang Pariaman [regency]’) produced by Pemda Kabupaten Padang Pariaman (‘Local Government of Padang Pariaman Regency’). The making of this album was sponsored by the former regent (*bupati*) of Padang Pariaman regency, Muslim Kasim, who now holds the post of Vice Governor of West Sumatra (Fig. 5.5). Muslim Kasim also appears as the singer on another VCD entitled *Dendang Salingka Nagari: PKDP*²⁵⁷ (‘Chanting about all the villages: the Union of Padang Pariaman Families’). Produced by Tanama Record in cooperation with the Pariaman regency government, *Dendang Salingka*

257 PKDP is the abbreviation of *Persatuan Keluarga Padang Pariaman* (‘Union of Padang Pariaman Families’). It was established in Pariaman on 29 April 1984. This union is an association of Minangkabau migrants from Padang Pariaman who live in *rantau*. It has branches in several towns in Indonesia, also in Malaysia’s capital Kuala Lumpur.

Nagari contains political messages in which Muslim Kasim's administration promotes Padang Pariaman as a tourist destination and calls on Padang Pariaman migrants to participate (*sato sakaki*) in developing their home villages.

In 2013 the candidate for mayor of Padang, Desri Ayunda, released an album in VCD format entitled *Rindu Bapusarokan* ('Yearning for a lost love'). It is obvious that the album was intended to attract prospective voters so that he could win the race to become Padang mayor for



Figure 5.5: VCD covers of political albums dealing with Padang Pariaman regency and Padang municipality. The cover conspicuously exhibits the politician who financed the production of the album.

2014–2019. Produced in Ayunda’s own name, the album cover is full of his political messages, like the motto of his political campaign, ‘Peduli dan profesional’ (‘Care and professional’), and the main program of his political party, ‘Terwujudnya kota Padang yang religius dan berbudaya dalam rangka menumbuhkan ekonomi berbasis pendidikan, perdagangan, dan pariwisata’ (‘To develop the religious and cultural city of Padang in order to have economic growth based on education, trade, and tourism’) (see Fig. 5.5). The songs on the album are recycled from prominent songs taken from several Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs released previously.

Such political VCDs suggest the importance of regional pop music for local politicians in their efforts to build a *politik pencitraan* (‘political image’). The connection between artists and politics came into existence in Indonesia’s early days as an independent state (Kartomi 2005; Lindsay 2005). Nowadays *pop Minang* artists are actively involved in political campaigns of regional politicians. John Storey (2003b:128-29) mentions that ‘using pop music to establish constituencies for a specific political campaign makes pop music political’. By using political VCDs like Muslim Kasim’s albums, politicians try to reach the public with a specific political agenda, usually to gain the public’s sympathy to vote for them again in the next elections. This can be seen as a manifestation of what John B. Thompson calls politicians’ ‘management of visibility through the media’ (Thompson 1995:238).

AESTHETIC ENRICHMENT: POP MINANG STANDAR AND POP MINANG BARU

Discourse on *pop Minang* today speaks of *pop Minang standar* (‘standard *pop Minang*’) and *pop Minang baru* (‘new *pop Minang*’). The terms indicate the aesthetic transformation of *pop Minang*, mirroring a change in audience tastes in regional pop music. *Pop Minang standar* refers to the earlier version of *pop Minang* that was initially formed during the gramophone period and popularized by the older generation of *pop Minang* artists, including Nurseha,



Figure 5.6: Typical VCD covers of standard *pop Minang* (left) and new *pop Minang* (right)

Elly Kasim, Syamsi Hasan, Nuskan Sjarif and Tiar Ramon. *Pop Minang baru*, on the other hand, refers to the aesthetic innovations of *pop Minang* endorsed by the younger generation of singers. Appearing since the mid 1990s, this new *pop Minang* has a different musical colour and caters to a different musical taste. This aesthetic transformation is a response to the ongoing penetration of elements of foreign music. As Jeremy Wallach (2008:34) notes, in Indonesian *pop daerah* the extent to which local elements other than language are present varies considerably. And yet, regardless of how modern a regional pop recording is, and how much foreign influence it has absorbed, local elements (the sound of its music and its local language) are still discernible. A prominent example is the *saluang dangdut* subgenre. It is the Minangkabau verbal arts genre of *saluang jo dendang* or *bagurau* with a national tinge, and the term *dangdut* in the title signals that this localized product has a commodity value within the contemporary national music market dominated by national *dangdut* music, which itself is a hybrid music (Weintraub 2010:212, 214; Sen and Hill 2004:76-9). A *saluang dangdut* ensemble has the same line-up as *saluang jo dendang* but is augmented with drums and tambourine borrowed from *dangdut* (Fraser 2012:15). In contrast, in *pop Minang baru* albums like ‘Bawang Bombay’ (‘Onions’) and ‘Ratu Triping’²⁵⁸ (‘Queen of triping’), foreign musical elements are very prominent (Naafs 2005:98-100). This new style of Minangkabau pop songs, incorporating fast melodies adopted from Western ‘house’ music, are very popular in public transportation vehicles in Padang, which are equipped with very loud music (see Yurnaldi 2001b; Jones 2008).

In terms of melody, standard *pop Minang* songs stress feelings of misery predominantly supported by the melancholy sounds of *talempong* and *saluang*. The sounds of these traditional Minangkabau musical instruments impart a feeling of sorrow (Fraser 2012) which bring ‘dysphoric emotions’, to borrow the words of Dana Rappoport (2014:221). The themes of standard *pop Minang* songs deal with Minangkabau traditional values, the beautiful Minangkabau nature and culture, and even Minangkabau matrilineal families. In these songs, the emotional effects of *merantau* (for those who have left the homeland as well as for those remaining in the homeland) are conspicuously reflected. They tell about the sad feelings of prospective *perantau* when they have to leave their home villages and families, the ups and downs of their lives in *rantau*, and their longing for home and families back in the beautiful homeland, the sadness and yearning of those left at home, and the broken hearts of sweethearts because of social class segregation or because one side breaks their vows of love after being separated by the far distance between the homeland and the *rantau*. Below is an example of such songs, entitled ‘Sinar Riau’ sung by Elly Kasim. Composed in *pantun* verse, it expresses the yearnings of a *perantau* for his (or her) mother in West Sumatra whom he has not seen for many long years. He/she also yearns for special Minangkabau foods like *dadiah* (fermented water buffalo milk), which is rarely found in *rantau*. Here is the transcription of the song text based on Elly Kasim and Tiar Ramon’s album *Pop Minang 1* (re)produced by Insictech Musicland Sdn Bhd (Malaysia) in 2004 (fillers are removed).

258 The term *triping* refers to the type of dance that is commonly used to accompany house music, which also has influenced *pop Minang*. The *triping* dance is preferred by young people. They prance, shake their heads, and move their bodies erotically. For some observers, the *triping* dance carries connotations of drug use (mostly XTC or ecstasy) in nightlife and parties (Sastramidjaja 2000:ix; Naafs 2010:389) because when dancing *triping* people feel stronger and it induces a trance. Therefore the public often perceive *triping* dancing as damaging the morals of young people and not in accordance with Indonesian culture

<p><i>Oto banamo Sinar Riau</i>²⁵⁹, <i>Baliak manambang dari Pakan</i>, <i>Baranti tantang Danau Bingkuang</i>; <i>Taragak Mandeh jo urang rantau</i>, <i>Ka pintu tangih bakalukaan</i>, <i>Sabalah mandeh denai lai ka pulang</i>.</p>	<p>The bus named Sinar Riau, back from serving the Pekanbaru route, stopped at the edge of Lake Bingkuang; Mother misses the people in <i>rantau</i>, she can only cry and cry. Be patient, mother, I will certainly return home.</p>
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[...]

<p><i>Dangalah Sinar Riau di pandakian</i>, <i>Rabab, tolong sampaikan</i>,</p> <p><i>Pakanbaru, Taratak Buluah</i>, <i>Labuhan kapa dari Siak</i>, <i>Mamuek gambia dari Bangkinang</i>; <i>Jawek pakirim dagang jauhah</i>, <i>Sayang bacampua, Mandeh, jo taragak</i>, <i>Denai taragak dadiah di rantau urang</i>.</p> <p><i>Dangalah Sinar Riau di pandakian</i>, <i>Rabab, tolong sampaikan</i>.</p>	<p>Hear (the horn of) Sinar Riau in the hills, Fiddle, please deliver (my messages)</p> <p>Pekanbaru and Taratak Buluah, the seaports in Siak, loading gambier from Bangkinang; Hear the messages sent from the wanderer far away, Mother, I have mixed love and longing, I miss the <i>dadiah</i> from my home village.</p> <p>Hear (the horn of) Sinar Riau in the hill, Fiddle, please deliver (my messages).</p>
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The manner of new pop Minang musically, lyrically, and linguistically parodies its standard counterpart. The lyrics invite laughter rather than contemplation, emphasizing triviality and foolishness. The soundtrack of new pop Minang is predominantly supported by the sounds of guitar and drums. The sounds of traditional Minangkabau musical instruments are limited, especially the anguished sound of the *saluang* flute, which is dominant in standard pop Minang soundtracks. The sound of *saluang* has almost disappeared from new pop Minang soundtracks. Full of comic phrasing, new pop Minang, textually and visually, incorporates various aspects of foreign pop music. The atmospheres of disco, house remix, reggae, hip-hop, and of course the prominent national genre *dangdut*, can easily be perceived in new pop Minang. New pop Minang reflects a youth culture expressing freedom and spontaneity that is often criticized by the parental generation. The Lepoh group is one outstanding example: since 2007 it has produced several albums, of which the most popular is the series *Bagadele 1-4* ('Triviality 1-4') produced

259 'Sinar Riau' ('Riau Ray') was a prominent inter-province bus service in the 1970s and 1980s which connected Pekanbaru and other prominent towns in Riau province with West Sumatran towns like Padang and Bukittinggi. The bus service was very well known among the Minangkabau migrants that migrated to Riau province at that time. It was a time when an innovative music genre called *kalason oto* (lit. 'car horn') was very popular in West Sumatra. Made by a kind of organ with pipes fitted in the engines of inter-province Chevrolet buses, the music, which was played by means of a keyboard mounted on the dashboard of the bus, was used to attract (potential) passengers (Barendregt 2002:437-8). Its liting sound (*mendayu-dayu*) is melancholy, as if representing the longing of Minangkabau *perantau* for their homeland (Perlman 1998). The sorrowful sound of *kalason oto* music does not refer to any Minangkabau musical genre but reminds Minangkabau people of the sounds of their traditional music instruments *saluang* and *rabab*.

by Leprin Production situated in Solok. The albums extremely parody standard pop Minang songs by employing humour, jokes, hilarious facial expressions, and Minangkabau slang.

New pop Minang song lyrics conspicuously represent the crisis experienced by couples (wife and husband) in their domestic relations due to economic difficulties or the negative impacts of the culture of materialism and hedonism brought by global and Western cultures. Such impressions can be perceived in the lyrics of a new pop Minang song from an album of the Mak Lepoh group entitled *Bagadele 3* ('Triviality 3') (Leprin Production, 2007), which is also available on YouTube.²⁶⁰ Another song is 'Rumah kontrak[an]' ('Rental house'). Sung in a hilarious way with funny facial expressions, and opening with a humorous dialogue, the song tells about the wife in an ordinary couple who does not have a sense of propriety in managing their limited family funds. The wife is so eager to buy new clothes and shoes that the couple face difficulties paying the expenses of their rental house.

Suami:

*Sabalah Adiak dulu,
Janlah bakandak juo,
Patang lah bali sipatu,
Kini lah tarompa pulo.*

Husband:

Please be patient, my dear,
Do not demand too much,
You bought shoes yesterday,
Today you buy sandals.

*Nan wajib didaulukan,
Nan sunaik bulan di muko,
Mangko itu Uda katokan,
Seo rumah lah tibo pulo.*

Essential things should take priority,
Optional things can be purchased next month,
The reason I am saying this to you,
The rent for our house has to be paid.

*Sabalah Adiak dulu,
Usah bakandak juo.*

Please be patient, my dear.
Do not demand too much.

Istri:

*Baragiah baru saketek,
Uda lah manyasak pulo,
Bisuak denai pai baralek,
Pakaian baru indak ado.*

Wife:

You just gave me little things,
Now you, my dear, pushed me,
I will go to a wedding party tomorrow,
I do not have a new outfit.

*Iyo Uda janyo denai,
Usah Uda bakato ibo,
Jikok rancak pakaian denai,
Urang mancaliak lah sanang pulo.*

Oh my lovely dear,
Do not talk so sadly,
If I am wearing pretty clothes,
Those who look at me will be delighted.

[...]

260 The extensive mediation of West Sumatran recording industry products, as part of media convergence in the contemporary world, is discussed in Chapter 8.

Generally speaking, standard *pop Minang* is favoured by the older generation and new *pop Minang* is favoured by Minangkabau youth, who strongly associate it with a cosmopolitan culture. People who like standard *pop Minang* consider that it conveys authentic Minangkabau cultural values (*nilai-nilai keminangan yang asli*). Conversely, the youth who like new *pop Minang* think standard *pop Minang* is boring, and too melancholy and full of laments (*ratok*). They say the lyrics of standard *pop Minang* sound too sentimental (*cengeng*).

But the features differentiating standard *pop Minang* and new *pop Minang* are not only their musical colour, but also their language register. Marked by extensive use of figurative phrases, standard *pop Minang* songs are rich in the Minangkabau literary dialect, which is characterized by the manifold use of traditional proverbs, metaphors, allegories, and analogies. The lyrics of standard *pop Minang* are rich in *kieh*, that is ‘any kind of analogy, allegory, figure of speech, implicit moral or other type of indirect language used [...] whenever someone says one thing, literally, but there is another, deeper meaning behind the surface of what is said’ (Simon 2007:213, 461).²⁶¹ Its song lyrics are also dominated by *pantun* verse.²⁶² Sharing important stylistic characteristics of Minangkabau and Malay performing arts, *pantun* ‘largely determine the form of songs, which are essentially strophic but allow a high degree of improvisatory freedom on the performer’s part, including the insertion of melodic phrases (with or without repeated textual phrases) or sections of percussive rhythms, and the insertion of incidental ornamentation, largely at whim’ (Kartomi 2012:19).

In contrast, new *pop Minang* song lyrics tend to reject such Minangkabau literary forms, using language that is poor in metaphors and allegories. The young generation of new *Minang pop* singers and composers – Edi Cotok, Opetra, Nedi Gampo, Santi Martin, and Lepoh, to mention just a few – tend to utilize unadorned language in their lyrics, sometimes by laying emphasis on local dialects. Others mix their mother tongue (Minangkabau language) with the national language (Indonesian) and English. This phenomenon can be seen in the lyrics of recent songs sung by Tommy Bolim, Mak Itam, Buset and Lepoh. Directly or indirectly, their songs parody the aesthetic concepts of standard *pop Minang* songs. Buset, Mak Itam, and Lepoh have also sung such songs in Western *pop* rhythms like rap and reggae. These alternative aesthetics of *pop Minang* appear along with changes in the Minangkabau vernacular due to the strong penetration of Indonesian into regional languages. The metaphorical and figurative language of Minangkabau oral literature, a most beautiful vernacular style according to some colonial Dutch scholars (see Hasselt 1883; Eerde 1887), is regarded as out of date by most of the Minangkabau young generation.

261 According to Gregory Mark Simon, ‘[traditionally] many Minangkabau people identify an extensive use of *kieh* as a particularly Minangkabau attribute, even in contrast to other Malay and Indonesian groups’ (Simon 2007:408).

262 *Pantun* is a verse-form found widely in the Malay world (Ding 2010; Salleh 2011). It consists of quatrains rhyming *abab*, but also of verses of six, eight or more lines, rhyming *abcabc*, *abcdabcd*, and so on. A couplet is made up of two parts: the first half is called the *sampiran* (‘hook’) while the second half is called the *isi* (‘meaning’). The *sampiran* is usually unconnected with the *isi* in sense, but foreshadows it in sound (Daillie 1988). For more on Minangkabau *pantun*, see Rangkota 1982, Chadwick 1994, Sati 2005, Gani 2010, and Suryadi 2013.

Humour and jokes are conspicuous in new *pop Minang*. Though a few standard *pop Minang* songs from the 1970s and 1980s have comical lyrics, most of them are predominantly characterized by sorrow and lamentation. According to Hajizar, recently *pop Minang* has been dominated by a trend towards more humour.²⁶³ One new *pop Minang* singer who employs humour and jokes in his albums is Andria Adhan. He produces albums in which songs alternate with funny stories presented in the Pariaman dialect. These hilarious stories have become a characteristic of Andria's albums and are adored by audiences. Other singers such as Nedi Gampo intentionally insert the coarse language (*idiom keras*) of bazaar Minangkabau (*Bahasa Minang pasar*) into their song lyrics, creating a comic effect.²⁶⁴ The Lepoh group in their albums use comical expressions, physically and linguistically.

'Aesthetic defiance' can be found in *pop Minang* in terms of the language of its lyrics, as shown by the younger generation of artists, which is reminiscent of the phenomenon of rap in Western pop music. Based on public perceptions of standard and new *pop Minang*, the former can be compared to high literature and the latter to popular literature. In this regard, the main factor distinguishing them is the register or style of language used in their song lyrics.

To some extent, the division between standard *pop Minang* on one hand and the new *pop Minang* on the other hand represents the 'consciousness of generation', to borrow Murdock and McCron's words (2006:162). However, there are young people who like standard *pop Minang* songs, though it is only rarely that people of the older generations like its new counterpart. What is certain is that the emergence of new *pop Minang* has provoked controversy among Minangkabau people. Agus Taher (2007:4) mentions five elements of new *pop Minang* that have become the subject of debate: first, new *pop Minang* is deemed not to be rooted in Minangkabau culture; second, individuals and parties involved in the production of new *pop Minang* recordings are considered as only thinking in commercial terms and ignoring the quality of the songs they produce; third, the musical instruments used to accompany the songs of new *pop Minang* such as the organ, piano, even MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) technology, are considered too Western oriented and, therefore, deprived of the sounds of traditional Minangkabau musical instruments; fourth, new *pop Minang* is considered less religious because its song lyrics mostly have a vulgar tone and are aesthetically, as Elly Kasim mentions in an interview (see below), far removed from the style of Minangkabau traditional literary language. As well, the clips of new *pop Minang* VCDs tend to present erotic dances and its VCD covers show pictures of singers in sexy clothes; therefore, fifth, new *pop Minang* is considered to deviate from traditional Minangkabau custom (*adat*).

Those who idolize standard *pop Minang* charge that the lyrics of new *pop Minang* songs are coarse, simplistic, candid and straightforward, hence they are appraised as not suitable to Minangkabau custom. These critics say the lyrics of new *pop Minang* represent a loss of Minangkabau cultural identity.²⁶⁵ The composers of new *pop Minang* are regarded as having no

263 See Nasrul Azwar's interview with Hajizar in 'Lagu pop Minang dikuasai aliran lawak', *Haluan*, 13 February 2011.

264 See 'Nedi Gampo: Asal-usul nama Gampo', *Padang Ekspres*, 23 February 2007, column titled 'Selebritis'.

265 See 'Lagu pop Minang kehilangan identitas kultural', *Haluan*, 6 February 2011.

aesthetic sense of Minangkabau literary language. Their compositions are considered kitsch. The songwriter Sexri Budiman agrees that the lyrics of many new *pop Minang* songs have no aesthetic value. And the senior Minangkabau cultural observer Bagindo Fahmi declared that one can no longer be called Minangkabau if one does not understand figurative language (*kato melereang*) (pers. comm., 20-1-2009). But not all of the songs created by the new generation of composers are considered kitsch. Some of the young composers still maintain the quality of their work. Among them are Sexri Budiman, Agus Taher, Alkawi, Alextris, Ades Sadewa, Zul Azham, and Rhian D’Kincai, just to mention a few (see Wahyuni 2001).

In an extensive report on *pop Minang* based on interviews with practitioners of the West Sumatran recording industry, and supplemented with essays on the subject, the leading West Sumatran newspaper *Padang Ekspres* (15 March 2009) quotes a devotee of standard *pop Minang*:

There are no more Minang songs now. What are found are simply bad songs using the Minangkabau language. They are far different from those of the pre-1980s, which were resonant, engrossing, and meaningful. As a consequence, such songs are eternal. They are known and adored by people of all generations.²⁶⁶

While the observer and composer of Minangkabau songs Ardoni Yonas says:

Although there are exceptions, we would agree that recent Minangkabau songs no longer reflect the culture. For example, in one recent Minangkabau song, there is a man who cries because his girlfriend has left him. In fact, in the Minangkabau culture, men were strong and would not cry.²⁶⁷

‘For the Minangkabau, the song is a message, delivered through allegories. This is no longer evident in the [recent] development of Minangkabau song,’²⁶⁸ adds a researcher named Indra Yeni. While the legendary Minangkabau singer Elly Kasim states:

Formerly Minangkabau songs were taken from the *pantun* [poem] which is one aspect of the Minangkabau culture that hides implicit meaning in its lyrics, but today it has begun to thin out; perhaps Minangkabau culture is less desirable or less maintained by the younger generation today.²⁶⁹

In a discussion of recent developments in *pop Minang* held at Padang Cultural Garden (Taman Budaya Padang) in 2007, Agus Taher argued that the change and transformation of

266 ‘Kini sudah tidak ada lagi lagu Minang. Yang ada, lagu-lagu kacang bahasa Minang. Jauh beda dengan masa-masa di bawah dekade 1980-an. Lagu Minang melantun, menghanyutkan dan sarat makna. Akibatnya, sepanjang masa tembang-tembang demikian abadi. Dikenal dan disenangi semua generasi.’

267 ‘Walau tidak semuanya, tapi kita akan sepakat bahwa lagu Minang sekarang ini tidak mencerminkan budaya[nya]. Contoh, dalam sebuah lagu Minang ada lelaki yang menangis karena ditinggalkan pacarnya. Padahal dalam budaya Minang lelaki itu tegar dan tidak boleh menangis.’

268 ‘Bagi orang Minang lagu itu adalah sebuah pesan, yang disampaikan dengan makna yang berkias. Dalam perkembangannya, lagu Minang tidak lagi menampakkan itu.’

269 ‘Kalau dahulu lagu Minang itu diambil dari pantun yang merupakan salah satu budaya Minangkabau yang menyembunyikan makna tersirat dalam tiap syairnya, namun saat ini hal tersebut sudah mulai menipis, barangkali budaya Minangkabau sudah kurang diminati lagi atau kurang dipertahankan oleh generasi-generasi muda zaman sekarang.’

Minangkabau music is a reasonable and necessary process. In his view, regional music should not be static. He notes the recent trend of songs with classical motifs, which aesthetically take on the spirit of Minangkabau oral literature genres (Taher 2007). An outstanding example is the new creations of new *pop Minang* songs based on *rabab Pesisir Selatan* music, especially by young performer/singers of *rabab Pesisir Selatan* like Siril Asmara, Tiar Palaga, and Iwil Melayu.²⁷⁰ In this case, the music of the Minangkabau verbal arts genre of *rabab Pesisir Selatan* is used to accompany newly created Minangkabau pop songs. Likewise, the comical songs sung by anti-standard singers such as Buset, Mak Itam, and Lepoh,²⁷¹ have humorous conversations in hilarious song lyrics, and funny video clips. Current Minangkabau music should not be judged using the aesthetics of earlier Minangkabau music, Agus Taher states, countering the scathing criticism directed toward the songs of new *pop Minang*, which certain parties regard as no longer reflecting the culture of Minangkabau society. Such harsh criticisms of new *pop Minang*, he says, will only have a negative impact rather than enhancing the way Minangkabau popular music evolves (Taher 2007). Esy Maestro (1999:6) mentions two factors that have brought about changes in musical aesthetics. First, the nuances of the sound of local musical instruments have been reduced to an electronic instrument through sound engineering technology. Second, with the rise of the recording industry, as far as the kind of music recorded, all practitioners – composers, singers and producers – obey the tastes of consumers. Whatever consumers want, practitioners will produce it.

The views quoted above reflect the conflicting views on *pop Minang*. This genre has most often become the subject of polemics and criticism, unlike the traditional genres, which do not give rise to debates and polemics because – to borrow the words of Agus Taher – ‘the traditional songs [with lyrics taken from oral literature] require hardly any innovation or experimentation, and have little or no commercial aspect, and they are performed in order to demonstrate ethnic identity. Their authenticity and traditionalism are often maintained fanatically.’²⁷² Media-bound genres such as modern Minangkabau cassette dramas also seem not to spark debate. The themes of Minangkabau cassette dramas are critical of social and individual behavior that is not compatible with Minangkabau culture. Essentially, the aim of these dramas is to retain and promote Minangkabau culture. Therefore, this genre does not give rise to polemics because it sustains the Minangkabau culture rather than subverting it. Similarly, there is no criticism of the other Minangkabau media-bound genre, Minangkabau children’s pop music. The lyrics of Minangkabau children’s pop songs are sorrowful and melancholy, for example depicting unhappy orphans or poor children struggling to survive (see Chapter 7). I speculate that there is no criticism of Minangkabau children’s pop music

270 This can be suggested from the terms written on their VCD covers, like ‘Rabab Dije’, ‘Rabab Dangdut Mix’, ‘Rabab Gaul’, ‘Rabab Terbaru’, and ‘Rabab Spesial’. See Siril Asmara and Igus Sikumbang, *Pak Dukun; Rabab Dije* (VCD karaoke), Vol. 4 (Padang: Sinar Padang Record, 2012), Tiar Palaga and Devi Pasla, *Kanai Tilang; Rabab Terbaru* (VCD karaoke) (Padang: Diva Production, 2012), and Iwil Melayu and Imil P., *Hari Panantian; Rabab Spesial* (VCD karaoke), Vol. 2 (Padang: Sinar Padang Record, 2012), just to mention a few examples.

271 See ‘Agus Taher, seniman musik: antara kreasi dan hujan’, *Haluan*, 6 February 2011.

272 ‘[L]agu tradisi relatif tidak memerlukan inovasi, eksperimentasi, serta kurang atau tidak ada unsur komersialnya, dan ditampilkan untuk menunjukkan identitas etnik. Secara fanatik, keaslian dan ketradisionalannya sering dipertahankan sebagaimana adanya [...]’ (Taher 2007:3).

because aesthetically the lyrics of this genre are generally similar to the lyrics of standard pop Minang.

As mentioned above, some practitioners of West Sumatran recording argue that change in the language and musical style of *pop Minang* is natural and should occur, because nothing is static in human culture. It is not bad to accompany the songs with an electronic organ, according to Agus Taher, since it can be enriched with the sound of indigenous Minangkabau musical instruments. In an interview with a *Padang Ekspres* journalist, he said:

Actually, with the electronic keyboard we are freer to arrange music. We can insert any sound to support the song with just the right instrument. The majority of our keyboard players now are professionals. Then it's a business calculation: if we are using a band, how are we going to pay each player?²⁷³

Agus Taher adds that the transformation from the cassette era to the VCD era also influenced the quality of production, because VCD pirates are difficult to eradicate. 'The sound quality of the pirated cassettes and pirated VCDs is very poor. The impact is subsequently accepted by producers, musicians, and artists.'²⁷⁴

Recently, criticism in the controversy about new *pop Minang* has become increasingly sharp: in June 2009 the local press reported that some religious and traditional groups were intent on curbing what they labelled as 'Minang songs that do not educate' (*lagu Minang yang tak mendidik*). This criticism was provoked by a statement released by the chairman of the Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars West Sumatra Branch (Majelis Ulama Indonesia Cabang Sumatra Barat), Gusrizal Gazahar, who stated that many recent *pop Minang* songs have lyrics which no longer contain typically Minangkabau philosophy and aphorisms. Gusrizal said that the institution he leads had received many complaints from the public on this subject.²⁷⁵ Criticizing this new phenomenon, which is regarded as a negative influence of globalization, the old generation of *pop Minang* artists like Elly Kasim, the traditional art practitioners, and the ulemas have been acting as keepers to maintain the original values (*nilai-nilai asli*) of Minangkabau music.

Facilitated by the national policy of regional autonomy, as the result of political reform in Indonesia, the debate about *pop Minang* represents a continuing search for identity and tradition in Minangkabau society in this era of globalization. As the cultural product that most strongly deals with the Minangkabau realm of *perasaan* (feeling), which is influenced by the ethnic cultural setting, *pop Minang* represents the folk emotion of the Minangkabau ethnic group. Anthony Giddens (1994:80) is probably right in saying that tradition is a 'constant process of recapitulation and reinterpretation' with 'creation of constancy over time'. My reading of

273 Sebenarnya dengan organ kita lebih bebas mengolah musik. Kita bisa memasukkan bunyi apa saja, untuk mendukung lagu yang dibuat dengan satu alat itu. Pemain organ kita sekarang juga sudah banyak yang professional kok. Kemudian perhitungan bisnisnya, kalau pakai band, berapa pula pemainnya akan dibayar per orang? (*Padang Ekspres*, 15 March 2009).

274 See 'Di balik layar pendendang', *Padang Ekspres*, 15 March 2009.

275 See 'Lagu Minang mulai meresahkan', *Singgalang* 15 June 2009.

Minangkabau cassette and VCD covers in the next section is aimed to better comprehend this ongoing search for Minangkabau identity through the visual images of Minangkabau regional commercial recordings.

POP MINANG CASSETTE AND VCD COVERS AS CULTURAL TEXTS

A commercial cassette or VCD is an entity consisting of auditory, pictorial, and visual elements which interrelate with each other. Cassettes and their covers, as Deborah Wong (1995:45) has pointed out, 'are artifacts that aggregate several media: sound, the printed word, and pictorial representation'. Forming a complex cultural package of various expressive and commercial media, the auditory and the visual elements of a cassette or VCD relate to each other in an intricately complex system (Slobin 1982:166).

Images on cassette covers of regional music, including the printed text as well as pictorial representations, are important sites through which we can capture the dynamics of a particular regional music and the society it is associated with. Cassette covers also reflect musical practitioners' strategies to attract consumers to their products. Regional cultural changes manifested in the tension between modernity and tradition have been made visible in the printed, pictorial and visual dimensions of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs. This section focuses on these printed, pictorial, and visual representations, discussing their cultural significance by investigating their nature and patterns, and interpreting the cultural meanings they exemplify.

'Cassette cover designs vary consistently by genre, and are a primary indication of the genre to which the music on a given cassette belongs' (Wallach 2002:114). Cassette covers of Indonesian Islamic songs, for example, represent local or national singers with the cultural landscape of the Arabic world (Rasmussen 2010:198). Customarily, *pop Minang* cassette covers have more extensive written and visual elements and a greater variety of colours than the covers of traditional genres. All the accompanying texts, not just the album title, are written not only in Minangkabau but also in Indonesian, even occasionally in English. The covers show patterns and images in the background, the company's logo, and invariably a picture of the artists. In short, *pop Minang* cassette and VCD covers exhibit diversity in terms of colour, text, and visual aspects, greater than those on covers of traditional genres, offering an impression of bustling crowdedness (*rami*).

Closer examination of the cassette and VCD covers of *pop Minang* reveals that though there are resemblances, each is different from the others, corresponding to the audio and musical content. It seems there is an interrelation between the content and the cover of a *pop Minang* album. To take one example, the covers of albums containing jokes in their song lyrics usually show the performers in a funny scene (Fig. 5.7). Likewise, the musical features of particular cassettes or VCDs labelled by genre names (*gamad*, *kim*, *saluang dangdut*, etc.), and the songs' lyrical orientation and characteristics are represented in the cassette or VCD cover design. The cassette and VCD covers of the *gamad* hybrid genre using traditional melo-



Figure 5.7: Two VCD covers of new pop Minang which contain hilarious songs interspersed with jokes. Left: Ajo (Andria Adhan) and One (Ida Busra) on *Basiginyang* (Sinar Padang Record, 2005); right: Edi Cotok's *Tambah Piti Balanjo* (Sentral Musik Record and Kreatif Record, 2008)

dies, for example, often picture the artists in traditional dress, contrasting with the appearance of artists' photographs on many *pop Minang* albums, which depict modern fashions of dress. The covers of albums that can be categorized as standard *pop Minang*, which is usually characterized by songs with melancholy lyrics, have a much less crowded layout compared to albums that can be categorized as new *pop Minang*, especially those adopting house and hip-hop musical rhythms, with cheerful and spirited lyrics.

The text, which on *pop Minang* covers is extensive and written in different colours and sizes, conveys economic, political, social, and musical aspects. Linguistically it is interesting to examine how the spoken Minangkabau language is written by practitioners of the West Sumatran recording industry in romanized form. For example, the spelling of text on cassette and VCD covers does not match the Minangkabau spelling system (see Ali *et al.* 1990), as can be seen in the title of Susi's album produced by Sinar Padang Record: 'Gamang Di Seso Mimpi' is written instead of 'Gamang Diseso Mimpi' (my underlining). In the Minangkabau language /di-/ in this context is a prefix, so that in writing it should be combined with the verb *seso* (misery). Errors are also frequently found in the transcriptions of song lyrics appearing as subtitles in the clips of *pop Minang* VCDs.

On *pop Minang* covers, the album title appears conspicuously, though I have found some *pop Minang* albums which have no title. The title of an album is usually printed in a big font using several bright colours. It competes in terms of size with the name of the artist(s) and the subgenre label such as 'Tembang Minang' ('Minang songs'), 'Pop Minang Standar' ('standard *pop Minang*'), 'Pop Minang Alternatif' ('alternative *pop Minang*'), or 'Pop Minang Abadi' ('everlasting *pop Minang*'). Sometimes the title is printed in the biggest font; sometimes the artist's name or the subgenre label is printed in the biggest font. This depends not only on which aspect of the album is being promoted by the producer but also the kind of image that the producer expects will attract consumers.

The title of an album is usually taken from the song that is considered the most prominent in it – ‘*lagu yang terkuat*’ (‘the strongest song’), borrowing the term used by the producer and lyricist Agus Taher – that is, the song which producer and singer expect to become the most popular. There are several considerations behind the choice of which song to promote as the title of an album, as Agus Taher mentions:

[The decision is made based on] feelings. The producer or the production practitioners usually have a feeling, which is rarely wrong. There are indeed some criteria: the power of the melody and the lyrics, the poetry of the title, whether the theme is trendy, with some specific nuances, for instance, magic, the trendiness of the rhythm plus the music, the singer’s inspiration or the singer’s characteristic way of performing.²⁷⁶

Sometimes the old favourite songs of standard *pop Minang* which were popularized by legendary Minangkabau artists of earlier times such as Elly Kasim and Tiar Ramon are the ones that tend to be promoted as the title of an album. There are many new albums containing new songs but often including one or two classic songs of standard *pop Minang*, such as ‘Hitam Manih’, ‘Urang Talu’ or ‘Bareh Solok’. Usually the name of the song used as the title of the album is placed number one in the list of songs of the album. In a few cases, the title of a *pop Minang* album is named after a song other than number one in the list of songs. Some *pop Minang* albums only present a single song as their title, while other albums list several songs on their covers. The additional song titles, up to a maximum of four titles, are usually printed in a smaller font size. Occasionally, particularly with *pop Minang* VCDs, the titles of songs number one and number two are printed in almost the same font size, making it unclear which one of them is to be regarded as the title of the album.

If we compare the front covers of *pop Minang* albums in gramophone disc, cassette, and VCD formats, it is apparent that the covers have become more and more crowded. On the front covers of gramophone records, the singer’s name is highlighted conspicuously and sometimes no song title is written. In the glory days of cassettes (1970s and 1980s) the singer names and the song titles, maximally two, are usually printed on the front cover. Seemingly both are equally important: they are often written in the same font size. During this period, commercial Minangkabau cassette covers still look relatively ‘empty’. But since the 1990s till the present, cassette and VCD front covers look more crowded not only by singer names and song titles, but also other elements (see below). To a certain extent, the change in Minangkabau commercial album covers over time not only reflects Minangkabau cultural transformation but also represents the way media practitioners (cassette and VCD producers in this case) respond to changing tastes of consumers. Viewed from an economic perspective, producers always try to follow the latest trend in cultural symbols to attract consumers’ interest to their products. By incorporating these cultural symbols into their products, producers hope to locate their products in the consumers’ horizon of expectation.

276 By feeling. Produser atau pelaku produksi biasanya punya feeling [yang] jarang meleset. Memang ada kriteria: kekuatan melodi plus lirik lagu, puitisnya judul lagu, temanya yang sedang trend, ada nuansa tertentu, misalnya magis, trend irama plus musik, penjiwaan penyanyi atau tampil beda (pers. comm., 9-8-2007).

To illustrate the titling practices of *pop Minang* currently, I present in Figure 5.8 the front and back covers of seven albums categorized as standard *pop Minang* which were produced between 2000 and 2008. In Ucok Sumbara's *Nyao Taruhan Kasiah* (Fig. 5.8a), only the title of the album is printed on the front cover (referring to the title of song no. 1). This differs from Zalmon's album (Fig. 5.8b), which presents two song titles on its front cover, 'Titian Lapuak' (song no. 10) and 'Rumah Sudah Tukang Dibunuah?' (song no. 1). Since the former is written in a smaller font than the latter, we assume the title of the album is the latter. In Kardi Tanjung's album (Fig. 5.8c), two song titles are written in almost the same font size on the front cover, 'Surek dari Rantau' (song no. 9) and 'Usah Diratoki' (song no. 4). But the former is written in a slightly larger font than the latter, so that we can conclude that the title of this album is *Surek dari Rantau*. This is rather similar to Dia Camellia's album (Fig. 5.8d), the cover of which has two song titles: 'Balulua Banci Ka Dado' (song no. 3) and 'Kasiah Nan Hilang' (song no. 1). One can surmise that the title of the album is *Balulua Banci Ka Dado* because it is printed in orange combined with yellow. This totally contrasts with Ody Malik's album (Fig. 5.8e). One immediately knows that the title of this album is 'Cinto Tak Sampai' (song no. 1), not 'Minangkabau bukan Kubangan Kabau' (song no. 3), because the former is printed in a larger font size than the latter.

Efrinon's album (Fig. 5.8f) and Tiar Ramon's album (Fig. 5.8g) show many more song titles on their front covers. Nevertheless, we can see that one of them is written in the biggest font. In Efrinon's album, 'Batu Tagak' (song no. 1) can be regarded as its title, though there are two other songs on the front cover: 'Tinggalah Kampuang' (song no. 2) and 'Ubekkan Denai' (song no. 7). Whereas on Tiar Ramon's album, 'Badindin' (song no. 1) can be regarded as its title. Four other songs are written in smaller fonts: 'Helo Pukek' (song no. 10), 'Kambang Bungo' (song no. 2), 'Hujan' (song no. 6), and 'Sayang Tak Sudah' (song no. 12).²⁷⁷

The name of the artist is also strongly foregrounded on *pop Minang* covers. As with the album title and the subgenre title, the name of the artist tends to be printed in a large font in several colours. The artist's name may be positioned anywhere on the front cover. The name of the artist is also printed on the back cover, on the printed side of the disc, and sometimes on the inside of the front or back cover as well. The majority of *pop Minang* albums are released by a single artist, but there are also many albums released by artists in duet and in group performances. As the artists involved in producing an album, their names are shown on the album cover, though occasionally not all artists' names are shown on the front cover, as can be seen with Ucok Sumbara's *Nyao Taruhan Kasiah* ('Life at stake for love') (Fig. 5.8a). The second artist's name (Wenny Afni) and picture are shown only on the back cover of this album.

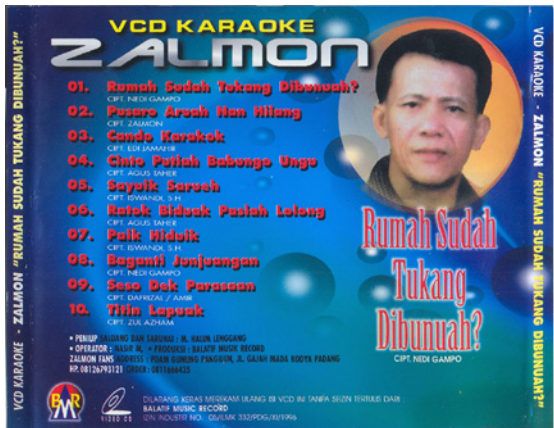
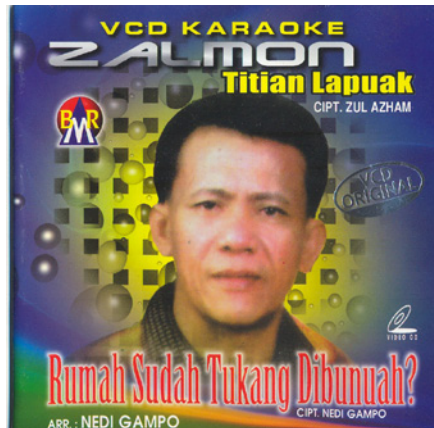
Another element of text often presented on *pop Minang* covers is the subgenre of *pop Minang* represented by the songs recorded, such as *Disco Reggae Minang*, *Tembang Favorit*, *Saluang dangdut*, *Pop Minang Ekslusive*, and *Karya Legendaris*. The words used are often taken from English, such as *disco* (not *disko*), *show*, and *standard* (not *standar*). On the front cover of one of Ucok Sumbara's albums produced by Sinar Padang Record, for instance, we find printed in

277 Unlike most *pop Minang* albums, this album contains twelve songs instead of ten.

A



B



C



D



E



F



G

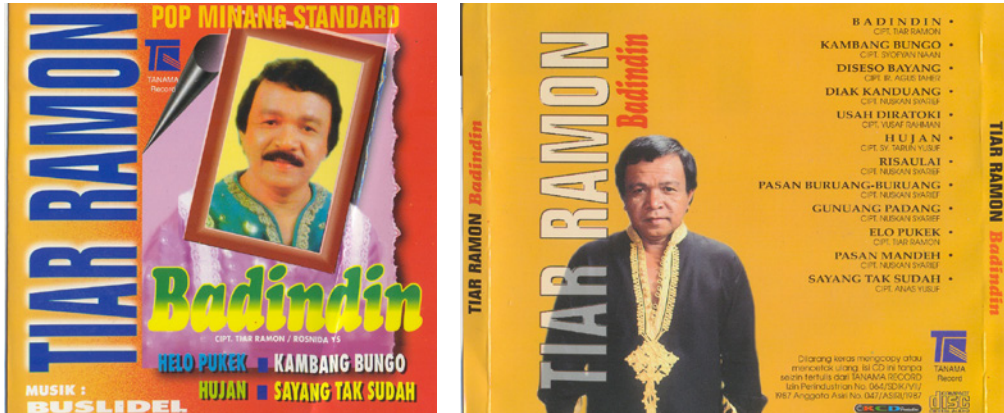


Figure 5.8 (pp. 150-152): Front and back covers of seven standard pop Minang VCDs: A) Ukok Sumbara's [and Wenny Afni's] *Nyao Taruhan Kasiah* (Sinar Padang Record); B) Zalmou's *Rumah Sudah Tukang Dibunuh?* (Balatuf Music Record); C) Kardi Tanjung's *Surek dari Rantau* (Sinar Padang Record); D) Dia Camellia's *Balulua Banci ka Dado* (Planet Record); E) Ody Malik's *Cinto Tak Sampai* (Pitunang Record); F) Efrinon's *Batu Tagak* (Sinar Padang Record); and G) Tiara Ramon's *Pop Minang Standard: Badindin* (Tanama Record)

large fonts 'Pop Minang Standard' and 'Best Seller', and on Boy Shandy's album 'The best of slow hits Minang' (Fig. 5.9). This suggests that the English language has also entered Minangkabau pop music, as has occurred in popular culture in various other Asian countries (see Lee and Moody 2012). However, the English influence in pop Minang is limited to the text on the cassette and VCD covers and does not affect the song lyrics.

Other information presented on pop Minang covers is the name of each song's composer and lyricist. Sometimes on the covers we find more detailed information about backing vocalists, presenters, sound engineers, music arrangement, operators/mastering, and the producer's name. The company's logo is also an important element presented on the front and back covers of pop Minang albums. It always appears on pop Minang VCD covers. On some VCDs the logo is very much enlarged. The term 'VCD', 'Video CD', or 'VCD karaoke' is usually found on the front cover of pop Minang. Some other phrases often found on pop Minang covers, such as 'Special VCD Emas' and 'VCD original', seem to be intended to indicate the specialness and originality of the album. Another phrase often found is 'Stop Pembajakan' ('stop piracy') which, seen from the presence-absence consideration, is apparently intended to remind the consumer to buy the original product, not a pirated copy. But, as discussed below, these messages are bound up with complex socio-political and economic aspects of Indonesia's cassette culture.

Generally speaking, the design of cassette and VCD covers of new pop Minang is not far different from that of their standard counterparts. But one element is outstandingly distinctive, and that is the photographs of the singers, which usually present them wearing clown-style clothes that certainly convey humour and comedy. For example, male singers wear shirts, short or long trousers, long gaudy coloured shoes, sometimes combined with Minangkabau



Figure 5.9: Examples of pop Minang albums with English text that stands out on their covers. Left: Ukok Sumbara's album (Sinar Padang Record, 2005); right: Boy Shandy's *Anggan Balayia* (Planet Record, 2005)

traditional clothing like *peci* (cap), *destar* (headband), and *sarung* (*sarong*) worn in eccentric ways (Fig. 5.10). It is clear that such photographs are intended to present humorous images which fit with the comical song lyrics of the albums. But, directly or indirectly, these humorous photographs of singers also suggest opposition to conventions. In other words, the eccentric appearance of the singers in the photographs laughs at tradition.

As noted by Wallach (2002:119), 'In Indonesia, pop artist photographs are usually integrated into an overall design scheme that incorporates the artist's name and the album title (which often is not the same as the title of the song)'. This is also true of the covers of pop Minang albums. On the majority of cassette and VCD covers, the singers are depicted in clear



Figure 5.10: Cover images of a new pop Minang VCD entitled *Bagurau dalam lagu* ('A joking song') by Buset and Pipin K., Planet Record, 2013

and well-lit photographs. Artists appear in traditional, modern Western-style fashion, or wearing modern-style Muslim headscarves (*kerudung*), the last being a concession to the desire for modernism among female Muslims in a Muslim-majority country like Indonesia, as well as to reverse the association of pop music with Western culture. Compilation albums usually feature a collage of photos of the artists involved in the recording (Fig. 5.11). But on most recent pop Minang cassette and VCD covers, the popular singers, especially those of the new generation, appear in modern-style dress. Many male singers are portrayed wearing Western-style shirts (*kemeja*), often with a jacket or a leather jacket. Female singers appear with modern short hairstyles, sometimes wearing a hat, and dressed in modern fashion.

Minangkabau commercial cassette and VCD covers seem to reflect the appropriateness of Western dress for pop Minang, showing male and female artists dressed elegantly and very often looking directly into the camera. Apparently, the modern Western-style clothing shown on covers, which tends to be respectable and decent clothing, is acceptable to consumers, possibly because in Minangkabau society modernity has long been accepted and far from unknown as part of their cultural experience. Minangkabau *perantau* have long played an important role in promoting modernity to their compatriots in the homeland. This brings to mind the debate about jackets and neckties, two symbols of modern fashion introduced by Western-educated Minangkabau intellectuals in the 1920s. As Graves (1981) has noted, the Minangkabau are an Indonesian ethnic community that in the early stages most enthusiastically accepted the Dutch education system, as successfully implemented by the people of the small



Figure 5.11: Three contrasting images of singers' photographs on Minangkabau VCD covers suggesting the influence of traditional adat, Islam, and modern Western-influenced fashion

village (*nagari*) of Koto Gadang in the West Sumatra highlands of Agam, from where a group of Minangkabau modern intellectuals emerged at an early date.

Another aspect shown on cassette covers is printed text such as the title of the album, the name of the singer(s), the name and logo of the recording company releasing the album, the name of the composer(s), and the name of the musicians. These bits of text displayed on the cassette cover are not all the same in terms of size. Considering this, Wong (1995:45) mentions that ‘the relative value of different parts of the text is usually indicated by size, that is, the title or the singer’s name is usually in the largest print, whereas text that is expected to have little impact on marketability will be in the smallest possible print. Some information never makes it into print at all. Connections between the text(s) and images on a cassette cover are open to extensive manipulation.’ Among the bits of text displayed on Minangkabau cassette covers, those which appear in the largest print are the singer’s name or the title of the album. The album’s title is usually written in the Minangkabau language, using Latin script, which is usually linked together with words such as ‘pop Minang alternatif’, ‘disco Minang’, or ‘pop Minang legendaris’.

The consumers of *pop Minang* cassettes and VCDs whom I interviewed mentioned that the biggest and most conspicuous text on the front cover of an album is automatically considered to be its title, no matter where on the front cover it appears. When a customer wants to buy a cassette or VCD, he/she always asks the seller for it by referring to the biggest sized text on the front cover or by mentioning the name of the singer(s). No doubt besides having cultural meanings that represent Minangkabau responses to the changing world, various symbols shown on cassette and VCD covers also function as veiled advertisement intended to attract consumers. Hence the appearance of artists on cassette covers is not natural but seems to have been recast and polished. An ostentatious and flashy appearance of the singer on a cassette cover may play an important role in the marketing of this product. As Wallach argues, ‘the Indonesian music cassette is a commodity designed to attract consumers by conveying specific information about the genre it represents and the ideal audience for whom it is intended’ (Wallach 2002:114).

POP MINANG AND REDEFINING MINANGNESS

So, what is the cultural significance underlying the lively debates on the subject of *pop Minang*? What is the meaning of the various symbols, modern and traditional, represented in audio as well as visual elements of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs? If we view this in the context of ethnicity as an imagined community, then it can be said that it is no other than a reflection of the sharing of a sense of collectiveness: the sense of Minangness. In other words, we can interpret such debates as showing a feeling of togetherness within an ethnicity. As one of the most highly structured human cultural expressions, music can be used to challenge and deconstruct rigid notions of ethnic particularity (Hyder 2004:320). It ‘encapsulates social groups’ most essential values affecting individual members’ worldviews or “cosmovisions” (Béhague 1994:v). Jennifer Anne Fraser (2007) has shown how Minangkabau people, in the homeland and in *rantau*, package Minangkabau ethnicity by using music (and other elements of

Minangkabau culture). Music is a constitutive element in identity formation for the composer as well as the audience, because the symbols incorporated in it may have a certain cultural connotation which is familiar to those who share a specific group identity (Wolvers 2010:12).

The continuous evolution of *pop Minang* provides a micro example of how Asian popular musics and cultural industries, facilitated by modern media, develop in local socio-political and cultural contexts, and directly or indirectly impact on expressions of ethnicity, inter-ethnic relations, and the complexity of relations between ethnic groups and the state. *Pop Minang*, which has now spread beyond West Sumatra through many media, not only through cassette and VCD but also through radio and Internet, appeals to the Minangkabau community as a whole. It is no longer centred on a particular village, but increasingly covers the whole regional or ethnic group, including Minangkabau in both the homeland and in *rantau* (Barendregt 2002:420).

Actually, commercial cassettes and VCDs of regional music are ‘most truthful in recording social reality and treat it as an entertaining reflection of life’ (Suwarna and Yunita 2011). They are cultural sites that record local socio-cultural changes as well as the collective memories of a particular community. Barendregt (2002) has shown convincingly that *pop Minang* has played a significant role in redefining Minangness (*rasa keminangan*) among the Minangkabau people who, due to their widespread *merantau* (out-migrating) habit, have formed a diaspora all over Indonesia as well as overseas. Conversely, *pop Minang* has served as a marker for other ethnic groups in Indonesia to identify Minangkabau ethnicity. Some standard *pop Minang* songs such as ‘Ayam den Lapeh’ (‘My hen has run away’) and ‘Kambanglah Bungo Parawitan’ (‘Parawitan flower is blooming’) have become famous nationally. By using Bahasa Minangkabau Umum, the common dialect among Minangkabau people from diverse regions of West Sumatra, *pop Minang* increases agency by bringing together all Minangkabau, geographically and socially. Unlike Minangkabau traditional genres, such as *rabab Pariaman*, *indang*, and *dendang Pauah*, which are associated with particular regions of West Sumatra (see Chapter 6), *pop Minang* no longer implies allegiance to a particular village of origin. Thus *pop Minang* addresses the Minangkabau community as a whole.

Regional music like *pop Minang* functions as an ethnic marker as well as a national symbol for Indonesian migrants, those who came from Minangkabau in this context, who live abroad. Conversely, in a national context, Minangkabau music will be associated just with the Minangkabau ethnicity. In contemporary Indonesian cultural life, which is more and more strongly influenced by pop culture, *pop Minang* functions as a means by which Minangkabau people distinguish themselves from other ethnic groups and, at the same time, it is a cultural expression used by those of other ethnic groups to recognize the Minangkabau ethnicity. This ethnic consciousness can be strengthened by external factors. The popularity of *pop Minang* among some neighbouring ethnic groups (see Chapter 4) has directly or indirectly engendered pride among Minangkabau people, which in turn has raised the sense of Minangness.

The popularity of *pop Minang* among neighbouring ethnic groups may also be due to the language factor: socio-linguistically, the Minangkabau language is regarded as a ‘Malay dialect’ (Suryadi 2006b), and historically, Minangkabau writers made a significant contribution as

pioneers of modern standard Bahasa Indonesia (Anwar 1976). Prominent among the regional pop music of western Indonesia, commercial cassettes of *pop Minang* spread outside the Minangkabau ethnic homeland, West Sumatra, along with Minangkabau migrants who settled in many towns of the island (and other islands). The migration factor indirectly contributed to introducing *pop Minang* outside its region and culture of origin: as early as the 1950s the Minangkabau Gumarang music group was formed in Jakarta by some Minangkabau migrants in that city, with the result that Minangkabau pop music became known nationally at an earlier stage than other Indonesian regional music styles of the outer islands.

Through *pop Minang*, Minangkabau ethnic identity has been subtly redefined: increasingly an overall regional or generalized ethnic identity is conveyed, encompassing Minangkabau people in both the homeland and the *rantau* (Barendregt 2002:27). *Pop Minang* today is a widely established genre and has become a new symbol of Minangness. It has come to express a regional cultural ideology, by stressing regional characteristics, standing as a representative of Minangkabau ethnicity, and everywhere confirming Minangkabau ethnicity.

CONCLUSION

Pop Minang is the largest category of West Sumatran recording industry products. It is a local cultural musical expression in which the elements of Minangkabau traditional music, national music, and global music hybridize in a complex alliance. Born in *rantau* (Jakarta) in the 1950s, the genre was given its start by the Gumarang band organized by some talented young Minangkabau migrants. Since its first appearance in *rantau*, the genre has been inextricably connected with recording media (initially the gramophone disc). In the 1970s *pop Minang* developed in West Sumatra, the homeland of Minangkabau people, along with the rising consumption of cassettes in Indonesia and West Sumatra's political and economic recovery after the collapse caused by the PRRI civil war. Since then, *pop Minang* has developed significantly, supported by the West Sumatran recording industry, which has also influenced the live regional pop music of surrounding ethnic groups.

Pop Minang consists of several genres and subgenres in which the elements of three kinds of music are mixed: traditional Minangkabau music, regional music, and global music. It also links up with the world of local politics. The involvement of *perantau* in the beginnings of *pop Minang* suggests the importance of external elements in its development. Since the beginning, *pop Minang* has had a hybrid character by combining elements of traditional Minangkabau music with regional and foreign ones. This characteristic has been persistently embedded in *pop Minang* up to today, as suggested by the emergence of what is called 'new *pop Minang*', which contrasts aesthetically with its standard counterpart.

Pop Minang is a principal cultural means through which Minangkabau people build agency, reinvigorating their Minangness in changing times. *Pop Minang*, which uses the Bahasa Minangkabau Umum dialect that is acceptable and understandable for all Minangkabau people, is an effective means to raise the sense of regionality. Representing cultural unity in an ethnic context, *pop Minang* creates a musical language of togetherness that can emotionally

link Minangkabau people in the homeland and in *rantau*. Debates among the Minangkabau centre on aesthetic innovations of *pop Minang* and reflect how Minangness has been redefined.

Like products of pop culture in general, *pop Minang* has become a tool for local cultural transformation, as represented on cassette and VCD covers of this genre. Such covers are cultural sites in which the Minangkabau adaptation to ongoing changes in the world is represented. Using a mixture of symbols of regionalism and globalization, *pop Minang* cassette and VCD covers are a popular phenomenon in which Minangkabau ethnicity is evoked and the tension between tradition and modernity is represented. Both audio and visual elements of *pop Minang* commercial recordings encapsulate the cultural dynamics of Minangkabau ethnicity facing the globalized world.

The next chapter will shed light on the second category of the West Sumatran recording industry's products: commercial recordings of Minangkabau verbal arts. It describes the Minangkabau verbal arts genres that have appeared on commercial cassettes and VCDs. It also examines how the recordings have affected the features of these genres and changes in their reception.

TRADITIONAL VERBAL ARTS MEET RECORDING INDUSTRY

This chapter²⁷⁸ focuses on the rise of a regional recording industry of Minangkabau oral literature.²⁷⁹ It sketches the changes that have occurred in Minangkabau traditional folk genres under the impact of cassette- and VCD-based commercialization. The production of commercial cassettes and VCDs of these genres grew from the 1980s onwards, stimulated by the significant development of the West Sumatran recording industry. However, as I will describe, the mediation of Minangkabau verbal arts has been occurring ever since the ‘talking machine’ era.

The most significant development in modern media in Indonesia is the emergence of a ‘cassette culture’, to borrow Manuel’s term (1993). In the context of ethnicity, this phenomenon has drawn traditional verbal arts performers to engage with modern electronic media. Nowadays verbal arts genres of numerous ethnic groups in Indonesia have been recorded on commercial cassettes and VCDs. While foreign scholars are interested in this phenomenon,²⁸⁰ Indonesian scholars seem unaware of it. Even as more and more local bards’ chanting has been captured on commercial cassettes and VCDs produced by regional recording companies, Indonesian regional verbal arts are considered as simply the repertoire of a traditional rural society untouched by modern media technologies. Indonesian researchers in this field have merely examined the impact of print media on traditional oral literature, a topic commonly discussed in seminars such as those frequently organized by ATL (Asosiasi Tradisi Lisan, ‘(Indonesian) Oral Tradition Association’). In such academic forums debates are often heard on whether the committing of oral literature genres into print will degrade their existence or can save them from extinction. Such a discussion of course presents a false picture, as if regional oral literature in Indonesia had not yet been touched by modern audio-visual media.

As regional recording industries in Indonesia have had a significant impact on Indonesia’s regional verbal arts, research done on them should be expanded by analysing the influence of modern electronic media on these verbal arts. The aim of this chapter is to examine how Minangkabau verbal arts engaging with recording media have shifted the cultural and musical conventions of these genres. I argue that numerous Minangkabau verbal

278 This chapter is based on Suryadi 2010.

279 Here I use the term ‘oral literature’. Though this term has sometimes been disputed on the grounds that it is self-contradictory if the original etymology of ‘literature’ (connected with *litterae*, letters) is borne in mind, the term has been widely accepted (Finnegan 1977:16). In this chapter I also use the term ‘traditional verbal arts’ as a substitute for ‘oral literature’, because what we are discussing here are regional cultural expressions expressed in oral language. These cultural expressions of course strongly engage with Minangkabau oral tradition.

280 See, for example, Andy Hicken’s ethnographic and ethnomusicological study of this phenomenon, using as a case study Torajan music in central Sulawesi (Hicken 2009).

arts genres have found their own ways to continue their existence in today's electronic society, and the West Sumatran recording industry's penetration into Minangkabau verbal arts has influenced their characteristics: their story-line, word choice, and artistic style. The genres that can adapt successfully to modern media will have a greater chance to survive. Due to the mediation of verbal arts genres, the Minangkabau people, both in the homeland and in *rantau*, have added to the ways they enjoy this mediated cultural repertoire. I want to show how the mediation of such genres, the commercial recordings made of them, has expanded their reception, both geographically and in terms of audience.

MINANGKABAU ORAL LITERATURE GENRES

There are many genres of Minangkabau verbal arts, which in regional and national terminology are called *kesenian tradisi* (traditional arts).²⁸¹ In Indonesian cultural discourse, this term covers diverse forms of regional arts presentations: storytelling or non-storytelling with specific rhythms and tunes, accompanied by musical instruments or not; those that do not involve verbal elements (like dance); and those that incorporate verbal elements (singing or chanting), music, and physical acting, like traditional theatre.

In the following section I briefly survey the major genres of Minangkabau oral literature which have been recorded by West Sumatran recording companies on commercial cassettes and VCDs. They include:

1. *rabab Pariaman*, *rabab Pesisir Selatan* (or *rabab Pasisia*), *dendang Pauah*, and *sijobang*: genres that consist of storytelling (*kaba*²⁸²), and are sung by professional singers, using specific rhythms and tunes, accompanied by musical instruments. These genres are performed by one singer accompanying himself on an instrument, or one singer accompanied by an instrumentalist.
2. *indang*, *saluang jo dendang* (or *bagurau*), *salawat dulang*, and *pidato adat dan pasambahan*: genres that consist of traditional *pantun* verse, sometimes interspersed with narrative verse, and are chanted by professional singers, using specific rhythms and tunes, accompanied by particular musical instruments.

281 Adriyetti Amir, Zuriati, and Khairil Anwar (2006) recorded some 50 genres. But some other genres are not on their list, such as *luambek* in Pariaman regency (Pätzold 2004), the tiger-capturing song *dendang managkok-marinda harimau* in Pasaman (Kartomi 1972; Kartomi 2012:31-41), and *batintin* in Rao-Rao, Tanah Datar regency (Susanti 1992; Mulyadi et al. 2008:22-6).

282 *Kaba* are Minangkabau folktales consisting of narratives which present the social and personal consequences of either ignoring or observing the ethical teachings and norms embedded in *adat* (Bakar et al. 1979; Djamaris 2004). Traditionally, *kaba* are sung by storytellers in narrative verse with diverse rhythms and tunes, accompanied by traditional musical instruments such as *rabab* (spike-fiddle, violin), different sorts of bamboo flutes (such as *saluang Pauah*, *bansi*), *adok* (a sort of tambourine), *kotak korek api* (matchbox), *kucapi* (steel-stringed zither), *pupuik* (aerophone made of rice stalk, with horn made of young leaves of coconut), and *talempong* (small kettle gong).

3. *randai*: traditional open-air theatre, which incorporates chanting, music, and physical acting.

Traditionally the aforementioned genres existed in particular regions with texts strongly influenced by a particular dialect of the Minangkabau language. *Rabab Pariaman* and *indang* exist in Pariaman district on the northwest coast of West Sumatra. Performed by a solo singer who accompanies himself on a small three-stringed lute called *rabab galuak* (*galuak* is a coconut shell, used for the body of the instrument; see Suwondo et al. 1977:57-9), *rabab Pariaman* tells classic *kaba*²⁸³ stories (Witnayetti 1992; Suryadi 1996, 1998). In contrast, *indang* is performed by three troupes (*sandiang*), each consisting of 8 to 22 performers, accompanied by a small frame drum which is called *rapa'i* (Kartomi 1986). *Indang* is performed as a contest in which two troupes face each other (while the third troupe acts as the host). The essence of *indang* is '*bersilat lidah*', which means literally 'fight with the tongue': the main singers of each group tease the other group by using a literary register of the Minangkabau language full of allusion, allegory, metaphor, and aphorism. *Indang* does not tell *kaba* stories. A plenary *indang* performance involves 21 troupes over fourteen nights, and is usually presented at *nagari* (Minangkabau village confederacy; indigenous political unit) festivities or at festivities celebrating the installation of a *panghulu* (Sulaiman 1989/1990; Suryadi 1994; Ediwar 2003; Ediwar 2007).

Rabab Pesisir Selatan and *dendang Pauah* are performed locally in the lowlands of West Sumatra's west coast. As suggested by its name, *rabab Pesisir Selatan* traditionally exists in Pesisir Selatan district, which is on the southwest coast of West Sumatra. *Rabab Pesisir Selatan* tells modern *kaba* stories.²⁸⁴ It is performed by a solo singer accompanying himself on a *rabab*, which looks similar to a violin (Suwondo et al. 1977:30-1; Suryadi 1993a; Arni 1995; Koto 2003).²⁸⁵ *Dendang Pauah* is found on the outskirts of Padang in Pauah district and surroundings. In this genre, the lyrics are composed in verse form (see description below) and are full of allegories, metaphors, and allusions. *Dendang Pauah* tells modern *kaba* stories. It is performed by two performers (usually male): a singer (*tukang dendang*) and a flute player (*tukang saluang*), who plays a bamboo flute called *saluang Pauah* (Suryadi 1993b).

Sijobang is found in Lima Puluh Kota regency in the West Sumatra highlands. It is performed by a solo singer (*tukang sijobang*) accompanied either by the rhythmic tapping of a half-empty matchbox or by the strumming of the steel-stringed *kucapi*. *Sijobang* relates the

283 The classic *kaba* tell stories set in the traditional kingdoms. The main characters have supernatural power (Junus 1984). The only modern *kaba* narrated in *rabab Pariaman* is 'Siti Baheram'. This story is based on a real tragedy: the robbery and murder of a rich woman named Siti Baheram in the village of Sungai Pasak in Pariaman on 11 November 1916. The suspects were a gambler named Joki, who was one of the victim's relatives, and his friend named Ganduik (*Sinar Sumatra*, 16 November 1916). The Dutch colonial government punished Joki by hanging him and Ganduik was sentenced to prison for several years. Since then, this tragic story has become very famous in Pariaman and surroundings and is represented in diverse art genres.

284 Modern *kaba* represent modern Minangkabau social life and cultural environment in the post-colonial era, with common people as the main characters (Junus 1984).

285 Linguistically, *rabab Pesisir Selatan* lyrics tend to use literal and modern words and phrases, noticeably different from the language of *rabab Pariaman* lyrics, which are rich in allusions, metaphors, and allegories.

adventures and romantic exploits of a hero known as Anggun Nan Tongga Magek Jabang (Phillips 1981).²⁸⁶

The four remaining genres, *saluang* (*bagurau*), *salawat dulang*, *randai* and *pidato adat dan pasambahan*, are found in many parts of West Sumatra, but sometimes carry local names.²⁸⁷ The Minangkabau *bagurau* (literally jollity) involves humorous *pantun* singing. It is performed by a troupe usually consisting of one *saluang* (flute) player (male) and one or two singers (female) (Sukmawati 2006). The lyrics of the songs, which evoke the atmosphere of village life and serve as a vehicle for teaching morals, stir the audience's emotions and generate a nostalgic mood. As it is usually performed at night, the *saluang* performance is also known as *malam bagurau* (evening of jollity) (Firman 1992; Sukmawati 2009).

*Salawat dulang*²⁸⁸ is a religious art form for 'remembering God' (Kartomi 1986). It is performed by two pairs of male singers, who accompany themselves by rhythmic beating on round brass trays (*dulang* or *talam*), as opposed to frame drums. The text, which is recited to the beat of a round brass tray, consists of Islamic teachings. *Salawat dulang* does not tell *kaba* stories (Amir 1995; Amir 2009:27-39). It essentially performs a 'fight with the tongue' (like *indang*), but the topics deal with religious matters. The performance is set up as a contest between the two pairs who chant in turn.²⁸⁹ *Salawat dulang* is very popular among the Minangkabau, since this ethnic group is strongly associated with Islam (Amir 1996; Bahar 1997).

Randai is a Minangkabau genre of open-air folk theatre. This type of traditional drama is found in many parts of West Sumatra. Previously almost every *nagari* had its own *randai* troupe. Unlike other genres, *randai* is a high-spirited combination of dance, martial arts, dialogue, and music in a theatrical performance of Minangkabau *kaba*, accompanied by *talempong* gong-chime, as well as other gongs, drums and *pupuik* (aerophone made of rice stalk, with horn made of young coconut leaves), which produce a repetitive texture consisting of interlocking rhythms (Kartomi 1981; Pauka 1998; Latrell 1999; Cohen 2003).

286 On the printed versions of the 'Kaba Anggun Nan Tongga Magek Jabang', see Bagindo Kajo 1925, Djamin and Tasat 1934 and Mahkota 1962. For the Malay version of this story, see Winsted 1914.

287 In Pariaman, for example, *salawat dulang* is called *salawat talam* or *batalam*, and in the Tiku district of Pariaman the local name for *randai* is *simarantang* (see Phillips 1981:5).

288 As has often appeared on cassette and VCD covers of this genre, though sometimes spelled *shalawat dulang*. In oral pronunciation it was pronounced *salawaik dulang* or *salawat talam* in some places, because in some Minangkabau areas *dulang* (drum brass tray) is called *talam*.

289 Reflecting its essence as a 'fight with the tongue' verbal art, *salawat dulang* troupes have powerful sounding names, such as Kilek Barapi ('Blazing Thunderbolt'), Piriang Talayang ('Flying Saucer'), Arjuna Minang ('Minang Arjuna'; in this context, the word *arjuna* can be meant womanizer or the chief hero of the *Mahabharata* who was well-known for his martial arts and sexual prowess), Gurun Sahara ('Sahara Desert'), Mustang (a type of fighter plane well-known during World War II), DC 8 (a type of aircraft produced by Boeing), Langkisau (Minangkabau word for whirlwind), Peluru Kendali ('Guided Missile') and Garuda Minang ('Minangkabau Garuda'; *garuda* is a mythical bird, mounted by the god Vishnu in the Hindu religion, which is used as the official seal of the Republic of Indonesia), which are strong and threatening in their referential meanings (Amir 1996). Each pair of performers asks questions (in *gurindam* or *syair* form), or members of the audience may ask the competitors questions, ranging from the religious to the clairvoyant, seeking advice or information (Kartomi 1986).

Pidato adat dan pasambahan is ceremonial oration or speech-making using a highly standardized literary register of the Minangkabau language, heavy with analogy, metaphor, allegory, and simile. It is presented on the occasion of events such as wedding parties or the festivities celebrating the installation of a new *penghulu* (head of matrilineal unit). The essence of this genre is also a ‘fight with the tongue’ (Hasselt 1883; Kasih 2008). Though the genre exists in many parts of West Sumatra, its textual composition differs between the Minangkabau highlands (*darek*) and the western coastal lowlands (*‘rantau’*, literally ‘place of migration’).

The texts of all these genres, whether they tell *kaba* or not, are composed in narrative verse chanted to various tunes. The texts of *rabab Pariaman*, *rabab Pesisir Selatan*, *sijobang*, *randai*, and *pidato adat dan pasambahan* are composed in narrative verse, but of course rhyming *pantun* are also used, usually to introduce the story, to mark turning-points in the plot, and to end the singing²⁹⁰ (Navis 1984:247-9; Phillips 1991:81). The texts of *dendang Pauah*, *indang*, *saluang* and *salawat dulang* are composed in stanzaic verse forms – the former three in *pantun* form and the latter in *syair* form. In all these Minangkabau traditional verbal arts genres, each genre has its own vocabulary and idioms, giving rise to a wide variety of local traditions within West Sumatra.

Minangkabau oral literature genres are traditionally performed on public occasions of celebration, such as marriage festivals, the celebration of Prophet Muhammad’s birthday at *surau* (religious shrines), *nagari* festivals (*alek nagari*), and festivities celebrating the installation of a new *penghulu*. Performances are also often held to raise money for building public facilities like schools and village halls (*balai desa*). They are usually performed at night, after the *Isya* prayer (around 9 p.m.) continuing to daybreak (around 5 a.m.). For that reason, Minangkabau verbal arts are called the ‘night music of West Sumatra’.²⁹¹

EARLY RECORDINGS OF MINANGKABAU VERBAL ARTS

A historical review shows that traditional Minangkabau verbal arts genres were one of the earliest regional oral repertoires of Sumatra recorded on gramophone disc. In 1939, for example, the Minangkabau *saluang jo dendang* was available on the Odeon Gajah label, produced by Toko Minangkabau in Fort de Kock. Referred to as ‘Njanjian Minangkabau Asli’ (‘authentic Minangkabau songs’), the *saluang jo dendang* appeared on two discs: the first disc had ‘Lagoe Simarantang’ and ‘Lagoe Moenah Kajo’ on one side and ‘Lagoe tangisan oerang Batoe Sangka’ on the other side. These songs were part of a *randai* play taken from classical Minangkabau literature.²⁹² The chanter (*tukang dendang*) of this disc was Djamarieh

290 In *sijobang* performance, for example, *pantun* are used in three ways: as *pantun pasambahan* (introductory *pantun*) before the story; to mark the beginning, resumption or end of a stint of singing; and as part of the dialogue and narrative itself (Phillips 1979:12).

291 To use Philip Yampolsky’s phrase. Yampolsky made a series of CD recordings of *saluang*, *dendang Pauah*, and *rabab Pariaman* in 1994, supported financially by the Smithsonian Institution. See http://www.folkways.si.edu/projects_initiatives/indonesian/liner_notes/volume06.html (accessed 5-3-2008).

292 See Karim Halim’s essay ‘Si Marantang dan Moenah Kajo dalam kesoesasteraan Minangkabau’, *Minami*, 1 April 1943, pp. 19-21. The story tells about a rich itinerant girl merchant named Moenah Kajo (Rich Moenah)

(Djamaris in Malay spelling) from Batagak Bukittingi, the flute players (*toekang saloelang*) were Mak Pono from Singgalang and Datoek Panggak from Sungai Buluah, while the rice-stalk aerophone player (*toekang pupui*) was Mak Toelah from Koto Tuo. The second disc had 'Lagoe Membuaikan Anak' (Song for rocking a child in a cradle) on one side and 'Lagoe Siti Baheram'²⁹³ on the other side. The chanter was Noeriahsjam from Suliki, Payakumbuh.²⁹⁴

In 1940, Djamaris and his flute player, mentioned above, signed a contract with Toko Delima in Batavia. The contract consisted of eleven articles. One stipulation (Article 7) was that the performers jointly would be paid royalties of 2 guilders for each disc sold by the producer. For the master recording of each song, Toko Delima would pay a one-off fee of 12.50 guilders (Article 8). Article 9 stipulated that all costs for transportation from Bukittinggi (to the recording studio in Batavia) and back, as well as lodging and food, were to be paid by Toko Delima. Under Article 5, Djamaris was prohibited from signing a contract with any other producer. Article 6 stipulated that the singer was not allowed to tell anyone how the recording was made. This document is clear evidence that a performer of verbal arts genres had been invited to make a recording outside West Sumatra (Batavia) in the gramophone era.²⁹⁵

A well-known *bagurau* performer, Syawir Sutan Mudo, recalled that his *bagurau* performances had been recorded on 78-rpm gramophone discs in the early 1960s before being re-recorded on cassette in 1972 (Yurnaldi 2000). Another well-known *bagurau* performer who was recorded on gramophone records was Adjis Sutan Sati. For example, his music troupe Ganto Sori had been recorded around 1960 on a gramophone record containing twelve songs (Fig. 6.1). In the same period, Elshintar Record produced a disc of the haunting Minangkabau *bagurau* music with the singer Bujung Kamang and the flute player Djaizar Sutan Nagari. Their music troupe is called Minang Saiyo. Their performance was recorded on a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm disc containing six songs (Fig. 6.1). It is likely that Minangkabau *kaba* were also recorded on gramophone discs, and circulated in West Sumatra as well as in *rantau*. In Batavia, for example, the main distributor for *kaba* commercial discs was Toko Delima in downtown Batavia (Salim 1941:back cover). Since no copies of these recordings can be found now, I could not accurately determine which genres had been recorded on them. Nevertheless, it is very possible that recordings were made of *rabab Pariaman* or *rabab Pesisir Selatan* performances, two genres of Minangkabau verbal arts which are very popular for chanting Minangkabau *kaba* stories.

who was robbed by Si Marantang and his friends when she and her uncle (*mamak*) passed by a lonely place in the Minangkabau highlands. Si Marantang is a gambler who in Minangkabau was associated with *parewa*, a male group in Minangkabau society who were not so religious because they loved their traditional customs (*adat*), hence they formed a contrast to religious groups. Moenah succeeded in beating him. Si Marantang restored Moenah's treasures robbed by him. He was punished by the Dutch colonial authorities with exile. At the end of his article, Karim mentions that the song was recorded on disc. See also Halim (2604 [1944]).

293 See footnote 6.

294 See Sinar Sumatra, 6 July 1939.

295 I would like to thank Prof. Mahdi Bahar for sending me a copy of this contract, which had been in the possession of Djamaris until he died.



Figure 6.1: Cover images of the Minangkabau verbal arts genre *bagurau* recorded on gramophone discs (Source: <http://madrotter.blogspot.com/2010/02/djazar-sutan-nagari-bujung-kamang.html>, accessed 20-1-2011)

COMMERCIAL CASSETTES AND VCDs OF MINANGKABAU VERBAL ARTS

According to Umar Junus, in 1971 a small private company in Padang produced commercial cassettes of the *rabab Pesisir Selatan* ‘Kaba Hasan Surabaya’ (‘The story of Hasan of Surabaya’), performed by Syamsuddin (Junus 1994a:410; Junus 1994b:109). This was the first instance of a Minangkabau oral literature genre released in cassette format for commercial purposes. Over the following years, in step with the increased consumption of cassettes in Indonesia, the number and variety of commercial recordings of Minangkabau oral literature grew. Most such recordings were produced by two leading West Sumatran recording companies situated in Padang: Tanama Record and Sinar Padang Record. Both companies were established in

the mid 1970s. Since the 1990s some other new competitors, such as Pelangi Record, Minang Record, and Talao Record, have also produced Minangkabau oral literature on commercial cassettes and VCDs.

In the following paragraphs I describe the cassettes and VCDs of Minangkabau oral literature genres made by West Sumatran recording companies. I aim to depict how far Minangkabau verbal arts have penetrated the West Sumatran recording industry. However, not all recordings ever released by West Sumatran recording companies are listed here, especially those that appeared in the late 1970s and 1980s, simply because the companies lack good archives. Most commercial cassettes of Minangkabau oral literature genres which are still reproduced up to today were initially recorded in the 1990s, while their VCD versions were produced after 2000.

Rabab Pariaman commercial recordings have been mostly produced by Tanama Record and released only in cassette format, performed by the singers Amir Hosen, Aly Umar, and Bagindo Sukiman, where the singer accompanies himself on a *rabab*. But recently the competitor Sinar Padang Record has been producing VCDs of *rabab Pariaman*. Appendix 5 provides a list of *rabab Pariaman* commercial recordings, both in cassette and VCD formats, which I was able to identify during fieldwork. Featuring the authentic characteristics of the genre, the visual images of *rabab Pariaman*, both on cassette and VCD covers (Fig. 6.2) and on their VCD clips, show traditionalism rather than modernity. Two generations of *rabab Pariaman* have been involved in recording media since the initial spread of cassette technology in Indonesia: the generation of singers Amir Hosen and Aly Umar, whose commercial recordings mostly appeared in cassette format in the 1980s and 1990s, and their successors like Monen and Mayur, whose commercial recordings were produced in VCD format starting in the early 2000s (Fig. 6.2).

Indang recordings have been released on cassette since the 1990s as well as on VCD since 2000. Like *rabab Pariaman*, the visual images shown on *indang* covers show traditionalism, though on the VCD covers one can perceive modernity in the performers' makeup and clothing (see Fig. 6.3). For example, Tanama Record produced cassettes of an *indang* troupe from Toboh Sikaladi village in Pariaman regency led by A. Karim (4 cassettes). The troupe is famous for the dexterity of its performers, who are very clever in playing *rapa'i* (small frame drum, the musical instrument typically used in *indang* performance), for their brightness in answering all the questions posed by the opponent troupe, and for the verbal pitfalls they fire off. Tanama also produced *Indang Piaman Sagi Tigo* ('Pariaman *indang* triangle'; 3 cassettes), performed by three troupes from Padang Kapeh, Kayu Samuik, and Banda Labuah villages, all situated in Padang Pariaman regency, and *Sejarah Syekh Burhanuddin dan Adaiik Basandi Sarak* ('The history of Shaikh Burhanuddin and Shariah as the basis for custom'; 6 cassettes) by the *indang* troupe led by Alam Sudin. In 2009 Sinar Padang Record produced VCDs of *indang* entitled *Indang Tradisi Pariaman Asli* ('Authentic *indang* of the Pariaman tradition'). The performance was carried out by troupes from Guguak Lurah Ampalu, Padang Baru Koto Buruk (Lubuk Alung), and Mangoe Batu Kalang villages, all situated in Padang Pariaman regency. I learnt from Pian (45 years old), one of the senior performers of the Koto Buruk



Figure 6.2: Rabab Pariaman cassette and VCD covers

troupe I interviewed on 29 October 2009, that Sinar Padang Record planned to produce subsequent volumes of this series, all in VCD format.

Rabab Pesisir Selatan is the most popular genre of Minangkabau oral literature produced by West Sumatran recording companies; it has been appearing since the early 1970s. The singers of this genre are engaged by cassette producers more often than their comrades of any other verbal arts genre. Rabab Pesisir Selatan employs lyrical prose using modern Minangkabau language enriched by humour. Commercial recordings of *rabab Pesisir Selatan* have been made in cassette and VCD formats (see Fig 6.4). Appendix 6 provides a list of the commercial recordings of this genre that I identified during fieldwork.

Among the singers of *rabab Pesisir Selatan* who have released commercial cassettes and VCDs, Syamsudin seems to have been the pioneer. His recording of ‘The story of Hasan of Surabaya’ (5 cassettes) was released in 1971. In several other recordings, male singers

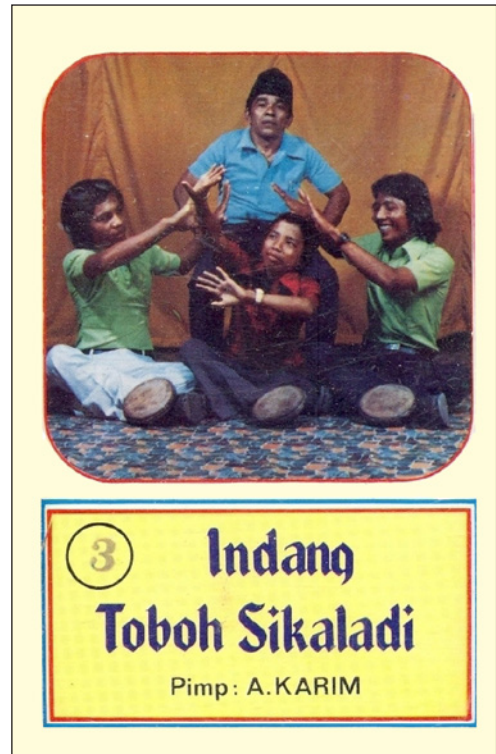


Figure 6.3: Indang cassette covers (above); indang VCD and its cover (below)

appear in duet with female singers such as Nurana or Erni. Sinar Padang Record has been the most aggressive company in producing commercial VCDs of *rabab Perisir Selatan*. Some singers have been recorded frequently by the company. For example, Siril Asmara, son of Pirin Asmara, has released 20 VCD titles under Sinar Padang Record's label. His VCD of *Kaba*

Sutan Palembang ('The story of the Prince of Palembang'), for which I observed the process of making the video clips (Fig 6.11), was released in mid 2011.

The visual images on the covers of *rabab Pesisir Selatan* commercial recordings suggest that this Minangkabau storytelling genre responds openly to cultural change and globalization. Modernity is visibly represented on the covers as well as on the clips of recent recordings of this genre. I would say that *rabab Pesisir Selatan* is the most flexible Minangkabau verbal arts genre, absorbing an element of modernity in its narratives and its performers. Examining *Kaba Zamzami jo Marlaini* ('The story of Zamzami and Marlaini', one of the most famous modern stories in this genre), as released by Tanama Record on commercial cassette by the singer



Figure 6.4: Rabab Pesisir Selatan cassette covers (above) and VCDs (below)

Syamsuddin, Edwin Wieringa (1997)²⁹⁶ concludes that Minangkabau bards, in this context the storytellers of *rabab Pesisir Selatan*, incorporate modern elements in the stories they recite, making the stories current and relevant to their audiences.

Dendang Pauah seems to have been released in cassette format only, with titles such as *Kaba Seorang Bapak yang Tidak Bertanggung Jawab* ('The story of an irresponsible father'; 3 cassettes), produced by Tanama Record (Fig. 6.5). It was recorded by the singer Harun St. Rajo Bujang and the *tukang saluang* (flute player) Syarif Bagindo Basa. This story is none other than a modern version of *Kaba Urang Lubuk Sikaping* ('The story of the Lubuk Sikaping people')



Figure 6.5: *Sijobang* cassette cover (above) (photo by Nigel Phillips; the cassettes were initially in the possession of Gerard Moussay); *dendang Pauah* and *bagurau* cassette covers (below)

²⁹⁶ Wieringa's analysis refers to my transcription and translation of the recordings of this story (see Suryadi 1993a).

(see Suryadi 1993b). Another performance by Harun recorded by Tanama is *Pasan ka Rantau* ('Message to our migrants'; 1 cassette). Tanama also released *Kaba Siti Jamilah* ('The story of Siti Jamilah'; 3 cassettes), performed by Burhan (singer) and Indiak (flute player).

The first commercial cassettes of *sijobang* appeared in 1974. Sung by Samsuir N., *Kesenian Minang Dandang Batambek Sijobang* (5 cassettes) was produced by Tanama Record in Padang (Fig. 6.5). Some amateur recording companies in Payakumbuh, capital of Lima Puluh Kota regency, also released *sijobang* recordings in the 1980s, which were sometimes played by vendors of folk medicines (*panggaleh ubek*) to attract customers (Phillips 1981:9). However, in recent times it has been difficult to find commercial recordings of *sijobang* on the market. Tanama Record and other West Sumatran recording companies in Padang and Bukittinggi

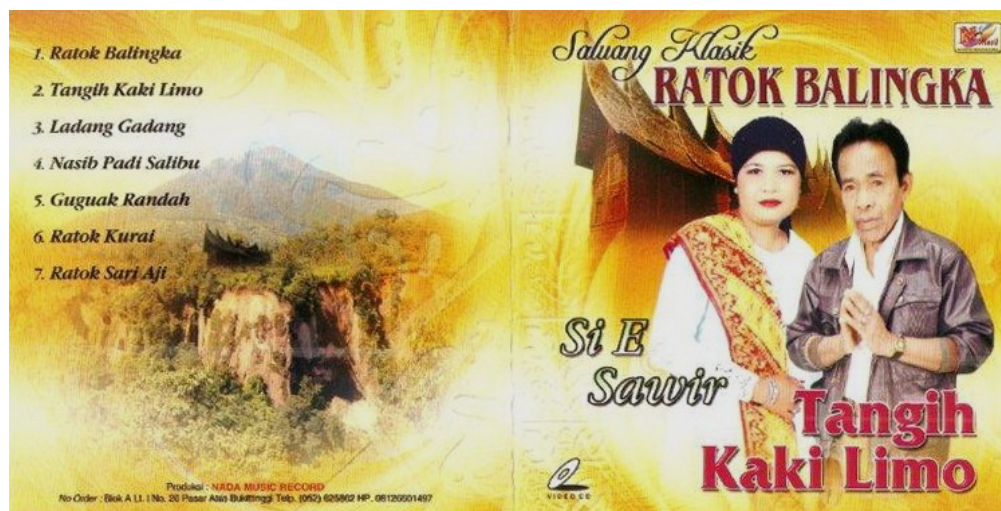


Figure 6.6: VCD covers of two recent commercial recordings of classic saluang or bagurau (photos by Andiko Sutan Mancayo, 2010)

no longer produce commercial recordings of this genre.²⁹⁷ Perhaps this is because such cassettes are consumed only locally by Minangkabau from Payakumbuh and surroundings, as the language of *sijombang* is highly coloured by the Payakumbuh dialect of Minangkabau. Hence, *sijombang* is not so popular in other regions of West Sumatra because the language used is not agreeable to the ears of Minangkabau language speakers outside the Payakumbuh dialect area.

Commercial recordings of *bagurau* have been mostly produced by Tanama Record. One example is *Solok Bacangkeh* ('Solok has cloves'), by the Minang Maimbau troupe with its well-known female singer Syamsimar (Fig. 6.5). Called *saluang klasik* ('classic *saluang*'), it is performed by one or two female singers accompanied by a male *saluang* flute player. In 2009 some producers like Minang Record and Nada Music Record in Bukittinggi produced VCDs of classic *saluang* (Fig. 6.6). Nowadays, due to the greater influence of the West Sumatran recording industry, *saluang* is adopting new lyrics and musical styles that incorporate elements of *pop Minang*. This transformation is reflected on the covers of *saluang* cassettes and VCDs in the new style, which is described as *saluang maso kini* ('contemporary *saluang*') (Fig. 6.7), *saluang dangdut* ('dangdut-style *saluang*') and *dendang saluang mode AseRege* ('chanting *saluang* Asereje style') – the latter was inspired by the song melody 'Asereje' by three Spanish sisters known as Las Ketchup that became a worldwide hit in 2002.

Randai recordings have also appeared on cassette and VCD. Among the *randai* cassettes produced by Tanama Record are *Kaba Salendang Dunia* ('The story of a pretty girl named Salendang Dunia'; 2 cassettes) performed by the Karih Pusako troupe; *Kaba Puti Ambun Suri & Buyuang Sarunai* ('The story of Princess Ambun Suri and Buyuang Sarunai'; 2 cassettes), and *Kaba Palimo Gaga jo Reno Nilam* ('The story of Commander Gaga and Reno Nilam'; 2 cassettes) performed by the Pulai Sati troupe; *Kaba Siti Rowani* ('The story of Siti Rowani'; 3 cassettes) and *Kaba Magek Manandin* ('The story of Magek Manandin'; 3 cassettes) performed by the Rumah Gadang '83 theatre troupe in Jakarta (Rosa 1990). Since 2000 *randai* recordings have also been produced in VCD format, for example, *Kaba Bujang Denai & Nilam Suri* ('The story of Bujang Denai and Nilam Suri') and *Kaba Rambun Pamenan* ('The story of Rambun Pamenan'; 4 VCDs), both produced by Minang Record in Bukittinggi (Fig. 6.7). Minang Record had previously released these recordings in cassette format. The VCD format enables the audience to enjoy not only the audio aspect of this Minangkabau folk theatre, but also its visual aspect.

Commercial recordings of *salawat dulang* are now available in cassette as well as VCD format, mostly produced by Tanama Record. Some prominent *salawat dulang* troupes from Tanah Datar and Agam regencies have been recorded by Tanama. Among *salawat dulang* cassettes released by this company are *Nabi Ibrahim & Pengorbanan-Nya* ('The Prophet Abraham and his sacrifices') performed by the Piriang Talayang troupe opposing the Gurun Sahara troupe (Fig. 6.8), *Takalo Nyao Kabapulang* ('When the soul is about to go home') performed by

297 Likewise the *ronggeng Pasaman* genre. Indra Nurdin (41 years), the warehouse manager (*kepala gudang*) of Tanama Record, mentioned that Tanama no longer (re)produces *ronggeng Pasaman* cassettes because of low consumer demand since it was first produced by his company in the mid 1980s (pers. comm., 25-9-2009). For more on *ronggeng Pasaman*, see Amir, Zuriati, and Anwar 2006:129-31; Gayatri 2010.



Figure 6.7: Modern saluang VCD and its cover (above) and randai VCD and its cover (below)

the Arjuna Minang troupe opposing the DC 8 troupe (Fig. 6.8), *Sabalun alun baralun* ('Before time began') and *Mengenal Hal Tubuah Nan Salapan* ('On the eight components of the human body') performed by the Kilek Barapi troupe opposing the DC 8 troupe (Fig. 6.8). In addition, *Martabat Diri* ('Self-respect'; 2 VCDs) performed by the Arjuna Minang troupe opposing the Langkisau troupe and *Nyawa dan Kulimah* ('The soul and the confession of faith') performed by the Kilek Barapi troupe opposing the DC 8 troupe are recorded in VCD format (Fig. 6.8).

Pidato adat dan pasambahan recordings seem to have been produced since the 1980s, pioneered by Yus Dt. Parpatiah, a *penghulu* from Maninjau, West Sumatra, who became the leader of the Rumah Gadang '83 theatre troupe in Jakarta. Commercial recordings of this genre have appeared only in cassette format (Fig. 6.9). Some recordings present Yus Dt. Parpatiah's monologues, while others present dialogues involving several actors. This genre is speeches in narrative verse spoken in a literary register with no musical accompaniment.



Figure 6.8: Salawat dulang cassette covers (above); salawat dulang VCD and its cover (below)

In unmediated public performances, a *pidato adat* performance in monologue is found only when celebrating the installation of a new *penghulu*, while in other contexts like marriage festivities it is performed in dialogues involving actors who can be grouped into hosts and guests. However, the commercial recordings of the genre feature more monologues than dialogues. Jennifer Anne Fraser mentions that such recordings, which are also used by Minangkabau migrants holding wedding parties following Minangkabau cultural practices in *rantau*, have homogenized *pidato adat*, disregarding its many variants. ‘The process of homogenization is made explicit through the apologetic announcement declaring that the recording presents a composite Minangkabau *adat* rather than any one specific practice’ (Fraser 2007:327), thus eliminating the local characteristics of the genre when presented in live performances. The recordings mostly present the old generation’s wise advice to young generations of Minangkabau to continually incorporate Minangkabau traditional custom and cultural identity in their lives, and to be aware of the negative impact of modern foreign

culture and globalization. This can be seen in volumes like *Kepribadian Minang* ('Minangkabau personality'; 2 cassettes), *Nasehat Perkawinan Versi Adat* ('Adat version of marriage advice'; 2 cassettes), and *Pitaruah Ayah untuak Calon Panghulu* (Father's advice for a candidate lineage head'; 2 cassettes). Other volumes present the ideal conception of Minangkabau custom (*adat*) while focusing on the dilemmas faced by Minangkabau traditional leaders (*niniak-mamak*) in the globalization era, as can be seen in *Konsultasi Adat Minangkabau* ('Consultation on Minangkabau custom'; 2 cassettes) and *Baringin Bonsai: Krisis Kepemimpinan Niniak-Mamak Di Gerbang Era Globalisasi* ('The bonsai banyan: a crisis of village leadership in the transition to globalization'; 2 cassettes). So, the recordings present the ideal version of Minangkabau *adat* on the one hand and on the other hand a way to respond to the cultural changes caused by modernization and globalization that seem to threaten Minangkabau identity.

Recordings of Minangkabau oral literature, whether in cassette or VCD format, and whether containing *kaba* or non-*kaba* stories, often come out in a multi-volume set. The *rabab Pariaman* recording of *Kaba Nan Gombang Patuanan & Sutan Pangaduan*, for example, takes twenty 60-minute cassettes. Many other *kaba* recordings fill 4 to 6 cassettes. *Kaba* VCD recordings also take several volumes, filling up to 7 VCDs. Non-*kaba* recordings, such as some of the *rabab Pariaman* genre – *Raun Sabalik* performed by Aly Umar, or *Jalan Kuliliang Bilang Nagari* ('Travelling around describing the villages') performed by Amir Hosen – take one or two cassettes. The media-bound genre of modern Minangkabau cassette drama also appears in multi-volume sets.

Some recordings of Minangkabau oral literature are released on both cassette and VCD (Fig. 6.10). They are released first in cassette format, and then, if market demand is high, the producer will re-release the recording in VCD format. This process is evident on many Minangkabau oral literature VCD covers, which read: 'Miliki juga kasetnya!!!' ('Possessing its cassettes too!!!'), indicating that the recording is also available in a cassette version. On the



Figure 6.9: Cassette covers of Minangkabau speeches by Yus Dt. Parpatiah



Figure 6.10: Kaba Kejadian di Batipuah Padang Panjang cassette cover (left) and VCD cover (right) of rabab Pesisir Selatan produced by Sinar Padang Record

contrary, cassettes never urge ‘miliki juga VCDnya’ (‘Own its VCD too!’). It is thus clear that the cassette version of the recording was produced earlier than its VCD counterpart. In such cases, the producer presumably uses the same master recording for both the cassette and the VCD versions.

Though the producers and West Sumatran recording industry practitioners I interviewed would not divulge exactly how many copies of each recording have been made, two of them, the aforementioned owner of Pitunang Record and former executive board member of Asosiasi Industri Rekaman Indonesia (ASIRINDO) Agus Taher (59 years old), and Indra Nurdin (41 years), the warehouse manager (*kepala gudang*) of Tanama Record, told me that each recording of Minangkabau verbal arts genres or *pop Minang* albums was produced in an edition of 2,000 copies of cassettes or VCDs. It is difficult to obtain accurate statistics on the production numbers of West Sumatran recording companies since many producers seem reluctant to give information on how many recordings their companies make and sell. Cassette and VCD covers give no date of the first edition on following editions, and this applies to all genres produced by West Sumatran recording companies.²⁹⁸ Perhaps the producers do not want outsiders to consider the significant profits they might have earned. But what startled me is the account of a traditional arts performer named Musra Dahrizal who indicated that some producers seem to have acted as hijackers who ‘pirated’ their own products. Musra is a performer of the Minangkabau verbal arts genre called *bagurau*. His avowal is based on

298 The dates of cassettes and VCDs cited in this book (see References: Discography) were obtained by asking the publishers or the singers.

his own experience when he was recorded by a producer (he does not mention the name of the producer). He said he was paid Rp 500,000 for one song (roughly US\$ 50). According to Musra, the producer reproduced his recording without informing him, even though in the initial agreement between the producer and the performer, it is stated that performers will receive additional royalties for reproduced copies of their recordings. 'It can be said that in West Sumatra the producers are 100% hijackers,' he said (pers. comm., 6-10-2011). This helps us understand how regional producers are able to survive during a period often hit by economic fluctuations. Though having the status of small-scale businesses, regional producers seem to have grabbed a significant profit by practising 'clandestine pirating' on their own products, which enables them to minimize expenditure by paying less money to performers.

As has occurred in other regions (see Weintraub 2004:170 on the production of Sundanese *wayang golek* commercial cassettes), performers of Minangkabau oral literature who have been recorded by West Sumatran recording companies have been excluded from decisions relating to aspects of production, including editing. Due to the *jua putuih* contract system between performer and producer, as explained in Chapter 4, the producer has unlimited rights to reproduce the master recording. Usually, storytellers of Minangkabau oral literature do not receive additional royalties or remuneration from their reproduced cassettes or VCDs. Production dates are not usually noted on cassette and VCD covers, so it is difficult to calculate how many times a master recording has been reproduced. Thus the *jua putuih* contract system is exceptionally beneficial for producers because they can reproduce unlimited numbers of copies from the master recordings they hold.

Most master recordings of Minangkabau oral literature genres in cassette format are made in studios. Established producers such as Tanama Record, Sinar Padang Record, and Talao Record have their own recording studios, which are sometimes rented by other producers who do not own a recording studio or by producers of regional pop recordings from neighbouring provinces like Jambi and Riau (see Chapter 9). When the master recordings are produced in a studio setting, it means that the performances are carried out without the participatory audience which would be present at a public performance, where audience reactions 'affect the nature and purpose of performances of oral poetry in various ways' and 'often have an effect on the form and delivery of a poem' (Finnegan 1977:231).

Likewise, the master recordings for Minangkabau oral literature genres in VCD format are also made in studios, while the video clips are made outside the studio. In an interview with Pian (45 years old), a senior performer in the *indang* troupe from Koto Buruk called Lubuk Alung, who was involved in the production of *Indang Tradisi Pariaman Asli* (3 VCDs) released by Sinar Padang Record in 2009 (Fig. 6.3), he explained that the performances for the master recordings of the VCDs were first recorded in the Sinar Padang Record studio in Padang. After that the competing troupes performed again in public in several locations in Pariaman, by day and by night, to shoot video clips which were then integrated into the VCDs. During the public performances, the master recording was played in order to keep it corresponding with the performers' body movements. This technique is also used in making

VCDs at the national level in Indonesia (see Wallach 2008). A similar process was used in producing clips for Siril Asmara's new VCD of *Kaba Sutan Palembang* ('The story of the Prince of Palembang') produced by Sinar Padang Record. On 19 July 2011, I was invited to see the process of making clips in the Padang suburb of Pasir Jambak. Organized by crew members of Sinar Padang Record, Siril was shot with a video camera while he moved his mouth as if he were really talking, following the sound of the master recording that was being played. He was shot from different angles and had to change his dress several times (Fig. 6.11).

Replication of copies from the master recording, both for cassettes and VCDs, is carried out in Jakarta. According to Agus Taher, cassette producers are unwilling to establish a recording factory in West Sumatra because of the high cost involved, and the likelihood that it would not be profitable if it relied only on local consumers (pers. comm., 11-1-2010). For these reasons of cost, the replication of master recordings is still carried out in Jakarta.

KABA VCD CLIPS: ANACHRONISTIC IMAGES

The production of *kaba* recordings in VCD format has enabled and challenged producers and performers to visualize these stories. How are such stories, most of them referring to the past, translated into clips? In general, West Sumatran producers use personnel and technology at as cheap a cost as possible. Because of their status as small-scale businesses, the companies have limited capital and must be careful in spending money.

The clips of Minangkabau *kaba* on commercial VCDs are of two types: 1) images of the singers in different clothes that are often shot from the front; 2) images of individuals representing the characters of the stories against a background of urban or rural scenes. The singers look static: they sit facing the camera with an unchanged position throughout the recording. But they appear randomly during the recording in different styles of clothing. Some singers wear Western-style clothes like a business suit and tie, while other singers wear non-Minangkabau clothes like *batik*²⁹⁹ and Islamic-style clothes. Images of singers exhibited on the covers of such VCDs are pictures taken during the making of the clips. But other images are taken from photos of performers wearing clothes particularly intended for the cover design of the VCD. So, these visual images, on the covers as well as in the clips, iconographically represent elements of regional culture and global culture, past time and present time, which suggests the cultural tension between authenticity and modernity.³⁰⁰

The images of countryside scenes, as a backdrop for characters' actions, are always from the Minangkabau region, but often do not correspond to the stories. The most extreme case

299 Though *batik* originated in the Javanese culture, it has become the national symbol of Indonesian textile.

300 This tension can also be suggested in the printed words found on these VCD covers: on *indang* VCD covers (also on cassette covers), for example, we find the text 'Pariaman Asli' ('authentic Pariaman') (see Fig. 6.3), whereas on the covers of some *rabab Pesisir Selatan* VCDs (also on cassette covers) we find the text '*gaya baru*' ('new style') (see Phillips 1991:81), suggesting the storytellers' attitude to modernity. Conversely, on another cassette cover we find the text '*rabab Pesisir Selatan asli*' ('authentic *rabab Pesisir Selatan*') with pictures of the performers wearing Minangkabau traditional clothing (see Fig. 6.4).

can be seen in the clips of *Kaba Gombang Patuanan* ('The story of Prince Patuanan'), a set of VCDs produced by Sinar Padang Record with the singers Momen and Mayur (see Appendix 5). *Gombang Patuanan* is a classic *kaba* about a young prince from Pariaman who struggles to free his mother, who was kidnapped by an evil king.³⁰¹ This classic *kaba* is set in the traditional kingdoms with the main characters having supernatural power. The story is very popular in the Minangkabau west coast rantau (Tiku, Pariaman, Padang, and Pesisir Selatan). There are no characters in the clips that represent the characters of the story. It is different with the clips of *rabab Pesisir Selatan*. Since this genre tells modern *kaba*, visualization of the characters of the stories in clips is not as difficult as visualizing characters in *rabab Pariaman*, which mostly tells classical *kaba* stories. Appearing in a modern setting, clips of *rabab Pesisir Selatan* show the characters wearing modern clothes and using modern technologies (like cars and motorcycles) in rural or urban settings. Nevertheless, they do not fully match the stories, which mostly represent the Minangkabau socio-cultural situation prior to the 1950s.

Lengthy traditional narratives like *kaba* originally had only auditory characteristics. When they are presented in VCDs, producers try to translate parts of the stories into visual form. This is of course not necessary if the stories are recorded on cassettes. Because the narratives are so long, VCD producers seek a way to supply the oral aspects with matching visual elements. But this is not easy since the stories deal with times in the distant past. As a consequence, the visual element does not match the audio element: the distant past of the story sung by the singer is translated into a modern-time situation in the video clips.



Figure 6.11: Making clips for Siril Asmara's *Kaba Sutan Palembang* ('The story of the Prince of Palembang') of *rabab Pesisir Selatan* (17 VCDs) produced by Sinar Padang Record (photograph by Suryadi, 2011)

301 For further details of this story, see Udin 1991. A synopsis of this story is available at: http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaba_Sutan_Pangaduan (accessed 30-9-2011).

The producers and singers I interviewed mention that presenting the singers in different styles of clothes in clips is intended to avoid monotony for the audience. This is one way the medium of VCD has adapted to the long duration of traditional oral narratives like *Minangkabau kaba*. It is interesting to see how space, event, and time are presented on the *kaba* VCDs. The clips of singers look rather static, whereas clips of landscapes show one scene after another in rapid succession. So, the clips of *kaba* VCDs are constantly presenting opposition and distortion not only in terms of the nonmatching of the audio (the story itself) and the visual (clips) elements but also the chaotic variety of images in the clip itself (Suryadi 2011c). I conjecture that this affects the audience's understanding of the story, making it different when listening to *kaba* on cassettes compared to attending live performances.

EFFECTS OF RECORDING ON ORAL TEXTS

My investigation of the narrative of *kaba* stories in commercial recordings shows that storytellers take the medium into account when they compose texts for commercial recordings. I mean that certain characteristics can be identified in the texts of oral literature genres that are performed for commercial recordings. For example, particular lines and formulaic expressions found in the recorded texts suggest that storytellers are aware of the limited space available on media like cassette and VCD. Consequently, this influences some features of the recorded texts, which differ from the texts used for live public performances. When watching the aforementioned *indang* VCDs produced by Sinar Padang Record, I noticed some couplets in which the performers say that they could not talk at length because time does not allow (*dek wakatu indak maizinan*), indicating that a consciousness of the limited space on a VCD causes performers to save time. In other couplets performers remind the audience that they are just performing for fun in the studio, implying that the performance they make for the recording is not a competitive tussle as it would be in a public performance.

<p><i>Mako dek tupai balun baambiak, Buah jo tampuak carai alun patuik. Kok diresek-resek buah nan masak, Urang punyo kabun kok marameh paruik.</i></p>	<p>The reason why squirrels have not taken the crop Is that it's too soon for the fruit to part from the calyx, If the ripe fruits are squeezed, The owner of the garden might be frightened.</p>
<p><i>Mukadimahe ndak dipapanjang, Cuma ka panonton sajo nak dagang sabuik, Nak jaleh bana dek urang banyak, Di Sinar Padang kami main bagaluik.³⁰²</i></p>	<p>The introduction will not go on any longer, I just want to say to the audience, In order to make it clear to the public, In Sinar Padang Record's [studio] we perform for the fun of it.</p>

We may hypothesize that a storyteller who has often recorded in studios has his own biological clock to make his narrative match the available space of the recording medium being used. Consequently, the texts of oral literature on commercial recordings may have their own specific characteristics depending on the medium being used. In fact, the oral literature texts

302 Pian Indang, dkk., *Indang Tradisi Pariaman Asli* (Sinar Padang Record 2009, 3 VCDs): VCD no. 3, *sandiang* 3.

recorded on cassette or VCD tend to be condensed, as has been shown by Nigel Phillips, who compared a *rabab Pesisir Selatan* text 'The story of migrating to Jambi' performed at a wedding near Padang and its commercial cassette version, both with the same plot and sung by the singer Syamsudin (Phillips 1991; Phillips 1992). The wedding performance took about six hours to sing, that is about one hour and a quarter longer than the studio recording.³⁰³ '[T]he diction used in the public performance was, on the whole, somewhat less condensed than that of the studio performance' (Phillips 1992:67). Syamsudin told Phillips that producers sometimes remind performers to condense the text. Phillips also noticed a lack of parallelism in Syamsudin's stories on cassette.

When asked about the lack of parallelism in his stories, Syamsudin said that he purposely left out repetitions and unnecessary phrases and tried to speed up his stories because the recording company wanted him to use fewer cassettes per story. This is presumably from a wish to save on fees [...] and to make the stories more attractive to buyers. (Phillips 1991:84)

Nevertheless, it seems that not all recording companies apply this policy, as indicated by the aforementioned recording *Kaba Nan Gombang Patuanan & Sutan Pangaduan* of *rabab Pariaman* produced by Tanama Record, which fills 20 cassettes. However, we can assume that the text of this *kaba* performed in the recording studio is not necessarily the same as the text presented in public performances. A dictum in the theory of oral literature says that circumstances (including audience responses) influence the oral form (Lord 2003:14). There is a difference between oral literature performances conducted in front of a listening audience and those carried out in a recording studio for commercial purposes. In a public performance, the singer interacts with a participatory audience: they make comments, whistle, and clap in response to the singer. Even in performances of some Minangkabau oral literature genres we find such a fanatic audience. For example, in *indang* and *dendang Pauah* performances there is a person who serves as *sipatuang sirah* (literally 'red dragonfly'). Associated with the appearance of a red dragonfly, which contrasts strongly with the surrounding environment dominated by the colour green, the *sipatuang sirah* has the duty to provoke the spectators in order to keep them always enthusiastic about the performance. The *sipatuang sirah* does this by interjecting comments, clapping, and exclamations during the performance (see Suryadi 1993b:21-2; Suryadi 1994:231). This situation is hardly ever re-created for singers of oral literature when recorded in a recording studio. Yet spontaneity and audience interaction is an intrinsic part of the performance of these oral genres.

In the case of a literary poem there is a gap in time between composition and reading or performance; in the case of the oral poem this gap does not exist, because composition and performance are two aspects of the same moment. Hence, the question 'when *would* such and such an oral poem be performed?' has no meaning; the question should be 'when *was* the oral poem performed?' An oral poem is not composed *for* but *in* performance. [...] We must eliminate from the word 'performer' any notion that he is one who merely reproduces what someone else or even he himself has composed.

303 It reminds me of Garrett Kam's study on the influence of commercial cassettes on Javanese classical dance (Kam 1987). Kam found that the duration of Javanese classical dances on commercial recordings are shorter than their counterparts in public performances.

Our oral poet is composer. Our singer of tales is a composer of tales. Singer, performer, composer, and poet are one under different aspects but at the same time. Singing, performing, composing are facets of the same act. (Lord 2003:13, emphasis in the original)

As every performance is in some respects a new creation by the singer, every oral literature performance potentially results in a new text. Consequently, performances conducted in recording studios result in texts which can be expected to show specific adaptations by the singer to the circumstances of studio recording, which usually lack a participatory audience. The singer's awareness of these circumstances is sometimes made explicit. For example, the singer Amir Hosen in *Kaba Nan Gombang Patuanan & Sutan Pangaduan* of *rabab Pariaman* uses formulaic verse elements (*pantun*) that indicate that his text was being performed for a commercial recording. He says (my emphasis):

<i>Ujuang tali pangabek paga,</i>	The end of the string for binding the fence,
<i>Putuih bajelo masuk balai,</i>	Broken, it trails into the market,
<i>Jelo-bajelo ka kadaian,</i>	Trailing and trailing into the shops,
<i>Ujuang nyanyi jatuah ka kaba,</i>	The end of the string falls into the story,
<i>Sakarang kini kito mulai,</i>	Now we are beginning it,
Disambuang [di] kaset nan kalapan. ³⁰⁴	<i>It is continued on cassette number eight.</i>

In the verse quoted above, Amir Hosen announces that he will continue his singing on cassette number eight. Whenever he moves to the next cassette, he uses this formulaic expression, matching the end rhyme of lines three and six. A similar medium-specific formulaic verse is found on *indang* VCDs, as in the quotation below (my emphasis).

<i>Jadi sahinggo itu dulu,</i>	That is enough for now,
<i>Nan lain lo lai carito nak diulangi,</i>	I shall repeat a different story,
<i>Balambek-lambek daulu ka kami sabuik,</i>	We will recount it slowly at first,
<i>Ka Sinar Padang mintak tarimo kasih,</i>	Thanks to Sinar Padang [Record],
<i>Sungguah bapisah kito di hari siang,</i>	Though we are apart in the daytime,
Kaset kaampekk nanti samo dinanti. ³⁰⁵	<i>We'll wait together for cassette number 4.</i>

In sum, it can be said that the engagement of oral literature genres with new media like cassettes and VCDs affects their texts. Such adaptation to cassette and VCD media has the linguistic consequence of new expressions appearing in oral literature texts. The texts of studio performances tend to be condensed, due to less parallelism, fewer pairs of synonyms, and fewer long evocative phrases. Medium-specific formulaic elements are incorporated, a clear indication that the texts are mediated texts.

304 Amir Hosen, *Nan Gombang Patuanan & Sutan Pangaduan* (Tanama Record 1996, 20 cassettes): cassette no. 8.

305 Pian Indang dkk., *Indang Tradisi Pariaman Asli* (Sinar Padang Record 2009, 3 VCDs): VCD no. 3, *sandi* 3.

Philip Yampolsky (1995) has shown how the regional cassette industry (in addition to factors like television, tourism, and central government cultural policies) has changed regional musics and performing arts. He mentions that ‘professionalism in performance is encouraged and proliferation of new repertoire is also encouraged – partly to provide new products for purchase, but also to make the repertoire so extensive that amateurs can no longer master it’ (p. 717). Along these lines, the engagement of Minangkabau oral literature genres with electronic media has, to a certain extent, opened up new ways of reception of these genres in addition to the traditional pattern of public performance at traditional festivities in Minangkabau villages. Commercial recordings of Minangkabau oral literature genres in cassette and VCD formats have provided Minangkabau people, especially the *perantau*, with new ways to appreciate these genres far from their land of origin, West Sumatra.

In West Sumatra itself, the reception patterns for Minangkabau oral literature genres, thanks to their commercial recordings, have expanded. Today we often see commercial VCDs of Minangkabau oral literature played at wedding ceremonies, as I saw on one such occasion on the outskirts of Padang municipality in July 2011. The host placed a television screen on the terrace of the house, linked to a VCD player with powerful loudspeakers (Fig. 6.12). A decade or two ago, such a happening was impossible. Today, devotees of *rabab Pesisir Selatan* who do not have enough money to pay for a live performance, can use an alternative way by playing a commercial VCD.

Cassette retailers I interviewed in Padang, Pariaman, and Bukittinggi said that commercial cassettes and VCDs of Minangkabau oral literature were often bought by Minangkabau migrants. As we know, the Minangkabau people have a tradition of voluntary migration or *merantau*. It is estimated that more than half of the total of six million Minangkabau people worldwide now live outside West Sumatra. Their places of residence are in many towns throughout Indonesia as well as in neighbouring Malaysia and Brunei. So, the products of West Sumatran recording companies are distributed both in the West Sumatran homeland and in *rantau* as well. Cassette and VCD technologies have enabled Minangkabau migrants to ‘take along’ diverse Minangkabau oral literature genres to the *rantau*. Playing such recordings fosters their nostalgia – ‘sentimental longing for one’s past’ (Sedikides *et al.* 2008:305) and ‘a longing for a place’ (Boym 2001:xv). The leading producers, Tanama Record and Sinar Padang Record, have established their own supplier shops in Glodok Plaza, Jakarta, in order to develop new expanding markets of potential consumers. At these supplier shops, retailers based in Java and the islands of eastern Indonesia can order Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs.

For contemporary Minangkabau society, then, attending public performances in the West Sumatran homeland are no longer the only way of enjoying and appreciating their oral literature. Thanks to the electronically mediated Minangkabau oral literature genres available on commercial cassettes and VCDs, Minangkabau migrants as well as those who live in West



Figure 6.12: Watching commercial VCDs of *rabab Pesisir Selatan* during the first night of a wedding ceremony on the outskirts of Padang (photograph by Suryadi, 2011)

Sumatra are now able to appreciate their traditional verbal arts in the privacy of their own home.

I even saw these kinds of recordings marketed in neighbouring Malaysia, where many Minangkabau have migrated (see Chapter 9). The reception of these genres, thus, has expanded to cover a geographically wider area. The best example of this is *rabab Pesisir Selatan*, which nowadays is popular far beyond the boundaries of its original location (Pesisir Selatan regency). Nevertheless, it seems that Minangkabau migrants are not fully satisfied by consuming only recordings of Minangkabau oral genres. Recently Minangkabau migrants have taken on the custom of inviting storytellers of Minangkabau oral literature to conduct performances in *rantau*. For example, *saluang* and *rabab Pesisir Selatan* singers have been invited by Minangkabau migrants living in Jakarta, Bogor, Bandung, Medan, Pekanbaru, Palembang, Batam, and Denpasar (Fig. 6.13). Siril Asmara, a *rabab Pesisir Selatan* singer who has often been recorded by Sinar Padang Record, has been invited to perform many times by Minangkabau migrants in Malaysia since 1998 (pers. comm., 19-7-2011). In the Jakarta district of Petamburan, as another example, there is a restaurant called Kampung Minang Resto that on certain nights offers traditional Minangkabau oral arts performances (like *bagurau* and *rabab Pasisia*) and *kim* game music (see Chapter 5) to its customers, most of whom are Minangkabau migrants. Similar Minangkabau restaurants can be found in other towns, like Palembang, Medan, and Jambi.



Figure 6.13: Performance of a *bagurau* group from West Sumatra who were invited by Minangkabau migrants' Minang Restaurant Association in Bali. The performance was in Denpasar on 29 July 2007 (photograph by Hasanuddin Yunus, 2007)

By coming together to enjoy such performances in *rantau*, Minangkabau migrants' nostalgia for their homeland may be satisfied. This development suggests that the mediation of oral literature genres does not threaten their live performance. Though cassettes and VCDs have created a new audience, especially in urban areas of the *rantau*, apparently people are still inclined to want to enjoy Minangkabau live verbal arts performances in public settings. The success of commercial recordings of storytellers thus seems to have increased the popularity of their live performances – a phenomenon also experienced by Minangkabau pop artists.

CONCLUSION

Historically, commercial recordings of Minangkabau traditional verbal arts were first produced on gramophone discs in the 'talking machine' era, but they grew into a significant phenomenon in the 1980s when cassettes, and then VCDs, became widely used in Indonesia. Nevertheless, many studies on verbal arts in Indonesia still regard these regional oral repertoires as if they were untouched by modern electronic media. This chapter has shown that as the West Sumatran regional recording industry gained prominence in Sumatra, it increased the production of commercial recordings of Minangkabau oral literature genres.

Engagement of Minangkabau verbal arts genres with the regional cassette industry has brought about impacts on these genres' features and socio-cultural meanings. More specifically, the production of commercial cassettes and VCDs of Minangkabau oral literature genres has altered their textual features. For example, some genres, such as *bagurau* and *rabab Pesisir Selatan*, show innovations in the language used in their texts and in their performance style. Other genres still retain their traditional form, although their texts do incorporate references to the recording medium on which they are recorded. Producers have their own approaches to translating spoken text into a visual format. Lengthy oral narratives of Minangkabau *kaba* stories in VCD format present visual clips which do not match the audio content, but audiences have their own cultural conventions for understanding this. Each genre has found a different way of adjusting to changing culture. The visual elements of Minangkabau verbal arts cassettes and VCDs, too, reflect continuity, adaptation, and change in Minangkabau oral storytelling. Such visual images express authenticity on one hand and modernity on the other hand, which can be interpreted as the way Minangkabau people maintain their ethnic identity in the face of a globalized world.

The engagement of Minangkabau verbal arts with modern electronic media has also changed distribution, reception, and transmission patterns. Through commercial cassettes and VCDs, the auditory and visual dimensions of Minangkabau oral literature can now be enjoyed far away from their point of origin. These recordings carry a flavour of traditionalism, which serves to reinforce a sense of cultural authenticity among Minangkabau migrants, and helps maintain an emotional relationship with the homeland. Although new electronic recording media have made performances available to a large, geographically dispersed virtual audience, live performances of oral literature genres still confirm ethnic identity and community, both in the homeland and in *rantau*. In contemporary mediated culture, the popularity of live performance is driven by electronic media. Cassettes and VCDs of Minangkabau verbal arts genres have greatly extended the traditional reception boundaries of these genres. Performers who have made many commercial recordings have become even more popular and are often invited by Minangkabau *perantau* to towns outside West Sumatra to give live performances. This shows that the extensive mediation of oral genres does not threaten their live performance. So, instead of clashing, recordings and live performance mutually complement each other.

After the discussion of the mediation of Minangkabau verbal arts in this chapter, in the next chapter I look at the third category of West Sumatran recording industry products: media-bound genres. Media-bound genres – cultural genres which are dependent on electronic media – emerged as an outcome of the cassette and VCD culture which, as elsewhere, has become a phenomenon in Indonesia. The case study focuses on Minangkabau children's pop music. This choice is not without reason, given that children's involvement in the media industry worldwide, both as performers and consumers, has increased greatly in recent years. The next chapter looks closely at how this phenomenon occurred in the Indonesian regional cultural context.

A MEDIA-BOUND GENRE: MINANGKABAU CHILDREN'S POP MUSIC

This chapter deals with Minangkabau children's pop music, a genre included in the third category of West Sumatran recording industry products, following the first category, *pop Minang* (Chapter 5), and the second category, Minangkabau verbal arts (Chapter 6). In this chapter I look closely at the features of Minangkabau children's pop music and its socio-cultural connotations by asking what this genre tells us about how regional recording industries have affected localized ways children in an Indonesian village experience and adapt to cultural transformation. I argue that such a study will help us to engage more fully with the local cultural dimensions of global children's pop culture.

This chapter, thus, tries to comprehend the 'Minang' in Minangkabau children's pop music and what outside factors have influenced it. I start from the notion that every culture has its own 'children's subculture' in which music is an important element. In this context, I refer to the situation before 1980s when Indonesian ethnic children's games and songs were still widespread and far from the influence of modern media. As I show in this chapter, the penetration of modern media, recording media in this context, into the life of Minangkabau children has tended to eliminate the 'subculture' nature and characteristics of children's music because it has made room for adult intervention. In other words, in this section I assess how far the term 'subculture' is still appropriate for modern Minangkabau children's music on recording media. Children sing everywhere, as Stevenson has observed (1974), and most have their own songs and games. Considering this, it is interesting to examine the cultural significance of regional children's pop music as a contemporary musical phenomenon in Indonesia's regions by investigating the changes that occurred after modern recording media started to affect Indonesia's local communities. As Bruno Nettl remarks, in order to understand the character of a musical culture, one must understand its subcultures, such as that of children (Nettl in Campbell 1998:viii).

While there is a long history of academic interest in children's music internationally, with the term 'children's music' itself commonly used in the global music industry,³⁰⁶ there have not yet been any such studies in Indonesia. Nor has much scholarship been dedicated to the influential role of the Indonesian media industry on children's pop. What studies exist on Indonesian pop music in general tend to concentrate on pop music by and for adults (Frederick 1982; Piper and Jabo 1987; Yamashita 1988; Yampolsky 1989; Hatch 1989:47-67; Arps 1996;

306 For publications on children's music worldwide, see May 1963 on Japanese children; Hopkins 1984 on Jamaican children; Harwood 1987, Merrill-Mirsky 1988, Riddel 1990, and Campbell 1991, 1998 on American children; Osborn 1988 on British-Canadian children; Kartomi 1991 on children in an aboriginal Australian Pitjantjara settlement; Marsh 1995 on Australian inner-city school children; Prim 1995/1996 on Portuguese children; Addo 1996 on Ghanaian children.

Lockard 1998:54-113; Sutton 2000; Barendregt and Van Zanten 2002; Wallach 2008). Based on her investigation of the themes of musical discourse in Indonesia, Margaret J. Kartomi (1995) complains that the phenomenon of Indonesian children's music, both national and regional, seems to have received minimal attention from local scholars as well. This neglect extends to its connection with modern media, including recording technologies and television.

Actually, a children's music culture does exist, and it has its own characteristics. As Patricia Shehan Campbell remarks, adults – the 'outsiders' of children's culture – 'have seldom taken time to tap either the musical thoughts or the natural musical behaviours of children or to seek systematically the function of music in their daily lives' (Campbell 1998:5). Considering children's music from the perspectives of education, musicology, ethnomusicology, and folklore, Campbell demonstrates how music is personally and socially meaningful to children and what values children place on particular musical styles, songs, and functions. Children, like adults, have their own opinions and perceptions of music, concerning where and when they listen to and 'do' music, and for what reasons. Music may be a treasure that children prize for their own personal pleasure, and a tool for their understanding of the world in which they live. In the Indonesian socio-political and cultural context, we will look at how far Indonesian children enjoy autonomy in music and the influence of the commercial context.

MINANGKABAU CHILDREN'S POP MUSIC AS A MEDIA-BOUND GENRE

The mediatized culture that characterizes human life today has led to the formation of media-bound genres. This term denotes cultural genres whose production and consumption are highly dependent on electronic media, genres that exist only on electronic media. At the beginning, such genres existed in one particular medium, but later their mediated existence extended to other media, and recently there is the added complexity of media convergence due to the advent of new social media. For example, *sinetron* (*sinema elektronik*, 'electronic cinema') is a media-bound genre of Indonesian television. Another example of Indonesian media-bound genres is the *sandiwara radio* ('radio play') 'Saur Sepuh', which was very popular among radio listeners in Java in the 1980s. The West Sumatran recording industry has also generated media-bound genres. One such genre is *pop Minang anak-anak* ('Minangkabau children's pop music').³⁰⁷

Minangkabau children's pop music has different characteristics to Minangkabau children's folk music, which includes traditional children's games and songs. Swept aside by modernity, traditional children's games and songs – or *speel en kinderliedjes*, to borrow the

307 Another prominent Minangkabau media-bound genre is modern Minangkabau cassette drama (*kaset drama Minang modern*). The genre was created in the 1980s by two Minangkabau theatrical troupes established by Minangkabau migrants in Jakarta, one named the Balerong Group (*balerong* means 'royal audience hall') established by Yus Dt. Parpatiah in 1980 and the other Teater Rumah Gadang '83 established by Yus Pilihan (Suryadi 2003:62-3). Modern Minangkabau cassette drama was appreciated not only at home but also in intercity buses carrying Minangkabau migrants from their homeland to the *rantau* or vice versa, as reflected in a novel by A. Fuadi (of Minangkabau descent), *Negeri 5 Menara* ('The land of five towers') (Fuadi 2011:18). The same phenomenon can be found among the Batak of North Sumatra (Rodgers 1986). On the psychological and sociological aspects of modern Minangkabau drama, see Rosa 1990.

Dutch term commonly used in Indonesia during colonial times (see for example Overbeck 1939) – almost completely disappeared from the mid 1980s onwards. The context of this disappearance is the radical transformation of Indonesia’s cultural environment and the modernization of Indonesian society. This includes the growth of modern audio-visual media consumption through televisions and VCDs, from urban areas right into remote rural villages. In earlier times, traditional unmediated children’s games and songs existed within the compass of various Indonesian ethnic groups.³⁰⁸

Ethnic games and songs have their own features and cultural environment. Within a particular ethnic group, traditional children’s songs and games for boys and girls tended to be differentiated due to gender segregation and for religious reasons. The religious reasons applied more strictly among communities strongly influenced by Islam. Minangkabau society provides a clear example: boys spent their time mostly in the *surau* (‘prayer house’) and *sawah* (‘paddy field’), while girls played at home with female relatives of their matrilineal extended family (Boejoeng 1929). The boys had their own songs and games which were distinct from those of the girls. Such gender separation is not visible in contemporary children’s pop music.

Traditional ethnic games and songs, unlike modern children’s pop music, were sung without musical accompaniment.³⁰⁹ And, unlike modern children’s pop music, which is mostly appreciated in front of the television screen, traditional games and songs were played publicly on various occasions, such as when the full moon came out at night, during rest time at school, or when children played together with neighbours. Unlike children’s pop songs, which are composed by particular songwriters, and therefore are copyrighted, traditional games and songs are anonymous.

Structurally, traditional ethnic games and songs were usually a combination of play and song, as suggested by the title of Kreemer’s 1898 article: ‘Javaansche kinderspelen met zang’ (‘Javanese children’s games with song’). Similar games and songs were also found in Minangkabau (see Boejoeng 1929). I recall a game called *sembalakon* (elsewhere pronounced *simalakon*, literally ‘chase actors’), which I played together with my friends during my childhood in Pariaman in the 1970s. This combination of play and song seems to be absent in modern children’s pop songs because they are mediated through audio-visual media that cause the audience to be positioned outside the singing event, and the playful aspect is largely gone.

308 Among colonial and pre-modern media industry writings and documentation of such traditional Indonesian children’s subcultures, see Klinkert 1885:47-41 and Putten 2001:224 on Riau Malay, Leiden manuscript Cod. Or. 5995 on Minangkabau, Dewall 1901 on Betawi Malay, Kreemer 1898 and Overbeck 1936 on Javanese children, Soeganda 1923 and Holtzappel 1952 on Sundanese, and Eggink 1932 on Mandailing, while Kool 1923 documents children’s games and songs of diverse parts of Nusantara archipelago. Post-colonial works on this subject are Doorn 1976, Gieben, Heinen, and Sapuleteij 1984, Supriyanto 1991, Heryana 1999, and Kusdiana et al. 2001.

309 Nowadays, many traditional children’s songs, especially from a Javanese cultural background, are available in modern printed books, written in Indonesian as well as regional languages, and complete with musical notation, both modern and traditional (such as *gamelan*). See for example Subiharso 1991, Dwidjosoebroto and Soekirno 1992, Widodo and Sutarno 1995, and Bramantyo 2000.

Below are the lyrics of the traditional Minangkabau children's game *sembalakon* mentioned above. They are set in *pantun* form:

<i>'Nak-'nak endong,</i>	Playing tag,
<i>Barabah ampek-ampek,</i>	Like birds flying by fours,
<i>Si Kandung bacicik'an,</i>	Comrades shrieking,
<i>Dikaja indak dapek.</i>	Are chased but cannot be caught,
<i>Mandi ka Solok,</i>	Take a bath in Solok,
<i>Bagusuak daun pudiang,</i>	Rub down with laurel leaves,
<i>Balaki indak elok,</i>	To get married is not good,
<i>Baranak putiah kuniang</i>	Have a fair-skinned child.

The traditional game *sembalakon* was performed by boys after they finished Quran recitation in the *surau* around 10 p.m., usually when the full moon comes out at night. The boys are divided into two opposing teams. One team are the pursuers, the other team are the pursued, as determined by lot. The pursuing team has to catch its opponents, who disperse and hide in the dark. They have to bring them to a sentry post situated close to the *surau*. The lyrics transcribed above are sung as preparation for starting the chase. After loudly pronouncing the final line, the pursuers scream 'Alah linteh?' ('Are you ready to be chased?'). If they get the answer 'Alah!' ('Ready!') from the members of the opposing team, it means the game can begin (interview with Zamzami, aged 44 years, in Sunur, Pariaman, West Sumatra, 12 July 2004). Apparently the game was also found in the Padang highlands, as described by Muhammad Radjab in his autobiography (1950:35-42), while Moussay (1995:1, 351) mentions a similar game called *bacik-endong*. Such ethnic children's games and songs have become extinct in contemporary Indonesian local culture, having been replaced by new mediated counterparts.

In the above description, what I want to say is that modern Minangkabau children's pop music, which will be further analysed in this chapter, can be categorized as a 'media-bound genre'. Unlike its counterpart for adults, which exists not only in recording media but also in live performance (Chapter 5), the Minangkabau children's pop music genre never existed in the form of live performances presented to the general public (pers. comm. with cultural observer Nasrul Azwar, 5-6-2014).

ADVENT OF MINANGKABAU CHILDREN'S POP MUSIC

Though Minangkabau children's pop music has flourished since the year 2000, its first existence dates back to the late era of the gramophone. For example, in 1970 Perindu Record in Jakarta released a commercial recording of Minangkabau children's songs entitled *Lagu Anak2 Minang* on 331/3 rpm disc. The child singers of the recordings are named Nina, Santi, end Elsa, supported by renowned adult artist Elly Kasim. Among these child singers, there was a daughter of an adult singer: she is Nina Nuskan, daughter of male Minang artist Nuskan Sjarif. The disc contains twelve songs, including 'Naiak bendi' ('Getting a horse car'), 'Si

Leki' (name of a puppy), and 'Usah manangih' ('Do not cry'). These were the first composed Minangkabau children's songs outside the traditional games and songs category. They were composed by Nuskan Sjarif and friends in Jakarta, not taken from traditional children's folk games and songs already existing in West Sumatra. Some songs in this album like 'Sepeda mini' represent elements of foreign culture. Other songs like 'Ka parak tingga' ('Go to unowned land') and 'Sala lauak' ('Fried fish'; a traditional culinary dish of Pariaman) were copied from adult albums. Both are earlier standard *pop Minang* songs that were popularized by Elly Kasim. As far as I know, such children's albums had not been widely produced on disc when the gramophone era ended in the early 1970s. The *Lagu Anak2 Minang* album is possibly a rare example.

In fact, in the 1930s there was a child singer famous in the vicinity of Bandung and Batavia with Minangkabau blood named Sjaugie (or Boeng Sjaugie). The boy was a son of St. Perang Boestami, the leader of Orkes Penghiboer Hati, one of the music groups founded by Minangkabau *perantau* that was very famous in Bandung and surroundings in the 1930s and 1940s (see Chapter 5). Born in Tanah Abang, Batavia, in 1927, Sjaugie can be seen as the product of the earlier Minangkabau generation of *perantau*, meaning that he was undoubtedly influenced by the urban culture of Batavia and Bandung and other ethnic cultures like Sundanese rather than solely by the Minangkabau culture inherited from his parents. Based on Thio Eng Hoat's information on this child singer and his father's music group Penghiboer Hati, I surmise that despite the fact that the boy was proficient in Minangkabau dances, as can be observed in his publication on Minangkabau 'tari piring' ('plate dance') when he was 29 years old (see Bustami 1956), he likely sung mostly in the Malay or Indonesian language rather than in Minangkabau.³¹⁰ He was invited to sing not only by Minangkabau migrant communities in Bandung and surroundings but also those of non-Minangkabau such as Sundanese noble families, while the singers of Penghiboer Hati also came from non-Minangkabau ethnicities. It seems that during the first half of the twentieth century, music bands established by Minangkabau migrants, such as Penghiboer Hati, did not primarily perform songs in the Minangkabau language but in the Malay language (at the time it was also called *Bahasa Indonesia*, or 'Indonesian language') with a Minangkabau cultural tint.³¹¹ The corpus of songs they sang at that time was known as '*lagoe-lagoe Melajoe*' ('Malay songs') (Alim 1939). Therefore, Boeng Sjaugie cannot be considered a child singer of Minangkabau children's pop music. Rather, he is an example of a pioneer of Indonesian national child singers.

310 Thio Eng Hoat 1939a:10 and 1939b:4, 11. I thank Matthew Isaac Cohen for bringing these sources to my attention. Thio (1939b:4) gives some lyrics of Sjaugie's songs written in *pantun* form using the Malay language. See also Bustami (1956:7-8), which presents the *pantun* couplets he wrote in Indonesian, not in the Minangkabau language, to accompany the 'plate dance'.

311 Before moved to Bandung, the leader of Orkes Penghiboer Hati St. Perang Boestami worked as second class chief editor in Balai Poestaka (Commissie voor de Volkslectuur, 'Commission for People's Readings'). He wrote many songs for children and poems in the Malay or Indonesian language using the *pantun* and *syair* form, which were published in periodicals released by Balai Poestaka. See for example 'Seboeah bingkisan oentoek Toean Djaini', *Pandji Poestaka*, No. 56, Tahoen V, 15 Juli 1927, pp. 956-7; 'Pantoen lagoe Selendang Majang', *Volksalmanak Melajoe*, Tahoen VI, 1924, pp. 228-30; and 'Serba-serbi: Lagoe Anak Kambing', *Volksalmanak Melajoe*, Tahoen XI, 1929, pp. 56-61.

Entering the cassette era, there were no children's albums produced by West Sumatran recording companies. From the 1970s to the 1990s the focus was mainly on pop music for adults. H. Alimar Ahmad, owner of Tanama Record, mentions that his recording company did not produce any children's albums on cassette during that period (pers. comm., 31-10-2003). Children's pop albums become popular after West Sumatran recording companies began using VCDs around 2000. Tanama Record pioneered the production of VCDs of Minangkabau children's pop music, followed by other recording companies. Appendix 7 provides a list of Minangkabau children's albums produced by West Sumatran recording companies since 2000. The list shows that Minangkabau children's pop music has mostly been produced in VCD format, but a few of the albums were also released in cassette format. But the genre itself was clearly born in the VCD era.

The recent popularity of Minangkabau children's pop music cannot be separated from the dynamics of Indonesia's national music industry. As in many parts of the world, imitation is commonplace in pop culture. In Indonesia, cultural trends in Jakarta, the capital of the country, tend to be replicated in the regions. It commonly happens that 'a successful song or composition will be translated into new genres or idioms' (Yampolsky 1995:717). Genres that have become popular in the national music industry are often imitated by regional music industries, and this has also happened to children's pop music. While it appeared as a new product in the West Sumatran recording industry, its producers had been inspired by the success obtained by their national counterparts.

The emergence of Indonesian children's pop music seems to have been greatly facilitated by the Indonesian state-run television station Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI), which was established in 1962. Though such songs appeared occasionally on phonograph discs, their distribution was very restricted, while the production of the genre in cassette format in the 1970s and subsequent years seems to have been stimulated by their popularity on national television. Two early TVRI programs for children, launched in 1968 and 1969 respectively, were 'Lagu Pilihanku' ('My favourite songs') and 'Ayo Menyanyi' ('Let's sing'), directed by AT Mahmud and friends (see below). TVRI also broadcast other programs intended for children. These programs allowed children with a singing talent to appear on TVRI, the only television station in Indonesia at that time. Throughout the 1980s, TVRI are credited with encouraging and popularizing several child singers (*penyanyi cilik*), who decades later became prominent national pop artists, such as Ira Maya Sopha, the Uci Bing Slamet brothers, Iyut Bing Slamet and Adi Bing Slamet, Cicha Koeswoyo, Joan Tanamal, Puput Novel, and Dina Mariana. The initial generation of national child singers achieved their popularity thanks to TVRI. Since 1990, Indonesian children's pop, national as well as regional, has developed significantly. National children's pop albums appeared on cassette as well as in VCD format. The songs sung by national child singers can be divided into several categories, such as *dangdut*, Islamic songs and disco songs.

The advent of national children's pop music also encouraged the emergence of professional children's songwriters. The most famous among them is Abdullah Totong Mahmud (1930–2010). He was a renowned composer of 500 children's songs. Some of his

best-known works, including ‘Pelangi’ (‘Rainbow’), ‘Ambilkan Bulan’ (‘Fetch the moon’), ‘Anak Gembala’ (‘Shepherd boy’), ‘Bintang Kejora’ (‘Morning star’), and ‘Mendaki Gunung’ (‘Mountain climbing’), brought popularity to child singers like Tasya. Mahmud was the host of two children’s song shows on TVRI, ‘Lagu Pilihanku’ (‘My favourite songs’) from 1968 to 1988, and ‘Ayo Menyanyi’ (‘Let’s sing’) from 1969 to 1988, together with two other composers of children’s songs, Ibu Sud and Daljono.³¹²

The fall of Soeharto’s New Order in 1998 brought media reform in Indonesia. Private TV stations were established in Jakarta and other major cities in Java and were soon competing with TVRI, which had enjoyed a monopoly for over thirty years. Today Indonesia has many private television stations, including RCTI, Indosiar, SCTV, ANTV (Anteve), TPI, Lativi, Metro TV, Global TV, Trans TV, Trans 7 (formerly TV 7), and TVE (Televisi Edukasi ‘Educational television’). This strong competition among stations since the 1990s has given rise to the popularity of local programs, while the popularity of foreign programs has declined steeply (Tuen-yu and Atkin 2012). Today, no fewer than 80 regional TV stations operate throughout the country.³¹³ This has led to fierce competition among practitioners of the Indonesian television industry. They create specific programs, including programs for children, in order to attract audiences and increase profits. For example, SCTV has a music program for children called ‘Dunia Anak’ (‘Children’s world’), and ANTV has a similar program called ‘Kukuruyuk’ (‘Cock-a-doodle-doo’).³¹⁴ Child singers of later generations, such as Joshua and Safa Tasya Kamila (Tasha), were made famous by such private television networks rather than by TVRI.

As in many other countries, the Indonesian state, with its distinctive bureaucracy and inimitable political logic, has influenced the way its citizens consume music, crossing over ethnic and geographic boundaries. The dynamics of national pop music influence its regional counterparts. And the emergence of new local media-bound genres such as Minangkabau children’s pop music was inspired and encouraged by the success of its counterpart genre at the national level. Nevertheless, Indonesian regional pop musics develop along their own paths, which do not always match the development of Indonesian national pop. Unlike the important role played by their national counterpart, West Sumatran television stations like Padang TV and Bukittingi TV (BiTV) did not contribute significantly to the formation of Minangkabau children’s pop music. The genre came into existence thanks to the West Sumatran recording industry.

Commercial recordings of Minangkabau children’s pop music seem to have been inspired by the popularity of national children’s pop music, and, in spite of the recent economic crisis, have achieved commercial success. High consumer demand for some albums has led to them being reproduced several times. The album *Kisah Yatim Piatu* (‘Tale

312 See ‘Legendary children’s song writer AT Mahmud dies at 80’, *Jakarta Globe*, 6 July 2010; ‘AT Mahmud telah tiada’, *Kompas*, 7 July 2010.

313 See <http://www.asiawaves.net/indonesia-tv.htm> (accessed 25-12-2006).

314 Though most Indonesian national television networks present programs intended for children, there is no station that dedicates all its programming to children in the way of School-TV, Nickelodeon and Jetix in the Netherlands or CBBC in England.

of an orphan’) by Trio Sarunai (Marce Utari, Oja and Naning; see Appendix 7), for example, is very much in demand.³¹⁵ It was and is sold on the market in original as well as pirated copies. The pirates operate outside West Sumatra and in Malaysia. Pirated albums of Marce Utari and Yogi Novarionandes, for example, are retailed in Glodok Plaza, the biggest market for pirated wares in Jakarta, and also in the Chow Kit district, a prominent enclave for Indonesian migrants in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur (Suryadi 2007). Interestingly, the consumers of this music are not children alone; some adults also buy these cassettes or VCDs for their own enjoyment.

Like other regional pop scenes in Indonesia, the Minangkabau children’s pop scene is closely tied to the Minangkabau ethnic group. It uses the Minangkabau language and represents the regional identity. In this way it differs from the national children’s pop scene,



Figure 7.1: Minangkabau children’s pop music cassette and VCD covers

315 See ‘VCD ‘Kisah Yatim Piatu’ Trio Sarunai Diserbu’ (Padang Ekspres, 11 December 2003).

which is performed by children of various ethnic groups, especially in urban areas. The singers, composers and musicians of Minangkabau children's pop are Minangkabau by descent. And the songs are composed by Minangkabau songwriters such as Agus Taher, Sexri Budiman, Yendra Bey, Meddy MD, Don Gebot, and Taswir Zoebir. Unlike the national composer of children's songs Abdullah Totong Mahmud, Minangkabau songwriters like Agus Taher also compose songs for adults (pop Minang).

The music of Minangkabau children's pop songs is similar to its adult *pop Minang* counterparts. The main instrument is a digital keyboard, enriched with sounds of traditional Minangkabau musical instruments. The main Minangkabau musical instruments invoked in this keyboard music are the sound of *saluang* (flute) and *rabab* (fiddle). The sounds of these instruments are considered necessary in any Minangkabau song as they convey a feeling of melancholy, the most important emotional power in Minangkabau music and song. It is difficult to find a Minangkabau pop song without a soundtrack that expresses grief and sadness, which is aimed at generating deep emotional feelings of heartache and sorrow. This outstanding characteristic of *pop Minang*, discussed in Chapter 5, also applies to Minangkabau children's pop music.

These days, children from all social classes can potentially be involved in performing in the media. This is a departure from the 1970s and 1980s, when access to performing media like television was restricted mainly to upper-class people in urban areas. Television programs like *Indonesian Idol*, for example, have provided an opportunity for talented youth from all social classes across ethnicities to participate in a competition to become a new celebrity (see Coutas 2006). Such a democratizing effect by television was not foreseen by media researchers decades ago, who mostly regarded television as an 'old' medium that is top-down in character (see Enzensberger 1970:26). Nevertheless, from a consumer perspective, children with a high social status tend to have more media at their disposal in their bedroom, especially electronic games, computers, and Internet connections, while for everyone else, television is still the most prominent of media today and can be accessed by children from most social classes (Hendriyani et al. 2012).

In West Sumatra, regional recording companies have facilitated talented Minangkabau kids in becoming regional child singers, not only children from upper and middle classes but also those from lower-class families. Collaborating with regional musicians and talent hunters, recording companies look out for talented local children with sweet-sounding voices. Minangkabau child singers like Marce Utari (Tari) and Ima Gempita, for example, showed up by way of regional song competitions, where they became known to local producers. Tari was found by a talent scout at a regional song festival in Padang, and Ima at a similar event in Bukittinggi. Tanama Record recorded Tari's first album in 2003, and Ima was promoted by Pitunang Record, which produced her first album *Rimbo Aceh Panyabuang Nyao* ('Risking your life in the Aceh jungle') in 2003. Every producer promotes their own child singer. Much remains to be studied on the technological, spatial, communicative, ethnic, gender, cultural, political, and musical aspects of the penetration of modern media into Indonesian local societies at specific places and times.

CONTENT OF MINANGKABAU CHILDREN'S POP MUSIC

Strikingly, not all Minangkabau children's pop songs deal with the world of children. For example, only three of the ten songs³¹⁶ on Yogi Novarionandes's first album, *Tinggalah Kampuang; Pop Minang Rancak 1* ('Farewell, my village!'; see Appendix 7), represent the world of Minangkabau children. Seven other songs are more associated with adults, because they tell about adult life. Likewise, only one of the ten songs on Yogi's second album is clearly connected with children, 'Raso Bamandeh Tiri'³¹⁷ ('How it feels to have a stepmother'), which is also the title of this album (see Appendix 7). The song tells a story about a child living with his cruel stepmother, a stereotype commonly applied to stepmothers in many regional cultures of Indonesia.

<i>Denai cando si layang-layang, Ado angin den tabang tinggi, Angin tahanti den tagamang Dek tabayang jatuah ka bumi.</i>	I am like a kite, When in the wind I can fly high, But if the wind stops, I become afraid of heights, Imagine falling to earth.
---	--

<i>Itulah nan denai rasokan, Sajak denai bamandeh tiri, Ado ayah denai disayang, Ayah pai denai dibanci.</i>	This now is what I feel, As I have a stepmother, When father comes back, I am loved, If he goes out, I am hated.
--	---

[...]

<i>Ado si mandeh tiri, Nyo sayang ka anak tirinyo, Tibo di diri denai, Manga kok denai taseso?</i>	There are other stepmothers, They love their stepchildren, In my case, Why do I feel tormented?
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Again, on Yogi's third album, *Penanggungan, Baliak Kasurau Kanagari*³¹⁸ ('Suffering, return to surau and nagari'), only one of the ten songs is closely associated with the world of children: 'Tapuak Ambai-ambai' ('The sand crab clapping') (song no. 3):

316 These songs are: 1) 'Tinggalah Kampuang' ('Farewell, my village!'); 2) 'Nasib Kabau Padati' ('Fate of the cart buffalo'); 3) 'Ayah' ('Father!'); 4) 'Kumbang Cari'; 5) 'Batu Tagak' ('Stone pillar'); 6) 'Pucuak Lansano' ('Rosewood shoots'); 7) 'Ratok Anak Mandeh' ('A mother's lament for her child'); 8) 'Hiduik Dirantau Subarang' ('Living abroad'); 9) 'Jaso Mandeh' ('A mother's devotion'); and 10) 'Ayam den Lapeh' ('My hen hopped off'), all can be found on Minangkabau standard adult pop albums. Those relevant to children are songs 3, 7, and 9, which tell stories about the destiny of a Minangkabau child.

317 Yogie Novarionandes, *Raso Bamandeh Tiri; Pop Minang Rancak 2* (VCD) (Padang: Tanama Record, 2003): song no. 2 (see Appendix 7).

318 Yogi Novarionandes, *Pananggungan, Baliak Kasurau Kanagari; Pop Minang Rancak 3* (VCD-karaoke) (Padang: Tanama Record, 2003) (see Appendix 7).

<i>Tapuak ambai-ambai,</i>	Sand crab clapping, ³¹⁹
<i>Bilalang kupu-kupu,</i>	Grasshopper, butterfly,
<i>Batapuak adiak Uda pandai,</i>	My little sibling can clap,
<i>Diupah jo aia susu.</i>	And is rewarded with breast milk.

<i>Aia susu lamak manih,</i>	Breast milk is delicious and sweet,
<i>Bak santan karambia mudo,</i>	Like green coconut milk,
<i>Adiak Uda usah manangjih!</i>	Don't cry, my younger brother!
<i>Urang panangih lambek gadangnyo.</i>	One who cries is slow to grow.

[.....]

<i>Adiak kanduang laloklah baa!</i>	Sweet sibling, please sleep!
<i>Boboklah, boboklah sayang,</i>	Sleep, please sleep, my darling!
<i>Jikok gadang masuk sikola,</i>	When you grow up, you'll go to school,
<i>Pandai mangaji jo sumbayang.</i>	Learn to recite the Quran and to pray.

The *surau* (prayer house) is associated with Minangkabau boys learning the Quran, but the title of Yogi's album has political overtones related to the adult world. This phrase (*baliak ka surau ka nagari*) echoed around West Sumatra province in support of the policy of the regional autonomy movement (*gerakan otonomi daerah*) introduced after the fall of Soeharto's New Order regime in (1998). Modernization and state intervention under the New Order administration are viewed by some as having engendered the existence of *nagari* as the unique geopolitical system in Minangkabau (Benda-Beckmann and Benda-Beckmann 2001; Rahmat 2013). The sixth song on Yogi's second album *Raso Bamandeh Tiri*, entitled 'Ratok Surau Tuo' ('Lamentation for an old *surau*'), accurately illustrates the breakdown of the *surau* institution in Minangkabau. The lyrics tell about regrets for an old Minangkabau *surau* as it becomes increasingly obsolete: its building is decrepit and the grass in the yard has grown wild, while only a few old people go there to pray. This *surau* is 'lonely' because most of the villagers, especially the young ones, have left and migrated to the *rantau*.³²⁰

Conversely, most of the songs on Tari's album *Dendang Harau* ('Harau chant') are moralizing in nature, which is considered appropriate for children's life. One of them is 'Dek Maleh Baraja (Janji)'³²¹ ('Too lazy to study'):

319 This line refers to sand crabs' movement bringing their two arms together as if they were clapping. But, as often in *pantun* stanzas, the final words of the *sampiran* (first two lines of the couplet, the 'hook') have no literal meaning, but are mainly intended to match the end rhyme of the *isi* (the second two lines of the couplet, giving the content), as illustrated by the word *ambai-ambai* and the word *pandai* in this verse.

320 The demise of the Minangkabau *surau* institution is also reflected in a short story, 'Robohnya Surau Kami' ('The collapse of our *surau*') by A.A. Navis (1924–2003), a prominent Indonesian novelist from West Sumatra (Navis 1986:7-17). It was first published in 1955 in the literary journal *Kisah* and it gave rise to debate nationally. Since then it has become well known, and literary critics have frequently discussed it.

321 Tari (Marce Utari), *Dendang Harau*; Disco Minang Anak (VCD) (Padang: Tanama Record, 2002): song no. 3 (see Appendix 7).

*Dek ulah indak maapa,
Ujian inyo batea,
Karano maleh baraja,
Rapornyo banyak nan merah.*

Because he doesn't learn the lessons,
He fails his exams,
Because he is lazy in study,
His report card is full of red.

*Jikok didanga kato rang tuo,
Tantu indak ka co iko,
Namun kok maleh nan baturik'an,
Alamaik sansaro badan.*

If he listened to his parents' advice,
Of course it would not be like this,
But, if laziness is practised,
One will later suffer.

*Basusah payah dulu,
Buliah sanang kudian,
Buek PR dahulu,
Baru bamain jo kawan.*

One has to work hard first,
In order to get happiness later,
You should do your homework first,
Then later you can play with friends.

The description above suggests that Minangkabau children's pop music articulates the world of children as well as that of adults. Generally speaking, in Indonesia, the electronic media industry expresses an adult world and ideology through which the child's world is read and interpreted. Many complaints in public discussions are that recording companies have children sing songs for adults.³²² Cultural institutions like religion and the educational system also contribute to this process. Children's duty to obey and help their parents is embedded in the culture and in religious teachings, especially Islam, the majority religion in Indonesia. Indonesian society tends to regard children as capital. Parents often have children in the hope that their children will later make money to support the family (Naafs 2013). This attitude is encouraged by the state, most clearly in countries governed by repressive regimes (like Indonesia's former New Order government³²³). In schools and schoolbooks Indonesian children are taught that they should serve their parents devotedly, above all the mother (Shiraishi 1997).

Minangkabau children's songs, unlike their national counterparts, often express grief and misery, resembling the melancholy atmosphere that appears so conspicuously in *pop Minang* songs for adults. The themes of Minangkabau children's pop music are dominated by sad stories of children who live in constant suffering due to the death of their father or because their father has been living in *rantau* so long and is not bearing responsibility for his wife and children left behind in the home village. This is contrary to the universal expectation that children's songs will express happiness, and deal with light, cheerful themes of childhood. One factor to consider is that the composers of Minangkabau children's pop songs, unlike their national counterparts, are people who also write *pop Minang* songs for adults. Another possible explanation is that sadness and melancholy have come to characterize Minangkabau children's pop songs in order to distinguish them from national children's pop songs or

322 See 'Anak Kecil Nyanyi Lagu Dewasa', *Kompas*, 13 December 2009.

323 For a good illustration of how so-called children's television becomes part of the machinery of state hegemony, see Philip Kitley's treatment of the children's puppet series *Si Unyil* screened on TVRI between 1981 and 1993 (Kitley 2000: Chapter 4, 112-4).

from children's pop songs from other parts of the world. In Agus Taher's compositions, for example, lamentation and misery are very conspicuous. This can be seen clearly in his composition 'Rimbo Aceh Panyabuang Nyao' ('Risking your life in the Aceh jungle') sung by the child singer Ima Gempita (see Appendix 7). Another good example is Yogi's song 'Tangih di Rantau'³²⁴ ('Weep in rantau'), which describes the experience of a Minangkabau man who is economically unsuccessful in rantau and yearns for his mother left behind in his home village in West Sumatra.

<i>Oi mandeh kanduang,</i>	Dear mother,
<i>Alah lamo indak basuo,</i>	It is so long since we met,
<i>Lai taragak denai nak pulang,</i>	I do want to go home,
<i>Pitih nan sayuik, jo apo den manyubarang?</i>	But I haven't enough money, how can I cross the sea?

<i>Sakik manyeso ka diri ambo,</i>	Sickness torments my body,
<i>Tinggalah kulik pambaluik tulang.</i>	Leaving only skin and bones.

[...]

<i>Apo kadayo ka diri nangko,</i>	I have no energy any more,
<i>Hari ka hari laruik dek parasaian.</i>	Day by day crushed by suffering.

[...]

The song entitled 'Seso Ekstasi'³²⁵ ('Ecstasy torment', referring to the drug ecstasy), sung by Ima on an album of the same title (see Appendix 7), depicts the life of children living in a world of adults who are addicted to drugs. Although certainly it may happen that children live in a family where some members are addicted to drugs, this theme runs counter to the expectation that children's songs should be cheerful and happy. 'Seso Ekstasi', like numerous other Minangkabau children's pop songs, carries a message of sorrow and sadness. This song and other songs on Ima's album *Seso Ekstasi* do not depict the joy of a child's world.

<i>Uda, mandeh kito mandi tangih,</i>	Older brother, [our] mother is shedding tears,
<i>Uda, ayah kini makin sadih,</i>	Older brother, [our] father is ever sadder,
<i>Ekstasi, mamisah kito, Uda di bui</i>	Ecstasy has separated us, you are in jail,
<i>Ekstasi, mamisah kito, kami sunyi</i>	Ecstasy has separated us, we feel lonely.

On the other hand, Minangkabau children's pop music clearly reflects the penetration of modern technology in the lives of children in Indonesia's regions. This is reflected in Cicy A. Lucy's song 'Ketek-ketek lah ba HP'³²⁶ ('Kids with mobile phones'). The children request

324 See Yogi's album, *Penanggungan*, Baliak Kasurau Kanagari, Pop Minang Rancak 3 (VCD-karaoke) (Padang: Tanama Record, 2003) (see Appendix 7).

325 Ima [Gempita], *Seso Ekstasi* (VCD-karaoke) (Padang: Pitunang Record, 2004): side A, song no.1 (see Appendix 7).

326 Aliyar and Cici, *Ketek-ketek lah ba HP*; *Classic – Modern Saluang Talempong* (VCD-karaoke and cassette) (Padang: Tanama Intro Record, 2005): side A, song no.1 (see Appendix 7).

more pocket money from their parents to buy prepaid credit for their phones. ‘Owning a mobile phone is a much-aspired part of a modern and hip lifestyle, especially to young urban Indonesians’ (Barendregt 2006:333). Another album entitled *Album Idola Minang Cilik*, with the child singers Nabila and Novi Barat, has a song entitled ‘Black Berry’ (song no. 2), while on *Album Teridola: 10 Karya Emas Don Gebot*, which is sung by the coquettish twins (si kembar centil) Dilla and Asbul, one song is entitled ‘Playstation’ (song no. 3) (Fig. 7.2). There is an album entitled *Nokia 66* (a mobile phone brand), with the singers Della Wana and Debby Prima. The title is taken from the first song of the album. And on a recent Minangkabau children’s pop VCD entitled *Pulang lah lai: nasehat Minang* (‘Let’s go home: Minangkabau advice’), with the child singers Vandy Sacria, Sarwo, and Noris, there is a song entitled ‘Balikan HP’ (‘Buy me a mobile phone’) (song no. 11). The album itself is labelled ‘Dhut Mix’ (dangdut and remix) which suggests its musical colour. Cici’s song about a young girl addicted to her mobile phone (HP) reflects the growing influence of mobile technology:

[....]

*Kiniko zamannyo iyo zaman tele,
Televisi, telepon, yo batele-tele,
Rang gaek jo anak ketek samo
mamakai HP (2 x)*

Nowadays is a crazy era,
Television, telephones go on and on,
Old men and children use mobile phones.

[...]

*HP Ici untuak pagaulan
Bacarito nan jo kawan-kawan.*

My mobile phone is the way I keep in touch,
Chatting with my friends.

Figure 7.2 shows examples of VCD covers of Minangkabau children’s pop albums. The text on the covers mentions the mobile phone brands *Black Berry* and *Nokia* [Type] 66. These



Figure 7.2: VCD covers of Minangkabau children’s pop music. The mobile phone brands *Black Berry* and *Nokia* written on these VCD covers suggest the influence of modern technology on Minangkabau children.

texts, like the lyrics discussed above, can be regarded as iconographic symbols that tell us a lot about the impact of modern technology on Minangkabau children.

The description of the content of Minangkabau children's pop music in this section leads us to think about the consumers (audiences) of this West Sumatran recording industry product. Of course we automatically assume that this genre is primarily intended for children, not for adults. Nevertheless, it is almost always the case that there are also adults who like to listen to children's songs. But it is not my intention to discuss further the reception of this music. It is sufficient to note that Minangkabau children's pop music, with its melancholy character as described above, gives pleasure in certain Minangkabau cultural contexts.

VCD CLIPS: CHILDREN IN A CONTESTATION BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Like Indonesian VCD recordings in general, Minangkabau children's pop VCDs are usually produced in a VCD-karaoke format. The lyrics are displayed on the TV screen, so that amateur singers can sing them with a connected microphone at home. Put on the market by Columbia Record Company in May 1972, 'voice-changer' karaoke technology, which enables users to suppress the vocal part of a stereo recording in order to sing the song themselves, has become popular around the world (Mitsui and Hosokawa 2001:35). In Indonesia, the karaoke machine is very popular in public cafés and nightclubs and in the houses of upper- and middle-class families as well, while the working classes rarely use one because the cost of purchasing the machine is quite high and the entrance fee for using this facility in public cafés is also rather expensive for them. Karaoke clubs are one of the most favourite sites chosen by metropolitan middle- and upper-class families for pleasure and amusement. Therefore, almost all Indonesian pop recordings are produced in a VCD-karaoke format in which the lyrics of the song are shown on the screen.

According to Philip Yampolsky (2003:12), there is a visual ambivalence in Indonesian regional VCD clips. Many VCD clips do not match their audio content (the lyrics of the songs). Even though the content of the songs is about regional life, the VCD clips show few images of traditional *kampung* (village) and rural life but many images of national, modern, and even global life. On some albums the backing dances do not match with the song themes: for example, cheerful and happy dances are performed to accompany a song with a theme of misery and longing (Sofia 2011). Likewise, Suzanne Naafs (2005) comments on the contradiction between the modern and sensual representation of women in some Minangkabau VCD clips, such as *Bawang Bombay* and *Triping Dangdut*, and traditional images of Minangkabau women as matrilineal and part of an Islamic society. But such sensual visual representation fits with the lyrics (audio aspect) of the songs presented in the VCDs. Exhibiting a pervasive tension between the popular and the regional, between modernity and tradition, the visual images (clips) and audio aspects of Minangkabau VCDs, and of Indonesian regional VCDs in general, fail to conform to what Michel Chion (1994:58) calls a 'synch point' or point of synchronization: 'a salient moment of an audiovisual sequence during which a sound event and a visual event meet in synchrony'.

Watching many Minangkabau VCDs, and other regional VCDs, I got the impression that the clips of such VCDs are often used by singers (and musicians) as a means of expressing their global orientation and of representing modernity. By making the desired connection with various images of 'elsewhere' gathered from global media, these clips depict globalization to local society, bringing about an intergenerational cultural conflict, with the older generation usually being opposed to such global influences. Aesthetically, the clips of these VCDs indicate a change in regional conventions and tastes. Indonesian regional VCDs are sites in which sounds and visual images are (re)presented in particular ways that have been culturally influenced by an indigenous conception of space and time.

It seems that Minangkabau children's pop VCDs often have clips that depict Minangkabau *alam* (nature) and society, through landscape and dance forms. On the other hand, they also represent modernity, especially through the singers' fashions and make-up. No songs of misery are accompanied by dances. Dances are only used to accompany cheerful songs. Generally speaking, the dances shown on VCD clips are of two types: Minangkabau traditional dances and modern innovative styles. These dances present child singers (often accompanied by backing dancers, *penari latar*) with a backdrop of scenes related to the Minangkabau world. Traditional dance clips tend to accompany songs dealing with the adult world, whereas modern-innovative dances tend to be used with songs intended for children. As an illustration, on Tari's album *Dendang Harau* ('Harau chanting'), a song called 'Adaik Limbago' ('Customs and traditions') tells how important it is to preserve Minangkabau customs. It uses clips of the Minangkabau traditional dance *tari piring* ('plate dance'), and is accompanied by *talempong*, a traditional Minangkabau instrument (Fig. 7.3). Another song on the same album called *Taman Nirwana* ('Nirvana Park') relates the enjoyment of a group of children visiting Nirwana Park, which is situated on the outskirts of Padang. It features a clip of children in fashionable clothes doing a modern dance to the accompaniment of a combination of traditional Minangkabau and non-Minangkabau musical instruments (Fig. 7.3).

Non-dancing clips usually show the child singers in various Minangkabau landscapes, such as villages, towns, at the coast, in a 'big house' (*rumah gadang*) or a prayer house (*surau*), traditional and modern markets, and on the road. Songs with a sorrowful theme, as found on Yogi's, Tari's, and Ima's albums, show clips that present the singers against a backdrop of the sea, mountains, or roads. Other clips show children living in a poor family in a substandard house, an extreme contrast with clips of cheerful songs showing children wearing modern fashions. This suggests that in the case of Minangkabau children's pop music there is a logical relationship between the audio and the visual elements of the songs. In music of this genre, I did not find the visual contradiction that Yampolsky points out. In this genre it clear that the clips support the message of the song lyrics.

But the clips suggest that modern media in Indonesia significantly influence the way of dressing the body and constructing individuality. With often copious make-up and lipstick, some young female Minangkabau singers present their songs with a strong personality and, like their male counterparts, have a discernible individualism in their performance. Indonesian



Figure 7.3: Images of traditional and modern dance taken from clips of Minangkabau children's pop VCDs (Source: Tari, Dendang Harau: Disco Minang Anak. Padang: Tanama Record, 2002: song nos. 1 and 2)

female child singers often appear on television and VCD clips full of make-up. Their bodies are adorned with symbols representing the culture of consumerism (lipstick, fashion, shoes), as if the media industry exploits the child's body for public gratification for commercial reasons. This phenomenon is present on many albums of Minangkabau children's pop music, such as Tari's and Cici's albums: the singers appear attractive and sensual in the clips and on the album covers as well. Such images are seen on covers of cassettes and VCDs as well as in video clips. These tendencies toward consumerism and individualism have been criticized by

some parties. They note that in traditional games and songs, children sing in groups, with a communal spirit. Comparing the songs of traditional games and songs and their modern pop counterparts, the compiler of children's games and songs Bramantyo observes:

The flow of modernization that is incessantly transmitted by mass media floods all aspects [of human life], including the world of children's music. The children's sound recordings that circulate nowadays leave a deep impression on the minds of children. Unfortunately, the musical taste of these songs, in my opinion, kills children's imagination and fantasies. In more explicit words, these songs do not educate them.

In my opinion, children's songs from the olden times are more meaningful and better, both in their aesthetics and music, and in terms of culture. From a cultural point of view this musical genre teaches children to be disciplined and to be in harmony with the environment and with fellow humans, and to have respect for their parents.³²⁷

Developments in modern media have changed consumer behaviour, including that of children. Television and VCD-karaoke technologies 'shackle' children in the house (Hendriyani et al. 2012). Children, especially those from more affluent families, show off in front of the television screen, imitating professional performers. They sing and dance with microphone in hand – *berkaraoke*. The impact of the use of these media is also significant in a regional context. In West Sumatra there have long been complaints that many children are too lazy to come to the *surau* (prayer house) to learn the Quran because they prefer to stay at home watching their favourite television programs. In public discourse the blame for the changed behaviour of children is usually levelled at modern electronic media.

REGIONAL CHILD SINGERS IN THE MEDIA BUSINESS

Being involved in the world of pop music allows child singers to perform an exciting job that enables them to become popular and acquire wealth rapidly. The popularity gained by national child singers, and stories of their economic success and celebrity lives, have inspired many Indonesian parents, especially among the urban middle and upper classes, to push (sometimes with compulsion) their children to seek their fortunes as pop singers. And people living in the provinces have also been affected. Hence, there is a great desire among Indonesian youth to become pop stars. One recent trend is the competition of child idols (*idola cilik*) on national TV stations in which ethnicity plays an important role. For example, if an idol has Minangkabau blood, his promoters spread messages via Facebook or mobile phone urging those who come from Minangkabau to vote for him. City malls, which function as prime public places for leisure as well as business centres for the culture of consumerism (see Van Leeuwen 2011), regularly hold song contests or shows involving talented children

327 Arus modernisasi yang gencar ditransmisikan media massa [...] menerpa bidang apa saja, juga dunia musik anak-anak. [...] Lagu rekaman anak-anak yang beredar sekarang begitu terpatri di hati anak-anak. [...] Sayangnya, lagu-lagu rekaman itu – menurut pandangan penulis – selera musiknya sama sekali mematikan daya imajinasi dan fantasi anak-anak. Tegasnya, tidak mendidik. Menurut penulis, lagu dolanan anak tempo doeloe [...] terasa lebih memiliki makna, baik secara estetis maupun secara musikal, dan bahkan secara kultural. [...] Secara kultural, genre ini [...] mendidik anak-anak untuk berdisiplin dan menjaga harmoni dengan alam sekitar, sesama manusia dan menghargai orang tua. (Bramantyo 2000:v-vi)

sponsored by companies who use this means to advertise their products. But beyond that, this activity is part of marketing strategies to attract parents to visit the malls. Theodore KS (2000) reveals three routes to becoming a pop star in Indonesia:

The first one is called the usual route. That is, you offer yourself to a particular recording company. Of course, this route requires great patience, as it is complicated and requires one to pass along a 'road' which has holes, is tortuous, and is long.

The second route, the highway route, is to finance all costs, from copyright of songs, music remuneration, rental costs for the recording studio, costs for producing video clips, to promotion in television, radio, and the print media. As one passes along the highway, it is expensive. It can cost Rp 100 to 500 million, or even more.

The third route is a short cut: you participate in [music] competitions. This route is the most common one, although it greatly depends on events, activities or competitions, festivals, and the like.³²⁸

The case of Minangkabau children's pop music suggests that this fever has also affected local communities living in rural areas of Indonesia. The phenomenon has been driven by regional recording companies' need to diversify their products in order to reap profits by involving local musicians, talent scouts, regional dance studios, and regional tourist agencies. Various regional pop festivals are held yearly, allowing talent scouts to collaborate with recording companies looking for talented amateur singers to contract to produce commercial albums. Children's pop music has generated a lot of profit for producers, indicated by the fact that numerous producers in Padang and Bukittinggi have been excitedly producing these Minangkabau children's pop music recordings. The Minangkabau child singer Tari, for example, signed an 'outright sale' (*jua putuih*) contract with Tanama Record, and later with JSP Record. Up till 2006 she had produced five albums. Likewise, Yogi Novarionandes achieved success with his albums. He became famous as the foremost male Minangkabau child singer after winning the Third National School Contest for singing (*mata pelajaran seni suara*) in October 2003.³²⁹ Aliyar, a newcomer who tried his luck in the world of Minangkabau pop music, made recordings together with his daughter Cici A. Lucy, as on their albums *Ketek-ketek lah baHP* ('Still young but have mobile phone') and *Lagu-lagu Saluang Talempung* ('Songs of bamboo flute and kettle gong'), both produced by Tanama Intro Record in 2005 (see Appendix 7).

328 Pengin jadi penyanyi dan masuk dapur rekaman? Gampang! Ada tiga jalan utama untuk jadi penyanyi. Jalan pertama, melalui prosedur biasa, yaitu menawarkan diri ke perusahaan rekaman tertentu. Cara ini tentu saja memerlukan kesabaran, karena lebih rumit dan harus menempuh jalan yang banyak lubang, berliku, dan panjang. Jalan kedua adalah jalan tol. Yaitu membiayai semua kebutuhan, seperti membayar hak penggunaan lagu, honor musik, sewa studio rekaman, pembuatan video klip hingga promosi di televisi, radio dan media cetak. Sebagaimana melewati jalan bebas hambatan, cara ini membutuhkan biaya tidak sedikit. Bisa menghabiskan Rp. 100 juta hingga Rp. 500 juta atau mungkin lebih. Jalan ketiga adalah mengambil jalan pintas dengan mengikuti salah satu perlombaan. Prosedur ini termasuk biasa dilakukan, meski sangat tergantung pada peristiwa, kegiatan atau perlombaan, festival dan sejenisnya. (Theodore KS 2000)

329 'Yogi Novario Nandes [sic] raih Juara III Nasional', *Singgalang*, 20 October 2003; 'Yogi Novarionades toreh prestasi nasional', *Padang Ekspres* (20 October 2003).

In 2003 a Minangkabau child singer like Tari was paid roughly Rp 5,000,000 (US\$ 380) for one album under an 'outright sale' contract. Under this contract system, Tari is not entitled to additional royalties from the reproduction of her albums. The 'outright sale' contract is a strategy used by regional recording entrepreneurs to get as much profit as possible. It is symptomatic of the weak bargaining position of local artists in relation to regional recording companies. Some recording entrepreneurs give bonuses to their artists if their albums are selling well. Tari, whose albums have been popular, has received bonuses from her producer to use for guitar and voice lessons, an English language course, school fees, and swimming lessons (pers. comm. with Tari's trainer, Sexri Hendri, 27-11-2003). In the eyes of these regional child artists, the majority of whom come from lower-class rural families, the regional recording companies are regarded as god-like patrons, through whom they and their families gain additional income.

The economic success achieved by Tanama Record with its Minangkabau children's pop music cassettes and VCDs has motivated other West Sumatran recording companies to produce similar products. Nowadays, many recording companies in West Sumatra are actively seeking out children who are talented amateurs to be trained and then promoted in the regional pop music world. Some adult pop Minang singers and songwriters encourage their own children to become child singers.

The situation of Minangkabau child singers, unlike that of their adult counterparts, is similar to that in the national music industry. To become a regional child singer is regarded as a way to reach popularity at the national level. Minangkabau child singer Tari is a clear example of this. After succeeding at the regional level, she has now become a KDI singer. KDI (Kontes Dangdut Indonesia, 'Indonesian dangdut contest') is a song program at the national level organized by the national private television station TPI (Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia, 'Indonesian Educational Television') headquartered in Jakarta. KDI singers are selected from all Indonesian provinces. They are quarantined in Jakarta for several weeks to receive training before performing in the contest, which is broadcast live by TPI. Many urban-based programs presented by the media industry, similar to 'KDI' and 'Indonesian Idol', have awakened Indonesian children's desire (*cita-cita*), even those living in rural areas. Amid difficulties to find jobs, it seems very attractive to seek one's fortune as an artist through the music industry; this is seen as an effortless way to gain success, popularity, wealth, and a modern lifestyle. In this regard, it can be said that the regional recording industry, directly or indirectly, has played the role of catalyst to produce young national artists.

CONCLUSION

The seed of Minangkabau children's pop music appeared in the gramophone disc era in rantau (Jakarta), but it developed only later, during the peak of cassette consumption in the 1980s and 1990s when the West Sumatran recording industry concentrated on developing pop Minang, the most popular music for adults. Minangkabau children's pop music really flourished from the time the West Sumatran recording industry entered the VCD era in about the year 2000. The development of Minangkabau children's pop music was inspired by a

similar genre that already existed at the national level: national children's pop music. The economic success achieved by national recording companies with their children's albums in the Indonesian language inspired their regional counterparts in West Sumatra to produce commercial recordings of children's pop music in the Minangkabau language.

Unlike national children's pop music, whose emergence was closely related to the television industry, the emergence of Minangkabau children's pop was strongly facilitated by the West Sumatran recording industry itself. Driven by cultural changes due to modernization, this new media-bound genre has largely replaced the Minangkabau traditional games and songs that children used to play in their home neighbourhoods. The existence of the media-bound genre of Minangkabau children's pop music demonstrates how regional recording industries contributed to diversifying the repertoires of regional cultures in Indonesia. Regional recording industries like that of West Sumatra triggered the generation of local genres whose existence is highly dependent on recording media, with the main example being Minangkabau children's pop music.

The main characteristic of Minangkabau children's pop songs is the conspicuous tone of misery in their song lyrics, that replaces the cheerful ambience one might expect in children's music. This can be explained by referring to the Minangkabau cultural perspective. In truth, Minangkabau pop music records the life stories of Minangkabau male migrants, in which feelings of resentment, sadness, and longing for families and homeland are mixed. All of these feelings come into existence as a consequence of the *merantau* custom of men leaving their homeland to find work elsewhere, which is driven by the cultural paradox or contradiction between the Minangkabau matrilineal system and Islam, which is based on a patriarchal order. An analysis of the lyrics of Minangkabau children's pop songs shows that they are intensely coloured by laments (*ratok*), the salient characteristic of the lyrics of standard *pop Minang* for adults (Chapter 5).

Nevertheless, the textual and visual elements of the covers and clips of Minangkabau children's pop music indicate the influence of globalization and modern technologies on Minangkabau children. This can be seen in the incorporation of aspects of modern life such as the influence of drugs and modern telecommunications technology like mobile phones in the lyrics of Minangkabau children's pop songs. Iconographically, VCD clips of Minangkabau children's pop albums show modern dances, alongside traditional ones, mirroring how Minangkabau children, facilitated by the modern media industry, hold modernity and globalization in one hand and their local culture in the other hand.

Children's pop music in Indonesia is part of the modern media industry. It is closely connected with the national music industry and with global capitalism. Indonesia's public debates on children's pop music, unlike pop music for adults, go far beyond children's music itself. As has occurred in other parts of Indonesia (see McIntosh 2010 on children's music and popular music in Bali), children actively incorporate national and global forms of popular music into their commercial music performance. Examples are the public blaming of the modern media industry for its exploitation of child singers, and the fact that some

parents or producers have forced their children to become singers as a way to make money. Cultural and religious values are influential in this case: children must be obedient to their parents; disobedience is considered a sin against God. Similar to the phenomenon of child singers who sing adult songs on national television, the melancholy lyrics of Minangkabau children's pop songs betray an unconscious adult interference in the world of Indonesian children through the power of the modern media industry.

The twenty-first century is seeing an increasing interconnection and intersection of digital media. The life of human beings incorporated in globalized networks is characterized by media convergence. Chapter 8 will look at the products of the West Sumatran recording industry in a globally converging media environment. It examines the remediation of the content of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs in other media, including new social media.

PART III

MODES OF RECEPTION OF
MINANGKABAU RECORDINGS



Broadcaster Zainal Piliang broadcasting the music program 'Minang Saiyo' ('harmonious Minang') on the *urang awak* radio station *Lanugraha FM 105* in Palembang, South Sumatra. In the background is a collection of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs used for the music program. (photograph courtesy of Zainal Piliang, 2010).

REMEDICATION OF MINANGKABAU COMMERCIAL RECORDINGS

Nowadays local societies, in Indonesia and elsewhere, engage not only with audio recording media, but also with other modern electronic media technologies. The Internet has been used by the diasporas of ethnic communities all over the world to express their identity in the contemporary virtual age (Landzelius 2006; Longboan 2011). Unlike print media, these modern media practices have significantly altered traditional cultural forms and performance and have encouraged the increasing commodification of local cultures in Indonesia. The contemporary globalized world is marked by increasing interconnection and intersection among diverse modern electronic media, a phenomenon often referred to as media convergence. And the Minangkabau, the first ethnic group of the outer islands to adopt European modernity (see Graves 1981), are not free of this phenomenon.

This chapter looks in historical perspective at the reception and dissemination of West Sumatran recording industry products in other media. It describes the roles played by radio, mobile phone, and various Internet-based social media in extending the mediation of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs. I will discuss how this phenomenon affects the West Sumatran recording industry and consumers, considering that interconnection between various media in our global world is becoming stronger and more complex, especially as regards the circulation and distribution of one medium on other media. I argue that remediation of Minangkabau cultural products on radio and new social media, which has been accelerating down to the present day, has brought new ways for Minangkabau people to construe their local culture. I conjecture that the vast use of social media for disseminating Minangkabau cassette and VCD content, as seen in the last ten years, has changed the way producers produce, distribute, access and re-use cultural repertoires. The changes have resulted in an increase in producers' and consumers' autonomy, increased participation, and increased diversity. Theoretically, the ultimate consequence of this process is the emergence of new perceptions among local communities in understanding their own culture and identities.

To make this clearer, I will look at the differences between conventional media like radio and new social media like blogs, YouTube, and Facebook, in order to understand how the distribution of the products of the West Sumatran recording industry now is very different from one or two decades ago. The changes are not only because of the invention of new social media, but are also due to the significant political changes in Indonesia following the fall of Soeharto's New Order regime in 1998, which led to a shift in cultural policy for Indonesia's regions.

This chapter aims to comprehend the history of remediation of West Sumatran recording industry products, the intersection of different media with the West Sumatran recording

industry, and the changes in West Sumatra's mediascape that, to some extent, represent changes in regional cultural life throughout Indonesia. Through the diachronic description of the use of modern media for representing Minangkabau culture, this chapter gives a historical sketch of media involvement in Minangkabau culture and society and how deeply that culture has engaged with electronic media.

MEDIA CONVERGENCE

The discussion in this chapter looks at radical changes in media characteristics. An important term is what media experts call 'media convergence'. Media convergence refers to the interconnection of information and communications technologies, computer networks, and media content. There are many notions about media convergence. But let's first understand Bolter and Grusin's definition: they say that media convergence is *remediation* – 'the representation of one medium in another' (1999:45). This happens as a direct consequence of the digitization of media content thanks to innovations in mobile phone technology and the popularization of Internet. Media convergence involves five major elements: technological, industrial, social, textual, and political.

This section is not aimed at describing the technical process of media convergence. Rather, it looks at the changes this technological transformation has brought about and their cultural significance. In other words, what is the position of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs in our contemporary 'convergence culture' (to borrow the term of Henry Jenkins 2008)? The interconnections among today's media have enabled entirely new forms of content to emerge. Media convergence has decreased the role of long-established media like television and radio, and increasingly uncouples content from a particular medium, which in turn presents major challenges for public policy and regulations. 'Convergent media technologies have exacerbated that complexity, and debates over the contested roles of policy, social norms, markets and technological architecture are a key part of current regulatory tensions' (Meikle and Young 2012:195).

As we can see in our contemporary world nowadays, social media have enabled individuals to engage in communication not only one-to-one, but also one-to-many and many-to-many, which has altered the ways people live and think. The growth of social media platforms has been phenomenal. As an illustration, in 2012 it is estimated that over 72 hours of video a minute were uploaded to YouTube, including images dealing with local repertoires from many different countries. One can only imagine how significant the impact is of such huge cultural (re)mediation activities.

Social media like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have allowed individuals to participate as producers as well as consumers. They have eroded the monopolistic, one-way, top-down characteristics and asymmetrical relationship between producer and audience in conventional media like radio. Howard Rheingold (2002) notes that social media have three core characteristics: 1) they make it possible for everyone in the network to be simultaneously acting as producer, distributor, and consumer of content; 2) their power comes from

connections between users; 3) they allow users to coordinate activities between themselves on a scale and at a speed that were not previously possible.

So, the important shift associated with media convergence, as applied to the new social media, is the rise of user-created content, with users changing from audience to participants. On the other hand, the rapid horizontal communications thanks to the invention of these new social media technologies has the potential to ‘destroy the privacy and basic liberties’ of human beings – to quote the whistleblower Edward Snowden, referring to world superpower states using the data from these huge communications networks to spy on their own citizens and citizens of other countries.

This chapter deals with more than the remediation of Minangkabau commercial cassette and VCD content on new social media. It also traces remediation in ‘older’ media, especially radio. The remediation of West Sumatran recording industry products occurred long before the invention of Internet technology in the 1990s. My description in the following sections moves chronologically from such ‘older’ media to the new social media.

RADIO

Radio is the media technology first used to remediate commercial recordings of Minangkabau repertoires. This occurred even before the gramophone era. Radio, as in other parts of the world (Bessire and Fisher 2013:364), remains central to everyday lives of many people in Indonesia. As described in Chapter 2, this media appeared in Indonesia in the early 1920s. In the 1930s some radio stations in Java broadcast music programs containing Minangkabau music. As noted in Chapter 5, the remediation of recordings of Indonesian (local) repertoires on radio before the 1950s shows that the radio stations that operated in those days took their music programs partly from commercial gramophone discs (Yampolsky 2013a; Yampolsky 2014). As Susumu (2006) mentions, in the 1930s and 1940s (see Chapter 2), the music genres broadcast on the colonial government’s NIROM stations were quite diverse, and most of that music had also appeared on commercial gramophone discs, making it likely that the songs broadcast by these stations were taken from gramophone discs. During the Japanese occupation (1942–1945), Minangkabau songs were broadcast by radio stations in some major Javanese cities, as can be determined by the lists of programs of radio stations (Programm Siaran Radio Indonesia) published in the vernacular press at that time (see Chapter 5).

In the homeland, West Sumatra, it is difficult to ascertain exactly when Minangkabau commercial recordings were first remediated on radio; I could find no information on this. What can be noted here is that Padang was one of the first cities in Sumatra where a radio branch station was set up by NIROM, which was owned by the colonial government. Founded in 1933, but officially established in 1934 (see Chapter 2), NIROM had branch stations all over the Dutch East Indies, and one of them was situated in Padang (Kementerian Penerangan 1953:226). In 1942 NIROM was closed following the Dutch surrender to the Japanese in World War II. The new invaders set up a new radio broadcasting company named Hôshô Kyoku, with branch stations in eight Javanese cities and other stations in the outer islands.

In Sumatra, Hôso Kyoku branch stations were established in Medan, Kutaraja (now Banda Aceh), Palembang, and in the West Sumatran towns of Padang and Bukittinggi (Kementerian Penerangan 1953:227). The programs were broadcast in two languages: Japanese and Indonesian (Djawatan Penerangan Propinsi Sumatera Tengah [1953]:850). The Padang and Bukittinggi radio stations continued to exist after the Japanese left Indonesia in 1945. The name 'Radio Republik Indonesia' (RRI), which also applied to its branches all over Indonesia, including in Padang and Bukittinggi, was used from 11 September 1945, though it was officially inaugurated only on 10 November 1950, according to a letter of agreement by the Department of Information of the Republic of Indonesia no. 20144, 1 October 1950 (Djawatan Penerangan Propinsi Sumatera Tengah [1953]:859).

Programming of government-owned broadcasters like RRI, as in other countries, tends to be adjusted according to national, regional, and international political changes. During the war of independence, the programming of RRI Padang and Bukittinggi, like other RRI branches, was dominated by political speeches of national leaders, slogans of independence, and patriotic songs, in order to foster the spirit of struggle of the people (*rakyat*). In the years after independence, RRI Padang was on the air from 5.55 a.m. till 11 p.m., with two breaks at 8.00-12.00 a.m. and 2.00-4.00 p.m. Music and local arts, which had been disregarded previously, began to be broadcast, besides political announcements from central and regional governments, national and regional news, and news from abroad.³³⁰ Among the local programs broadcast at that time were the hybrid Minangkabau music *gamad* performed by the group Tikam Tua ('Old Thrust') led by Djaafar, and the Chinese-descent Orkes 'Gambang' Tionghowa headed by Lie Leng Goan.³³¹ I could not ascertain whether they were broadcast based on disc recordings or from live performances, since there is no detailed information available. However, commercial discs containing regional songs were available in the markets of West Sumatran towns at that time, and were probably what radio stations used for their musical programs. The relayed music programs from RRI's central station in Jakarta included Balinese and Moluccan songs. There were also foreign music broadcasts, such as 'Slow-Fox' and 'Orkes Ferey Faith', while Hawaiian influence was manifested in a program called *Irama Lautan Teduh* ('Pacific Ocean Rhythm'). In the mid-1950s, RRI Padang also produced some small scale recordings on discs, containing some 45 Minangkabau and Mentawai songs. The studio had some 2000 discs which contained local, Western, and Middle East songs (Thaib and Dasiba 1956:295).

Compared with the pre-independence era, foreign music broadcasts seem to have decreased markedly. The administration of the newborn Republic seems to have reduced foreign influence in the cultural field, a cultural policy that was most clearly visible during the last decade of President Soekarno's administration. During the PPRI³³² revolt (1958-

330 'Diantara programma jang urgent jang harus dipenuhi ketika itu ialah menjiarkan pengumuman pemerintah, baik pusat maupun daerah, berita-berita luar dan dalam negeri dan berita-berita daerah jang diselang-selingi musik dan kesenian-kesenian daerah jang selama ini kurang diperhatikan dalam penjiaran dan tidak mendapat tempat dalam programma.' (Djawatan Penerangan Propinsi Sumatera Tengah [1953]:861)

331 See 'Atjara Siaran RRI Padang, Rebo 7 Maart 1951', *Haluan*, 7 March 1951.

332 For more on the PPRI revolt, see Kahin 1999 and Zed and Chaniago 2001.



Figure 8.1: Radio Republik Indonesia Padang branch station, at Jalan Proklamasi No. 38A-B, Padang (photograph by Suryadi, 2005)

1961) which hit West Sumatra severely, national soldiers (*tentara pusat*) sent by Soekarno's regime prohibited Minangkabau people from listening to the radio because the radio station operated by PRRI rebels from the Bukit Barisan jungle often broadcast propaganda in the Minangkabau language to seek support from the Minangkabau people in continuing their war against Soekarno's regime.

Like its predecessor, Soeharto's New Order (1965–1998) tightly controlled RRI and private radio stations operating in West Sumatra, as well as in other regions across the country. RRI Padang, RRI Bukittinggi and the private stations were allowed to broadcast Minangkabau music and verbal arts as long as they did not endanger law and order. In the 1980s and 1990s the music for such programs was taken from Minangkabau commercial cassettes produced by West Sumatran recording companies. But the political reform (Reformasi) that began in Indonesia in 1998 allowed radio stations to serve their central function as a medium for dialogue among citizens as well as between citizens and the state (Jurriëns 2009). Such a circumstance was impossible during Soekarno's Old Order and Soeharto's New Order. With the introduction of the national government's policy of decentralization as one result of the Reformasi, RRI Padang, like other RRI branch stations, began to devote much more of its airtime to local programs. From its office in Jalan Proklamasi No. 38A-B, Padang (Fig. 8.1), RRI Padang broadcasts national programs relayed from the RRI central station in Jakarta, as well as regional programs. For instance, RRI Padang daily broadcasts Minangkabau pop music and major Minangkabau verbal arts genres like *bagurau*, *dendang Pauah*, *rebab Pesisir*

Selatan, and rebab Pariaman. The musical content of the programs is taken from Minangkabau commercial cassettes. RRI Bukittinggi also broadcasts programs containing such local repertoires, but the majority of its news and information programs are still relayed from RRI Jakarta (see Laporan 2002).

The business of private radio stations in Indonesia is always interesting. The number of private radio stations increases every year. They can be found even in many regency (*kabupaten*) capitals across the country. According to the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia, or KPI) West Sumatra office, there were 26 private radio stations operating in the province in 2005.³³³ Several stations were established in West Sumatra after the Reformasi. Among these new stations are Radio Gumarang (in the Tanah Datar regency), Radio Pariaman FM and Damai FM (in the Padang Pariaman regency), Radio Payakumbuh FM, Planet FM, and Aprilia AM (in the 50 Kota regency), and seven stations in the Solok regency (Radio Gapilar Rasosania, Radio Vanesa, Radio Citra, Radio Semarak FM, Radio Rosalinda, Radio Solok nan Indah, and Radio SMA Alahan Panjang), Radio Elsi FM (in Bukittinggi), and four stations in Padang (Classy FM, Pesona Padang, Favorit FM, and Sushi 99.1 FM).

The significant development of private radio stations in Indonesia has brought stiff competition in its wake, nationally as well as provincially, especially in terms of advertising. Each station tries to distinguish itself from other stations in terms of programming. In its musical programming, a station often specializes in a particular genre of music, such as classical music, *dangdut*, Western rock or regional music (Sen and Hill 2000:91). This phenomenon can also be seen in West Sumatra. The private radio stations there present a variety of programs but always allocate space for programs with local content like Minangkabau music and verbal arts. The Minangkabau songs and verbal arts they broadcast are taken from commercial cassettes or VCDs produced by West Sumatran recording companies. There are even stations that specialize in programs with local content, as exemplified by Radio Harau Megantara Angkasa (100.6 FM), situated in Harau, Payakumbuh. Likewise, Sushi 99.1 FM, situated in Padang. Having the motto 'Radio orang Padang' ('Radio for the Padang people'), Shusi offers a special call-in program 'Pantun Balega', an interactive presentation of *pantun* verses in the Minangkabau language. Its advertisement in a local daily, using a mixture of English and Indonesian, reads in translation:

Listen to the Rhythm of the new inspiration in Sushi 99.1 FM. Enjoy our special programs from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m. every day. Cik Indun and Mak Tilul always faithfully accompany Sushi's audiences every Monday to Thursday from 7 to 9 p.m. on the 'Pantun Balega' program. Sushi's audience can participate by calling telephone number 70555885 and via SMS [Short Message Service] on mobile number 08126600991. There are attractive prizes every day from sponsors for the verse senders. So, make sure that Sushi's audience do not pass up this 'Pantun Balega' special program.³³⁴

333 See '14 Radio Tak Lolos Verifikasi; Tak Penuhi Syarat, Dilarang Beroperasi', *Padang Ekspres*, 1 October 2005.

334 Listen to the Rhythm of the new inspiration in Sushi 99.1 FM. Enjoy our special programs from 5 am to 1 am every day. Cik Indun dan Mak Tilul selalu setia menemani Sushi Mitra setiap hari Senin sampai Kamis jam 19.00 sampai jam 21.00 di Pantun Balega. Sushi mitra bisa ikut berbalas pantun di no telepon 7055885 dan di

Other Sushi programs broadcast Minangkabau verbal arts genres such as *balanse*, *rabab Pesisir Selatan*, and *Salawat dulang*. Some other stations present special programs of Minangkabau traditional cultural genres like *saluang*, *rabab Pariaman*, and *rabab Pesisir Selatan*. Most stations offer regional song programs, while advertisements using the Minangkabau language have increased. Such programs are usually in an interactive format: by phone or SMS the audience call the presenter asking for a song to be aired which they want to dedicate to someone (usually friends or family).

The diversity of programs and the increased attention given to regional content by many radio stations all over Indonesia, including in West Sumatra, is clearly connected with the political changes in post-New Order Indonesia. The Reformasi era has had a significant impact on the radio business in Indonesia, and it has affected the content and format of programs. Many regional private stations, including in West Sumatra, have allocated more space in their programs for local repertoires. In this regard, the West Sumatran recording industry has directly or indirectly benefited because more of their products, like *pop Minang* songs or recordings of verbal arts, are being broadcast by these radio stations.

As the number of private radio stations has increased, tension among them has also escalated. In June 2003 there were some 740 radio stations registered with PRSSNI,³³⁵ the only private radio broadcasters association in Indonesia, formed and spied upon by the authoritarian New Order regime. Other sources list some 978 stations in Indonesia, including RRI's station branches.³³⁶ However, in reality the number of stations is higher than these data indicate. Since the start of the Reformasi era, a great number of new stations have an 'illegal' status, meaning that they are not registered with the government branch offices of the Ministry of Information (Departemen Penerangan) or with a private radio association such as PRSSNI.

Minangkabau migrants have also used radio technology to express their ethnic sentiments in *rantau*. Such radio stations operated by these Minangkabau migrants are called *radio urang awak* ('our people's radio'). Their broadcasts are specifically intended for Minangkabau audiences (Lindsay 1997). *Urang awak* radio stations can be found in several major cities across Indonesia where many Minangkabau migrants live. They have played a key role in forming and spreading an image of Minangkabau ethnicity to a national and inter-ethnic audience. Most of them are situated in Jakarta and outskirts (Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, and Bekasi/Jabodetabek) (Table 8.1). *Urang awak* radio stations mostly produce Minangkabau-language programs, and they use Minangkabau pop music and verbal arts from commercial recordings produced by West Sumatran recording companies.

SMS 08126600991. Ada hadiah menarik setiap harinya untuk pemantun dari sponsor. Jadi, pastiin Sushi mitra tidak melewatkan program special Pantun Balega ini. (*Padang Ekspres*, 2 August 2008)

335 See: <http://www.prssni.or.id/anggota/htm> (accessed 4-6-2003). PRSSNI is Persatuan Radio Siaran Swasta Nasional Indonesia ('Association of Indonesian National Private Radio Broadcasting'), which was established on 17 December 1974 in Jakarta.

336 See: <http://www.idx.org>, portal: 'Radio Directory' (accessed 9-6-2003).

Table 8.1

Urang awak radio stations in Jakarta, Bekasi, Tangerang and Bogor which broadcast Minangkabau programs

No	Name of station	Broadcasting schedule		Frequency	Presenter	Address
		Day	Time			
1.	Minang Maimbau RRI Pro 4	4 x seminggu; Rabu malam	20.00–22.00	FM 92.80; MW 1332; SW 9686	Yus Parmato Intan; Hj.Mislin Asmi Arti	Medan Merdeka Barat Jakarta; Tlp. 021.3440798; 021.3483435
2.	RRI Bogor	Rabu malam	20.00–22.00	93.7 FM	Bandaro Labiah	Jl. Pangrango No. 34, Bogor
3.	Gurindam Minang 'Radio Samhan'	Selasa malam; Kamis malam	21.00–01.00; 18.00–22.00	AM 630	Chen St. Caniago; Puti Lenggok Geni	Deren Sawit Jakarta Timur
4.	Radio Multazam	Minggu malam	20.00–23.00	AM 1017	Yus Panduko Nan Putiah; Nur ABG	Tanjung Priuk
5.	RPM Radio Pusako Minang	Acara Minang; setiap hari	04.30–24.00	AM 972	St. Muncak; Yanto Jambak; Sidi Maco	Tangerang
6.	Radio Palanta Minang	Acara Minang; setiap hari	04.00–22.00	AM 531	Ida Zoraida; Alam Batuah; Zairul Bandaro	Tangerang
7.	Radio S.B.Y	Rabu Siang	13.00–16.00	AM 666	Angku Ramdhan Ahmad	Matraman Jakarta
8.	Radio P25C			AM 936	Zainal Almai	Kemayoran
9.	Radio Pelangi Nusantara	Minggu malam; Jumat sore	21.00–24.00; 13.00–16.00	AM 888	Asri Sikumbang; Ajo Manih (Boy)	Taman Mini Indonesia
10	Radio Elgangga	Senen Malam	19.00–21.00	FM 101	Bagindo Markurai; Deni Madaliko	Bekasi

(Source: Azmi Dt. Bagindo, General Secretary of Lembaga Adat dan Kebudayaan Minangkabau, 'Minangkabau Custom and Culture Institution', Jakarta branch)

Ongoing innovation in computer technology has also had an impact on radio broadcasting. Nowadays, radio stations in West Sumatra, as in other regions, have equipped their studios with a computer and Internet network that enable programmers to collect songs in MP3 format and use them for their music broadcasts. The same goes for other genres like Minangkabau verbal arts. So, there has been double remediation of Minangkabau cassette and VCD content here: from cassettes and VCDs to MP3 format, and from MP3 to radio broadcast. This is different from the situation in the 1990s and earlier, when much of the music broadcast by radio stations was taken directly from cassettes, because at that time MP3 technology, which began in 1997, was not widely known in Indonesia. It has now become common in interactive programs that communications between the presenter in the studio and listeners use the short message system (SMS) facility via mobile phone, Facebook or Twitter. So, it must be said that contemporary radio broadcasting studios are places where media convergence and interconnection between different media can be seen.

Nowadays, political reform has given much freedom to radio stations to determine their own programming without fear of being censored by the government. The radio as a medium for ordinary people, such as community radio (*radio komunitas*), which brings empowerment to local culture, has developed significantly (see Birowo 2011). In the Reformasi era, radio programs have become more diverse than before: foreign programs are relayed without

restriction³³⁷ and domestic programs contain more local elements. The recording industry has benefited from this phenomenon.

FROM BROADCAST RADIO TO INTERNET RADIO

These days, radio service is an activity in which media convergence is high. This can be seen in the Internet radio technology which has been used in Indonesia since about 2000. Internet radio is audio service transmitted via the Internet using streaming media or the streaming radio on internet (Black 2001:403). The invention of Internet radio marked a new way in radio communications, and led to a change from broadcasting to social media. Pioneered by Carl Malamud in 1993, Internet radio use is now phenomenal. In Indonesia the technology is called 'radio streaming' or 'radio online'. By renting a server, those who have Internet access can produce their own online radio. Four types of online radio services are found in Indonesia: 1) those operated by private conventional radio stations; 2) those operated by individuals as a hobby in cyber technology; 3) those operated by local communities; 4) those operated by diasporas of particular ethnic groups. Such online radio services are usually accessible from anywhere in the world. Online radio in Indonesia, like traditional radio service, offers news, sports, talk shows, religious preaching, and various genres of music, and presents listeners with a continuous stream of audio that cannot be paused or replayed, much like traditional broadcasting media. From their computer, presenters can find out the number of listeners who are listening online worldwide.

Minangkabau ethnic communities, in the homeland and in *rantau*, have also started using this technology. Since 2005 several radio stations in West Sumatra have added online radio service in addition to traditional radio service (type 1). By adding online service to their broadcast programs, stations can expand their audience outside their broadcast coverage areas. The technique is by connecting the conventional broadcast with a microphone for radio streaming; so the conventional broadcast can be listened to by using a radio set, while the streamed version can be listened to worldwide by using a computer, laptop, or smart phone (BlackBerry, Android, etc.). Using this technique, when the conventional broadcast ends, its online counterpart also ends.

There are some 63 online radio services operated by Minangkabau people these days, some of them initiated in the homeland and some in *rantau*, including what is called *Radio Online Minang* ('Minangkabau Online Radio').³³⁸ This is the online radio service that emerged among Minangkabau diaspora communities worldwide. The emergence of *Radio Online Minang* was pioneered by Minangkabau migrants through the organization *Cimbuak* (literally, a water dipper for cleaning feet), which established *Radio Online Cimbuak* in Jakarta in 2004 (see <http://www.radiocimbuak.16mb.com/>; Fig. 8.2). It is part of *cimbuak.net*, a website on Minangkabau

337 The New Order government prohibited radio stations from relaying foreign broadcasts from 1971, although the implementation of this rule did not prevent underground stations from doing so (Sen and Hill 2000:94-5). In the current Reformasi era there is no more prohibition.

338 For more on radio streaming in Indonesia, see <http://www.radiostreamingindonesia.com/> (accessed 12-5-2013).

culture which provides articles and a chat facility (which they call *palanta*, literally a long bank in a coffee shop), but it does not have a mailing list. Initially, *cimbuak.net* was established by migrants from Sungai Puar, a *nagari* (village) in Agam regency, West Sumatra, who were living in Jakarta. The website was intended as a medium of communication for people originating from Sungai Puar.

In the course of time *cimbuak.net* has offered articles which deal not only with the *nagari* Sungai Puar, but also with other parts of Minangkabau. The membership of *cimbuak.net* has also been expanded: not only people from Sungai Puar, but those from other villages in Minangkabau can now join. *Cimbuak.net* also has a charity that gives scholarships to Minangkabau children. Listeners of *Radio Online Cimbuak* are not limited to those who come from the same *nagari*; Minangkabau migrants from other *nagari* and those who are living in the homeland also listen to it. It seems to have inspired Minangkabau migrant communities from other *nagari* to set up similar radio services. These days several other organizations of Minangkabau migrants have their own online radio service, for example *Radio Minang Saiyo*, *Radio Online Sulita*, *Radio Ranah Minang*, *Radio PKDP*, and *Radio Urang Minang Sedunia*.

Belonging to type 4 of the aforementioned categorization, *Radio Online Minang* services aim to form a good relationship between Minangkabau migrants in *rantau* and those living in



Figure 8.2: Virtual banners of Radio Online Minang Cimbuak, the pioneer of Minangkabau online radio that emerged among Minangkabau migrant communities in *rantau* (https://www.facebook.com/groups/Radio.Online.Minang.Cimbuak/559147790814373/?comment_id=559158440813308¬if_t=group_comment_reply; accessed 10-6-2013)

the homeland. They do not seek profit. Hence there are no advertisements in their programs. The DJs (disk jockeys) – the term used by the management to refer to presenters – work voluntarily and most of them are amateurs. They participate as DJs motivated only by the spirit of ethnicity among these Minangkabau migrants. Their function is just to greet listeners and play the songs they request, but some of them have created programs other than songs, such as presenting *pantun* verse and promoting migrants who are considered successful in their career or have rendered services for their Minangkabau homeland. The DJ's function is shared among listeners living a great distance from each other. So, online radio shares an important characteristic of social media, where the participant can alternate status as consumer/listener and producer. The management organizes the performing schedule of the DJs. *Radio Online Cimbuak*, for example, has DJs in Jakarta, Bontang, Palembang, Jambi, and Pekanbaru, while its overseas DJs dwell in Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Egypt, the United States, and Japan.

Radio Online Minang services are filled with a Minangkabau traditional cultural atmosphere, in part due to the many Minangkabau jingles. Likewise, the songs and music they present are dominated by traditional Minangkabau sounds. The most prominent is the sound of two Minangkabau traditional musical instruments, *saluang* and *talempong*. The bulk of the programs are filled with Minangkabau pop songs. Other program content includes Minangkabau verbal arts and Islamic religious preaching. All content of the programs is presented in MP3 format, and is taken from Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs. *Radio Online Minang* services strongly encourage the emotional bond between listeners (mostly Minangkabau migrants in *rantau*) and their homeland. This can be seen, for example, in one of *Radio Online Cimbuak*'s jingles which says '*Radio Online Cimbuak, batagak di ranah virtual, manyapo sanak di rantau, paubek hati taragak*' ('Radio Online Cimbuak, stands for virtual world, greets relatives in *rantau*, and cures homesickness') and '*Radio Online Cimbuak dot net, kampuang nan jauh di mato, samakin dakek di jari*' ('Radio Online Cimbuak dot net, homeland so far away, but close to one's fingers'³³⁹).

Erwin Moechtar (54 years old), one of the founders of *Radio Online Cimbuak* living in Bogor, mentions that the virtual relationships among listeners are intimate and warm. They feel like a big family, although most of them meet only in the virtual world. Online participants listen to the songs (audio) they request while keeping in touch with each other via Facebook, a chatting facility, and texting (SMSs) using a mobile phone. Sometimes they gather in Jakarta or other places to meet each other in person (*kopi darat*). Erwin mentions that there are some 80 to 100 listeners online with *Radio Online Cimbuak* every day, indicating that it is fairly popular among Minangkabau migrants worldwide. Because the songs presented are mostly *pop Minang*, and the language used by the DJs and among the listeners in chatting and on Facebook is very colloquial Minangkabau language, so the longing for the homeland among participants can be satisfied. *Radio Online Cimbuak* has been credited with bringing together three Minangkabau couples, Erwin told me. They met in the virtual world facilitated by this radio service, and then

339 This jingle means that thanks to sophisticated media technologies these days, Minangkabau migrants can easily keep in touch with their families and relatives in the homeland just by pressing buttons on their computer or mobile phone.

decided to get married. No royalties are claimed by the singers whose songs are presented on *Radio Online CimbuaK*, because this online radio service is not profit oriented (pers. comm., 12-5-2013). Nevertheless, the singers feel that the fans' spontaneous actions to spread their songs through online radio or YouTube gives them a non-material advantage, by promoting their singing. So, we can see the complex media intersection and interconnection in online radio communication activities among Minangkabau migrants where the recording industry (through its products) has become one of the supporting elements.

I could not verify how far this phenomenon is unique for Minangkabau, since I did not find any reference to cases of other ethnic groups; there have been some studies of internet use like mailing lists (see Landzelius 2006; Hepp 2009; Longboan 2011), but the use of online radio technology to create translocal communities among an ethnic diaspora seems to still be overlooked in cultural studies of modern media. Minangkabau, with its *merantau* tradition, is an ethnic group that has used online radio (and now also other kinds of social media) to maintain cultural connections in virtual space, blending indigenous values and cosmopolitan perspectives, which in turn motivate listeners to make direct physical contact (*kopi darat*) with each other.

MOBILE PHONE

Like other countries in the world, Indonesian society has already engaged with the modern communications medium of the mobile phone (better known in Indonesia as hand phone, or *HaPe*). First introduced in Indonesia in 1998, the mobile phone has reached all levels of Indonesian society. Ranking as the sixth country in the world in mobile phone use, after China, India, the United States, Russia, and Brazil, Indonesia has some of the world's most voracious consumers of mobile phones. With a population of over 250 million, Indonesia is a potential market for various brands of mobile phone, including the newer brand of BlackBerry³⁴⁰ which is very popular in the country in recent years.

The invasion of the mobile phone among the Indonesian people has unavoidably had socio-cultural impacts. As Indonesia is known as the nation with the largest Muslim population in the world, use of the mobile phone has been domesticated in Muslim religious circles, and many people use Muslim ringtones (see Barendregt 2009). The Minangkabau in West Sumatra are no exception: mobile phones have reached even the remote areas in the province, affecting people in various ways. This can be illustrated by a weekly satirical column entitled 'HParangai' published by a local newspaper in Padang, which satirically records behavioural and personality changes brought about by the mobile phone.³⁴¹ For instance,

340 Invented by the Canadian company Research in Motion (RIM) in 1997, BlackBerry is a cellular phone technology that has the ability to do email, telephone, short message service (SMS), surf the Internet, and various other wireless capabilities. It was first introduced in Indonesia in mid-December 2004 by the operator Indosat cooperating with StarHub, the successor of RIM (see <http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/BlackBerry> ; accessed 14-8-2011).

341 See Yusrizal KW and Cornelis's column 'HParangai' in Sunday editions of *Padang Ekspres* (first edition: July 2010). 'HPrangai' is written in the Minangkabau language. 'HParangai' is a play on words in the Indonesian language: 'Perubahan-perubahan perangai orang karena HP' ('Changes in people's behaviour caused by the

one tends to chat simply and briefly with family members but feels comfortable talking much longer with other persons on the mobile phone about things that are unnecessary.³⁴²

The domestication of the mobile phone in Indonesia is not just in the religious domain (predominantly Islam), as discussed by Barendregt (2009), but has also entered the local cultural sphere. In a Minangkabau cultural context, two aspects can be identified: 1) ringtone and ringback tone (RBT)³⁴³; 2) texting, or short message service (SMS). But only RBTs using favourite songs taken from Minangkabau pop albums produced by West Sumatran recording companies are relevant to be discussed further here. Other RBTs available are the sounds of Minangkabau musical instruments like *talempong* and *saluang*, *bansi*, and *pupuk sarunai*.

In 2008 the regional government of West Sumatra signed a memorandum of understanding with the mobile phone operator Telkomsel, which operates *Hallo*, *Simpat* and AS SIM cards, to use three favourite Minangkabau pop songs as ringtones and ringback tones. The songs are 'Minangkabau', 'Malereng Tabiang' ('Cliff slope'), and 'Malam Bainai' ('Merry first evening'). Part of the proceeds from their sale will be donated to the development of the Grand Minangkabau Mosque (Mesjid Raya Minangkabau) in Padang.³⁴⁴ Telkomsel did the same thing in 2009 in order to raise money to help survivors of the earthquake which rocked West Sumatra and caused serious damage. Surfing in Google, we can find some favourite Minangkabau pop songs that can be used as the ringtone of a hand phone. Today one can download a Minangkabau song from Internet for one's mobile phone's ringtone by using Bluetooth technology. An Internet blog with the address <http://budy-pasadena.blogspot.com/> (accessed 26-7-2011) informs us about dozens of Minangkabau pop songs that are used as ringtones and RBTs by several mobile phone providers in Indonesia and Malaysia. Most of them are taken from Elly Kasim's albums, which contain standard *pop Minang* songs of the best quality. Based on observations in the field, I have the impression that ringtones and RBTs of Minangkabau music are favoured not only among Minangkabau people living in the homeland but also among those settled overseas (*rantau*). A Minangkabau migrant in Kuala Lumpur I interviewed said that he used a Minangkabau song for his mobile phone ringtone because its sound satisfies his longing for his homeland in West Sumatra.

From the description above, it can be seen that the mobile phone medium has been utilized as a means for representing the products of the West Sumatran recording industry in particular and Minangkabau local culture in general. New technology has made it possible to remediate some of the musical and lyrical elements of Minangkabau commercial recordings

hand phone').

342 'HParangai' column: 'Ado Urang Nan Suko Maota Lamo-lamo di Hape Tantang Hal-hal Nan Indak Paralu', *Padang Ekspres*, 21 August 2011.

343 A ringback tone (RBT), which in the Indonesian language is called *nada sambung* ('dial tone'), 'is an audible indication that is heard on the telephone line by the caller while the [mobile] phone they are calling is being rung. It is normally a repeated tone, designed to assure the calling party that the called party's line is ringing, although the ringback tone may be out of sync with the ringing signal' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ringback_tone ; accessed 14-6-2011).

344 See: <http://padanginfo.wordpress.com/2008/05/22/telkomsel-bantu-bangun-masjid-raya-minangkau/> (accessed 25-7-2011).

for ringtones and RBTs of mobile phones, which suggests that in the Indonesian local context, mobile modernity has provided space for rejuvenating ethnic culture.

BLOGS

Blogging is a social media service which exists worldwide and, as in other parts of the world, is very popular in Indonesia. Blogging is still popular now, though its popularity has suffered from competition from newer social media like Facebook and Twitter. Blogging emerged in the late 1990s, and until 2009 most blogs were the work of a single individual, although more recently multi-author blogs have developed significantly. In Indonesia bloggers first appeared in 2001, but blogging activity only became popular from 2004 (Lim 2012:131). In 2011 Indonesia had around 5 million bloggers (Lim 2013:639). Functioning mostly as personal online diaries, blogs combine text, images, and links to other blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual, but there are blogs that focus on art (art blogs), photographs (photoblogs), video (vlogs), music (MP3 blogs), and audio (podcasts). Having an interactive format, blogs allow visitors to leave comments and even messages; this characteristic distinguishes them from static websites (Mutum and Qing 2010). The interactive format is an important contribution to the popularity of blogs.

My searching on the Internet turned up several blogs with content dealing with the West Sumatran recording industry. Three categories of blogs remediate products of the West Sumatran recording industry. First, those that provide transcriptions of Minangkabau pop song lyrics – the category of textual blogs. For example, a blog named ‘Kumpulan Lirik Lagu Minangkabau/Lagu Sumatra Barat’ (‘Compilation of Minangkabau song lyrics/West Sumatran songs’) (<http://liriklaguminang.blogspot.nl/>; accessed 7-5-2013) and a blog named ‘Lirik Lagu Minang Lamo’ (‘Standard pop Minang song lyrics’) (<http://laguminanglamo.wordpress.com/>; accessed 9-7-2013) provide transcriptions of many Minangkabau pop songs. However, I found no blog that provides transcriptions of recordings of Minangkabau verbal arts (see Chapter 6). Second, blogs that show photos of the covers of Minangkabau commercial recordings – discs, cassettes and VCDs – the category of photoblogs. Some blogs in this category also provide images of disc covers of songs other than Minangkabau songs, for example a blog named ‘Madrotter’ (<http://madrotter.blogspot.nl/search?q=Minang>; accessed 20-1-2011). Third, blogs that provide the audio content of Minangkabau commercial recordings in MP3 format – the category of MP3 blogs. Such blogs provide the audio track of Minangkabau commercial recordings of *pop Minang*, Minangkabau children’s pop, and (rarely) Minangkabau verbal arts. The blogs in this category tend to specialize in pop songs (including Minangkabau children’s music). For example, ‘Lagu Minang Free Download’ (‘Minangkabau songs which are free to download’) (<http://minanglagu.blogspot.nl/>; accessed 10-5-2013; Fig. 8.3) contains *pop Minang* songs and Minangkabau children’s pop songs in MP3 format which can be downloaded. Blogs offering Minangkabau verbal arts are rarely found. I think this is because recordings of verbal arts are usually too long, so that they are not suitable to be uploaded to blogs with limited space. Besides the aforementioned categories of blogs, there are also blogs that provide information (text) about Minangkabau music and verbal arts.

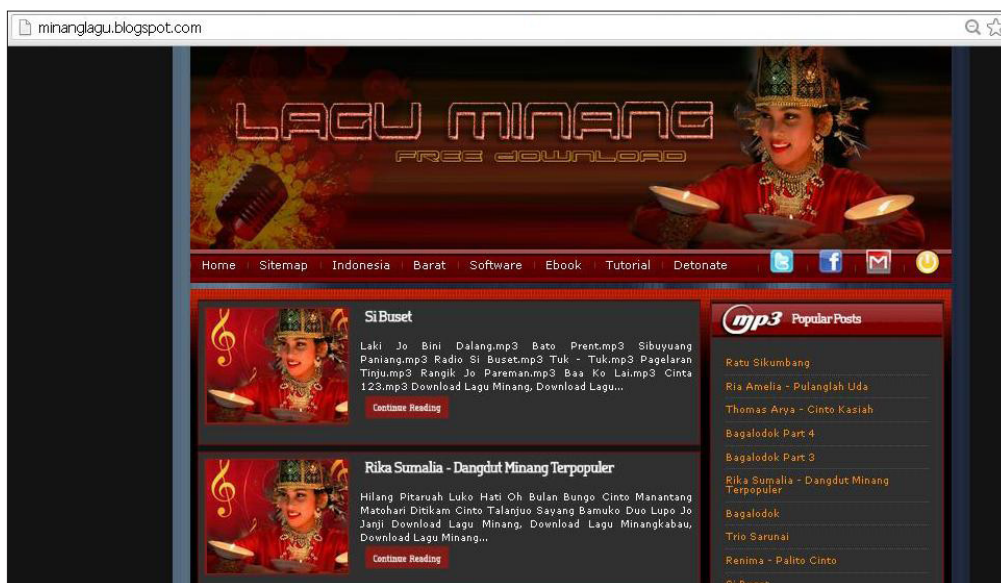


Figure 8.3: Personal blog offering Minangkabau pop songs in MP3 format

Blogs often provide information about their owners (bloggers). Many Indonesian blogs have a part containing personal data, usually called ‘tentang saya’ (‘about me’). Although ethnic background is not usually specified, I was able to identify owners of blogs of Minangkabau ethnicity if the place they were born was in West Sumatra or if they had Minangkabau names. In other cases, with a place of birth outside Minangkabau, it was nevertheless clear that the blogger had emotional and cultural bonds with Minangkabau. This was the case for some bloggers who had (Malay) Malaysian names. I suspect they are Minangkabau descendants who have been living in the Malay Peninsula for generations. This is evidence of the consumption of Minangkabau commercial recordings by Malays, as discussed in the next chapter.

Unlike other social media, a blog typically represents the keen interest of its owner in a specific topic. It differs from Facebook, for example, where users deal with a whole range of matters, from cultural to political, from social issues to private affairs. Most bloggers are well-educated individuals. A blog might represent not only a hobby but also the blogger’s intellectual or scholarly concerns. In this regard, it can be said that bloggers who have blogs dealing with the products of the West Sumatran recording industry can be assumed to have a strong interest in Minangkabau culture and society. In the context of Indonesian society, such an interest tends to be motivated by genealogical and cultural ties.

YOUTUBE

These days all three categories of West Sumatran recording industry products (see Chapters 5, 6, and 7) can be found on YouTube. They are taken from Minangkabau gramophone discs, cassettes, and VCDs. MP3 technology (invented in February 2005) is utilized actively for promoting and disseminating these products of the West Sumatran recording industry on

YouTube. MP3 technology is the easiest and most popular way these days to collect songs, most of which are pirated. And if we want to understand this widespread sharing of pirated music files, ‘we also need to understand the long history of music piracy’, which takes many forms such as cassette and VCD recordings, ‘and the history of software piracy’ (Sterne 2003:338). My examination of YouTube shows that almost all *pop Minang* songs have been uploaded to this video-sharing website. The same is true of various Minangkabau verbal arts genres and media-bound genres like modern Minangkabau drama and Minangkabau children’s pop songs. But not all commercial recordings of verbal arts genres, especially very long stories, are available in their entirety on YouTube. This is understandable, because YouTube is usually used to upload quite short audio-visual recordings.

On YouTube one can find most of the early and standard songs of *pop Minang* of the 1960s (Nurseha and Elly Kasim’s generation) right up to the most recent new *pop Minang* songs of the 2000s (Lepoh and Buset’s generation) (see Fig. 8.4). Visual images for songs sung by the younger generation of singers just show pictures of the singers. An examination of what is available on YouTube shows us that many of the songs from the 1960s and 1970s have been re-sung (re-recorded) or recycled by younger singers from later generations. The transfer of songs from disc or cassette to YouTube is usually done using MP3 technology. Sometimes uploads use MP4 technology. As YouTube can be used by anyone, there are also many Minangkabau songs sung by ordinary people uploaded to the website.

My searching on YouTube also shows that products of the West Sumatran recording industry were uploaded to the website as early as 2007 and then in successive years (up to 2013). Some Minangkabau pop song albums were even uploaded in their entirety to YouTube. The number of viewers ranges from thousands to hundreds of thousands, indicating that enthusiasm for Minangkabau pop songs is quite high. This shows that YouTube has become a significant medium for disseminating the products of the West Sumatran recording industry.



Figure 8.4: A posting of *pop Minang* on YouTube

YouTube has become a virtual place where (almost) all reproduced Minangkabau sounds are accumulated, which reminds us of a principal notion of this book: that reproduced sounds from the past cannot be separated from the reproduced sounds of today. Here, they are all there together on YouTube.

It seems that Minangkabau pop music and verbal arts from commercial discs, cassettes, and VCDs are not usually uploaded to YouTube by the producers or the singers, but by other individuals. Surveying the names of the uploaders, I have the impression that they are names characteristic of Minangkabau, Javanese, and Malaysians. Some singers I interviewed mentioned that they have never uploaded their own songs to YouTube. They were surprised to learn that many songs they have sung or released have been circulating on YouTube. This means that West Sumatran recording industry products have often been uploaded to YouTube by fans living in *rantau*, including those living in neighbouring Malaysia. (For more on the distribution and reception of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs in Malaysia, see Chapter 9.) Numerous songs have been uploaded several times by different individuals.

YouTube, like other social media, has empowered audiences to be creative. And as Meikle and Young (2012:125-6) mention, ‘creative audience behaviour is social – it connects people who organize, write, manipulate, collaborate upon and share media texts – and it allows them to develop their media literacies in new and creative ways, becoming more engaged, active and critical viewers, readers and listeners’. The singer Nedi Gampo says that he is happy to hear that many of his songs are available on YouTube. He believes this has directly or indirectly promoted him and made him more popular, though he suspects it might harm the producers (by reducing their sales). YouTube, thus, provides ways of promoting and disseminating products of the West Sumatran recording industry where consumers play an active role. It can be said that the existence on YouTube of Minangkabau repertoire taken from commercial recordings reflects consumers’ interest and passion for them.

As this book deals with regional recording and ethnicity, it is important to look at not only the Minangkabau repertoire uploaded to YouTube but also the comments left by viewers. Generally speaking, such comments are mostly written in the Minangkabau language, and smaller numbers of them in Indonesian or Malaysian Malay or English. It is likely that the viewers are mostly Minangkabau (and probably living in *rantau*) or have blood and cultural relations with Minangkabau. A smaller number of viewers appear to be living in Malaysia and do not understand the Minangkabau language but are interested in the songs for their music. Most comments reflect longing for the homeland in West Sumatra.³⁴⁵ Viewers often write that listening to the songs brings their minds to the homeland, which they rarely visit. Such comments by Minangkabau migrants are often responded to by their ethnic fellows living in the homeland by saying: ‘Please visit the homeland (*kampung*) if you miss it.’ For example, commenting on Elly Kasim’s ‘Bapisah Bukannyo Bacarai’ (‘Separate but not detached’) (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r19MiTI7JoA>; accessed 8-5-2013) one viewer says:

345 Of course there are also other comments, such as comments expressing praise. Some comments tell of viewers’ life experiences related to the themes and morals of the songs. There are also comments discussing the quality of the song clips.

‘Listening to this song makes me miss my late father, who always played Minangkabau songs, though his children have never visited the homeland [West Sumatra]. My tears flowed.’³⁴⁶ This comment, inspired by listening to a song, suggests the viewer’s emotional bond with the homeland. It is evidence that for Minangkabau migrants in *rantau*, like the commentator and his late father, Minangkabau songs they can listen to now in *rantau*, thanks to modern technologies, are the means for satisfying their longing for their homeland and the family members left behind there. Like many other comments found on YouTube, this is empirical evidence that demonstrates a main notion of this book: that Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs, including their derived forms remediated on other media like YouTube, serve a significant function in maintaining a sense of Minangness among the Minangkabau, wherever they live.

FACEBOOK

Facebook is another social medium that has been used to disseminate products of the West Sumatran recording industry. Though Facebook is a media technology related to writing, it is important to discuss here because Facebook walls are very often used to attach links to Minangkabau recordings available on YouTube (see Fig. 8.5). By disseminating Minangkabau recordings in this way, Facebook users attract their online friends to enjoy the products of the West Sumatran recording industry. As in other countries, Facebook is very popular in Indonesia. Myrna Lim, in her research on digital media in Indonesia, notes that Facebook started being used by people in Indonesia in 2007, became popular in 2008-2009, and increased greatly in popularity during the following three or four years (pers. comm., 07-07-2013). By 2012 Indonesia had become the third largest nation for Facebook, with 43 million users (statistics by SocialBakers quoted in Lim 2013:639). According to A. Yogaswara (2010:18) Indonesia is a country which has very active Facebook users: of 94,748,820 users in 2009, 6.84% of them posted each week. Facebook, like other (social) media, has experienced domestication in Indonesia. Generally speaking, many Indonesian Facebookers are not shy about expressing their feelings related to private affairs on their Facebook walls. Gossip and religious affairs figure prominently in Indonesian Facebookers’ postings. Facebook is very popular in Indonesia, because of its capability to virtually facilitate Indonesian oral culture and communality. Facebook has helped many Indonesian people to find, for example, their old friends from primary and secondary school. When former classmates are located in this way, meetings in cyberspace are usually continued with face-to-face meetings.

But an important thing here is to look at Facebook use in relation to local culture and ethnicity in Indonesia. Facebook is used to express matters dealing with ethnicity, including among Minangkabau people. Among the materials posted on Facebook by people assumed to come from the Minangkabau ethnic group, are *pop Minang* songs (Fig. 8.5) and Minangkabau verbal arts genres. Most people seem to have copy-pasted from YouTube. So, after being remediated in YouTube, these Minangkabau recordings are remediated again in Facebook.

346 ‘Mandanga lagu-lagu ko rindu [awak] jo almarhum apak awak nan salalu mamuta lagu-lagu Minang, walaupun kami anak-anaknyo alun pernah pulang kampung. Badarai aia matooooo...’



Figure 8.5: Pop Minang postings on Facebook walls copy-pasted from YouTube

Other postings present the transcription of *pop Minang* song lyrics. It is almost certain that most of the responders who comment on such postings are fellow Minangkabau. The non-Minangkabau responders can be identified from their comments. They state, for example, that they do not understand the song lyrics, and ask the person who posted the song to translate the lyrics into Indonesian.

Indonesian Facebookers are eager to form Facebook groups or Facebook forums for their own ethnic group in which they discuss, even harshly debate, various topics. Minangkabau people also have such Facebook forums, with participants living in *rantau* as well as in the homeland. There are sometimes bitter debates. Generally speaking, those who confront each other in such virtual debates are the defenders of traditions and *adat* versus conservative Islamists (see Suryadi 2012; Hendra 2013). Some Facebook forums were extended from earlier old-fashioned mailing lists. The main example is *Palanta RantauNet*.³⁴⁷ Established in 1993 by Indonesian students from Minangkabau who were studying in Canada and the United States, *RantauNet* was claimed by its founders to be the first Minangkabau mailing list. During the first years of its existence, the members of the *RantauNet* mailing list were mostly living abroad, since the Internet was still rarely used in Indonesia at that time. (The first commercial Internet was established in Indonesia in the mid-1990s; see Hill and Sen 1997:72-3.) Since the early years of its existence, the members of the *RantauNet* mailing list have

347 At <https://www.facebook.com/groups/palanta.rantaunet/> (accessed 12-10-2010).

predominantly been Minangkabau *perantau* white-collar workers – diplomats, government employees, lecturers, and businessmen. The mailing list has administrators. The current administrators live in Jakarta (previously in Washington). Called *urang dapua* (literally, people in the kitchen), the administrators function to guide the content of the mailing list and the behaviour of subscribers, as the mailing list has regulations (called *tata-tertib RantauNet*) one of which states that issues discussed on the mailing list should be related to the motherland (*ranah bundo*, Minangkabau). The *RantauNet* mailing list still exists these days, alongside its Facebook forum counterpart. But not all *RantauNet* mailing list members joined the Facebook forum. The members of the *RantauNet* Facebook forum are more diverse in terms of social class: from white-collar workers to street vendors, both those living in *rantau* as well as in West Sumatra.

As can be seen in Figure 8.6, using a logo that is like a Minangkabau ‘big house’ (*rumah gadang*), the Facebook forum (also its mailing list counterpart) is called *Palanta RantauNet*. In



Figure 8.6: Front wall of Minangkabau ethnic-based Facebook group *RantauNet*

the Minangkabau language *palanta* means a long bench made of wood which is always found in coffee shops (*lapau kopi*) in Minangkabau. There the men sit while chatting about current events. So, the cyber ‘Minangkabau coffee shop’ RantauNet, like real coffee shops in West Sumatra, is used by its members to discuss a variety of topics while expressing nostalgia for their Minangkabau homeland. They tend to discuss issues dealing with Minangkabau culture and the situation in the homeland (West Sumatra). Postings on the RantauNet Facebook forum contain Minangkabau songs taken from YouTube, or from threads on Minangkabau pop music. Though discussions sometimes deal with national and global issues, participants tend to connect them with Minangkabau and West Sumatra. RantauNet members treat the Facebook forum (and also its mailing list) like a real Minangkabau coffee shop in West Sumatra, where people discuss current hot issues, political, economic, cultural, and religious (see Bagindo *et al.* 2008).

The number of postings of *pop Minang* songs and Minangkabau verbal arts on Facebook has multiplied the remediation of Minangkabau commercial cassette and VCD content with a speed that could not previously have been imagined. With this capability, Facebook, like YouTube, can be credited with disseminating the Minangkabau cultural repertoire that is recorded on commercial cassettes and VCDs. With its facility to share postings easily, it is not surprising that Facebook postings of *pop Minang* and other genres that originated as Minangkabau commercial recordings have vastly proliferated, reaching a far larger audience in terms of geography, social class, ethnicity and race. Considering that Facebook is only one site in a complex social media network, such postings are often rearticulated or translated to other social media like Twitter and Flickr. The strong ripple effect of social media is undeniable. But at the same time, remediation of Minangkabau cassette and VCD content on Facebook is more intensive than on other social media. This is made possible by the characteristic of Facebook which prompts users to routinely and frequently post new information on their walls. This encourages users to openly respond to postings and in this way become aware of others’ reactions.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown how the products of the West Sumatran recording industry are situated in today’s convergent media environment. Though the Minangkabau culture of West Sumatra has engaged with media technology ever since the ‘talking machine’ era (Chapter 2), the remediation of this culture by different electronic media technologies greatly increased since the early 1970s, and has become vastly more complex due to the interconnection and intersection among many media these days. This has brought about a gradual transformation of the previous transformation, infused with new local meaning.

The remediation of Minangkabau commercial recordings initially occurred in ‘old’ media like conventional broadcast radio. Later, such remediation made use of social network media. These days Minangkabau commercial recordings are disseminated on social media like Internet radio, blogs, YouTube, and Facebook. Audio fragments from Minangkabau commercial recordings have also been used in Indonesia for mobile phone ringtones and

RBTs. In a convergent media environment, as information becomes more and more replicable, scalable, and searchable worldwide (Boyd 2011:45-8), the dissemination and consumption of Minangkabau commercial recordings has crossed beyond Minangkabau ethnic boundaries.

Remediation of the products of the West Sumatran recording industry has involved consumers much more than producers. This has marked a new way of promoting and disseminating such products. Today's convergent media environment has given birth to 'creative audiences' (Meikle and Young 2012:103) where, unlike in broadcast media, distinctions between producer and audience have become blurred and where the label 'consumer' in this interactive virtual communication seems to be out of date. Such proliferating remediation of Minangkabau cassette and VCD content on social media networks has positive as well as negative effects on the West Sumatran recording industry. On the one hand producers can now advertise their products without necessarily spending any money. On the other hand, Minangkabau cassette and VCD producers no longer have complete control over their products. This may challenge the continuing existence of small-scale West Sumatran recording companies as institutions which tend to be profit oriented.

The ways in which media convergence has been used to remediate products of the West Sumatran recording industry has affected cultural perceptions in local and global contexts. With multifaceted remediation and multilayered representation of Minangkabau cultural repertoire recorded on commercial cassettes and VCDs on radio and various social media, the Minangkabau culture itself has been transformed and Minangkabau people's perception of their own culture has altered, both in the homeland and in *rantau*. At the same time, outsiders' images and perceptions of the Minangkabau ethnic group and Minangkabau culture have shifted.

The entire discussion in this chapter suggests that, from their place of origin, Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs have spread everywhere in the world as a result of being remediated on various media. Such a process of remediation has been carried out mostly by consumers rather than by singers or producers. On the other hand, the distribution and reception of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs in a conventional way – taking pleasure in music by playing cassettes and VCDs on cassette and VCD players – is still happening. The following chapter (Chapter 9) traces how Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs, outside of remediation routes in other (social) media, find their way to consumers overseas. It will look at the distribution and consumption of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs in Malaysia. The chapter aims to identify what factors have influenced the prevalent consumption of products of the West Sumatran recording industry in its neighbouring country.

BEYOND HOMELAND BORDERS

MINANGKABAU CASSETTES AND VCDs

OUTSIDE WEST SUMATRA

Having described the complex nature of Minangkabau pop music and its commercial recordings in the homeland, in this chapter I explore the (re)production, circulation, consumption and reception of pop Minang outside the region of its origin.³⁴⁸ I distinguish two areas: foreign countries (focusing on Malaysia) and the national (Indonesian) context (focusing on Riau province). Both Malaysia and Riau have close connections with Minangkabau in terms of religion and culture. Historically, both regions were destinations of the early migrations of Minangkabau people (De Josselin de Jong 1985; Kato 1997). By taking these regions as case studies, I want to explore the distinctions between the (re)production, dissemination, and reception of Minangkabau pop music in the home country and outside the home country. How have the products of the West Sumatran recording industry been received outside West Sumatra? I observed that the reception of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs outside the place of their origin goes far beyond the main audiences among Minangkabau *perantau* communities. I argue that commercial recordings of regional music are an important means for the ethnic diaspora, Minangkabau in this case, to keep up their emotional ties and satisfy their nostalgia for their homeland. I believe that the conception of the nation-state influences the perceptions of regional music of a given ethnicity. This is because every state has its own cultural policy. The extensive and vigorous dissemination of regional music recordings beyond their original geographical boundaries and across nation-state boundaries in Southeast Asia, which is inhabited by many different ethnicities, has some bearing on (re)constructing identities among migrants in many urban areas of the region.

Demographically, in Southeast Asia, we see many ethnic communities that have out-migrated to places outside their homelands. This has affected the socio-cultural and political domains of each region, because humans tend to have difficulty disengaging with their own culture. Migrants tend to continue their own cultural practices in the new places, including practices related to music. Thanks to modern recording technologies like cassettes and VCDs, ethnic cultural elements like music have now become portable and therefore can be distributed far outside their original cultural area. Migrant populations across the world contribute to transnational and diasporic audiences. The Minangkabau ethnic community in Indonesia is an example. Well known for a strong tradition of *merantau*, Minangkabau migrants (*perantau*) can be found in many places in Indonesia as well as in some neighbouring countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Australia.

348 This chapter is based on Suryadi 2007 and partly on Suryadi 2005.

The research findings discussed in this chapter are the result of fieldwork trips to the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur in February and December 2004 and two short visits in January 2008 and August 2009. Besides my observations and interviews with music shop owners and customers in the Chow Kit district in Kuala Lumpur, which carries the nickname ‘miniature Indonesia’, I also visited Pahang, capital of the Malaysian state of Kuantan, and Seremban, capital of the Malaysian state of Negeri Sembilan, where many Minangkabau descendants live. Chow Kit is largely occupied by Indonesian migrants and you will find many music shops selling music albums of Indonesian regional and national music. Most of these albums are in cassette or VCD format.

As recording media can shape and bring about cultural images, this chapter looks at the distribution and reception patterns of regional cassettes and VCDs, Minangkabau in this case, tracking demographic changes in Indonesia and surrounding regions, and examines how these regional recordings serve as ‘binding’ for the Minangkabau people in their migration destinations. It is important to understand the relationship between ethnicity and regional cassettes and VCDs in contemporary Southeast Asia in the context of ethnic communities’ increasing mobility beyond their initial geographical borders.

MINANGKABAU MIGRANTS IN MALAYSIA

Historically, Minangkabau people have long out-migrated to the Malay Peninsula, which now forms part of Malaysia. This was one of the oldest Minangkabau *rantau* destinations. Most of the residents of the Malaysian state of Negeri Sembilan, in particular, have ancestors originating from Minangkabau in central Sumatra. They trace their historical origins to Minangkabau (Swift 1965). Minangkabau people had out-migrated to Negeri Sembilan since the fourteenth century, when it was still under the authority of the Sultanate of Malacca (see De Josselin de Jong 1985; Gullick 2003). As witnessed by a European observer of the region in the early nineteenth century, Minangkabau migrants in Negeri Sembilan set up communities based on the traditions of their hometowns in West Sumatra (Newbold 1835). Therefore the two regions maintain strong cultural relations up to today (Saifullah 2008). Like the Minangkabau in West Sumatra, the people of Negeri Sembilan are Muslims and they have matrilineal kinship (De Josselin de Jong 1985; Hadler 2008). The people of Negeri Sembilan call their customs *Adat Perpatih*, and state that these customs were brought by their ancestors from Minangkabau. It was a tradition from the 1790s to 1870s if the king of Negeri Sembilan died, that its nobles looked for a new king as his successor from the Minangkabau kingdom of Pagaruyung in West Sumatra (Panghulu 1970; Idris 1970; Sati 1983; Ajisman et al. 2009), which suggests strong cultural and political ties between the two regions. An old Negeri Sembilan proverb says: ‘Beraja ka Johor, Bertali ka Siak, Bertuan ka Minangkabau’ (‘Have a king from Johor, have an ally with Siak, have a master from Minangkabau’), which means that the ancestors of Negeri Sembilan’s monarchy came from Minangkabau and settled temporarily in Siak (now located in Riau province) before they crossed the Strait of Malacca and reigned in Johor (Idris 1968:19-20).

Descendants of Minangkabau migrants in Malaysia continue to play a significant role in the political, military, intellectual, and religious fields up to the present. For the earlier period, we can mention that the coup against Sultan Mahmud of Johor Kingdom in the early eighteenth century was launched by a Minangkabau adventurer from Pagaruyung named Raja Kecil (Andaya 1976; Barnard 1994). Minangkabau descendants became prominent religious and political leaders in the Malay Peninsula, both during the colonial era and the modern period (see Aziz 2003; Chaniago 2010; Musda 2010).

Besides those of Minangkabau descent living in Negeri Sembilan, there are many more Minangkabau people who have migrated to Malaysia since the 1960s. These, and other immigrant groups from Indonesia, are classed by the Malaysian authorities as *pendatang haram* ('illegal migrants'), a term often used by the ruling regime to invoke the unity of the Malaysian ethnic group (*Bangsa Malaysia*) (Holst 2012:133-35); blaming the immigrants is a political strategy used by the regime when elections are coming up to maintain its power and political hegemony. Many Minangkabau migrants in Malaysia have intermarried with local Malay women. They live there amid fluctuating political sentiments between Indonesia and Malaysia as often reflected in public discourses on culture, sports, and the economy. Malaysia's significant economic development in recent decades has stimulated many Indonesian labourers as well as white-collar workers to migrate there.

Chow Kit, discussed below, is a busy district in Kuala Lumpur where many people from Minangkabau run their businesses as traders and restaurant owners offering Minangkabau cuisine. Minangkabau descendants in Malaysia and Minangkabau migrants who came to the country later still maintain their ancestral customs. During my fieldwork in the Chow Kit district, I heard the Minangkabau language being used in communication among the Minangkabau migrants settled there. I speculate that the high consumption of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs in Malaysia is closely related to the significant number of people of Minangkabau descent living in the country.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF POP MINANG IN MALAYSIA

The recordings of *pop Minang* songs that are distributed in Malaysia are (re)produced independently by recording companies in Malaysia. Some of the *pop Minang* VCDs circulated in Malaysia are copies of original versions produced by West Sumatran regional recording companies; others are recom compilations featuring a selection of songs from various albums and compiled into a whole new album with a newly created cover. Most of the *pop Minang* albums distributed in Malaysia are recorded in VCD format, although you might still be able to find some in cassette format. Malaysian distributors are able to sell these albums at a lower cost than imported albums because they are (re)produced locally in Malaysia and are therefore free from foreign import tax. This seems like a good business strategy employed by local Malaysian recording companies to avoid the high taxation imposed by the government.

There are at least a dozen Malaysian producers and distributors who produce and distribute *pop Minang* albums in Malaysia. Most of these recording and distributing companies are owned by Malaysian Chinese. In Southeast Asia ethnic Chinese involvement in introducing modern technologies in business has long been occurring. Since colonial times, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Indonesians of Chinese descent have long been involved in marketing gramophones and discs in Indonesia. But, as described in Chapter 5, they cannot be credited with contributing to the establishment and development of West Sumatra's recording industry.

The producers of *pop Minang* VCDs in Malaysia are mostly located in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur and its immediate surroundings. As a cosmopolitan city, Kuala Lumpur has burgeoned in tandem with the nation's huge economic success. The pop music industry has developed significantly, and the recording industry has been part of this. Minangkabau cassette and VCD producers have enlivened the recording industry in Kuala Lumpur in particular and Malaysia in general. Outside Kuala Lumpur, *pop Minang* albums are also produced by other recording companies located in Malacca City.

Pop Minang VCDs (re)produced by Malaysian recording companies are distributed legally in Malaysia, as evidenced by the fact that they bear a sticker of certification from Lembaga Penapisan Filem Malaysia ('Malaysian Film Censorship Board') that states that the content of the album is not 'harmful' (Figs. 9.1 and 9.2) and has successfully been passed by the censors. But there is no guarantee that the Malaysian producers of such VCDs have got permission from the West Sumatran recording companies that initially produced them. Some West Sumatran producers I interviewed stated that they were unaware that the *pop Minang* albums they produce have been reproduced by Malaysian producers and then officially and legally sold in Malaysia. Likewise, some singers I interviewed in Padang and Bukittinggi said they also did not know that their albums have been reproduced and marketed in Malaysia. This suggests that music piracy in Southeast Asia has become transnational. It is not merely a case of national as well as regional music being pirated within one country, but also national and regional pop music from other countries. As in Indonesia, pirated VCDs are also circulated in Malaysia. Likewise, Malaysian songs by prominent singers are also pirated in Indonesia.

A number of *pop Minang* VCDs are authorized only for distribution in West Malaysia (Fig. 9.1). I have not yet uncovered the reasons behind such a limitation. My guess is that there is a different office for registrations in East Malaysia, so the office in Kuala Lumpur issues permits for West Malaysia only. Perhaps this relates to regulations on the music business issued by the Malaysian government, or perhaps to this relatively authoritarian state's cultural policies that tend to consider foreign music 'harmful' to national stability which may negatively influence the Malaysian public and their values (see Côté 2011). However, there are some *pop Minang* VCDs that are distributed throughout Malaysia.

In Malaysia, a *pop Minang* VCD sells for about RM 12–14 (roughly US\$ 4–5 or Rp 36,000–45,000). This is far more expensive than the selling price of the original genuine VCD in Indonesia, which is about Rp 17,000–25,000 (roughly US\$ 1.5–2). Minangkabau songs that

are distributed in Malaysia are mostly pop, including Minangkabau children's pop music (Chapter 7). Other traditional Minangkabau genres sold are *saluang* (Chapter 6) and the hybrid genre of *gamad* (Chapter 5).

During my fieldwork in Malaysia, I did not see cassette shops and stalls selling recordings of Minangkabau verbal arts. But I know from some Chow Kit residents from Minangkabau that they bought such recordings on visits to West Sumatra. The reason that Malaysian producers and sellers do not sell recordings of Minangkabau verbal arts might have to do with the market segment: presumably these recordings would only be attractive to migrants who come from particular regions of West Sumatra, and they tend to be popular only among the older generations of Minangkabau *perantau*. So, from a marketing perspective, the production and sales of recordings in Malaysia likely are not considered to have the potential to be profitable.



Figure 9.1: VCD cover of Opetra album *Dangdut Minang* (distributed by Team Music Enterprise Sdn Bhd, 2004) with the sticker of certification issued by the Malaysian Film Censorship Board

As described in Chapter 4, the *jua putuih* ('outright sale') contract offered by producers to Minangkabau pop artists is not beneficial for the artists. In this regard, the (re)production system of *pop Minang* music in Malaysia definitely exacerbates the financial loss of West Sumatran local artists. Moreover, it is very likely that such losses will increase in the coming years due both to rampant piracy within Indonesia and to the rising (re)production of *pop Minang* outside its region of origin (especially in Malaysia) that does not give any compensation (be it financial or moral) to Minangkabau artists.

CONSUMPTION AND RECEPTION OF POP MINANG IN MALAYSIA

My research in Kuala Lumpur reveals that *pop Minang* songs in Malaysia are largely consumed by Minangkabau migrants residing in that country. This is understandable, as *pop Minang* songs are in fact regional songs featuring lyrics in the Minangkabau language. From conversation with several Minangkabau migrants in Chow Kit, I got the impression that they still use the Minangkabau language in communicating with each other. But they are actually trilingual: they use the Malay language of Malaysia for communication with locals (other Malaysians), the Minangkabau language within the Minangkabau community and at home, and the Indonesian language for communication with Indonesians of other ethnicities that are migrants in Malaysia. The Minangkabau community in Malaysia, despite being absent from their homeland, maintain a sense of ethnic identity partly by listening to *pop Minang* songs. In Chapter 8 I have shown, by referring to comments on *pop Minang* songs posted on YouTube, that Minangkabau migrants satisfy their longing for their homeland and family members left behind there by listening to *pop Minang* songs. For Minangkabau migrants who have resided in Malaysia for a long time, nostalgia for their homeland is satisfied partly by listening to these *pop Minang* recordings that are easily available locally. For the diaspora, Minangkabau music functions as a representation of their homeland and conveys a sense of familiarity. Having the power to connect across time and memories, such ethnic-branded sound 'holds meaning and significance that reaches beyond the immediate context and physical confines of the home[land]' (Tacchi 2003:281). Through this nostalgic practice, 'the past, imagined or real, [...] can be brought into the present, as a feeling that alters the present, and can further be projected into the future' (Tacchi 2003:293). This illustrates the cultural function of portable music recordings among ethnic-based diasporas in today's globalized world.

In Malaysia, the reception of *pop Minang* music is related to the social class of Minangkabau migrants in the country. Most of these migrants are of the lower-middle class. According to a survey, 99 percent of Minangkabau migrants in Malaysia are traders, and a large majority achieve success (Padang Ekspres, 28-2-2006). In a *rantau* destination like Kuala Lumpur, Minangkabau migrants, surrounded by fellow migrants, retain strong emotional bonds with their ethnic origins, manifested in the form of associations with a regional character based on place of origin. This is especially so for those who come from the same village in West Sumatra. This indicates their strong relationship with their homeland in West Sumatra. Gamawan Fauzi, Governor of West Sumatra, has visited Malaysia on various occasions to encourage a sense of togetherness among Minangkabau migrants so that they may one day return and contribute to their homeland. Such a strong ethnic sentiment can be found in Chow

Kit: Minangkabau migrants form unions such as PIKM (Persatuan Ikatan Minang-Malaysia, 'Association of Minang Society in Malaysia'), and those from the same village seem to remain on very familiar terms with each other. For example, Minangkabau migrants from Sulit Air, a *nagari* in Solok regency in West Sumatra which became famous because of the success of its *perantau* in business in various *rantau* destinations in Indonesia and abroad, formed an association called Sulit Air Sepakat (SAS, 'Sulit Air in Harmony') Malaysia branch in 1996.³⁴⁹



Figure 9.2: Music shop in the Malaysian city of Kuantan that sells Indonesian national and regional cassettes and VCDs (above) and its classification of types of Indonesian music (below) (photographs by Suryadi, 2005)

349 Sulit Air Sepakat is an association of Minangkabau migrants from the *nagari* Sulit Air in Solok regency, West Sumatra. It has branches in many *rantau* destinations, including in Malaysia. SAS was founded by Rainal Rais, a successful businessman from Sulit Air living in Jakarta. He borrowed money from banks and then credited them just to his fellow-migrant traders from Sulit Air. With such financial assistance, many Sulit Air migrants in *rantau* destinations successfully developed their businesses (see Rainal Rais's biography edited by D'Kincaï 2003; 'SAS dari Organisasi Sosial ke Ekonomi', *Kinantan*, Edisi Percobaan/no. 2, Mei 1995:22-23). SAS demonstrates the cohesiveness of Minangkabau migrants from a particular homeland village in *rantau* destinations.

The largest Minangkabau organization in Malaysia is the *Pertubuhan Ikatan Kebajikan Masyarakat Minangkabau* (PIKMM, ‘Minangkabau Community Benevolent Association’)³⁵⁰ (*Padang Ekspres*, 28-2-2006). Minangkabau migrant traders in Kuala Lumpur also established *Koperasi Minang Kuala Lumpur Berhad* (‘Minangkabau Cooperation of Kuala Lumpur Private Limited’). The cooperation and community spirit of the Minangkabau people in Malaysia is thus exemplified by the unity of people from the same province, regency or village.

Minangkabau songs are particularly well liked in the Malaysian states of Kuantan and Negeri Sembilan, and it is there that *pop Minang* VCDs are sold in local markets. In fact, some retail cassette shops are owned by Minangkabau migrant traders. For instance, one of the retail cassette shops in *Pasar Taman Tas*, Pahang, capital of Kuantan, is owned by Abizar, a Minangkabau migrant from Pariaman. He sells many Minangkabau albums issued by Malaysian cassette companies. Abizar said that the main customers for these cassettes are Minangkabau migrants residing in Kuantan and surroundings, who share his cultural background (pers. comm., 28-7-2005).

In music shops and stands in Malaysia, as I saw in Abizar’s shop, Indonesian music recordings are categorized ethnically and nationally, suggesting that both sellers and consumers recognize these music products as markers of local and national identity. Indonesian national pop songs, labelled *pop Indon* (‘Indonesian pop music’), are distinguished from Indonesian regional pop like *pop Minang* (‘Minangkabau pop music’) and *campursari* (literally ‘mixture of essences’; a crossover of several contemporary Indonesian music genres, mainly Javanese *langgam Jawa* and *dangdut*) (Fig. 9.2). But when I asked the sellers about Indonesian songs, they referred me to all the VCDs containing music from Indonesia, the national as well as regional varieties. So, in Malaysia, unlike in Indonesia, Indonesian regional music like *pop Minang* bears two ‘identities’: as Indonesian music as well as an ethnic music from Indonesia.

MUSIC AND DAILY LIFE IN CHOW KIT

As Chow Kit is home to a large number of Indonesian migrants from various regions, the large majority of Minangkabau migrants in Kuala Lumpur also live there. Most of them sell textiles or Minangkabau food (*masakan Padang*). Most of the Minangkabau who have opened businesses in Chow Kit migrated to the Malaysian Peninsula after 1960. They may differ from earlier Minangkabau descendants from Negeri Sembilan who have become Malaysian. A large number of Minangkabau migrants in Chow Kit married fellow Minangkabau, while others intermarried with local Malays. The interviews I carried out in Chow Kit show that most of these Minangkabau migrants rarely return to their hometowns in West Sumatra. Most said that Malaysia’s immigration policies make it difficult for them to make frequent trips in and out of Malaysia. Still others are in Malaysia illegally, which makes it even harder for them to move across the borders.

350 This association is now headed by H. Buchari Ibrahim, a Minangkabau migrant from Batusangkar, Tanah Datar regency, West Sumatra (information from rantaunet@googlegroups.com, posted by Firdaus HB on Saturday, 19 March 2011).

Chow Kit is often called 'little Indonesia' in Kuala Lumpur. It can be recognized by its musical atmosphere, which is dominated by Indonesian music, national as well as regional styles. As Ray Allen and Lois Wilcken (1998) and Lloyd Bradley (2013) suggest, music, whether live or recorded, is a cultural element that tends to be preferred to express a sense of group identity among overseas immigrants living in the world's metropolises. There are dozens of music shops in Chow Kit selling Indonesian music in cassette or VCD format. The shops are owned and managed by ethnic Chinese or by Minangkabau migrant traders. It is common knowledge that these two migrant communities, along with ethnic Indians, lead the trade sector in Malaysia's urban areas, while Malay Natives tend to become government employees. In Chow Kit you can hear songs from Indonesia as you walk along the shopping streets. In fact, musical sounds from Indonesia are heard more often than the sounds of music from Malaysia. Based on my observations, music shops in Chow Kit sell mostly Indonesian pop and *dangdut*, together with some Indonesian regional songs, mainly from Java and Minangkabau, with a few Sundanese. There are also Melayu-Riau songs from the Indonesian province of Riau, but Malaysian Malays probably feel sufficient ethnic and linguistic affinity with these Melayu-Riau songs to regard them as their own. This musical atmosphere illustrates how ordinary migrants in Southeast Asian cities prefer music of their own country or ethnicity in their place of migration. A further question can be posed: how does this preference influence the construction of migrants' identity overseas? And how does this emotive power of music relate to sentiments of nationalism? Further study of this notion might be of interest.

As in Kuantan and other places in Malaysia, the Indonesian music marketed in Chow Kit is labelled in various ways: besides *pop Minang*, *campursari*, and *pop Indon*, there are also *Indon song* ('Indonesian songs') and *disco dangdut* (*dangdut* to a house music beat). The term *Indon song* seems to be used to refer to genres that do not fit any other label. Recordings of songs in VCD format are more numerous than those in cassette format. In Malaysia, as in the majority of Southeast Asian countries, although cassette players are still used, their numbers are steadily dwindling. Since the late 1990s, Southeast Asia has been flooded by various brands of VCD players hailing from Japan, Korean and Taiwan. Such models are cheaper than those made in Europe and America and are thus easily affordable for the lower economic classes.

In Chow Kit, nationalism, regionalism and globalism intermingle and are expressed uniquely in a complex system where music plays an important role. In line with their 'increasingly complex and globalized world', these Indonesian immigrants 'carry distinct, often conflicting, personal identities with regard to gender, race, (and, I would add, religion and social class), ethnicity, or nationality' (Josselson and Harway 2012:3). For Malaysian citizens in Kuala Lumpur – an identity that only began to exist towards the end of colonial rule in the Malay archipelago in the 1950s – Chow Kit sits on a social periphery. It holds a very lowly status in the eyes of everyday Malaysians. Since most Chow Kit residents are Indonesian, the district is frequently referred to as *Indon* (abbreviation of the word 'Indonesia'), which has a negative and derogatory meaning.³⁵¹ This low status was reinforced after the economic and political crisis in Indonesia in 1989.

351 Though initially the word *Indon* was neutral in meaning, it now tends to be used to mock and disparage the Indonesian domestic workers and labourers working in Malaysia. 'The adjectives used around *Indon* ranged

It is commonly known by residents of Kuala Lumpur that Chow Kit is a district that houses many illegal Indonesian migrants. Therefore the Royal Police Force of Malaysia often conduct raids there. To avoid detection and deportation, illegal migrants receive shelter from other Indonesian migrants. In such a situation, a nationalistic spirit emerges due to empathy between citizens of the same status, of the same fate, and usually of the same ethnicity. During my fieldwork in Chow Kit, I was frequently told stories of how Minangkabau migrants sheltered their illegal counterparts to avoid detection by the police. However, they were also known to shelter illegal migrants of other ethnicities as well, as long as they were Indonesian. Here it is evident that nationalism is expressed spontaneously when fellow-countrymen encounter one another in a foreign host country, particularly if they share a minority status, whether consciously or not. I have also heard that you can get just about anything you want in Chow Kit, including fake passports – often used to obtain residential permits and other necessary documents. This reinforces the negative image of Chow Kit in the eyes of Malaysian Kuala Lumpur residents.

My core interest here is: how does the musical atmosphere in a cultural enclave in a foreign country where migrants from other countries live influence not only individual and communal matters but also socio-political issues? A recent public and political discourse that has influenced socio-political relations between Malaysia and Indonesia deals with cultural heritage, including song and dance. The Indonesians accused the Malaysians of unilaterally claiming ownership of certain items of cultural heritage. It seems that Indonesians are envious of Malaysia's success in utilizing their cultural heritage – although some of the items originally came from Indonesia – to promote international tourism. Indonesian protestors criticizing Malaysia use the word *Malingsia* ('Malaysian thieves') or *Malingsial* ('unlucky Malaysian thieves').

Minangkabau too claim that their cultural heritage has been stolen by Malaysia, for example, the song-dance 'Indang Sungai Garinggiang', which was performed by a Malaysian tourism delegation at the Asian Festival in Osaka, 12-14 October 2007. The Minangkabau critics mention that the song-dance claimed by Malaysia as its own creation was originally created by the Minangkabau singer Tiar Ramon in 1981.³⁵² The Indonesian side also accused Malaysia of claiming Minangkabau *talempong* music and its *rendang* culinary specialty as their own cultural heritage.³⁵³ Similar controversy has also occurred with other items of material culture such as manuscripts and traditional textiles. These contested claims of cultural heritage ownership

from sexy to stupid' (Martin 2012). Issues around the disparaging use of the word *Indon* have also entered the political field and influenced diplomatic relations between Malaysia and Indonesia.

352 See Azwar 2007; see also report entitled 'Tambahkan lagu kita yang dicuri oleh MALINGSIAL', <http://www.topix.com/forum/world/malaysia/TS27C8H4J4OKTCLUI>; 'Malaysia kembali 'bajak' lagu daerah Indonesia di Osaka', *Antara News.com*, Thursday, 25 October 2007. (<http://www.antaraneews.com/view/?i=1193310660&c=SBH&s=>) (accessed 26-11-2011).

353 See Nusyirwan 2011; http://www.harianhaluan.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5182:talempong-minang-dan-klaim-malaysia&catid=46:panggung&Itemid=198 (accessed 14-10-2011); see also 'Klaim Malaysia untuk rendang Indonesia', *Gatra*, Thursday, 15 September 2011 (<http://www.gatra.com/politik-1/2695-rendang-made-in-malaysia-merambah-dunia.html>). For more on cultural contestations between Indonesia and Malaysia, see Clark 2013, Clark and Pietsch 2014.

have even influenced diplomatic relations between these two neighbouring nations of the same descent (*bangsa serumpun*). Malaysian policy patenting such cultural heritage has been criticized by the Indonesian side.³⁵⁴

In these problematic socio-political relations between Indonesia and Malaysia dealing with cultural heritage, Minangkabau migrants and other Indonesian migrants living in Malaysia have also been affected, which influences people's attitudes. When I asked Minangkabau residents in Chow Kit about this, they actually blamed Malaysia. This attitude of course is also related to the way Malaysian authorities have treated them as migrants from overseas. My investigations in Chow Kit and other Malaysian towns show that the Minangkabau migrants settled there retain strong emotional bonds with their home villages in West Sumatra. Such emotional bonds are a cultural phenomenon commonly found among minority migrant groups living as enclaves among majority groups in the world's urban centres. It is too naïve, I think, if we ignore the function of music as one of many elements which play a role in constructing these cultural feelings among Minangkabau migrants in foreign countries. In this regard, migrants' strong ongoing nostalgia for their homeland may have contributed to the cultural and political problems in the Malay world, which today is split up into several nation-states as a result of boundaries drawn by European colonization in the past.

MINANGKABAU MIGRANTS AND RADIO BROADCASTS IN PEKANBARU, RIAU

Chapter 8 discussed the remediation of Minangkabau commercial recordings on radio. In this section I take the reader to the situation in the field. I describe how Minangkabau *perantau* in Pekanbaru, Riau province, are indirectly engaged in Minangkabau commercial recordings. To do this, I examine radio programs that broadcast Minangkabau music intended for Minangkabau migrants in Riau, especially Pekanbaru, the capital of the province. I take as a case study a private radio station called Radio Soreram Indah (henceforth RSI) which specializes in local programming using regional languages. Its programs focus on regional pop songs, especially pop *Minang*.

As noted in studies on regionalism and radio programs in other regions of Indonesia,³⁵⁵ after the media reform introduced by the Reformasi, many radio stations in the provinces seem to be more fervently enthusiastic in representing local culture. RSI is an example of how local radio stations use the opportunities offered by the policy change to promote a sense of regionalism. As Tod Jones observes (2005:211-15; see also Jones 2012; Jones 2013), Indonesia's political decentralization in the Reformasi era has led to a growing assertion of ethnic and local identity, including in regional politics. In this new era, various radio stations, including those situated in Pekanbaru, have created specific programs to provide a

354 For a list of items of local cultural heritage that have been registered by the Malaysian government, see <http://www.ruanghati.com/2009/09/28/inilah-200-benda-dan-seni-budaya-yang-sudah-dipatenkan-malaysia-gamelan-wayang-nasi-goreng-dan-sate-termasuk/> (accessed 14-10-2012). Those marked with red font are claimed by Indonesia as Indonesian ownership.

355 See for instance Arps 2003, Jurriëns 2004, Putra 2009 and 2014, Creese 2009, Birowo 2011, and Putra and Creese 2012.

new conduit for marginalized ethnic, linguistic and social groups to address issues of their identity in an increasingly globalized and decentralized Indonesia. In Edwin Jurriëns's words (2009), Indonesian radio programs now present dialogues rather than the typical top-down monologues as sternly practised during the New Order regime. The drastic Indonesian political change, which brought about media freedom, has led to local radio stations flourishing and enabled them to expand and diversify their technology, programming and ownership. This development is reflected in the great variety of broadcasting stations that have arisen: *radio komunitas* ('community radio'), *radio anak kampung* ('village people's radio'), *radio satelit* ('satellite radio'), *radio wong cilik* ('common people's radio'), *radio siaran* ('broadcast radio'), *radio pemda* ('regional government's radio'), *radio Internet*, *radio 'digital'*, *radio mahasiswa* ('student radio'), etc.

The population of Riau province is ethnically heterogeneous, and 'culturally or politically Riau was never a bounded entity' (Kato 1984:3-4). The urban economy of Riau, especially Pekanbaru, the capital of the province, situated on the banks of the Siak river, is dominated by Minangkabau³⁵⁶ and Chinese traders, both of whom – like the Buginese from Sulawesi – began migrating to what is now Riau before the European colonization of the region. The Riau regencies of Kampar, Kuantan, and Inderagiri, located near the Minangkabau border, are inhabited by local communities who are culturally affiliated with Minangkabau. In Minangkabau traditional historiography, these areas are called Minangkabau's earliest eastern *rantau*.

In Riau, one of the richest in natural resources of Indonesia's provinces, politics and ethnic relations are hot issues. The local Malays feel that they were impoverished and disempowered by Jakarta during the New Order and that this situation has not changed much since the Reformasi. Because the recent economic development of the region has not created a more prosperous life for Malays in Riau, some have charged that outsiders have benefited from exploiting the natural resources of their land. Only a small number of Riau Malays have found work in the modern industrial sectors of oil extraction, large-scale plantations and forestry, and the high-technology industries of Batam, which have generated enormous profits for those perceived as 'outsiders', thereby causing resentment among Malay Natives towards other ethnic groups (Al azhar 1997; Wee 2002). The majority of Malays are merely spectators, it seems, of the economic developments in their own region (Mubyarto 1997).

RSI's programming reflects the diversity of Riau's population. Responding to the market opportunities created by the ethnic diversity of Pekanbaru's inhabitants, RSI's programs reflect how the media view ethnicity or, conversely, how regionality is represented in the media. RSI is owned by Tuti Suparyati, a woman who is half Javanese and half Malay. According to Tuti, 60 per cent of RSI's programs express a distinct feeling of locality and ethnicity. Two prominent RSI programs aimed at Minangkabau listeners are 'Gendang

356 According to the Indonesian census of 2000, when Riau still comprised a single province, Minangkabau migrants were 11 per cent of the total Riau population of 4.7 million (see BPS Propinsi Riau 2001:34-40).

Acu' and 'Ranah Minang Maimbau'.³⁵⁷ The musical content of the programs is taken from commercial cassettes.

'Gendang Acu' is an interactive program that broadcasts songs from the Kampar regency in the northwestern part of mainland Riau along the Kampar river. Administratively the regency is part of Daratan Riau, but culturally its inhabitants are more closely related to Minangkabau (West Sumatra) than to Riau Malays. In Minangkabau cultural terms, the Kampar region is called '*ikua darek kapalo rantau*' (literally 'tail in the motherland, head in the place of migration'), meaning that here is where the *darek* (Minangkabau heartland) ends and the (eastern) *rantau* region begins. 'Gendang Acu' literally means 'older brother's drum'; *acu* or *ocu* is a word for greeting one's older brother in the Kampar dialect and is also used by local girls referring to their boyfriends or to men who are slightly older. 'Gendang Acu' is a daily program, broadcast for one hour. The announcer takes phone calls from listeners who request one or two 'Kampar songs', 'Bangkinang songs' or 'Acu songs'. Callers often dedicate a song to friends or relatives, as well as to the studio announcer.

Commercial cassettes and VCDs featuring music from Kampar have been on the market since the early 1990s; they are produced by Minangkabau producers situated in Bukittinggi and Padang in West Sumatra, such as Minang Record, Tanama Record and Sinar Padang Record. The number of local singers in the regency is rising, and performers such as Yanti Ahmad, Oren Gompo, H. Surya Abdullah, Ali Agumond, Bahrun Benny, Rio Star, Emy Nurlita, Yasir Yatim have become a source of pride for Kampar society. The titles displayed on these cassettes, such as *House Acu* and *Disco House Acu*, *Dangdut Acu Millenium 2000*, and *Dangdut Acu* (Fig. 9.3), are a good illustration of the strategy adopted by local cultures facing globalization. They reflect the stylistic diversity and musical variety of Kampar local songs and clearly serve as a new cultural symbol for people of the regency. Their distinct identity is reflected in the popular term *kaset Acu* ('Acu cassette'), as opposed to 'Minangkabau cassette' or 'Malay cassette'. They have made Kampar a vibrant and proud local culture.

RSI's program 'Ranah Minang Maimbau' is especially intended for Minangkabau migrants in Pekanbaru and surroundings.³⁵⁸ Like 'Gendang Acu', 'Ranah Minang Maimbau' is an interactive musical program, broadcast by RSI since 1996. Literally 'Ranah Minang Maimbau' means 'The Minangkabau land calls': the homeland (West Sumatra) calls the Minangkabau *perantau* to return home. The program is broadcast weekdays for one hour. Pekanbaru is a major destination of Minangkabau migrants in Sumatra. The city's music

357 Other prominent RSI programs are: *Pantun Melayu* ('Malay pantun'), an interactive program in which listeners participate by submitting *pantun* couplets either over the telephone or through the mail; *Syair Melayu* ('Malay Poetry'), an interactive program structured like *Pantun Melayu*; *Dongeng Melayu* ('Malay Legends'), an interactive program that features a guest who plays the role of storyteller. For two hours, the guest gives a presentation of traditional storytelling, often reciting Malay legends, sagas and myths that are available in print, such as *Lebai Malang*, *Pak Belalang* or *Lang-Lang Buana*.

358 Statistical data from the 2000 census mention that 38 per cent of Pekanbaru's population of 568,146 is Minangkabau, compared to 27 per cent Riau Malay, 15 per cent Javanese, 10 per cent Batak, 1 per cent Sundanese and 7 per cent others (BPS Propinsi Riau 2001:34-40). All these groups represent prospective market segments for the radio business.



Figure 9.3: Cover image of a Kampar Acu cassette produced by Minang Record in Bukittinggi, 1995

shops offer Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs. The Minangkabau community in Pekanbaru further expanded when some Minangkabau pop artists, like Riyan, Devi Prima, and An Roys, migrated there following the earthquake that shook West Sumatra in 2009 (Haluan, 8-2-2011). In fact, these Minangkabau artists who migrated to Pekanbaru formed an organization called Forum Komunikasi Artis dan Seniman Minang, or FORKASMI (“Communication Forum for Minangkabau Artists”). Many private radio stations in Riau aim their programs at a particular ethnic community, as is also the case in Medan and Palembang. On RSI’s ‘Gendang Acu’ program, the announcer takes phone calls from listeners who request one or two Minangkabau pop songs played from commercial cassettes and VCDs which echo ‘the sound of “longing for home”’ (Barendregt 2002).

RSI’s success with local programs seems to have inspired other radio stations in Pekanbaru to create similar programs, including some for Minangkabau migrants. For example, since the end of 2003, Radio Clapita Emas (RCE), established in 1989, has broadcast an interactive program called ‘Minang Hit’. As the title suggests, ‘Minang Hit’ is intended especially for Minangkabau migrants in the Pekanbaru area. Broadcast on weekdays, the program presents Minangkabau pop songs requested by listeners. A presenter from RCE says that the program has received an enthusiastic response from listeners, which suggests that urban listeners do not consider a local focus in programming to be out of date (Dedi, pers. comm., 23-3-2004).

The variety of programs broadcast by radio stations in Pekanbaru like RSI and RCE represent the ethnic diversity of the city. While RSI initially focused on Malay culture, listener demand led to the development of programs that would appeal to other ethnic groups living

in Pekanbaru as well, such as 'Gendang Acu' and 'Ranah Minang Maimbau'. It may be that local programs aimed at specific ethnic groups broadcast by Riau's radio stations, whether intentionally or not, encourage urban listeners to distinguish different ethnic 'blocs'.

The playing of *pop Minang* music on radio broadcasts in Pekanbaru shows the importance of music as a communications tool and as a way to maintain a sense of togetherness and belonging among Minangkabau migrants. This form of remediation is one way the products of the West Sumatran recording industry have been used in *rantau*. Another way of reception is the conventional one: purchasing Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs from music shops. And the most sophisticated form of remediation is through social media, as described in Chapter 8. The different ways that Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs are used outside West Sumatra suggest that the West Sumatran recording industry has hooked into other (social) media, enabling Minangkabau music and verbal arts to acquire a new image and new audiences.

PIRATED NEW POP MINANG VCDs IN EASTERN INDONESIA

It appears that Minangkabau commercial recordings, especially VCDs, have also had an influence on other ethnic groups. I found that many albums of the genre called *new pop Minang* (*pop Minang baru*) in eastern Indonesia are pirated. I saw them for sale in places in Southeastern Sulawesi and North and Central Maluku, the homelands of ethnicities like Buginese, Butonese, Muna, Tolaki, Ambonese and Ternatean. I found pirated VCDs of *new pop Minang* being sold in eastern Indonesian towns like Makassar, Maros, Kendari, Bau-Bau and Ambon. A Minangkabau friend of mine who migrated to North Maluku told me that local people are very fond of *new pop Minang* albums, in Ternate and surrounding districts, where many Minangkabau migrants (especially from Bukittinggi) migrated during and after the 1958 PRRI revolt in West Sumatra. Possibly the presence of the Minangkabau community has caused local Natives to become interested in Minangkabau music in Ternate. The pirated *new pop Minang* VCDs are frequently played on buses, ferries and other public transportation. Local people don't understand the lyrics, but they like the music (Denny Setiawan, pers. comm., 10-10-2011). It surprised me during my trips to Buton (the most recent one was in January 2009) to find that many Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs of *new pop Minang* were for sale in Bau-Bau, capital of Buton regency, so far away from the Minangkabau homeland.

The covers of these pirated *new pop Minang* VCDs tend to show images of sexy girls, often Western, wearing bikinis (Fig. 9.4). Why do pirates present such images on VCD covers? If the images are intended to attract consumers' sexual desire, then the producers seem to imagine that the main consumers of such pirated VCDs are men. This phenomenon suggests that there are gender issues involved in the production and marketing of commercial recordings of this type of music.

The album title on the pirated cover is usually a humorous one and is written in the Indonesian language or a local language, for example 'Joget Pele Putus' ('Dance like cars in a chain collision'), 'Goyang Cakar Bongkar' ('Scratching and stabbing dance'), '14 Lagu



Figure 9.4: Front and back covers of a pirated Minangkabau VCD made and distributed in eastern Indonesia

Pilihan Minang Plones' ('Fourteen selected *pop Minang* songs in *dangdut* style', which consists of several volumes), 'Minang Bali Pili' ('Selected *pop Minang* songs'), and 'Joget Anjing Aer' ('Dance like an otter's motions'), but the titles of songs on the front and back covers are written in the Minangkabau language (Fig. 9.4). So, the pictorial and visual images of these VCDs (the cover and clips) do not always correspond with their audio aspects (the songs). These pirated VCDs are not distributed in West Sumatra.

Some purchasers I interviewed in Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, said that they don't understand the lyrics of the songs because they do not speak Minangkabau, but they are fond of the songs because they are cheerful and are good for dancing. A Butonese linguist and a Butonese cultural observer told me that in the Butonese islands, Southeast Sulawesi, the majority of young people liked new *pop Minang* songs. They proposed a historical claim to explain this phenomenon: that the ancestors of the Butonese came from Johor and Sumatra, possibly from Minangkabau (Abidin [1968]). This claim linking an interest in foreign music with the origins of an ethnic group is very interesting: as if music has become an important cultural element that can serve as evidence of the genealogical relationship between different ethnicities.

In the Butonese islands, new *pop Minang* songs are very popular not only as accompaniment for *joget* (dance) events, but also for playing on passenger boats, especially when the boats are docked in ports of the Butonese archipelago such as Bau-Bau, Muna, and Wanci. Local sailors are very fond of such new *pop Minang* songs. The *joget* style of dance is very popular among Butonese young people and new *pop Minang* songs are the type of songs generally played for this kind of dancing (Asrif and Sumiman Udu, pers. comm., 10-10-2011).

There is no doubt that these pirated Minangkabau VCDs have been made by local pirates because their clips commonly show local people dancing. In addition, there are many errors in the text of the Minangkabau-language song titles on the back covers of these pirated VCDs, indicating that the pirates who have made these VCDs are not familiar with the Minangkabau language.

The Butonese people I interviewed said that many of the rhythms of new *pop Minang* songs are suitable for the musical tastes of Butonese people, who are very fond of dancing (*berjoget*). Due to the popularity of new *pop Minang* songs distributed by pirated cassettes, local producers and pirates have created songs locally that adopt the musical rhythms of new *pop Minang* songs. In this way, local producers in Wanci, Bau-Bau, and Muna have produced Butonese pop songs by adopting the rhythms of new *pop Minang* songs, and substituting lyrics in local languages such as the Ambon Malay dialect of Maluku or the Wanci language of the *Tukang Besi* islands. Most such songs are called *joget Minang*. This term is never used for *pop Minang* music in West Sumatra.

This phenomenon indicates that elements of regional music of a particular ethnicity, new *pop Minang* in this case, have been creatively adopted by other ethnicities in eastern Indonesia. This adds one more way that products of the West Sumatran recording industry have acquired audiences beyond the Minangkabau ethnic group: not only through social media like YouTube, which copy-paste the original content, but also through a process of adaptation of some of their characteristics as in local Butonese versions of new *pop Minang* VCDs distributed in eastern Indonesia. Actually, this indicates that Indonesian regional recording industries develop in their own ways, which may not be detectable in Jakarta, which is preoccupied with grand discourses on national and international politics and economics, national and international terrorism, and global modernism. I would say that regional cassettes and VCDs, due to their distribution beyond ethnic boundaries, have provided a new site for diverse ethnicities to become acquainted with each other through music.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the circulation and reception of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs beyond their place of origin in West Sumatra. Taking as case studies the Chow Kit district of Kuala Lumpur (outside Indonesia) and Pekanbaru (inside Indonesia), this chapter has shown that the distribution and consumption of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs has been mostly among Minangkabau migrants in urban centres. But the distribution of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs outside West Sumatra has also crossed ethnic boundaries, as suggested by the reception and popularity of new *pop Minang* albums among several ethnic groups in eastern Indonesia. In this sense, commercial recordings produced by the West Sumatran recording industry can be credited with facilitating horizontal cultural contact and understanding between the Minangkabau and other ethnic groups in Indonesia.

The reception of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs outside West Sumatra takes place in two conventional modes. First, by purchase of these cassettes and VCDs, including pirated copies; second, via radio broadcasts on which the content of Minangkabau commercial recordings is remediated in music programs. Several more modes of reception have been made possible by new (social) media technologies (Chapter 8).

For Minangkabau migrants, the consumption of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs has helped them to construct a feeling of their homeland in the far distant *rantau*. Music of their

homeland can help maintain a sense of togetherness for Minangkabau migrants living in *rantau*, where they tend to live in cultural enclaves. As the number of Minangkabau migrants dwelling in various cities in Indonesia and neighbouring Malaysia is quite high, some people see economic prospects: they reproduce Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs, including by way of 'legal' pirating, as practised by dozens of Malaysian producers in Kuala Lumpur and Melaka.

Unlike in their place of origin, the (re)production of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs in Malaysia involves ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs. Many Minangkabau commercial recordings, particularly the (sub)genres of *pop Minang* (Chapter 5), have been reproduced by Malaysian producers. But the marketing of such products still involves Minangkabau migrant traders. The (re)production of Minangkabau pop music by Malaysian entrepreneurs is carried out without being noticed by the original producers or singers in West Sumatra. And yet the distribution and marketing of these products in Malaysia is legalized by the Malaysian authorities. This means that there has been transnationalization of the piracy of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs, where the destination state, direct or indirectly, supports or facilitates this illegal activity. In a national context, the piracy of new *pop Minang* songs and the adaptation of this music in local recordings by producers in eastern Indonesia is an example of adoption rather than replication.

The extensive migration of ethnic groups in Southeast Asia is the main reason for the distribution and marketing of regional cassettes and VCDs beyond their place of origin. The consumption of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs among Minangkabau migrants outside West Sumatra has created a translocal site to reinforce collective memory, authentic culture, and a sense of Minangness in *rantau*. Like other electronic media, recordings have enabled people to create a virtual community without requiring physical contact or proximity (Lysloff and Gay 2003).

Political relations between Malaysia and Indonesia fluctuate. One contributing factor is controversy about the ownership of items of cultural heritage shared by these two nations of the same descent. Regional songs are such items of cultural heritage that are claimed by both countries. The complex cultural and political relations between Malaysia and Indonesia have an impact not only on the reception of Indonesian regional music, Minangkabau in this case, in Malaysia, but also on the meanings of such items of Indonesian cultural heritage among consumers there. In the Chow Kit district of Kuala Lumpur, where identities of migrants are labelled by state authorities in a prejudicial way, music tends to emphasize residents' differences rather than their similarities.

CONCLUSION

This book reflects its author's curiosity to find out what happens to a local community that still practises ancestral customs, far from Jakarta's modern hullabaloo, in a time when media technologies, especially the technologies of sound reproduction, have invaded almost the whole of every day throughout the life of a human being. What do the Minangkabau people do with modern recording media for articulating their identity and traditions in a rapidly changing, threatening, and homogenizing world? Far from any pretention to discuss grand narratives that dominate the lives of metropolitan residents strongly influenced by global media discourses and networks, this book aims simply to explore the manifold effects of the penetration of recording technology into local culture and society and to trace how and when this occurred.

Although the phenomenon of regional cultural representation on cassettes and VCDs has been encountered by many ethnic groups in Indonesia, there has not been any extensive study from a diachronic perspective. Close observation of the characteristics and surrounding elements involved in regional cultural media expressions is still overlooked, and for that reason such phenomena get considerable attention in this study. Building on observations by Bart Barendregt (2002) and Suzanne Naafs (2005, 2010), this book provides a more thorough examination of regional recording industries in the context of Minangkabau ethnicity. It is to be hoped that comparative studies will be carried out with other ethnic groups of Indonesia, which have so far been touched upon by scholars such as Andrew Toth (1980) dealing with the Balinese and the Sasak, Susan Rodgers (1986) dealing with the Batak, R. Anderson Sutton (1985) and Bernard Arps (2009) dealing with the Javanese, Edwin Jurriëns (2004) dealing with the Sundanese, I Nyoman Darma Putra (2004, 2005) dealing with the Balinese, Paula R. Bos (2005) dealing with the Nagi community of Flores, and Andy Hicken (2009) dealing with the Toraja of Central Sulawesi. Further extensive studies would contribute immensely to an overall understanding of the role played by recording media in the twentieth-century transformation of local culture and society in Indonesia.

Mediated modern sound, which has come into existence thanks to sound recording technologies, has extended our sense of hearing across time and space and brings our past memories to the present. Indonesian local culture has been involved in this process since the 1890s up to today, starting with a crude model of a cylinder phonograph with a limited capacity to store and play back the voices of the dead, to its sophisticated, more flexible, parasitic, 'glocal', and above all cheap successor, the VCD (Davis 2003:165). Due to the cumulative and varied effects of sound reproduction on a particular culture facilitated by such technologies, this book shows the impact on the Minangkabau ethnic group in particular, by tracing the historical course of mediation and representation of Minangkabau culture in a variety of recording media over a period of two centuries.

In the preceding chapters, I have recounted how the different recording media, the phonograph and its successors, penetrated Indonesian regional culture by discussing the

long-standing mediation of Indonesian regional music and verbal arts, especially those of the Minangkabau. To examine the socio-cultural significances of the technologizing of culture in an Indonesian local context, I have focused my investigation on the production of Minangkabau commercial recordings. Since the gramophone era in the 1930s, and above all following the emergence of the West Sumatran recording industry in the early 1970s, this technologizing of culture, which intersected with other media technologies like radio and social media, has facilitated the mediation and representation of Minangkabau cultural elements. Beyond this historical process of domestication of recording technology by Indonesians in the context of ethnic cultures, this book conjectures about the socio-cultural significance of reproduced sound, as manifested in Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs, in the context of Minangkabau ethnicity.

Retracing some of the central theoretical notions offered in the preceding pages, in this conclusion I track connections between the history of reproduced sound and the redefining features of locality, which alter the features and nature of ethnic cultures. There are three main points here that I want to scrutinize to capture the complex relations between sound, (recording) technology, culture, communication, and human nature. Firstly, the recorded sounds of a particular ethnic repertoire produced at different times correspond and interconnect with each other in complex ways. 'There are likely as many unexpected connections in the audible present as there were in the audible past' (Sterne 2003:338). I would like to change that to: there are likely many unexpected connections *between* the audible past and the audible present. Contributing to shaping the cultural production of sensory perception, the totality of modern ethnic sounds defines the modern auditory practices of the members of a given ethnic group. Secondly, as occurred in many other countries of the world (see Nettl 1972; Racy 1977), the recording industry, since its initial emergence during the gramophone era, promoted new musical expressions associated with a particular recording technology. Recording technology, being interconnected with other media, thus changed the contexts and practices of listening to cultural repertoires, and in the long run it promoted change in already existing expressions and styles and encouraged the adoption and creation of new forms, as manifested, for example, in the emergence of new *pop Minang* starting in the early 2000s. Thirdly, the connections between recordings and translocality in relation to ethnic diasporas. Recorded sounds of cultural repertoires function as a form of mapping, offering listeners identification of places, situating them in a kind of imaginary space, and providing points of reference by which they can orient themselves to their (imagined) homeland. When someone listens to such recorded sound, his aural sensibility instinctively aligns him with the cultural location he perceives in the world. Media technologies such as recording media thus 'helped to put space in the foreground' and erase or redraw 'traditional spatial or geographic limits' (Tally Jr. 2013:3). In this sense, cultural identifications are not necessarily bound to geographic location, but transcend place and space.

THE HISTORY OF (RE)PRODUCTION OF INDONESIAN SOUNDS AND ITS EFFECTS

This book has explored the historical course of (re)production of Indonesian cultural sounds in diverse recording technologies. It enriches our comprehension of the European colonization of Asia, which in many historical studies tends to focus on political, military and economic aspects. When technology is discussed, it is usually military technology or infrastructure. More than cannon shots, however, reproduced sound and the technologies that have recorded it, have fundamentally transformed the attitudes and behaviour of Indonesian people, changing the expression of their own cultures. As we have seen, Indonesians' encounter with recording technologies started in 1879, initially facilitated by European scholars and intercontinental entertainers who travelled to the Orient with phonograph and gramophone to seek fame and fortune. Public exhibitions of these machines by such individuals, especially in Java, up to the first decade of the twentieth century, marked Indonesia's introduction to reproduced sound. Its effect on Indonesian Natives might be perceived through the name they gave to the instrument: 'mesin bitjara' ('the talking machine'), a name that reflects a sense of wonder and admiration. Their acceptance was expressed in a variety of reactions: ridicule and criticism as well as astonishment (Chapter 1). Though the recordings initially played on the machines were taken from a European cultural context, such as opera arias and speeches of leading European politicians and religious leaders, they were immediately expanded to include a Dutch East Indies local repertoire, which was pioneered by the recording of Sundanese *tembang* that appeared in 1892. Around this time the director of the National Botanical Garden (*Kebun Raya*) in Buitenzorg (present-day Bogor), Melchior Treub, purchased a phonograph, which was the first privately owned recording machine in Indonesia (Chapter 2).

Pioneered by the London-based gramophone expedition to the Orient led by Fred Geisberg (1902-1903) and the German-based Beka expedition headed by Heinrich Bumb (1905-1906), the reproduction of Dutch East Indies and Malay local repertoires for commercial purposes came into view and increased significantly in subsequent years. It put into motion the mechanical reproduction of Indonesian culture, to echo Walter Benjamin's phrase (1970). This phenomenon, accompanied by increased marketing of several brands of the 'talking machine' in Java and the outer islands in the 1910s, marked the following phase of recording technology penetration into Indonesia once the Natives began purchasing the machines and the discs, viewing them as a symbol of modernity (Chapter 2). This phenomenon accompanied the far-reaching modernization of the colony as a consequence of 1) the introduction of a variety of European technological inventions in the Netherlands East Indies, 2) the implementation of the Ethical Policy launched by the colonial regime in 1901, and 3) the logical effects of global economic capitalism driven by the significant development of modern industry in Europe (Moon 2005, 2007; Schulte Nordholt 2011).

Starting with the recording of the hybrid music genre *kroncong* and the music accompanying *komedie stamboel* and *bangsawan* theatre, commercial recordings then began to be made of local repertoires of other ethnic groups in the Netherlands Indies, including Minangkabau. Such recordings were facilitated by local middlemen who cooperated with

European and Japanese entrepreneurs. The first half of the twentieth century saw extensive use of the 'talking machine' and gramophone discs among Indies Natives, including the Minangkabau in West Sumatra. This had socio-cultural, political, and religious consequences as, for example, shown by reactions of local Muslim communities to Quran recordings (Chapter 2). Slowly but surely, modern reproduced sound changed local people's 'understandings of and relations to the nature and function of hearing' (Jonathan Sterne 2003:12). The reception of recorded sound by Natives was certainly influenced by their local cultures and beliefs, reminding us of Stephen Connor's (2000) remark that spiritualism contributed to the 'ghostliness' of European technologies. By the 1950s, Indonesians seem to have become well familiarized with the mediated sound of their own local repertoires as well as foreign repertoires, facilitated by gramophone technology, which transformed their listening habits and culture of hearing. At this stage, it can be said that the breeding ground of regional recording industries was already formed, and it matured in the subsequent decades.

The advent of cassette technology in the mid 1960s, which became worldwide in the following decade, caused gramophone disc technology to become defunct. The cassette had a significant impact in Indonesia and gave birth to its pop music industry. The sound of local repertoires on disc extended their existence, as most of them were transferred onto cassettes. At that time the culture of pirating sound recordings in Indonesia began. Almost immediately the effects of cassette technology reached all the regions throughout the country, including West Sumatra, the homeland of the Minangkabau ethnic group, where regional recording companies began to emerge in the mid 1970s, along with the province's economic recovery after the PRRI civil war. In the early 1990s the CD entered Indonesia, followed by the VCD in the year 2000 (Chapter 3). As a typical Asian recording technology (Hu 2005), the VCD and VCD player offer low-cost consumption that is cheaper than similar technologies (CD and DVD). This corresponds with the economic circumstances of the majority of people of Asian countries, and renders the medium accessible to lower-income groups in urban as well as rural areas. Therefore, the VCD, which is more durable and lower-priced than the DVD, soon became very popular in Indonesia, a country where the majority of citizens still have a low income. The early 2000s have witnessed the extraordinary spread of VCD technology in Indonesia and decidedly influenced its regional entertainment industries. Indonesian regional cassettes and VCDs, which are used for a variety of local genres, have become the main products of modern recording media in Indonesia and they meet the aesthetic needs of the majority of lower-class people throughout the country. From the early 2000s onward, VCDs flooded the Indonesian national as well as regional recording industries, strongly competing with cassettes.

EMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF THE WEST SUMATRAN RECORDING INDUSTRY

The West Sumatran recording industry is a good example of a local culture engaging with recording technologies. The industry emerged in West Sumatra in the early 1970s, along with the spread of cassette technology in Indonesia, which then flourished with the rapid spread of VCDs starting in the early 2000s. But Minangkabau migrants' encounter in *rantau* with recording technology during the gramophone era had preconditioned the emergence of the

West Sumatran recording industry. Some early *pop Minang standar* songs produced by the first Minangkabau producers were taken from albums on gramophone discs by Minangkabau migrant musical groups that had been released in Jakarta in the 1950s (Chapter 3). Not less Minang than their post-1970s Minangkabau recording products, these Minangkabau gramophone discs produced in *rantau* contributed to the initial redefining of the sense of Minangness and helped mediate an initial translocality among Minangkabau migrants. Cassette and VCD technologies facilitated a considerable development of the West Sumatran recording industry and West Sumatra became the principal hub of regional recording industries in western Indonesia, inspiring the surrounding Malay subgroups to create their own regional pop musics.

The significant development of the West Sumatran recording industry is indicated by the rising number of producers who spread to other West Sumatran towns beyond Padang (Chapter 4). Strong competition among producers encouraged diversification in Minangkabau commercial recordings. In this situation Minangkabau pop music was generated which was enriched by contemporary themes and a new musical flavour. Regional hybrid styles emerged and flourished, supported by new singers who transformed the aesthetics of Minangkabau pop music. In addition, cultural repertoires other than pop music, most particularly Minangkabau verbal arts, increasingly appeared on commercial cassettes and VCDs.

The products of West Sumatran recording companies can be put into three categories: recordings of *pop Minang* (Chapter 5), traditional Minangkabau verbal arts genres (Chapter 6), and media-bound genres (Chapter 7). *Pop Minang* is essentially the local pop music genre whose existence is linked inextricably with the gramophone disc and its successors. As the most prominent product of the West Sumatran recording industry, encompassing various genres and subgenres, *pop Minang* is a cultural site that hybridizes elements of Minangkabau traditional verbal arts with elements of foreign music. The seed of *pop Minang* was planted in close connection with gramophone discs, and it continued to thrive on cassettes and VCDs. Because *pop Minang* was initially a hybrid kind of music, it continued to undergo aesthetic innovation as reflected in the appearance of what Minangkabau audiences call *pop Minang standar* and *pop Minang baru* (standard vs. new *pop Minang*). Absorbing the power of pop culture in the modern world, and blending it with elements of Minangkabau local musical and verbal arts, *pop Minang* resonated with the dynamics of local culture facing a changing world. Representing the important role of the West Sumatran recording industry in western Indonesia, *pop Minang* has definitely affected the world of live music performances in West Sumatra as well as in *rantau*, and plays an important role in maintaining a sense of Minangness in the global era. The images on cassette and VCD covers of *pop Minang* albums suggest the significance of the genre as a cultural site that reflects Minangkabau people's encounters with alien cultures and the accompanying tension between modernity and tradition in Minangkabau society. If we view the essence of popular music as a battleground (Hall 1981), *pop Minang* has become a site of debate through which the Minangkabau people discuss ethnic identity and cultural authenticity.

The West Sumatran recording industry has also been responsible for the mediation of Minangkabau verbal arts genres (Chapter 6). Though some genres of Minangkabau verbal arts had been recorded on gramophone discs, the quantity of this significantly increased in cassette and VCD formats. One of the consequences is that these anonymous Minangkabau verbal arts repertoires have been brought onto a commercial track and have been commodified. This has irrefutably changed the structure and aesthetics of these verbal arts genres as well as their consumption and dissemination patterns. The recorded oral texts tend to be condensed and therefore become shorter than their counterparts presented in live public performances. In addition, these mediated texts contain what I call ‘media-specific formulaic verses’, which indicate performers’ adaptation to the recording medium. Minangkabau people in *rantau* and the homeland enjoy these oral genres privately via cassette and VCD players. Nevertheless, ‘star performers’ – those most frequently recorded by local recording companies – are often requested by Minangkabau migrants in *rantau* to hold performances, suggesting that the mediation of ethnic oral genres on electronic media has not necessarily eroded the demand for live public performances (Chapter 6).

The widespread use of recording media in West Sumatra has transformed Minangkabau tradition in certain fundamental respects. One of them is the spawning of ‘media-bound genres’ – genres that exist due to and only in an electronic medium. One such genre in the West Sumatran recording industry is Minangkabau children’s pop music. Inspired by the popularity of the new genre of children’s pop music at the national level, thanks to the national television and recording industries, since the early 2000s West Sumatran recording companies have produced children’s pop music cassettes and VCDs in the Minangkabau language (Chapter 7). In contrast to earlier (non-recorded) Minangkabau village games and songs that emphasize joy and excitement, modern Minangkabau children’s pop songs have many resemblances to Minangkabau pop songs for adults. Their lyrics are dominated by lamentation and misery. Their song lyrics as well as their visual images (on cassette and VCD covers and VCD clips) suggest Minangkabau children’s encounter with modern technologies and globalization.

Considering the distinctive local influences, Minangkabau children’s pop music has its own characteristics that seem to have been moulded by aesthetic concepts of standard *pop Minang* in which *ratok* (melancholy, lament) constitutes the most important element (Chapter 7). It is indeed as a consequence of the domestication of media technologies by local people, that media-bound genres have enhanced local cultural repertoires. Nevertheless, as has occurred in other parts of the world, Indonesian children, including Minangkabau children in West Sumatra, are sucked in to the media industry, which has given rise to a lot of debate in Indonesian society. To become an *artis cilik*, (child artist), which is associated with fame and financial prosperity, is the dream of more and more parents and children, not only of the middle and upper classes but also the lower classes. At the same time, however, public discourse often views such child artists as being exploited by the media industry and sometimes also by their mad-money parents.

Having the status of small-scale industry (*industri kecil*), the West Sumatran recording industry is actually an economic business characterized by ethnic sentiment. The production, distribution, and consumption of its products are mostly in the hands of Minangkabau. Unlike huge mainstream and international media industries like television, cinema, and the recording of Western pop music, in West Sumatra hundreds of regional small-scale cassette companies produce enormous numbers of commercial cassettes and VCDs containing local repertoires. Their creation, production, distribution, and consumption for the most part involve Minangkabau practitioners. Such companies developed vigorously, far from the nation's capital, and were 'characterized by democratic, participatory, grassroots control, a lack of social distance between producers and consumers, and a decentralized structure affording a responsiveness to community values and aesthetics' (Peter Manuel 1993:xv). Nevertheless, both singer and audience/consumer have expanded beyond the Minangkabau ethnic group (Chapter 5). And for the diaspora of the Minangkabau ethnic community, the production, circulation, and consumption of West Sumatran recording industry products provide a way of ethnic bonding. In *rantau*, however, for instance in Malaysia, production and distribution have involved ethnicities other than Minangkabau (Chapters 6 and 9). The consumers of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs are mostly Minangkabau people or those of Minangkabau descent, both in the homeland and in *rantau*. Nevertheless, *pop Minang* is also sung by non-Minangkabau artists outside West Sumatra (Chapter 6), while some ethnic groups in eastern Indonesia are so fond of this kind of songs that they have adopted its musical rhythms in their own local pop music. In this way, the West Sumatran recording industry has contributed to the incorporation of Minangkabau musical elements in the pop music of other ethnic groups in Indonesia (Chapter 9).

Migrating to various places in Indonesia and foreign countries, Minangkabau migrants have become the main consumers of commercial cassettes and VCDs produced by recording companies in their homeland. Unlike Internet, which is customarily used mainly by upper-class people, commercial cassettes and VCDs are consumed by middle and lower-class Minangkabau migrants, most of whom work as merchants in urban areas. Examining these Minangkabau migrants' reception by doing case studies in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) and Pekanbaru (Indonesia), I found that they purchase Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs or listen to radio programs of Minangkabau pop music derived from such cassettes and VCDs (Chapter 9). But since the early 2000s the distribution and consumption patterns of West Sumatran recording industry products have changed following the ongoing innovation of communications media, especially new social media. Adjusting to the convergent media environment has become a necessity in the world today, and inevitably the content of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs has been remediated in other 'conventional media' and in new social media (Chapter 8). With the advent of new social media like Internet radio, blogs, YouTube, and Facebook, the Minangkabau diaspora, like other diasporic ethnic communities around the world, can enjoy their recorded ethnic repertoires wherever they live. The contexts and practices of listening to regional music have significantly changed due to

distribution via Internet. On Internet one can easily find Minangkabau songs sung by Oslan Husein in the 1950s as well as the most recent ones sung by Edi Cotok and Buset, thus putting Minangkabau reproduced sound from the past and from today in the same basket. Such remediation demonstrates the ongoing adaptation of the Minangkabau ethnic group to media technologies through which they continually rearticulate their local culture and identity in the face of a changing world. They 'have not been mere victims or products of globalization' (Jurriëns 2004:back cover text).

The intersection and remediation of new communications media has been used by the Minangkabau to reconfigure their identity and to share the sense of Minangness virtually, beyond geographical ethnic boundaries. The various modes of virtual communications have enabled Minangkabau people, both in *rantau* and in the homeland, to celebrate their identity in translocal places. Getting pleasure from *pop Minang* songs or verbal arts recordings in *rantau* is one way by which Minangkabau migrants continue to articulate and reproduce their ethnic identity in overseas urban environments, to keep alive 'the sound of "longing for home"' (Barendregt 2002) in their hearts and minds. In this regard, we are reminded of John B. Thompson's remark that communications media provide a way of sustaining cultural continuity despite spatial dislocation and therefore they can play an important role in the maintenance and renewal of tradition among migrant or dislocated groups (Thompson 1995:203).

This book suggests that the West Sumatran recording industry represents a strategy of Indonesian local cultures for coping with globalization. Recording media are among the means by which Minangkabau people cope with modernity while maintaining their culture to keep pace with changing times. The complex features of the West Sumatran recording industry and the content of Minangkabau commercial recordings yield information about how the Minangkabau ethnic group has translated elements of local, regional, national, and global cultures in a continual process of updating its culture over the course of time. The various modes of sound recording technology adopted by the Minangkabau ethnic group have facilitated new creative cultural expressions, generating more and more media-bound local repertoires. Such cultural significance of the domestication of recording technology in the West Sumatran recording industry captures the theme of regionalism running through this book. The representations of Minangkabau culture in regional commercial recordings explored in this book demonstrate the use of recording media technology by a local society to contextualize and maintain the viability and existence of their culture and identity, whose features are changing, adaptive, and fluid. It can be taken to represent current cultural phenomena in Indonesian local culture in general.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

MINANGKABAU COMMERCIAL CASSETTE PRODUCERS

No.	Name of recording company	Owner	Town
1	Alif Perdana Record	In Jambek Madjid & Elita	Bukittinggi
2	Artha Record	Arifin	Bukittinggi
3	Cotok Production	Edi Cotok	Bukittinggi
4	Eddy Moenir Production	Eddy Moenir	Bukittinggi
5	Fadilla Record	Oki Feriko Rasaki	Bukittinggi
6	Gita Virma Record	H. Onlivir	Bukittinggi
7	JSP Record	Drs. Yuhendra AMd	Bukittinggi
8	Klas Manang Record	Drs. Ridwan Idma	Bukittinggi
9	Kreatif Record	H. Isreri R	Bukittinggi
10	Minang Record	Yusrial MS	Bukittinggi
11	Nada Music Record	Idris Efendi	Bukittinggi
12	Planet Record	Samsuir	Bukittinggi
13	Sabili Record	Eddy Moenir	Bukittinggi
14	Sentral Musik Record	Yusrial Malin SH	Bukittinggi
15	Satayu Record	Syahrul Tarun Yusuf	Bukittinggi
16	Venoni Musik Record	Moel Saypani	Bukittinggi
17	Wahana Musik Persada	Rizal Zakaria	Bukittinggi
18	Alle Record	Alle	Padang
19	All Stars	Eka Putra	Padang
20	Amel Record	H. Asli Khaidir	Padang
21	Aniko Record	Anas Leo SH	Padang
22	Anjungan Record	Eko Muhardi	Padang
23	Arena Record	Yusrizal	Padang
24	Beatrice Record	Joko Beatrice	Padang
25	Cahaya Record	Hj. Nuraini	Padang
26	Carolin Record	FerryZein	Padang
27	Deca Record	Nasir	Padang
28	Defni Record	Ujeng Darmansyah	Padang
29	Deras Record	Defiardi	Padang
30	Diva Production	Dicky Rian	Padang
31	DK Record	In Dukun	Padang
32	Edo Record	Keng	Padang
33	Elkatra Record	Hilman	Padang
34	Fadil Record	Edy Plangki	Padang
35	Fenny Production	Fenny Harison	Padang
36	FH Entertainment	Herman Makmur	Padang
37	Ganto Minang Record	Ambunsari	Padang
38	Gemini Record	Herman Erchan	Padang
39	Gurindam Record	Asben	Padang
40	Head Studio	Pirin Jambak	Padang
41	Kencana Musik Record	Syafriyu Rajo Indo	Padang
42	Marina Musik Sentral	Hendri SE	Padang
43	Nabila Production	N. Boestami	Padang
44	Pasaman Wulan Record	Muhklis Kelana	Padang
45	PD Record	Pendinur	Padang
46	Pinokio Record	Buyung	Padang
47	Pitunang Record	Dr. Ir. H. Agusli Taher	Padang
48	PR Record	Parlan S	Padang
49	Rafqa Record	Doni Asben	Padang
50	Rumah Gadang Record	Winardi	Padang

51	Sapayuang Record	Rustam Effendi	Padang
52	Sari Musik	Dr. Widyawarman	Padang
53	SAS Record	Elman Bur	Padang
54	Sayang Ibu Record	Edy Mansyur	Padang
55	Scorpion Record	Anroys	Padang
56	Semoga Jaya Record	Zulkifli	Padang
57	Sinar Padang Record	H. Yuskal	Padang
58	Sony Studio	Sony Adeo	Padang
59	Talao Record	Yessi Saputri	Padang
60	Tanama Record	H. Alimar Ahmad	Padang
61	Tanama Intro Record	H. Musfar St Pamuncak	Padang
62	Zalmon Record	Zalmon	Padang
63	Baramas Record	Zulkifli	Padang Panjang
64	Pusako Minang Record	Yubahar	Padang Panjang
65	Ase Record	Hermansyah	Pariaman
66	Atika Record	Edmon	Pariaman
67	Dhea Record	John Bass	Pariaman
68	Mona Record	M. Nasir	Pariaman
69	Paris Record	Sonny SH	Pariaman
70	Robby Record	Robby Chaniago	Payakumbuh
71	Muma Record	Nono Muma	Sawahlunto
72	Bintang Record	Yen Rustam	Solok
73	Bintang Perdana Production	Awlia Agus	Solok (Sulit Air)
74	Lepirin Production	Lepoh	Solok
75	Utama Mandiri Record	Syafrizon Ilyas	Solok

Source: ASIRINDO 2008, and the author's fieldwork

APPENDIX 2

WEST SUMATRAN RECORDING COMPANIES WITH THEIR OWN RECORDING STUDIOS

No	Company name	Owner	Town
1	JSP Studio	Drs. Yuhendra Amd	Bukittinggi
2	Kreatif Studio	H. Isferi	Bukittinggi
3	Minang Record	Yusrial	Bukittinggi
4	Amel Record	Ali Chaidir	Padang
5	Andrea Record	Un Andrea	Padang
6	Anjungan Record	Eko Muhardi	Padang
7	Caroline Record	Ferry Zein	Padang
8	Cotok Producons	Edi Cotok	Padang
9	Deras Record	Defiardi	Padang
10	Edo Record	Keng	Padang
11	Elkatra Record	Hilman	Padang
12	FH Entertainment	Herman Makmur	Padang
13	Ganto Minang Record	Syamsi Hasan	Padang
14	Gurindam Record	Asben	Padang
15	Nelson Studio	Nelson	Padang
16	Novert Studios	Nover T	Padang
17	Pinokio Studios	Buyung	Padang
18	Pitunang Record	DR. Ir. H. Agusli Taher	Padang
19	Rumah Gadang Record	Win	Padang
20	Sari Musik	Dr. Wydyawirman	Padang
21	SAS Record	Elman Boer	Padang
22	Sinar Padang Record	H. Yuskal	Padang
23	Sonny Pro Studios	Sonny Adeo	Padang
24	Talao Record	Yan Anas	Padang
25	Tanama Record	H. Alimar Amad	Padang
26	Tanama Intro Record	H. Musfar St Pamuncak	Padang
27	Jon Piai Record	Jon	Padang Panjang
28	STSI Padang Panjang	STSI P. Panjang	Padang Panjang
29	Atika Record	Edmon	Pariaman
30	Kuncung Studio	Kuncung	Solok
31	Ool Studio	Ool	Solok

Source: ASIRINDO 2008

APPENDIX 3

PRODUCTION HOUSES IN WEST SUMATRA

No.	Company name	Owner	Address
1	Jimi Productions	Jimmi Endris	Bukittinggi
2	Minang Record	Yusrial	Bukittinggi
3	Ray Video Editing	Ir. Halimaryunis	Lubuk Alung
4	Ale Productions	Ale	Padang
5	FH Entertainment	Herman Makmur	Padang
6	Glory Production	Al	Padang
7	Memory Studio	Andi	Padang
8	My Own Productions	Dr. Ir. H. Agusli Taher	Padang
9	PR Studio Editing	Parlan S	Padang
10	Reyhan Productions	Pendinur	Padang
11	Sinar Padang Record	H. Yuskal	Padang
12	SiWin Productions	SiWin	Padang
13	Tanama Record	H. Alimar Amad	Padang
14	Wira Video Editing	Wira	Padang

Source: ASIRINDO 2008

APPENDIX 4

SATAYU'S 50 TOP SONG COMPOSITIONS

No	Title	Year	Vocalist	First Producer
1	Takana Juo	1963	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
2	Bugih Lamo	1963	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
3	Roda Padati	1967	Elly Kasim	Philips, Singapore
4	Di Taluak Bayua	1967	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
5	Tinggalah Kampuang	1968	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
6	Kasiah tak Sampai	1968	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
7	Ampun Mandeh	1968	Elly Kasim	Philips, Hongkong
7	Japuiklah Denai	1968	Elly Kasim and Tiar Ramon	Remaco, Jakarta
8	Minang Maimbau	1968	Elly Kasim and Anas Yusuf	Remaco, Jakarta
9	Bika Si Mariana	1969	Lily Sjarif	Philips, Singapore
10	Nasib Kabau Padati	1969	Lily Sjarif	Philips, Singapore
11	Sunguik Apolo	1969	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
12	Sutan Batawi	1969	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
13	Pandeka Regok	1969	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
14	Buyuang jo Baruak	1969	Ferdi Ferdian	Yusaf Rahman, Padang
15	Takicuah Juo	1969	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
16	Batu Tagak	1971	Lily Sjarif	Philips, Singapore
17	Ayah	1971	Lily Sjarif	Remaco, Jakarta
18	Gasiang Tangkurak	1971	Elly Kasim	Perindu Record, Jakarta
19	Bapisah Bukannyo Bacarai	1971	Anas Yusuf and Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
20	Jan Cameh	1971	Elly Kasim and Tiar Ramon	Perindu Record, Jakarta
21	Buyuang Boneh	1971	Elly Kasim	Musica Studio, Jakarta
22	Hujan	1972	Tiar Ramon	Remaco, Jakarta
24	Pak Wali	1972	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
25	Bagaluik	1972	Elly Kasim and Tiar Ramon	Remaco, Jakarta
26	Kanai Sijundai	1972	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
27	Karam di Lauik Cinto	1972	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
28	Buruang jo Pikek	1972	Tiar Ramon	Musica Studio, Jakarta
29	Galombang Hidiuk	1973	Syam Tanjung	Suryaman Musica, Jakarta
30	Ratok Nan Tinggi	1973	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
31	Parmato Cinto	1973	Elly Kasim	Remaco, Jakarta
32	Saba Mananti	1973	Nurseha	Remaco, Jakarta
33	Kumbang Babega	1973	Eva Nurdin	Tanama Record, Jakarta
34	Balam Tigo Gayo	1975	Evan Nurdin	Tanama Record, Padang
35	Jan Diharok	1975	Eva Nurdin	Tanama Record, Padang
36	Pakiah Geleng	1978	Elly Kasim	Musica Studio, Jakarta
37	Dandam Rindu	1978	Waty Yusuf	Tanama Record, Padang
38	Indak Masyasa	1981	Tirza Tamin	TJS, Medan
39	Bukittinggi Kota Wisata	1985	Fetty	Tanama Record, Padang
40	Tolong Pikiakan	1996	Viviep Yuza	Tanama Record, Padang
41	Batu Nisan Mandeh	1996	Efrinon	Padang Record, Padang
42	Anak Hilang	1996	Efrinon	Sinar Padang Record, Padang
43	Hati Nan Luko	1997	Yen Rustam	Minang Record, Bukittinggi
44	Hati Nan Cabiak	1997	Luciyana	Minang Record, Bukittinggi
45	Aia Mato Mandeh	1997	Yen Rustam	Tanama Record, Padang
46	Gamang Diseso Mimpi	2002	Susi Susanty	Sinar Padang Record, Padang
47	Undangan Panabuih Cinto	2002	Susi Susanty	Asa Record, Jakarta
48	Anak Sarugo	2003	Fitri	Nada Record, Bukittinggi
49	Isak Tangih Malam Partamo	2003	Indah Dellia	Nada Record, Bukittinggi
50	Lilin Tangih Majalangi Pagi	2003	Susi Susanty	Nada Record, Bukittinggi

APPENDIX 5

RABAB PARIAMAN COMMERCIAL CASSETTES AND VCDs PRODUCED BY TANAMA RECORD AND SINAR PADANG RECORD

Tanama Record

No.	Title	Singer	Number of cassettes
1	Jalan Kuliliang Bilang Nagari ('Travelling around describing the villages')	Amir Hosen	2
2	Kaba Sutan Binu Alim ('The story of Prince Binu Alim')	Amir Hosen	6
3	Kaba Nan Gombang Patuanan & Sutan Pangaduan ² ('The story of the handsome King Patuanan and Prince Pangaduan')	Amir Hosen	20 ²
4	Raun Sabalik ³ ('Travelling around')	Aly Umar	2
5	Kaba Siti Baheram ('The story of Siti Baheram')	Aly Umar	5
6	Kaba Sutan Gando Hilang ('The story of Prince Gando Hilang')	Aly Umar	5
7	Kaba Si Untuang Sudah ('The story of Untuang Sudah')	Bagindo Sukiman	7

Sinar Padang Record

No.	Title	Singer	Number of VCDs
1	Raun Sabalik: dendang panjang ('Travelling around: long chants')	Monen and Mayur	2
2	Sutan Pangaduan ('The story of Prince Pangaduan')	Monen and Mayur	5

Footnotes

- 1 In Pesisir Selatan regency this story is well known as 'Kaba Sutan Pangaduan' – Sutan Pangaduan is Gombang Patuanan's son – and is performed in the bataram performance in the nagari of Batuhampa (Zuriati 2006).
- 2 As far as I know, this is the longest commercial recording of kaba ever produced by a West Sumatran recording company.
- 3 'Raun Sabalik' performed by Aly Umar and 'Jalan Kuliliang Bilang Nagari' performed by Amir Hosen do not tell kaba; they give accounts of the nagaris situated in Minangkabau's western rantau, with their unique local culture and the identifiable characters of their people.

APPENDIX 6

RABAB PESISIR SELATAN CASSETTES AND VCDs

No.	Title	Singer	Producer	Number of cassettes/VCDs
1	Kaba Hasan Surabaya ('The story of Hasan of Surabaya')	Syamsuddin	unknown	5 cassettes
2	Kaba Marantau ka Jambi ('The story of migrating to Jambi')	Syamsuddin	Tanama Record	5 cassettes
3	Kaba Paruntungan, pajalanan & pacaraian ('The story of fortune, travel, and discord')	Pirin Asmara and Nurana	Pelangi Record	5 cassettes
4	Lamang Tanjung Ampalu ('The story of roasted sticky rice from Tanjung Ampalu')	Syamsuddin	Tanama Record	5 cassettes
5	Carito Zamzami & Marlaini ¹ ('The story of Zamzami & Marlaini')	Syamsuddin	Tanama Record	4 cassettes
6	Kaba Rukiah jo Malano ('The story of Rukiah and Malano')	Syamsuddin	Tanama Record	14 cassettes
7	Kisah Ridwan ('The story of Ridwan')	Syamsuddin	Tanama Record	4 cassettes
8	Tembak selang kubak ubi ('Cross kick and peel sweet potatoes')	Siril Asmara & Erni Kampai	Sinar Padang Record	1 cassette
9	Merantau ke Malaysia ('Migrating to Malaysia')	Pirin Asmara	Tanama Record	4 cassettes
10	Carito Abidin & Binar ² ('The story of Abidin and Binar')	Pirin Asmara	Tanama Record	5 cassettes
11	Puti Gondorih ('Princess Gondorih')	Pirin Asmara	Tanama Record	5 cassettes
12	Kaba Busama ('The story of Busama')	Pirin Asmara	Tanama Record	3 cassettes & 3 VCDs
13	Kaba Gadih Basanai ('The story of Basanai')	Pirin Asmara	Sinar Padang	5 VCDs
14	Kaba Derita Hati Ibu ('The story of a mother's heartache')	Hasan Basri	Sinar Padang	6 VCDs
15	Kaba Lamang Tanjung Ampalu ('The story of roasted sticky rice from Tanjung Ampalu')	Hasan Basri	Sinar Padang	5 VCDs
16	Kaba Kejadian di Batipuah Padang Panjang: Abu Nasar dengan Rosni ('The story of an occurrence in Batipuh, Padang Panjang: Abu Nasar and Rosni')	Hasan Basri	Sinar Padang	7 VCDs
17	Karam di Daratan ('Sinking in the mainland')	Hasan Basri	Sinar Padang	6 VCDs
18	Raun Sabalik ('Travelling around')	Hasan Basri and Kawat	Sinar Padang	1 VCD
19	Anak Balam ('Turtledove's child')	Siril Asmara and Erni Kampai	Sinar Padang	2 VCDs
20	Kaba Sutan Palembang ('The story of the Prince of Palembang')	Siril Asmara	Sinar Padang	17 VCDs
21	Kaba Kejadian di Muaro Padang: Kawin Tapaso ('The story of an incident in Muaro Padang: forced marriage')	Herman	Talao Record	5 VCDs

Footnotes

- 1 For a transcription of this story, see Suryadi 1993a.
- 2 For transcription and content analysis of this recording, see Arni 1995 and Wieringa 1997.

APPENDIX 7

MINANGKABAU CHILDREN'S POP ALBUMS

No	Title	Vocalist(s)	Producer	Year	Format
1	Dendang Harau; Disco Minang Anak-anak	Marce Utari	Tanama Record	2002	VCD-karaoke
2	Pulanglah Ayah; Pop Minang Anak-anak	Marce Utari	Tanama Record	2003	VCD-karaoke
3	Saluang Gubalo; House Minang Anak-anak, Vol. 1	Cici A Lucys	Tanama Record	2003	VCD-karaoke
4	Cak Mimin; House Minang Anak-anak, Vol. 2	Cici A Lucys	Tanama Record	2003	Cassette & VCD-karaoke
5	Samalam di Ranah Minang	Yogi Novarionandes	Tanama Record	2003	Cassette & VCD-karaoke
6	Tinggalah Kampuang; Pop Minang Rancak [1]	Yogi Novarionandes	Tanama Record	2003	VCD-karaoke
7	Raso Bamandeh Tiri; Pop Minang Rancak	Yogi Novarionandes	Tanama Record	2003	VCD-karaoke
8	Penanggungan, Baliak ka Surau ka Nagari; Pop Minang Rancak 3	Yogi Novarionandes	Tanama Record	2003	VCD-karaoke
9	Om Pim Pa; Disco House Minang, Pop Minang Rancak 4	Yogi Novarionandes	Tanama Record	2003	VCD-karaoke
10	Malin Kundang; Pop Minang Rancak 5	Yogi Novarionandes	Tanama Record	2003	VCD-karaoke
11	Tembang Minang masa kecil: Lalok Babuai	Alin	Planet Record	2003	VCD-karaoke
12	Jan Batele	Trio Sarunai (Marce Utari, Oja, Naning)	JSP Record	2003	VCD-karaoke
13	Kisah Yatim Piatu	Trio Sarunai (Marce Utari, Oja, Naning)	JSP Record	2003	VCD-karaoke
14	Antahalah ;Pop Minang Spesial	Chikita Meidy	Planet Record	2003	VCD-karaoke
15	Rimbo Aceh Panyabuang Nyao; Album Spesial	Ima Gempita	Pitunang Record	2003	VCD-karaoke
16	Lagu India, ketek-ketek lado kudu; House Minang Anak-anak	Cici A Lucys	Tanama Record	2004	Cassette & VCD-karaoke
17	Tangih Piatu	Angga	Sinar Padang Record	2004	Cassette & VCD-karaoke
18	Rindu Batuka jo Aia Mato	Angga	Sinar Padang Record	2004	Cassette & VCD-karaoke
19	Pulanglah Abak	Angga	Sinar Padang Record	2004	VCD-karaoke
20	Seso Ekstasi	Ima [Gempita]	Pitunang Record	2004	Cassette & VCD-karaoke
21	Cinto Indak Kabacarai	Chikita Meidy	Planet Record	2004	Cassette & VCD-karaoke
22	Panti Asuhan, Mandeh nan Malang	Rizki Djamal	Gita Virma Record	2004	Cassette & VCD-karaoke
23	Taragak Pulang; Pop Anak-anak Minang	Clarisa Meidy	Planet Record	2004	VCD-karaoke
24	Ketek-ketek lah ba HP	Cici A. Lucys & Aliyar ¹	Tanama Intro Record	2005	Cassette & VCD-karaoke
25	Lagu-lagu Saluang Talempong	Cicy A. Lucys & Aliyar	Tanama Intro Record	2005	Cassette & VCD-karaoke
26	Tsunami Aceh	Ima Gempita	Pitunang Record	2005	VCD-karaoke

27	Sebatang Kara	Intan	Talao Record	2005	VCD-karaoke
28	Barayo Di Kampuang	Rani Asben & Ridho Ramona	Planet Record	2006	VCD-karaoke
29	12 Anak Minang	Ima Gempita dkk	Talao Record	2007	VCD-karaoke
30	Zahara, Refo Rafli, Ayah; Trendut Mix	Ranny Asben	Tanama Record	2008	VCD-karaoke
31	Album Teridola 10 Karya Emas Don Gebot	Dilla & Asbul (Si Kembar Centil)	Dilla Production	2009	VCD-karaoke
32	Gaduh Bajilbab, Usah Cameh, Salingka Minang	Ranny Asben	Tanama Record	2009	VCD-karaoke
33	Nasehat Minang	Vandy Sacria, Sarwo, Noris	Head Studio	2010	VCD-karaoke
34	Tak Tontong; House Mix Minang Rancak	Iqbal Paganti	Sentra Musik Record	2010	VCD-karaoke
35	Nokia 66; House Dangdut Minang Asyik	D2 (Della Wana dan Debby Prima)	Zalmon Record	2010	VCD-karaoke
36	Album Idola Minang Cilik: Black Berry	Navila Novi Barat	Nabila Production	2010	VCD-karaoke
37	Pulanglah Abak, Usah Mandeh Baibo Hati; Pop Minang Anak-Anak Nostalgia	Fadly	Leprin Production	2013	VCD-karaoke
38	Ratok Anak Jalanan, Tangih Piatu; Pop Minang Selektif	Fadly	Leprin Production	2013	VCD-karaoke

Footnote

- 1 Aliyar is an adult, and Lucy is his daughter. Aliyar is a chanter of Minangkabau traditional *saluang* or *bagurau* performances. As in reality, he plays the role of Cici's father in her albums.

GLOSSARY

adaik / adat

custom, tradition associated with a particular ethnicity

Adat Perpatih

customary law practised in Malaysia's state of Negeri Sembilan, brought in from Sumatra as early as the 14th century, covering broad areas of daily life, including the selection of leaders through a democratic process, marriage laws, and community cooperation and rules

alam takambang jadi guru

the whole of nature becomes the teacher: Minangkabau life philosophy

ASIRINDO

abbreviation of Asosiasi Industri Rekaman Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Recording Industries), which has branches in several provinces, including West Sumatra

Bahasa Minangkabau Umum

a dialect of the Minangkabau language used in urban centres like Padang, as a medium of communication among Minangkabau from various areas of West Sumatra

bansi

a small end-blown bamboo flute (e.g. 20 cm by 1.5 cm), often with seven finger holes and one thumb hole

budaya daerah

regional cultures; refers to the cultures of Indonesia's ethnic communities

budaya nasional

national culture; the thinking and character of the entire people of Indonesia

budaya tradisional

traditional culture; refers to all indigenous and aboriginal elements of Indonesia's ethnic cultures other than those regarded as being adopted from Western culture

dalang

puppeteer of Javanese shadow theatre (*wayang*)

dangdut

genre of Indonesian popular music that is partly derived from Indian, Malay and Arabic music

darek

Minangkabau heartland consisting of the three oldest districts (*luhak*) Tanah Datar, Agam, and Limo Puluah Koto; cradle of the Minangkabau culture

FORKASMI

abbreviation of Forum Komunikasi Artis dan Seniman Minang (Communication Forum for Minangkabau Artists), an organization of Minangkabau artists in Pekanbaru, Riau

gamaik / gamad

song genre that incorporates elements drawn from Portuguese and other Western music, and from the Indian, Niasan, and Minangkabau communities in the port of Padang; it is a duet between a male and a female singer, who avoid physically touching each other. Its song lyrics are mostly composed in allegoric and metaphoric *pantun* verses, and tend to be romantic and nostalgic in character

gandang

two-headed drum

goyang ngebor

erotic dance with special 'drilling' (*ngebor*) movements

harato pusako tinggi

heirlooms, especially land, incorporated into the holdings of an extended matrilineal family

Idul Fitri (Lebaran)

the celebration that comes at the end of the Muslim fasting month (Ramadhan)

ikua darek kapalo rantau

literally, tail in the motherland, head in the place of migration; a traditional Minangkabau saying to refer to where the Minangkabau heartland (*darek*) region ends and the eastern *rantau* region begins

industri besar

large-scale business that employs 100 or more employees

industri kecil

small-scale business that employs 5-19 employees

industri menengah

mid-scale business that employs 20-99 employees

industri rumah tangga

household business that employs 1-4 employees

izin perindustrian

industry license given to private companies, issued by the Department of Industry

joged / joget

a genre of song-dance for mixed couples but without body touching; originally Malay

jua putuih (jua master-master)

outright sale; contract system through which the singers are required to give full rights to the producer in reproducing their albums without additional royalties

kaba

Minangkabau anonymous oral stories

kampung

villages of the Indonesian countryside

keduaan

dualism: an outstanding characteristic of Minangkabau cultural personality as a consequence of practising two contradictory principles – patriarchal-oriented Islam and matrilineal kinship – in Minangkabau culture

kim

a genre combining game and song with lyrics in *pantun* form where the spectators are involved by receiving prizes

komedi peranan

theatre genre popular with audiences of Chinese descent in Java's main cities in the 19th century

krontjong (kroncong; keroncong)

Indonesian musical style that typically makes use of the *kroncong*, a ukulele-like instrument, usually performed in an ensemble consisting of a flute, a violin, a guitar, a cello, a string bass, and a female or male singer

luhak

three regions of *darek* (see above), with a fourth region added later: *luhak Kubuang Tigo Baleh*

mamak

maternal uncle

merantau

literally, go to the *rantau*; customary voluntary migration of young Minangkabau people moving away to places, mostly urban places, outside the homeland (see *rantau* and *perantau*)

mesin bitjara

literally 'talking machine', the name given by Dutch East Indies Natives to the phonograph and the gramophone

mudin

muezzin; village religious functionary with the task to give the call to prayers

nagari

Minangkabau village confederacy; indigenous Minangkabau geopolitical unit

orgen tunggal

live popular music performance accompanied by a digital single keyboard, with a maximum of eight performers, with two female singers wearing sexy outfits

Padangitis

a typical cultural psychopathological symptom of Minangkabau people when they live in their culture of paradox, a culture combining patriarchal Islam and matrilineal principles

panghulu / penghulu

male village leader

pantun

traditional verse, mostly quatrain, used among various ethnicities in the Malay world

pembantu

Indonesian domestic workers

pendatang haram

term used in Malaysia to refer to illegal migrants, especially those who come from Indonesia

penyanyi cilik

child singer

perantau

Minangkabau migrants (see *rantau* and *merantau*)

PIKM

abbreviation of *Persatuan Ikatan Minang-Malaysia* (Association of Minang Society in Malaysia)

PIKMM

abbreviation of *Pertubuhan Ikatan Kebajikan Masyarakat Minangkabau* (Minangkabau Community Benevolent Association), in Malaysia

PKDP

abbreviation of *Persatuan Keluarga Padang Pariaman* (Union of Padang Pariaman Families) living in the *rantau*

politik pencitraan

the politics of image projection; the ways Indonesian politicians present their images in order to convince voters to vote for them in national or regional elections

PRSSNI

abbreviation of Persatuan Radio Siaran Swasta Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Association of National Private Radio Broadcasting)

pulang basamo

go back temporarily to the homeland; collective action of Minangkabau migrants during the period of Idul Fitri

pupuik

aerophone made of rice stalk, with horn made of young leaves of coconut, which produces a static texture consisting of interlocking rhythms

rabab galuak

three-stringed spiked fiddle with a coconut-shell body, used in accompanying the performance of rabab Pariaman (verbal arts genre of the north coastal area of rantau Pariaman)

rantau

originally frontier regions; now includes all migration destinations of Minangkabau migrants outside the heartland (*darek*) (see *merantau* and *perantau*)

ratok

the typically Minangkabau melancholy sound which is expressed in chanting and singing

rumah bola

term used by Dutch East Indies Natives for a *soci  t  t*, or club building; place used by a group of people to gather

rumah makan Padang

restaurant offering Minangkabau cuisine, widely known across Indonesia and Malaysia

saluang

generic term for a bamboo flute; an end-blown, ring-top flute

saluang Pauah

a kind of flute used in accompanying performances of the verbal art of *dendang Pauah* in the outskirts of Padang city

SAS

abbreviation of Sulit Air Sepakat (Sulit Air in Harmony), an organization of Minangkabau migrants from the *nagari* Sulit Air, Solok regency, West Sumatra

Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA)

senior high school; the middle level in Indonesia's education system

sembalakon

a traditional children's game and song that was very popular among children in Minangkabau

sinetron

acronym of *sinema elektronik*; Indonesian television series, notably television drama

sipatuang sirah

literally 'red dragonfly'; a fanatic spectator at a *dendang Pauah* or *indang* performance

Surat Izin Tempat Usaha (SITU)

Business Location Permit, issued by the municipality or the regency

Surat Izin Usaha Perdagangan

Business Trade Permit, issued by the government to companies that have fulfilled certain requirements

surau

traditionally a special house for boys once they become too old to live in their mother's house; today also used for prayer and other village community activities

talempong

a single kettle-gong, a gong-chime

Taman Budaya

cultural park, sponsored by the government to showcase regional culture, found in many Indonesian provincial capitals

tandak

female dancer; a form of song-dance originally from the Malay culture, with lyrics in *pantun* verse

Tuah Sakato Award

award given periodically by the West Sumatra provincial government to those who are credited with promoting and preserving Minangkabau culture

TVRI

abbreviation of *Televisi Republik Indonesia* (Television of the Republic of Indonesia)

urang awak

literally our people; term used by Minangkabau people to identify their ethnic fellows

wayang kulit

Javanese puppet theatre

wayang potehi

Chinese puppet theatre

YKCI

Yayasan Karya Cipta Indonesia (Indonesian Foundation of Creative Works)

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SUMMARY

This study deals with the arrival of diverse types of recording technology in Indonesia and the socio-cultural significances they brought about as the consequence of their use to (re)present Indonesia's local cultures. As a case study, it examines the encounter of these technologies with the Minangkabau culture. Having its homeland in West Sumatra, the Minangkabau ethnic group is known for its voluntary practice of migration (*merantau*). As recording technologies, mainly cassette and video compact disc (VCD), have become strongly incorporated in Indonesian ethnic cultural life, this study explores the role of the local recording industry in contemporary ethnic cultural production and how it impacts on local societies, the Minangkabau in this context. Considering the Indonesian people's extreme enthusiasm in embracing diverse modern foreign technologies, including sound recording technologies, it is plausible to assume that these recording technologies have had significant effects in transforming Indonesian ethnic communities and their cultures. For that reason, this study extensively investigates such effects in an Indonesian regional context by tracing ethnic groups' encounter with recording technologies, from the nineteenth-century gramophone era to the current VCD era. This study, thus, investigates how reproduced sound, thanks to the invention of recording technologies, has affected the life of humans and, in turn, has brought about a transformation of local cultures and societies.

As the book covers the history of recording technology's encounter with Indonesia's local cultures, which is then examined more in depth through the case study of the Minangkabau ethnic group, it is organized into three sections. Part I (Chapters 1-3) outlines the encounter of recording technologies with Indonesian local cultures and more specifically with the Minangkabau culture. Part II (Chapters 4-7) examines the Minangkabau culture's encounter with recording technologies through an in-depth investigation of the features, products, cultural and historical contexts of the West Sumatran recording industry. Part III (Chapters 8 and 9) surveys the distribution and reception of West Sumatran recording industry products (Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs) through the extensive remediation of such products on other social media in addition to conventional ways of purchasing them or listening to radio programs that broadcast them.

The first chapter recounts the earliest experiences of Dutch East Indies society with the phonograph or gramophone. It was called *mesin bitjara* ('talking machine') in Malay, which reflected the Natives' admiration of the machine. The country had encountered the first type of Edison's phonograph in 1879 through demonstrations of the machine in Java by a Dutchman named A. de Greef. After De Greef, other European travellers arrived in Java with the 'talking machine'. Prominent figures among them were Douglas Archibald, Giovanni Tesséro, J. Calabressini, and Miss Meranda. Their exhibitions of the phonograph in Java and elsewhere in the Indies are recounted, along with the public's responses. I call this the 'period of exhibition', when recording machines were demonstrated to the public in venues such as theatres and clubs in the form of shows for which people had to buy tickets, which took place in the late nineteenth

and early twentieth century. This was the first phase of the adoption of sound recording technology in Asia. The second phase was the trading of gramophones and discs, first in Java, then in the outer islands, enabling people to purchase such playback recording machines and the early commercial gramophone records that soon became objects of prestige and status. The third phase was the period when European and US recording companies appointed local agents in Asian cities and established local recording facilities, and collaborated with local entrepreneurs and middlemen (Chapter 2). The vast expansion of the consumption of the gramophone and gramophone records in the Dutch East Indies throughout the first half of the twentieth century saw the first commercial recordings of indigenous repertoires produced locally.

As reproduced sound and the mediation of their own cultural repertoires on commercial gramophone records increased significantly, it changed the ways the Dutch East Indies colonial society received their own culture. Native reactions to the gramophone and gramophone records suggest how recording technology affected their self-identity in the context of colonial society in the early twentieth century.

Gramophone technology was largely obsolete by the late 1960s, replaced by cassette technology. The arrival in Indonesia of the cassette and successive types of recording technology like the compact disc (CD) and video compact disc (VCD) is described chronologically in Chapter 3. The vast spread of the cassette in Indonesia during the 1970s was a significant factor in the formation of the West Sumatran recording industry.

I argue that the recovery of Central Sumatra's politics after being destroyed by the PRRI civil war also contributed to the emergence of the regional recording industry in West Sumatra. Businesses, including the local recording industry, grew as many Minangkabau migrants returned home after the civil war. Describing the introduction of these new recording media in Indonesia and the use of these technologies beyond the music industry, Chapter 3 provides a historical overview of the expansion of new recording technologies after the 'talking machine' era into Indonesia's national and regional cultural territories, especially in Minangkabau, and the distinctive domestication of these technologies by Indonesian society. Along with the extensive use of such new media technologies in Indonesia, the mediation of Indonesia's local cultures also grew extensively. The spread of the VCD in Indonesia since the early 2000s has brought the country into a 'VCD culture', and brought changes to regional recording industries like that of West Sumatra.

The second and third parts of the book look closely at the surrounding elements that support the existence of the West Sumatran recording industry to comprehend how far Indonesian local cultures and societies have engaged with recording technologies.

Chapter 4 discusses the elements involved in the West Sumatran recording industry, which is classified as a small-scale industry (*industri kecil*) by authorities because a recording company usually has between five and nineteen employees. Based on the assumption that a regional recording industry is related to a particular ethnicity and has its own features

influenced by local cultural circumstances, this chapter looks at state authorities and other parties involved in the recording media business, like producers, singers, and songwriters, and the cultural-based relations between them. The chapter also describes the West Sumatran recording industry's products, grouped into three categories: Minangkabau pop music (*pop Minang*), Minangkabau verbal arts, and the media-bound genre of Minangkabau children's pop music (each is examined in one of the next three chapters), and the distribution and marketing patterns of such products amid strong competition and rampant piracy of commercial recordings in Indonesia.

The prime category of products of the West Sumatran recording industry is *pop Minang* cassettes and VCDs. Chapter 5 describes the characteristics of *pop Minang* and its socio-cultural significances in Minangkabau society. Germinating in the migration destinations (*rantau*) in the mid 1950s where Minangkabau musical groups were formed like Orkes Gumarang in Jakarta, *pop Minang* then developed in West Sumatra.

As the main product of the West Sumatran recording industry, which stockpiles many genres and subgenres that blend elements of local music and foreign music, *pop Minang* has influenced not only the direction of the development of Minangkabau music but also the musical tastes of Minangkabau society. This can be recognized from the aesthetic diversification of *pop Minang*, which now distinguishes *standard pop Minang* and *new pop Minang*. There has been much debate surrounding this aesthetical transformation of *pop Minang*. The chapter then examines the cassette and VCD covers of *pop Minang* to see how they reflect the contestation of modernity and authenticity in Minangkabau society, and the role of *pop Minang* in redefining the sense of Minangness.

The second category of products of the West Sumatran recording industry is Minangkabau oral literature or verbal arts, which is highlighted in Chapter 6. The historical mediation of Minangkabau traditional verbal arts genres is discussed, and the ongoing process of this mediation in the electronic communications era. Coming into view since the gramophone era, the production of commercial recordings of Minangkabau oral literature genres increased during the period of cassette and VCD consumption since the 1980s onwards. The production, circulation, and consumption of these mediated oral genres and their representation in recording media have brought about changes in their narrative, storyline, language, and artistic style.

The vast mediation of human culture today has increasingly shaped what I call media-bound genres. Existing in particular media, a media-bound genre is a newly generated genre whose production and consumption is highly dependent on electronic media. The West Sumatran recording industry has also generated media-bound genres, which I list as the third category of its products. One such genre is Minangkabau children's pop music. Chapter 7 recounts the emergence of Minangkabau children's pop music and its relationship to the national and global music industries. It sketches the complex nature and characteristics

of the genre and its socio-cultural significances, and maps its position in the domain of Minangkabau pop music.

Altered by the phenomenon of media convergence, as a consequence of the invention of Internet and newer social media, the products of the West Sumatran recording industry have now been remediated not only on conventional media (radio) but also on Internet radio, mobile phone, blogs, YouTube, and Facebook. The link between the West Sumatran recording industry and other media, and the extensive dissemination of its products by these new media are delineated in Chapter 8. The intersection between the West Sumatran recording industry and these new media has spread the content of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs widely, reaching a global audience.

However, the conventional modes of consumption of these regional commercial recordings continue today: consumers purchase Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs for their own use. Other consumers listen to radio broadcasting stations that broadcast the recordings in their music programs. Most of those consumers are Minangkabau ethnic fellows, whether living in the homeland or in the *rantau*.

The final chapter looks at such conventional distribution and reception of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs among Minangkabau migrants outside their homeland, looking at the function of commercial recordings for members of an ethnic group who move everywhere beyond their homeland. Two case studies are taken to understand this phenomenon: the (re)production, distribution, and consumption of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs in neighbouring Malaysia, and the reception of Minangkabau music broadcast by local private radio stations in Pekanbaru, the capital of Indonesia's Riau province which borders on West Sumatra province and neighbours with Malaysia. The acceptance of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs by the Minangkabau diaspora functions to retain as well as redefine local identities beyond geographical ethnic boundaries. Moreover, by taking these two regions as case studies, one located in Indonesia and the other located abroad (in Malaysia), this chapter outlines how the reception of commercial recordings of their own ethnic music among Minangkabau migrants affects their feelings of ethnicity and nationalism.

This book has three major focuses. First, the history of recording in Indonesia. The recording of Indonesian repertoires occurred almost as soon as the phonograph was first introduced in Java, pioneered by the recording experiment of Sundanese *tembang* by the phonograph exhibitor G. Tesséro on August 1892, which was the first Indonesian local repertoire to be mediated by recording technology. The recordings were expanded to Indonesian urban entertainment genres like *stambul* and *kroncong* and to regional genres of the outer islands, including those of Minangkabau.

The production and marketing of such commercial gramophone discs of Indonesian local repertoires expanded from solely European entrepreneurs during the late nineteenth century to Indonesian-based ethnic Chinese and Native competitors during the twentieth

century. Performers of local genres became acquainted with recording media through national and international agents and producers, and people experienced a new mode of reception of their cultural products in which performers were not physically present.

The European colonization of Asia has been extensively studied from political, economic and military perspectives. Technology has been studied mostly only in relation to these perspectives. However, I propose that, more than cannon shots, reproduced sound and recording technologies have had a significant impact, and are deserving of study. Recording technologies have fundamentally transformed the mental and behavioural attitudes of Indonesian people, and changed the manifestation of their own local cultures.

As its second focus, the emergence and growth of the West Sumatran recording industry is used as an example of how Indonesian local cultures are influenced by recording technology and how a local society makes use of the technology to translate its culture in order to maintain its existence. The West Sumatran recording industry initiated the mediation of Minangkabau verbal arts, and at the same time encouraged the development of Minangkabau pop music and stimulated the creation of media-bound genres. The recording industry has changed the way Minangkabau people engage with their culture, and has made Minangkabau cultural genres accessible to Minangkabau migrants, no longer dependent on geographical borders.

Pop Minang, as the main category of products of the West Sumatran recording industry, now serves as a musical language of togetherness for Minangkabau people everywhere, and within Indonesia has become a marker of Minangkabau culture and ethnicity. *Pop Minang*, furthermore, is a cultural site which represents how Minangkabau people adapt to ongoing changes in the world. These are examples of how recording media have influenced Minangkabau local culture and transformed Minangkabau culture and identity.

The third focus concerns how the West Sumatran recording industry is associated with Minangkabau ethnicity. I have shown that the West Sumatran recording industry is actually an economic business strongly coloured by ethnic sentiment. Taking a road different to the mainstream and international big media industries like television, cinema, and the recording of Western pop music, hundreds of regional small-scale recording companies in West Sumatra have produced enormous numbers of commercial cassettes and VCDs containing local repertoires, and the process of their creation, production, distribution, and consumption for the most part has involved Minangkabau practitioners. Despite the Indonesian government's attempts to develop a national culture, ethnic cultures such as that of Minangkabau are continually transforming – driven in part by regional recording industries – and these changing regional cultures influence Indonesia's socio-political environment. Considered in the light of communications technology, the relationship between regional cultures and national culture is not a one-way street; each influences the other.

SAMENVATTING

Deze studie behandelt de komst van verschillende soorten opnametechniek in Indonesië en de sociaal-culturele invloeden die deze teweeg brachten, door het gebruik ervan om de lokale culturen van Indonesië te (re)presenteren. Als casestudy wordt de ontmoeting van deze techniek met de cultuur van de Minangkabau onderzocht. De etnische groep van de Minangkabau, afkomstig uit West-Sumatra, is bekend om zijn vrijwillige migratie (*merantau*). Omdat opnametechnieken, voornamelijk de cassette en de video compact disc (VCD), sterk geworteld zijn in het etnisch-culturele leven in Indonesië, wordt in deze studie de rol van de lokale opname-industrie in de hedendaagse etnisch-culturele productie onderzocht en hoe deze de lokale samenleving in die context de Minangkabau beïnvloedt. In aanmerking genomen het buitengewone enthousiasme van Indonesiërs om diverse moderne vreemde technologieën, inclusief geluidsopnametechniek, te omarmen, is het plausibel om te veronderstellen dat deze opnametechniek significante effecten hebben gehad in het veranderen van de Indonesische etnische samenlevingen en hun culturen. Om die reden zijn in deze studie uitgebreid zulke effecten in een Indonesische regionale context onderzocht, door het traceren van de confrontatie van etnische groepen met opnametechniek van de negentiende-eeuwse grammofoon tot het huidige VCD-tijdperk. Op die manier onderzoekt deze studie hoe gereproduceerd geluid, door de uitvinding van opnametechniek, het leven van mensen heeft beïnvloed en op zijn beurt veranderingen van lokale culturen en samenlevingen tot gevolg hebben gehad.

Omdat het boek de geschiedenis van de ontmoeting van opnametechniek met Indonesische lokale culturen omvat, die vervolgens diepgravend wordt onderzocht door de casestudy over de etnische groep van de Minangkabau, is het opgezet in drie delen. Deel I (hoofdstuk 1-3) schetst de geschiedenis van de confrontatie van Indonesische lokale culturen met opnametechniek en meer specifiek met de cultuur van de Minangkabau. Deel II (hoofdstuk 4-7) onderzoekt de ontmoeting van de Minangkabau met opnametechniek door een diepteonderzoek van de kenmerken, de producten, de culturele en historische context van de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie. Deel III (hoofdstuk 8 en 9) vat de distributie en ontvangst van West-Sumatraanse industrieproducten (Minangkabause commerciële cassettes en VCD's) van de opnametechniek samen. Dit is gedaan door te kijken naar de uitgebreide remediatie van zulke producten op andere sociale media, in aanvulling op de conventionele manieren, door ze aan te schaffen of naar de radio te luisteren.

Het eerste hoofdstuk vertelt over de eerste experimenten van de Nederlands-Indische samenleving met de fonograaf of grammofoon. Deze werd *mesin bitjara* (praatmachine) genoemd in het Maleis, wat de bewondering van de inheemse bevolking voor het apparaat weergeeft. Het land zag het eerste type van Edison's fonograaf in 1879 door demonstraties van het apparaat op Java door een Nederlander genaamd A. de Greef. Na De Greef, arriveerden er andere Europese reizigers op Java met de 'praatmachine'. Prominente figuren onder hen waren Douglas Archibald, Giovanni Tesséro, J. Calabressini en Miss Meranda. Hun

tentoonstellingen van de fonograaf op Java en elders in Indië worden beschreven, naast de reacties van het publiek. Ik noem dit de ‘tentoonstellingsperiode’, waarin opnameapparatuur aan het publiek werd gedemonstreerd in plaatsen als theaters en clubs, in de vorm van een show waarvoor de mensen kaartjes moesten kopen. Een en ander speelde zich af in de late negentiende en vroege twintigste eeuw. Dit was de eerste fase van de toepassing van geluidsopnametechnologie in Azië. De tweede fase was de tijd van de handel in grammofoons en platen, eerst op Java, daarna in de buitengewesten. Deze handel stelde de mensen in staat deze afspeel- en opnameapparatuur en de eerste commerciële grammofoonplaten, die al gauw status- en prestigeobjecten werden, aan te schaffen. De derde fase was de tijd dat Europese en Amerikaanse platenmaatschappijen lokale agenten aanstelden in Aziatische steden, lokale opnamefaciliteiten vestigden en samenwerkten met lokale ondernemers en bemiddelaars (hoofdstuk 2). De enorme uitbreiding van het gebruik van de grammofoon en grammofoonplaten in Nederlands-Indië gedurende de eerste helft van de twintigste eeuw zorgde ervoor dat de eerste commerciële grammofoonplaten met inheems repertoire lokaal werden geproduceerd.

De significante toename van de reproductie van geluid en de mediatie van hun eigen culturele repertoire op commerciële grammofoonplaten, veranderde de manier waarop de koloniale samenleving van Nederlands-Indië haar eigen cultuur ontving. Inheemse reacties op de grammofoon en grammofoonplaten wijzen op de invloed van opnametechnologie op hun eigen identiteit, in de context van de koloniale samenleving in de vroege twintigste eeuw.

Eind jaren zestig van de twintigste eeuw was de grammofoontechnologie grotendeels in onbruik geraakt en werd vervangen door cassettetechnologie. De komst van de cassette en opvolgende typen van opnametechnieken als de compact disc (CD) en de video compact disc (VCD) in Indonesië is chronologisch beschreven in hoofdstuk 3. De enorme verspreiding van de cassette in Indonesië gedurende de jaren zeventig was een factor van betekenis voor de oprichting van de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie.

Ik denk dat het herstel van de Centraal-Sumatraanse politiek, na te zijn vernietigd door de burgeroorlog van de PRRI, ook heeft bijgedragen aan de opkomst van de lokale opname-industrie in West-Sumatra. De handel, inclusief de lokale opname-industrie, groeide toen veel Minangkabause migranten terugkeerden na deze burgeroorlog. Met het beschrijven van de introductie van deze nieuwe opnamemedia in Indonesië en het gebruik van deze techniek buiten de muziekindustrie, geeft hoofdstuk 3 een historisch overzicht van de expansie van nieuwe opnametechnieken na de ‘praatmachine’-tijd op nationaal en regionaal cultureel gebied, in Indonesië en in het bijzonder in Minangkabau, alsook van de onderscheiden aanvaarding van deze techniek door de Indonesische samenleving. Met het uitgebreide gebruik van deze nieuwe mediatechniek groeide in Indonesië ook de mediatie van de lokale culturen expansief. De verspreiding van de VCD in Indonesië vanaf de eerste jaren van de eenentwintigste eeuw heeft het land in een ‘VCD-cultuur’ gebracht en daarmee ook veranderingen in de regionale opname-industrie zoals die in West-Sumatra.

In het tweede en derde deel van het boek wordt zorgvuldig gekeken naar de omgevingsfactoren die de opname-industrie van West-Sumatra ondersteunen, om te doorgronden in hoeverre de Indonesische lokale culturen en samenlevingen betrokken zijn bij de opnametechniek.

Hoofdstuk 4 behandelt de elementen die betrokken zijn bij de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie, die geclassificeerd is als een kleinschalige industrie (*industri kecil*) door de autoriteiten omdat een opnamemaatschappij gewoonlijk tussen de vijf en negentien werknemers heeft. Gebaseerd op de aanname dat een regionale opname-industrie gerelateerd is aan een specifieke etniciteit en haar eigen kenmerken heeft die wordt beïnvloed door de lokale culturele omstandigheden, wordt in dit hoofdstuk gekeken naar de overheid en andere partijen die betrokken zijn bij de handel in opnamemedia, zoals producenten, zangers en tekstschrijvers, alsmede de op cultuur gebaseerde relaties tussen hen. Het hoofdstuk beschrijft ook de producten van de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie, opgedeeld in drie categorieën: Minangkabause popmuziek (*pop Minang*), de verbale kunsten van de Minangkabau en het mediagebonden genre van de Minangkabause kinderpophmuziek (elke categorie wordt onderzocht in een van de drie volgende hoofdstukken), en de distributie en marketingmodellen van deze producten te midden van een sterke concurrentiestrijd en het welig tierende plagiëren van commerciële opnamen in Indonesië.

De eerste categorie producten van de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie is *pop Minang* cassettes en VCD's. Hoofdstuk 5 beschrijft de kenmerken van *pop Minang* en haar sociaal-culturele betekenis in de Minangkabause samenleving. Midden jaren vijftig ontstonden in de migratie (*rantau*) muziekgroepen die werden gevormd door migranten, zoals in Jakarta Orkes Gumarang, daarna ontwikkelde de *pop Minang* zich in West-Sumatra.

Als belangrijkste product van de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie, die vele genres en subgenres omvat die elementen van lokale en vreemde muziek vermengen, heeft *pop Minang* niet alleen de richting van de ontwikkeling van Minangkabause muziek, maar ook de muzikale smaak van de Minangkabause samenleving beïnvloed. Dit kan worden herkend door de esthetische diversiteit van *pop Minang*, nu standaard *pop Minang* en nieuwe *pop Minang*. Er is veel discussie geweest over deze esthetische transformatie van *pop Minang*. In het hoofdstuk worden vervolgens de covers van cassettes en VCD's onderzocht om te zien hoe ze het standpunt van moderniteit en authenticiteit in de Minangkabause samenleving weerspiegelen en de rol van *pop Minang* bij het herdefiniëren van het 'Minanggevoel'.

De tweede categorie producten van de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie omvat de Minangkabause orale literatuur of verbale kunsten, die wordt toegelicht in hoofdstuk 6. De historische mediatie van de traditionele genres van Minangkabause verbale kunsten wordt besproken en ook het voortdurende proces van deze mediatie in het tijdperk van elektronische communicatie. Opkomend sinds de grammofon tijd, nam de productie van commerciële opnamen van de Minangkabause orale geschiedenisgenres toe sinds de jaren tachtig, in de tijd van het gebruik van de cassette en de VCD. De productie, de circulatie en het gebruik van deze

gemediateerde orale genres en hun representatie in opnamemediën hebben veranderingen in hun verhaal, plot, taal en artistieke stijl tot gevolg gehad.

De huidige enorme mediëatie van menselijke cultuur heeft in toenemende mate wat ik noem een media-afhankelijk genre geschapen. Bestaand in specifieke mediën, is het media-afhankelijke genre een nieuw ontstaan genre waarvan de productie en het gebruik in hoge mate afhankelijk is van elektronische mediën. De West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie heeft ook media-afhankelijke genres geproduceerd, die ik vermeld als de derde categorie van haar producten. Een van deze genres is Minangkabause kinderpops. Hoofdstuk 7 vertelt de opkomst van de Minangkabause kinderpopsmuziek en haar relatie tot de nationale en de wereldwijde muziekindustrie. Het schetst de complexe natuur en kenmerken van het genre en de sociaal-culturele betekenis en het bepaalt de depositie ervan op het terrein van de Minangkabause popsmuziek.

Veranderd door het fenomeen van mediëconvergentie, door de uitvinding van internet en nieuwe sociale mediën, is de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie niet alleen gemediateerd op conventionele mediën (radio) maar ook op internetradio, mobiele telefoons, blogs, YouTube en Facebook. De verbinding tussen de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie en andere mediën en de extensieve vrije verspreiding van hun producten door de nieuwe mediën wordt geschetst in hoofdstuk 8. Het in elkaar grijpen van de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie en deze nieuwe mediën heeft de inhoud van de Minangkabause commerciële cassettes en VCD's wijd verspreid en daarmee een wereldpubliek bereikt.

Echter, de conventionele gebruiksvormen van deze regionale commerciële opnamen gaan gewoon door: consumenten kopen Minangkabause cassettes en VCD's voor eigen gebruik. Andere consumenten luisteren naar de radiozenders die de opnamen uitzenden in hun muziekprogramma's. De meeste van deze consumenten zijn etnisch Minangkabau, wonend in het thuisland of in de rantau.

Het laatste hoofdstuk behandelt deze conventionele distributie en ontvangst van Minangkabause commerciële cassettes en VCD's onder migranten uit de Minangkabau, die buiten hun thuisland wonen, waarbij gekeken wordt naar de functie van commerciële opnamen voor leden van een etnische groep die verhuisd zijn naar buiten hun thuisland. Twee casestudy's zijn gedaan om dit fenomeen te begrijpen: de (re)productie, de distributie en het gebruik van Minangkabause cassettes en VCD's in naburig Maleisië en de ontvangst van Minangkabause muziek die wordt uitgezonden door lokale particuliere radiostations in Pekanbaru, de hoofdstad van de Indonesische provincie Riau grenzend aan de provincie West-Sumatra en aan buurland Maleisië. De ontvangst van commerciële Minangkabause cassettes en VCD's door de Minangkabau in de diaspora zorgt voor het behoud en herdefiniëren van lokale identiteit buiten geografische etnische grenzen. Bovendien, door het kiezen van deze twee regio's voor de casestudy's, de ene in Indonesië en de andere in het buitenland (in Maleisië), schetst het hoe de ontvangst van opnamen van hun eigen etnische muziek onder de Minangkabause migranten hun gevoelens van etniciteit en nationaliteit beïnvloedt.

Dit boek heeft drie grote focussen. Ten eerste de geschiedenis van de geluidsoptname in Indonesië. Het opnemen van Indonesisch repertoire kwam bijna tegelijkertijd op met de introductie van de eerste fonograaf op Java, waarbij het pionierswerk werd verricht met het opnemen van de Sundanese *tembang* door expositant G. Tesséro in augustus 1892. Dat was het eerste Indonesische lokale repertoire dat werd gemediateerd door opnametechniek. De opnamen werden uitgebreid naar Indonesische stedelijke vermaakgenres als *stambul* en *kroncong* en naar de regionale genres van de buitengewesten, inclusief de Minangkabau.

De productie en marketing van deze commerciële grammofoonplaten met Indonesisch lokaal repertoire breidde zich uit van uitsluitend Europese ondernemers in de late negentiende eeuw naar Indonesische etnisch-Chinese en inheemse concurrenten in de twintigste eeuw. Uitvoerders van lokale genres raakten bekend met opnamemedia door nationale en internationale agenten en producenten. Hiermee ervoer het publiek een nieuwe manier om hun culturele producten te ontvangen, een manier waarbij artiesten die ze uitvoerden niet fysiek aanwezig waren.

De Europese kolonisatie van Azië is uitgebreid bestudeerd vanuit politiek, economisch en militair perspectief. Technologie is meestal alleen bestudeerd in relatie tot deze perspectieven. Echter, ik denk dat, meer dan kanonschoten, de reproductie van geluid door opnametechnieken een significante invloed hebben gehad en het waard zijn te worden bestudeerd. Opnametechnieken hebben de mentaliteit en het gedrag van Indonesiërs én het uiten van hun eigen lokale cultuur fundamenteel veranderd.

Als tweede focus is de opkomst en groei van de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie gebruikt als voorbeeld hoe Indonesische lokale culturen zijn beïnvloed door opnametechnieken en hoe een lokale samenleving gebruik maakt van deze techniek om haar cultuur te bewaren. De West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie introduceerde de mediatie van Minangkabause verbale kunsten, moedigde tegelijkertijd de ontwikkeling van de Minangkabause popmuziek aan en stimuleerde de totstandkoming van mediagebonden genres. De opname-industrie heeft, niet langer afhankelijk van geografische grenzen, de wijze waarop Minangkabauers zich bezig houden met hun cultuur veranderd en het heeft de Minangkabause culturele genres toegankelijk gemaakt voor migranten uit de Minangkabau.

Pop Minang, als de belangrijkste productcategorie van de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie, is nu overal een muzikale taal van saamhorigheid voor de Minangkabauers. Binnen Indonesië is het een herkenningsteken van de Minangkabause cultuur en etniciteit geworden. *Pop Minang* is bovendien een cultureel terrein dat laat zien hoe Minangkabauers zich aanpassen aan de voortdurende veranderingen in de wereld. Dit zijn voorbeelden van hoe opnamemedia de lokale culturen van de Minangkabau hebben beïnvloed en de Minangkabause cultuur en identiteit hebben veranderd.

De derde focus gaat over de wijze waarop de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie verbonden is met de Minangkabause etniciteit. Ik heb aangetoond dat de West-Sumatraanse opname-industrie feitelijk een economisch bedrijf is dat sterk gekleurd wordt door etnisch gevoel. Door een andere weg te kiezen dan de meest gebruikelijke, anders dan die van de internationale grote mediabedrijven als televisie, film en de opname van westerse popmuziek, hebben honderden kleinschalige opnamebedrijven in West-Sumatra enorme aantallen commerciële cassettes en VCD's geproduceerd met lokaal repertoire. Bij het proces van hun schepping, productie, distributie en gebruik zijn voor het grootste deel Minangkabause vakmensen betrokken. Ondanks de pogingen van de Indonesische overheid om een nationale cultuur te ontwikkelen, veranderen etnische culturen als die van de Minangkabau voortdurend - deels gedreven door de regionale opname-industrie. Deze veranderende regionale culturen beïnvloeden het sociaal-politieke milieu in Indonesië. Beschouwd in het licht van de communicatietechnologie is het verband tussen regionale culturen en nationale cultuur geen eenrichtingsverkeer; ze beïnvloeden elkaar.

RINGKASAN

Studi ini mengkaji kehadiran berbagai jenis teknologi rekaman di Indonesia dan signifikansi budaya yang dibawanya sebagai konsekuensi penggunaannya dalam menghadirkan dan merepresentasikan budaya lokal Indonesia. Sebagai studi kasus, studi ini meneliti pertemuan teknologi-teknologi itu dengan budaya Minangkabau. Berkampung halaman di Sumatera Barat, suku Minangkabau dikenal dengan budaya merantaunya. Karena teknologi rekaman, terutama kaset dan *video compact disc* (VCD), telah sangat merasuk ke dalam kehidupan kebudayaan berbagai etnis di Indonesia, studi ini meneliti peran industri rekaman lokal dalam penciptaan budaya etnik kontemporer dan bagaimana pengaruhnya pada masyarakat lokal, dalam hal ini suku Minangkabau. Mengingat antusiasme orang Indonesia yang teramat sangat dalam merangkul beraneka ragam produk teknologi modern asing, termasuk teknologi rekaman suara, sangatlah masuk akal untuk berasumsi bahwa teknologi rekaman ini memiliki efek signifikan dalam mentransformasi komunitas suku-suku di Indonesia dan budaya mereka. Untuk alasan tersebut, studi ini akan meneliti secara mendalam efek-efek sosial-budaya tersebut dalam konteks kedaerahan Indonesia dengan cara melacak pengenalan suku-suku ini dengan teknologi rekaman sejak era gramofon di abad kesembilan belas sampai dengan era VCD saat ini. Jadi, studi ini meneliti bagaimana suara yang direproduksi – berkat penemuan teknologi rekaman – telah mempengaruhi kehidupan manusia dan, pada gilirannya, menyebabkan terjadinya transformasi masyarakat dan budaya lokal.

Karena disertasi ini mencakup sejarah pertemuan teknologi rekaman dengan budaya lokal Indonesia, yang kemudian diteliti lebih dalam melalui studi kasus suku Minangkabau, maka disertasi ini dibagi menjadi tiga bagian. Bagian I (Bab 1-3) merangkum pertemuan berbagai jenis teknologi rekaman dengan budaya lokal Indonesia, khususnya budaya Minangkabau. Bagian II (Bab 4-7) meneliti pertemuan budaya Minangkabau dengan teknologi rekaman melalui penelaahan yang lengkap dan mendalam tentang kekhasan, produk, konteks budaya dan sejarah industri rekaman Sumatera Barat. Bagian III (Bab 8 dan 9) meneliti distribusi dan resepsi produk industri rekaman Sumatera Barat (kaset dan VCD komersial Minangkabau) melalui remediasi yang luas terhadap produk-produk ini dalam media sosial lain di samping melalui cara-cara konvensional dengan cara membeli kaset dan VCD atau mendengarkan program radio yang menyiarkan rekaman-rekaman tersebut.

Bab pertama melukiskan pengalaman paling awal masyarakat Hindia Belanda dengan fonograf atau gramofon. Alat ini disebut *mesin bitjara* dalam bahasa Melayu; istilah yang menggambarkan kekaguman orang-orang pribumi terhadap mesin ini. Negeri ini telah mengenal jenis pertama fonograf ciptaan Edison di tahun 1879 melalui peragaan penggunaan mesin ini di Jawa oleh seorang Belanda bernama A. de Greef. Setelah De Greef, para penjelajah lain dari Eropa tiba di Jawa dengan membawa ‘mesin bitjara’. Beberapa orang yang terkenal dari mereka adalah Douglas Archibald, Giovanni Tesséro, J. Calabressini, dan Miss Meranda. Pertunjukan fonograf milik mereka di Jawa dan tempat-tempat lainnya di Hindia Belanda beserta respons dari publik direkonstruksi. Saya menyebut era ini sebagai ‘periode peragaan’, yaitu masa ketika

mesin rekaman didemonstrasikan kepada publik di tempat-tempat seperti gedung teater dan klub dalam bentuk pertunjukan yang untuk dapat menontonnya orang harus membeli tiket; ini terjadi di akhir abad kesembilan belas dan awal abad kedua puluh. Ini adalah fase pertama pemakaian teknologi rekaman suara di Asia. Fase kedua adalah perdagangan gramofon dan piringan hitam. Awalnya di Jawa, kemudian di pulau-pulau lain, yang memungkinkan orang untuk membeli mesin pemutar ulang rekaman dan piringan-piringan hitam komersial pertama, yang segera menjadi simbol prestise dan status. Fase ketiga adalah periode ketika perusahaan rekaman Eropa dan AS menunjuk agen-agen lokal di kota-kota Asia sebagai mitra mereka, mendirikan fasilitas rekaman lokal, dan berkolaborasi dengan wirausahawan dan makelar lokal (Bab 2). Ekspansi penggunaan gramofon dan rekaman piringan hitam secara meluas di Hindia Belanda selama paruh pertama abad kedua puluh menjadi saksi adanya rekaman komersial pertama repertoar asli pribumi yang diproduksi secara lokal.

Karena bunyi yang direproduksi dan mediasi repertoar budaya mereka sendiri dalam rekaman piringan hitam komersial meningkat secara signifikan, hal itu telah mengubah cara masyarakat kolonial Hindia Belanda dalam menerima budaya mereka sendiri. Reaksi kaum pribumi terhadap gramofon dan rekaman piringan hitam menunjukkan bagaimana teknologi rekaman telah mempengaruhi identitas diri mereka sebagai masyarakat kolonial di awal abad kedua puluh.

Teknologi gramofon sudah menjadi obsolet di akhir 1960-an, digantikan oleh teknologi kaset. Kedatangan kaset dan jenis-jenis teknologi rekaman lainnya secara berturut-turut di Indonesia seperti *compact disc* (CD) dan *video compact disc* (VCD) dijelaskan secara kronologis dalam Bab 3. Penyebaran kaset yang meluas dengan cepat di Indonesia selama tahun 1970-an adalah faktor yang signifikan dalam pembentukan industri rekaman di Sumatera Barat.

Saya beranggapan bahwa pemulihan politik Sumatera Tengah setelah diprakporandakan oleh perang sipil PRRI juga berkontribusi pada pemunculan industri rekaman daerah di Sumatera Barat. Berbagai macam bisnis, termasuk industri rekaman lokal, meningkat karena banyak kaum perantau Minangkabau yang kembali ke kampung halamannya setelah berakhirnya perang sipil itu. Untuk menjelaskan tentang pengenalan dengan media rekaman baru di Indonesia dan penggunaan teknologi ini di luar industri musik, Bab 3 memberikan tinjauan historis tentang ekspansi teknologi rekaman baru setelah era ‘mesin bicara’ ke dalam ranah budaya daerah dan nasional Indonesia, terutama di Minangkabau, serta adaptasi teknologi-teknologi ini secara berbeda oleh masyarakat Indonesia. Bersamaan dengan meluasnya penggunaan teknologi media baru ini di Indonesia, mediasi budaya lokal Indonesia juga makin bertambah-tambah meluas. Penyebaran VCD di Indonesia sejak awal 2000-an telah membawa negara ini ke dalam ‘budaya VCD’, dan membawa perubahan pada industri rekaman daerah seperti yang terjadi di Sumatera Barat.

Bagian kedua dan ketiga disertai ini menyorot lebih dekat elemen-elemen lain yang mendukung eksistensi industri rekaman Sumatera Barat untuk memahami seberapa jauh budaya lokal dan masyarakat Indonesia telah bersenggayut dengan teknologi rekaman.

Bab 4 membahas elemen-elemen yang terlibat dalam industri rekaman Sumatera Barat, yang diklasifikasikan sebagai industri kecil oleh pihak berwenang karena perusahaan rekaman biasanya hanya memiliki lima sampai sembilan belas karyawan. Berdasarkan asumsi bahwa industri rekaman daerah berhubungan dengan kesukuan tertentu dan memiliki kekhasan sendiri yang dipengaruhi oleh kondisi budaya setempat, bab ini menyoroti otoritas negara dan pihak-pihak lain yang terlibat dalam bisnis media rekaman ini, seperti produser, penyanyi, dan penulis lagu serta hubungan berbasis budaya di antara mereka. Bab ini juga menjelaskan produk-produk industri rekaman Sumatera Barat yang dikelompokkan ke dalam tiga kategori: musik pop Minangkabau (*pop Minang*), seni lisan Minangkabau, dan genre yang terikat dengan media (*media-bound genre*) berupa musik pop anak Minangkabau (masing-masing kategori akan dibahas dalam satu bab dari tiga bab berikutnya), dan distribusi serta pola pemasaran produk-produk tersebut di tengah kompetisi ketat dan merajalelanya pembajakan terhadap rekaman komersial yang terjadi di mana-mana di seluruh Indonesia.

Kategori produk utama industri rekaman Sumatera Barat adalah kaset dan VCD *pop Minang*. Bab 5 menjelaskan karakteristik *pop Minang* dan makna sosiokulturalnya dalam masyarakat Minangkabau. Berkecambah di rantau pada pertengahan 1950-an di mana grup-grup musik Minangkabau dibentuk, seperti Orkes Gumarang di Jakarta, *pop Minang* kemudian berkembang di Sumatera Barat.

Sebagai produk utama industri rekaman Sumatera Barat yang memiliki banyak genre dan subgenre yang memadukan elemen-elemen musik lokal dan asing, *pop Minang* telah mempengaruhi bukan hanya arah perkembangan musik Minangkabau, tapi juga selera musik masyarakat Minangkabau. Ini dapat dikenali dari keanekaragaman estetis *pop Minang* yang kini dibedakan menjadi *pop Minang* standar dan *pop Minang* baru. Telah banyak terjadi perdebatan seputar transformasi estetis *pop Minang* ini. Bab ini meneliti sampul kaset dan VCD *pop Minang* untuk melihat bagaimana keduanya merefleksikan kontestasi antara modernitas dan autentisitas dalam masyarakat Minangkabau, dan peran *pop Minang* dalam mendefinisikan kembali perasaan keminangan.

Kategori kedua produk industri rekaman Sumatera Barat adalah sastra lisan atau seni lisan Minangkabau yang disorot pada Bab 6. Mediasi historis genre seni lisan tradisional Minangkabau dibahas di sini, begitu pula kesinambungan proses mediasinya dalam era komunikasi elektronik. Tampak bahwa sejak era gramofon, produksi rekaman komersial genre sastra lisan Minangkabau meningkat selama periode penggunaan kaset dan VCD sejak tahun 1980-an sampai sekarang. Produksi, sirkulasi, dan penggunaan genre lisan yang dimediasi ini beserta representasinya dalam media rekaman telah membawa perubahan dalam narasi, alur cerita, bahasa dan gaya artistiknya.

Mediasi kebudayaan manusia yang makin meluas saat ini telah semakin membentuk apa yang saya sebut sebagai genre yang terikat dengan media (*media-bound genres*). Eksis dalam media tertentu, genre yang terikat dengan media adalah genre baru yang penciptaan dan penggunaannya sangat terikat pada media elektronik. Industri rekaman Sumatera Barat

juga telah menghasilkan genre yang terikat dengan media, yang saya masukkan ke dalam kategori ketiga dari produknya. Salah satu genre ini adalah musik pop anak Minangkabau. Bab 7 melacak kemunculan musik pop anak Minangkabau dan hubungannya dengan industri musik nasional dan global. Bab ini menggambarkan sifat dan karakteristik yang kompleks dari genre ini beserta makna sosiokulturalnya, serta memetakan posisinya dalam ranah musik pop Minangkabau.

Berubah karena fenomena penggabungan media sebagai konsekuensi dari penemuan internet dan media sosial yang lebih mutakhir, produk-produk industri rekaman Sumatera Barat kini telah diremediasi tidak hanya di media konvensional (radio) tapi juga radio internet, telepon seluler, blog, YouTube, dan Facebook. Kaitan antara industri rekaman Sumatera Barat dan media lain, serta penyebaran produknya secara meluas oleh media-media baru ini diuraikan dalam Bab 8. Hubungan saling silang antara industri rekaman Sumatera Barat dan media-media baru ini telah membantu menyebarkan isi kaset dan VCD komersial Minangkabau lebih luas lagi, hingga menjangkau pendengar di seluruh dunia.

Namun, konsumsi rekaman komersial daerah ini secara konvensional masih berlanjut hingga saat ini: konsumen membeli kaset dan VCD Minangkabau untuk mereka gunakan sendiri. Konsumen lain mendengarkan siaran radio yang menyiarkan rekaman-rekaman tersebut dalam program musik mereka. Kebanyakan konsumennya adalah orang-orang yang berasal dari etnis Minangkabau sendiri, baik yang tinggal di kampung halaman ataupun di perantauan.

Bab terakhir membahas distribusi dan resepsi konvensional kaset dan VCD komersial Minangkabau tersebut di antara kelompok-kelompok perantau Minangkabau yang berada di luar kampung halaman mereka, dengan melihat fungsi rekaman komersial itu bagi anggota sebuah kelompok etnis yang menyebar ke berbagai tempat di luar kampung halaman mereka. Dua studi kasus diambil untuk memahami fenomena ini: (re)produksi, distribusi, dan konsumsi kaset dan VCD komersial Minangkabau di negara jiran Malaysia, dan resepsi terhadap siaran musik Minangkabau yang disiarkan stasiun radio lokal di Pekanbaru, ibukota Provinsi Riau di Indonesia, yang berbatasan dengan Provinsi Sumatera Barat dan Malaysia. Akseptasi terhadap kaset dan VCD komersial Minangkabau oleh para diaspora Minangkabau berfungsi untuk mempertahankan sekaligus mendefinisikan kembali identitas lokal di luar batas-batas geografis sebuah etnis. Lagipula, dengan mengambil dua daerah ini sebagai studi kasus, yang satu berlokasi di Indonesia dan yang lain berlokasi di luar negeri (di Malaysia), bab ini merangkum bagaimana resepsi terhadap rekaman komersial musik etnis sendiri di kalangan perantau Minangkabau mempengaruhi rasa kesukuan dan nasionalisme mereka.

Disertasi ini memiliki tiga fokus utama. Pertama, sejarah rekaman di Indonesia. Rekaman repertoar Indonesia dilakukan tidak lama setelah fonograf pertama kali diperkenalkan di Jawa, dipelopori oleh eksperimen rekaman *tembang* Sunda oleh peraga fonograf, G. Tesséro pada bulan Agustus 1892, yang tercatat sebagai repertoar lokal Indonesia pertama yang dimediasi oleh teknologi rekaman. Belakangan, rekaman lalu diluaskan ke genre-genre hiburan daerah

urban seperti *stambul* dan *kroncong* serta genre-genre daerah dari pulau-pulau lain, termasuk yang berasal dari Minangkabau.

Produksi dan pemasaran piringan hitam komersial yang berisi repertoar lokal Indonesia tersebut telah meluas dari semula hanya di kalangan wirausahawan Eropa saja selama akhir abad kesembilan belas ke para pesaing Tionghoa-Indonesia dan para pebisnis pribumi selama abad kedua puluh. Para penampil genre-genre lokal jadi mengenal media rekaman melalui jasa para agen dan produser nasional dan internasional, dan khalayak mengalami suatu model resepsi baru terhadap produk-produk budaya sendiri di mana para penampil telah tidak langsung hadir secara fisik.

Kolonisasi Eropa di Asia telah dipelajari secara luas dari perspektif politis, ekonomis, dan militer. Teknologi dipelajari terutama hanya dalam hubungannya dengan perspektif ini. Bagaimanapun, saya menawarkan bahwa, lebih dari sebatas tembakan meriam, suara yang direproduksi dan teknologi rekaman telah membawa pengaruh yang signifikan dan patut dikaji. Teknologi rekaman secara mendasar telah mengubah sikap mental dan tingkah laku orang Indonesia, serta mengubah tampilan budaya lokal mereka sendiri.

Sebagai fokus kedua, kemunculan dan pertumbuhan industri rekaman Sumatera Barat digunakan sebagai contoh tentang bagaimana budaya lokal Indonesia dipengaruhi oleh teknologi rekaman dan bagaimana masyarakat lokal menggunakan teknologi ini untuk memaknai budayanya demi menjaga eksistensinya. Industri rekaman Sumatera Barat memprakarsai mediasi seni lisan Minangkabau, dan pada saat yang sama mendorong pengembangan musik pop Minangkabau dan menstimulasi penciptaan genre-genre yang terikat dengan media. Industri rekaman telah mengubah cara orang Minangkabau menyatu dengan budaya mereka sendiri, dan telah memungkinkan berbagai genre budaya Minangkabau dapat diakses oleh para perantau Minangkabau, yang tidak lagi tergantung pada batas-batas geografis.

Pop Minang sebagai kategori utama produk industri rekaman Sumatera Barat, kini berfungsi sebagai bahasa musikal untuk kebersamaan bagi orang Minangkabau di mana pun. Di Indonesia, kategori musik ini telah menjadi penanda budaya dan kesukuan Minangkabau. Lebih jauh lagi, *pop Minang* adalah laman budaya yang merepresentasikan bagaimana orang Minangkabau beradaptasi dengan perubahan dunia yang terus terjadi. Ini semua adalah contoh bagaimana media rekaman telah mempengaruhi budaya lokal Minangkabau serta mentransformasi budaya dan identitas Minangkabau.

Fokus ketiga adalah tentang bagaimana industri rekaman Sumatera Barat diasosiasikan dengan kesukuan Minangkabau. Saya telah menunjukkan bahwa industri rekaman Sumatera Barat pada dasarnya adalah bisnis yang sangat diwarnai oleh perasaan keetnisan. Dengan mengambil jalan yang berbeda dari industri media besar arus utama dan berskala internasional seperti televisi, sinema, dan rekaman musik pop Barat, ratusan perusahaan rekaman daerah berskala kecil di Sumatera Barat telah memproduksi banyak sekali kaset dan VCD komersial

yang berisi repertoar lokal yang proses kreasi, produksi, distribusi, dan konsumsinya sebagian besar melibatkan para pelaku beretnis Minangkabau. Kendati pemerintah Indonesia berupaya mengembangkan budaya nasional, berbagai budaya etnis seperti budaya Minangkabau juga terus berubah – antara lain didorong oleh industri rekaman daerah – dan perubahan budaya daerah ini mempengaruhi lingkungan sosio-politik Indonesia. Merenungkan akibat dari elusifnya teknologi komunikasi sekarang, hubungan antara budaya daerah dan budaya nasional bukan merupakan jalan satu arah; satu sama lain saling mempengaruhi.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Suryadi was born on February 15th, 1965, in Sunur, Pariaman – Indonesia, where he also went to primary school. He completed junior high school at Kuraitaji in 1981 and senior high school at Pariaman in 1985. He obtained his *doctorandus* degree from the University of Andalas in 1991. In 1994, he participated in research training on oral tradition held in Pekanbaru, Riau, which was organized by Leiden University, the University of Indonesia, and the University of Riau. In 1998, he studied at the University of the Philippines at Manila on a scholarship from the Japan Foundation. Suryadi was a lecturer at Andalas University in Padang and the University of Indonesia in Jakarta before he joined Leiden University in 1998 until the present. In Leiden, he teaches Indonesian language, literature, and media culture. While employed at Leiden University, he began his MA and obtained his degree from Leiden University in 2002. He was also involved during this period in the project ‘Verbal Arts in the Audio-Visual Media of Indonesia (VA/AVMI)’ at Leiden University (1996-2001). In 2002 while teaching, Suryadi started a PhD sponsored by the Research School CNWS (School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies) at Leiden University. In 2008 and 2010, he became the principal applicant of the project to preserve the endangered manuscripts of the legacy of the Sultanate of Buton, South-Eastern Sulawesi Province, Indonesia that received an award by the Endangered Archives Programme at the British Library. In 2009, he conducted a project entitled ‘Malay Letters as Legacies of the Local Kingdoms on the Island of Sumbawa, Indonesia’ that received an award by Brill Fellowship Scaliger Institute at Leiden University Library. Affiliated with the Arts and Media cluster at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS), he has published several books and articles on oral tradition, literature, and radio and recording media in Indonesia.