



POLITICS AND THE MEDIA IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY INDONESIA

Decade of democracy

Edited by Krishna Sen and David T. Hill

ROUTLEDGE

First published 2011
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Typeset in Times New Roman by Swales & Willis Ltd, Exeter, Devon
Printed and bound in Great Britain by CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham, Wiltshire

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Politics and the media in twenty-first century Indonesia/edited by
Krishna Sen and David T. Hill.
p. cm. — (Media, culture, and social change in Asia; 21)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Press and politics—Indonesia. 2. Mass media—Political aspects—Indonesia.
I. Sen, Krishna. II. Hill, David T.
PN5449.I5P56 2010
302.2309598—dc22
2010017484

ISBN: 978-0-415-47652-2 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-0-203-84042-9 (ebk)

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3 **Community radio and the empowerment of local culture in Indonesia**

Mario Antonius Birowo

Freedom of information has become an important issue in the transition to democracy in Indonesia. Denied during the New Order from 1965 to 1998, the problems around the establishment of an open media have not been entirely overcome. This chapter examines one facet of the Indonesian community's attempts to establish a democratic information, media and communication system. It pursues a case study of community radio in Yogyakarta Special Region, to analyse how ordinary people use community radio to preserve local culture as a strategy to empower themselves in the public sphere.

Participatory communication

Communication studies scholars have been discussing the participatory communication approach in the development process since the 1970s. It has been argued that communication from the bottom up, or participatory communication, enables participants to communicate their views on their particular circumstances in order to build common interests and understanding. Community participation is regarded as a crucial aspect of empowerment, by developing self-confidence, awareness and local organizational ability.¹

This calls for a shift from a communicator-oriented approach to an audience-oriented approach to communication, recognizing that people are the agents of development.² This approach cannot be applied in a non-democratic society which puts government at the centre of the communication flow, a phenomenon often found in the developing countries. In most developing countries, communication technologies are controlled by social and economic elites, particularly those in power and in large cities, with mass media content reflecting their perspective on issues such as politics, economics and entertainment. With this imbalance in the flow of communication, mass media are regarded as responsible for widening the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged audiences, with mainstream media providing little space for ordinary people.³ As Rodriguez⁴ points out, mainstream media operates hierarchically, with audiences in the passive role of receiving media messages.

It has been argued that centralized communication, from the centre to the periphery, while designed to accelerate development, does not allow for active involvement of the participants in the process of communication. Some Latin

American scholars such as Jesus Martin Barbero, Luis Ramiro Beltran, Juan Diaz Bordenave, Fernando Reyes Matta and Rafal Roncagliolo rejected centralized communication in the development process, and proposed an alternative model emphasizing participatory communication (known as the participatory communication model).⁵ Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* published in 1970 (translated into English in 1983) was the major source of inspiration for this model or normative theory of participatory communication.⁶

Freire's notions of dialogical education, conscientization and the 'culture of silence' became widely accepted by development communication scholars. In this process, men and women, not as recipients but as knowing subjects, achieve a deeper awareness both of the sociocultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality. Their consciousness about their environment is the foundation for participating in the process of decision-making where they can voice their interests and propose solutions which are relevant to their lives.⁷ Freire's liberation notions encourage critical thinking which helps people to understand 'the causes of social injustices and to organize effective action to influence the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives'.⁸ Freire's 'conscientization' has contributed to the movement of independent community media, which 'went hand in hand with critique of oppressive mainstream media and the culture of silence they induced'.⁹ His emphasis on people-centred development is central to the participatory communication model, in which people are the subject of the communication process.¹⁰ This participatory communication model has influenced the development of community radio throughout the world, especially through United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) programmes facilitating community radio in developing countries.¹¹

By making space for people's participation, community radio creates horizontal communication, based on the principles of community access to media production and decision-making. Along with the notion of participation, Servaes¹² takes into account the importance of cultural identity in the communication process, with cultural identity a key to the development of community solidarity. Through cyclical and horizontal communication processes, participants engage in dialogues about their daily experience, which result in commonness of views.

Community radio provides the circumstances in which people can create new ideas to solve problems based on local conditions. In this way, community radio aims not only to participate in the life of community but also to allow local people to participate in the life of the station. Aimed at empowering ordinary people, community radio is an effective medium for participatory communication, more focused on facilitating expression rather than professionalization, since if ordinary people have the opportunity to express their interests, they can exercise the political power to change their lives.¹³

Community radio in Indonesia: struggle for freedom on the air

The movement for democratization that ousted Suharto in 1998 also called for press freedom, freedom of information and freedom of expression. Siregar, the

General Secretary of the Indonesian Newspaper Publishers Association, argues that there have been two significant changes related to the post-Suharto flow of information: decentralization and democratization, which have replaced the system of centralization and authoritarianism under Suharto.¹⁴

In the reform era, measures to reduce the government's previous control on the flow of information have been brought about through legislative changes. New regulations were enacted during Habibie's administration (1998–1999) and later, the Wahid administration (1999–2001) demolished the institutions for controlling the mass media. During Megawati's administration (2001–2003), the People's Representative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*, DPR) enacted the Broadcasting Act No. 32/2002 enshrining new media freedoms. This Act changed fundamentally the relations between the state and citizens regarding the function of mass media as media of expression. It introduced two new institutions in the broadcasting system in Indonesia: the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (*Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia*, KPI) as an independent regulatory body to manage the broadcasting system in Indonesia and community broadcasting.

Attempts to gain legal acknowledgement for community radio in Indonesia have always been controversial. According to Ali Pangestu,¹⁵ the Head of Presidium of the Community Radio Network of Indonesia (*Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia*, JRKI) (2002–4), prior to the enactment of the 2002 Broadcasting Act, community radio was regarded by government as 'wild radio, illegal radio'.

A variety of strategies were employed in the push for legal recognition for this form of radio. For example, on 22–24 March 2002, community radio activists of West Java participated in a workshop in Bandung.¹⁶ Participants from various types of *radio gelap* (illegal/unregulated radio) such as citizens' forum radio, campus radio and hobby radio all agreed to transform their operations into community radio. Since the community radio movement was only just beginning, not all participants were familiar with the term so the meeting discussed the definition and characteristics of community radio. The main agenda was to create common understanding about the movement and strategies in promoting community radio in Indonesia, especially to gain legal acknowledgement under the new Broadcasting Act. They regarded the new Act as entitling them to obtain a legitimate broadcasting licence. Activists at this workshop started to build collaborative networks, making history by establishing the first community radio association in post-colonial Indonesia, the Community Radio Network of West Java (*Jaringan Radio Komunitas Jawa Barat*, JRK Jabar).¹⁷

The Bandung workshop was a trigger for the establishment of Yogyakarta Community Radio Network (*Jaringan Radio Komunitas Yogyakarta*, JRKY) on 6 May 2002. In fact, the community radio movement in Yogyakarta had its roots in a UNESCO-sponsored Community Radio Seminar which was held there on 4 September 2001. That was the first time the prospects for community radio were discussed in an academic environment and received attention from a wider public. Participants included academics, NGO activists, journalists, radio practitioners and politicians. Subsequently many other seminars, discussions and conferences have been organized to promote community radio in Indonesia. Civil society groups

supporting the community radio movement organized a forum, the Community Radio Supporters Network (*Jaringan Pendukung Radio Komunitas*, JPRK), to lobby for the establishment of an independent regulatory body for broadcasting and to encourage the House of Representatives to acknowledge community broadcasting by including it in the Broadcasting Act.¹⁸

Soon after the UNESCO seminar, 30 community radio stations and 23 NGOs founded JRKY to support community radio. It was inaugurated on 6 May 2002 in the Yogyakarta Provincial House of Representatives building, to underscore community radio's role in the democratic movement. Likewise at the national level, the Indonesian Community Radio Network (*Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia*, JRKI) was inaugurated on 15 May 2002 in the national House of Representatives building in Jakarta, when the Broadcasting Act No. 32/2002 was still being drafted.

In 2002 community radio activists, NGOs and universities established a team called Advocates for a Draft Broadcasting Act (*Advokasi Rencana Undang Undang Penyiaran*) to lobby for the inclusion of a clause on community broadcasting in the Act. Activists understood obtaining community acknowledgement would be a long process, so they formed a coalition with NGOs and academics, lobbied members of the Council and networked with international organizations such as AMARC (*Association Mondiale Des Radiodiffuseurs Communautaires*, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters), Internews and UNESCO.¹⁹ Kitley has noted the importance of this civil society movement in gaining freedom of information, not evident in the Suharto era.²⁰

The draft Broadcasting Bill was dominated by ideas about democratization of the broadcasting system in Indonesia. According to Zainal Suryokusumo,²¹ a former member of the Press Council, the Broadcasting Act adopted by the People's Representatives Council was proposed by civil society organizations, initiated by the Indonesian Press and Broadcasting Society (*Masyarakat Pers dan Penyiaran Indonesia*, MPPI) and the Indonesian National Private Broadcast Radio Association (*Persatuan Radio Siaran Swasta Nasional Indonesia*, PRSSNI).²² Responding to the growing dominance of media corporations, communication academics and media activists began looking at alternative media to counterbalance the unequal distribution of communication resources.²³ The earlier Broadcasting Act No. 24/1997 contained no reference to community broadcasting. Effendy Choirie, a Vice Chair of Commission I of the House of Representatives,²⁴ contends the DPR introduced community radio into the new Act because it wanted to emphasize participation of people in the public sphere and reduce government intervention in broadcast media.²⁵

The much-debated Broadcasting Act was enacted on 28 December 2002, inaugurating a new era for Indonesia's media. The Act established a new regulatory body, the KPI, and acknowledged four types of broadcasting institutions: (1) public broadcasting, (2) private broadcasting, (3) subscriber broadcasting, and (4) community broadcasting.

In article 21 clause (1) of the Broadcasting Act No. 32/2002, community radio is defined as 'a broadcasting institution in the form of an Indonesian corporate body,

which is established by a certain community, independent and non-commercial in nature, with low transmission power and limited broadcasting coverage to serve the interests of its (surrounding) community'. Thus community radio's limited reach, over a small geographical area, is clear, with 'community' defined as a group of people living within a small area.

Despite enacting the Bill, the government seems unwilling to implement some of its clauses. First, in practice, it does not support the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) granting broadcasting licences, wanting this authority retained by government. Second, the government initially rejected community radio on the grounds of state security, claiming this media would create 'inter-group' conflict (meaning, tensions across class, religion or ethnic divisions).²⁶ At the Community Radio Meeting in Bandung in March 2002, one senior officer of the Department of Communication and Information Technology asserted this media could ignite conflict between religious and racial groups.²⁷ In addition, there is suspicion in some quarters, perhaps stimulated by international support for the community radio movement in Indonesia, that community radio is an overseas concept and institution.²⁸

The Government sought to regulate community broadcasting. AMARC notes the government seems ambiguous in implementing Broadcasting Act No. 32/2002.²⁹ Activists assert the government is not supporting the development of community broadcasting, and Government Regulation No. 51/2005 limits the coverage area of community radio to a 2.5 square kilometre area. Many critics of this limitation of coverage area pointed out first that, while on the densely populated island of Java a 2.5 square kilometre area might provide a reasonable participating audience, it would be insufficient for low population density areas like Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Papua. Second, even on Java the coverage area is too small to accommodate people's information needs because social interaction for most of the population takes place over much greater areas. For example, this limitation does not accommodate the interactions between people who have similar interests or features, such as ethnicity, profession and religion.³⁰

Nonetheless, the 2002 Broadcasting Act has benefited the development of community radio in Indonesia. While previously community radio was illegal, operating underground and constantly risking closure, today there are thousands of such stations across Indonesia, so many in fact that accurate data is unobtainable, with many joining together to form networks.³¹ Further, the conflict between the Indonesian Government's Department of Information and Communication, and the KPI has meant that the precise process for gaining a community radio broadcasting permit is still uncertain. Community radio stations have been following the process set down by the KPI but, after more than three years, still no licences have actually been issued.

Empowering people with local cultures

In Indonesia, the history of community radio epitomizes a transformation from media of elites into media of ordinary people. In the 1930s, broadcast radio was

established by aristocrats as media for cultural expression, and during the Dutch era culture and entertainment were predominant in radio programming.³² A community of Javanese aristocrats collectively funded their radio stations. For example, in the early 1930s, in Surakarta, 600 kilometres from Batavia/Jakarta, a group of Javanese aristocrats, 'Javanese Kunstkring Mardi Raras Mangkunagaran,' established a radio station to promote Javanese culture.³³ Nowadays community radio belongs to ordinary people, as a mode of cultural expression, especially for local culture marginalized in mainstream radio dominated by city-based pop culture.

Syamsul Muarif, Minister of Information and Communication, observed in 2002 that 41,000 villages still could not receive broadcast radio.³⁴ Most private radio stations are located in big cities, limiting access to information for those beyond these reception areas. In addition, private radio programmes, particularly those primarily targeting teenagers, are frequently oriented to Jakarta's capital city lifestyle. For example, their radio presenters adopt the Jakartanese language style or 'MTV style', which combines Indonesian and English – what Indonesians call *bahasa gado-gado*. English is often used for private radio station programme titles. If Sen and Hill³⁵ concluded that radio is an exception by not marginalizing local cultures, that situation has now changed. In many cases, local cultures are the minority in commercial radio, a situation which reflects Lucas's critique that the mainstream media, in its present form and structure, has become an effective tool for globalization.³⁶ In this vein, MTV style can be seen as a representation of globalization, especially Americanization. As Rodriguez notes, cultural invasion from abroad has worried developing countries since foreign values and cultural forms endanger local cultures and identities, in turn affecting national identity.³⁷

Community radio, in this context, can be interpreted as an attempt to provide a diversity of content from people who have little opportunity to participate in message production in mainstream media. It is a resistance to the growing uniformity of social life produced by mainstream media. Thus, community radio, following the principle of democracy, challenges 'the homogenisation of way of life'.³⁸

Learning from the field

The following case study describes how community radio plays its role in providing public space for people, especially through its focus on local culture. In Yogyakarta Special Region, one of the pioneers of community radio is Balai Budaya Minomartani Community Radio (*Radio Komunitas Balai Budaya Minomartani FM*, Radio BBM). Radio BBM is located in Minomartani village, Sleman Regency, in the north of Yogyakarta. The name 'Minomartani' consists of two words: 'mino' meaning fish, and 'martani' meaning field. So Minomartani refers to the many fish farms and rice fields that used to exist in the village. Since Minomartani is only nine kilometres to the north-east of central Yogyakarta and close to various universities, the location has become an attractive residential area for newcomers. Rapid housing development has changed Minomartani, transforming it from rural to urban.

Today, the village has become primarily a suburban housing estate. Most residents no longer farm, but are instead civil servants, lecturers, entrepreneurs and employees of private companies. Kisno, a volunteer at Radio BBM as well as a local artist, explains that the population of Minomartani is ethnically complex, with residents not only from Java, but also from Sumatra, Sulawesi, Jakarta and elsewhere. Radio BBM encourages all these inhabitants to communicate with each other using arts and culture which are developing in Minomartani Cultural Hall. In this way, inhabitants can bond as a community.³⁹

The Minomartani Cultural Hall (*Balai Budaya Minomartani*, BBM) was founded in 1990 by the Audio Visual Production Training Centre (*Studio Audio Visual Puskat*), better known as SAV Puskat.⁴⁰ BBM is actually a compound, consisting of staff housing of SAV Puskat and a cultural hall.⁴¹ This cultural hall is a public space, open to Minomartani residents who want to stage traditional performances, such as *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry), *wayang orang* (dance drama based on traditional forms known as *wayang*), *ketoprak* (traditional drama), traditional dance and *karawitan* (traditional music). Although BBM focuses on traditional arts, it also allows young people to perform in pop bands, and frequently pop mixed with traditional music.

The idea of creating a community radio was developed by SAV Puskat as early as the 1980s through its concept of a 'media village', where a sense of community could be strengthened by enabling all residents to participate in village-based media, such as a one-page newspaper, posters, puppet performances and community radio. Such village media was a way of empowering people as they assess their local situation and consider ways of bettering their life. Iswara Hadi, the chairperson of SAV Puskat, acknowledges that Latin America's experiences inspired their community media programmes, such as folk theatre, community radio and video programmes (personal communication 23 April 2007). The aim of such a media village was similar to Freire's notion of conscientization, by recognizing people's identity as an important factor in participatory action.⁴²

In 1993, to promote community radio and ideas about the potency of radio, Ruedi Hofmann, a Jesuit priest and Head of SAV Puskat, convened a discussion regarding the potential of community radio in Balai Budaya Minomartani. Participants included community members and three Yogyakarta commercial radio broadcasters. To stimulate discussion, they watched a video about *Latacunga* Community Radio in Latin America, brought back by Hofmann after his visit there. According to Kusuma,⁴³ a radio practitioner who participated in that discussion, the concept emerged of a *gubug rekaman* (literally, 'recording hut') where village residents could produce and broadcast their own radio programmes. Since the political situation of Indonesia in the early 1990s did not allow people to establish a community radio, this idea was finally realized in 1995 when the community of Minomartani cooperated with Radio Retjo Buntung, a private radio station, to broadcast cultural performances, especially *wayang* and *karawitan* (traditional Javanese orchestral music). The programmes were produced in Minomartani village, and broadcast by Radio Retjo Buntung, as a way of circumventing prevailing broadcasting regulations. The broadcasts cost 150,000 rupiah (AUD\$ 21), but even at these rates the

community had difficulty obtaining sufficient funds, with the programme ceasing after two years due to the 1997 economic crisis in Indonesia.

In 1998 the idea of village radio was continued with the establishment of a low power radio, *Radio Suket Teki* (Grass Nut Radio), founded by SAV Puskat and, importantly, by some students of Gadjah Mada University who were living in Minomartani. Using the frequency 93.5 FM, *Radio Suket Teki* had no broadcasting permit, so it was effectively 'illegal', closing down in 2000 after a warning from the Monitoring Bureau of the Department of Transportation.⁴⁴

Giovani,⁴⁵ a resident of Minomartani and a social communication expert from SAV Puskat, explains that *suket teki*, a kind of grass used as food and natural medicine, was adopted as the name of the radio station because it symbolized that, with its simplicity, *Radio Suket Teki* could provide benefits to the community. The experience of Unai, a mother of four, illustrates the function of that radio station. She says that being an announcer on the radio helped her to learn to speak in public and improved her self-confidence. She got involved in the radio to socialize more with others, but could not imagine having that opportunity in mainstream radio. Her experience demonstrates community radio's contribution to people's empowerment by developing individuals 'who are confident enough to speak up with their own points of view'.⁴⁶

Although *Radio Suket Teki* closed in 2000 because it did not have a broadcasting licence, after a two-year hiatus the Minomartani community revived the village radio station in 2002 to support local culture. The initiative came from a group of residents who were active in cultural events in Minomartani Cultural Hall and wanted to use radio to publicize their performances.⁴⁷ The result was *BBM Community Radio (Radio Komunitas Balai Budaya Minomartani)*, named after its location in the Minomartani Cultural Hall (*Balai Budaya Minomartani/BBM*), with SAV Puskat providing the building for a radio studio and some equipment.

The *BBM Community Radio* studio consists of two climate-controlled spaces and one common room. One space, with a sofa, is used for talkback programmes, the other for the technical operator. The studio, although simple, is semi-sound-proof. There are two personal computers, an audio mixer, audio player and an amplifier. Although it initiated the radio's establishment and provided its facilities, SAV Puskat does not own *Radio BBM*. Instead, the radio is managed independently by the Minomartani community. Residents participate as volunteers with the station open to all, including volunteers from outside Minomartani village who live in the station's reception area. Volunteers work as members of the Community Broadcasting Board (*Dewan Penyiaran Komunitas*), the Founders Board, the Advisors Board and as announcers and technical operators.

BBM Community Radio provides opportunities for people to celebrate their cultural identity. One initial example of this was the project to produce a Javanese-language historical drama 'Rona Cakrawala Tanah Perdikan (RCTP)' telling the history of Minomartani village in the context of the history of Mataram Sultanate (now Yogyakarta Special Region).⁴⁸ In this drama, Minomartani village is depicted as a free territory within the Sultanate, suggesting that through this retelling of their history, the villagers are asserting that they too are free citizens like their

ancestors. The drama enables them both to entertain and to promote values such as integrity, tolerance and emancipation to their audience. The programme interprets the community's identity through members' own signs, codes and narration, reinforcing their cultural values in a highly local and specific way.

As BBM Community Radio became popular among Minomartani residents, it began to attract the attention of the local government. The village government started using the radio to seek input from residents or to disseminate information about government policies. The station broadcasts the latest information not only through its news programmes, but also in talkback programmes. The village chief, for example, announces government activities on talkback and gets immediate feedback from residents telephoning the programme. This enables people to hold the village government to account for its actions. The radio station encourages dialogue in a democratic spirit, by providing public space for discussion about matters of importance to the community. Through their radio, people have the opportunity both to hear and to be heard.⁴⁹ Because of its popularity, BBM Community Radio belongs not only to Minomartani residents but also to surrounding villages in its five square kilometre reception area.⁵⁰

Inclusiveness

BBM Community Radio is a representation of the various ethnic groups making up the population of Minomartani, where their cultural activities were seen as opportunities to share their daily experiences and reflect upon the interaction between local and outside culture. The openness of Radio BBM to non-Javanese cultures was demonstrated by its creation – and broadcast in the 'Around the Archipelago' (*Jajah Nusantara*) programme – of *gamelan gaul*, a mix of Javanese music with music from other Indonesian ethnic groups, including those from Papua and West Java, for example. In this way, BBM hoped to attract both youth and non-Javanese listeners (interview with Surowo 22 February 2009). Every Wednesday night, Radio BBM broadcasts traditional music from other regions of Indonesia to foster better understanding of other cultures. As a result, Radio BBM was invited by Tabanan village in Bali to exchange broadcasts of Javanese and Balinese versions of *mocopatan* (a kind of traditional music).⁵¹

Intercultural communication can be seen in Radio BBM's off-air activities. The radio station has often hosted groups from other regions, even from other countries. In October 2008, a Malaysian group performed in Minomartani Cultural Hall, with Radio BBM broadcasting the event. Since residents often lack time to gather together, such broadcasts of cultural activities provide access to community events, and help the community stay in touch.

Solidarity building

Alfaro views community radio as part of the public sphere in which people can engage in dialogue and make collective commitments.⁵² Some of the programmes on BBM are directed at building solidarity, that is, a form of citizenship where

people commit with others. BBM Community Radio's purpose is to be 'the radio that encounters, the radio which develops, and the radio which increases the quality of people's life'.⁵³ This aim is evident in the station's popular flagship programme of Javanese music, *Mbah Tro Mulur*. The name is an abbreviation of *Nambah Mitro Ketemu Sedulur* (to add friends and to meet relations), a Javanese expression which means communication strengthens cohesion among community members. *Mbah* means grandfather or grandmother, and by extension, an attribute given to elders, usually as a term of respect. *Tro Mulur* is a Javanese nickname. The words in the programme's name are very familiar to the Javanese ear. Here, the name symbolizes the programme's effort to draw the station into a closer relationship with its community. The programme itself is a combination of song requests and artistic performances, with people having the opportunity to perform their creations, especially of Javanese music, while also sending greetings to audience members.

The programme functions like a village hall get-together. The virtual interactions are followed up with *jumpa darat* (face-to-face meetings) held every evening in the Radio BBM studio from 6 p.m. to midnight. These gatherings build closer relationships among the community and support friends who are working as announcers and technical operators in the studio. Often people bring food to the studio for the announcers, operators and their visitors. Sometimes food vendors close to the studio offer the volunteers snacks, in turn getting free promotion with their names mentioned on the radio. To accommodate visitors to the studio, there are benches in front surrounding a table made from planks and covered with a simple large umbrella where people can chat until the radio shuts down for the day.

The radio has an institutionalized audience group, the *Paguyuban Monitor* (literally the 'monitoring group'). Members are between 30–60 years of age, from various backgrounds and professions, including teachers, entrepreneurs, lecturers, employees of private institutions, civil servants, housewives and retirees. The group's focus is the preservation of local culture. Not surprisingly, many members are traditional artistes who have also been involved in cultural activities in the Minomartani Cultural Hall, which have been incorporated into Radio BBM with performances recorded and broadcast so more residents can listen. Many young shadow puppet (*wayang kulit*) performers have developed their skills at the station, with one publishing a book of *geguritan* (Javanese poems), most of which had been broadcast by the station.

Paguyuban Monitor is at the core of Radio BBM's activities, both on- and off-air, with these two forms of activities supporting each other. Supporters interact not only in the community radio programmes on-air, but follow this up in their interactions in daily life, and consequent concern for each other. Off-air activities are extensions of the broadcast programmes, in activities such as visits to hospital patients, collection of donations for natural disaster victims, sporting activities and art performances, which then provide input back into the broadcasts. If a member has a problem, the group would help solve it. If they had a major celebration, such as a birthday, members would join in. *Paguyuban Monitor* also sustains the radio financially, with money raised from members' contributions.

BBM Community Radio did not acquire a broadcasting licence until 2009, because of the complex process involved. Although community radio was recognized by Broadcasting Act No. 32/2002, obtaining a broadcasting licence remains problematic because of the ongoing difference of opinion between the government and KPI about who has authority to grant broadcasting licences.⁵⁴ So, to avoid being closed by the Local Broadcasting Monitoring Institution (*Balai Monitor*), community radio must have acknowledgement and support from the local government. Thus, BBM Community Radio activists adopted a 'cultural strategy'. As the former capital city of the Mataram Sultanate, Yogyakarta is the centre of Javanese culture.⁵⁵ The local population still see the Sultan of Yogyakarta, Hamengku Buwono X, who is also the Governor of Yogyakarta Special Region, as a cultural icon as well as a political leader. As a cultural leader, he has interest in preserving Javanese culture. For this reason, in 2002 activists of Radio BBM invited him to visit the studio to observe the role of the station in cultural preservation in Minomartani. During his visit, the Sultan was invited to participate in a talk show with his people in Minomartani. The visit had a positive impact on BBM Community Radio, and on other community radio stations in Yogyakarta. Resulting publicity about this visit illustrated the Sultan and Governor acknowledging the benefit of community radio for the community. His autographed photograph was framed and hung on the studio wall of BBM Community Radio as evidence of his support.

Conclusion

BBM Community Radio continues to play an important role in the community radio movement in Indonesia. It demonstrates that the establishment of a community radio station should not be seen as the starting point for organizing people, but rather should be viewed as an extension of an existing desire to communicate.⁵⁶ It plays a valuable cultural role by facilitating dialogue between diverse elements in a community, optimizing radio's potential to provide a community with relevant local content.

During its development, BBM Community Radio went through three stages: first, creating a sense of community through cultural activities; second, establishing a radio station as a forum for people to get together; and third, developing radio as a medium for community development. In the first stage, most activities in the Minomartani Cultural Hall were aimed at encouraging residents to come together and interact during cultural activities and meetings. Minomartani residents were encouraged to practise their traditions and other cultural activities. They used the cultural hall as a place to present their art performances and social activities. At that stage, the cultural hall encouraged a focus on cultural expression, especially of traditional culture, to strengthen community and communality. In the second stage, BBM Community Radio functioned as a broadcasting forum where residents could get together. Its programmes developed a media habit among the residents. The programme, *Mbah Tro Mulur* illustrates how the broadcasts could strengthen audience solidarity with residents encouraged to communicate through

radio. Residents learnt from their own experiences how to use the media. Finally, in the third stage BBM Community Radio developed the capacity of residents by giving them the opportunity to express themselves through radio and to develop self-reliance, participation and organization.

Given the difficulties ordinary people have in expressing their local culture through mainstream media, community radio functioned as an alternative means of cultural preservation. As a medium for cultural identity, it became a public arena, an on-air community hall, where people exchange their experiences. Participants in community radio's on-air programmes also join in community radio's off-air activities, promoting local culture and strengthening solidarity. Community radio gives people more options for distributing and receiving information of benefit to them. But this is only possible if the media operates within a system that is democratic. Such radio provides a public sphere in a simple format, with flexible rules, no hierarchy and a participatory environment, enabling village people access and creating a sense of democratic communication. In Indonesia's transition to democracy after the fall of the New Order, community radio has played its role in civil society's movement for social change, to democratize the political system, in what Antlov sees as a mechanism of democracy that allows people to be heard.⁵⁷

Notes

- 1 P.M. Lewis, 'Community media: giving "a voice to the voiceless",' in P.M. Lewis and J. Susan (eds), *From the Margins to the Cutting Edge: Community Media and Empowerment*, Cresskill: Hampton Press, 2006, pp. 13–39.
- 2 J. Servaes, 'Linking theoretical perspectives to policy,' in J. Servaes, T.L. Jacobson and S.A. White, *Participatory Communication for Social Change*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996, p. 32. See also P. Thomas, 'Participatory development communication: philosophical premises,' in A.G. Dagon and T. Tufte (eds), *Communication for Social Change Anthology: Historical and Contemporary Readings*, New Jersey: Communication for Social Change Consortium, 2006, p. 475.
- 3 P.M. Shingi and B. Mody, 'The effects gap hypothesis,' in A.G. Dagon and T. Tufte (eds), *Communication for Social Change Anthology*, p. 126.
- 4 C. Rodriguez, 'Civil society and citizens' media: peace architects for the new millennium,' in K.G. Wilkins (ed.), *Redeveloping Communication for Social Change: Theory, Practice, and Power*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000, pp. 147–60.
- 5 These Latin American scholars (whose work can be found in A.G. Dagon and T. Tufte (eds), *Communication for Social Change Anthology*) were concerned about the use of development communication in the context of local culture, to enable people to participate. They promoted a new model which should develop from the local situation. For example, J.D. Bordenave ('Communication theory and rural development: a brief review,' in A.G. Dagon and T. Tufte (eds), *Communication for Social Change Anthology*, pp. 133–41) suggests a need for new models in agricultural development. L.R. Beltran ('Rural development and social communication relationships and strategies,' in A.G. Dagon and T. Tufte (eds), *Communication for Social Change Anthology*, 2006, pp. 76–87) argues about the need for a new model to answer problems of rural development and social communication in Latin America. J.M. Barbero ('Communication from the perspective of culture,' in A.G. Dagon and T. Tufte (eds), *Communication for Social Change Anthology*, 2006, pp. 333–42) argues for the importance of culture in the construction of communication theories.

- 6 Servaes, Linking theoretical perspectives, p. 17. See also S.A. White, 'The concept of participation: transforming rhetoric to reality,' in A.G. Dagron and T. Tufte (eds), *Communication for Social Change Anthology*, p. 482.
- 7 P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983.
- 8 J. Downing, *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication And Social Movements*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001, p. 45.
- 9 Lewis, *Community media*, p. 20. See also Thomas, *Participatory Development*, pp. 476–77.
- 10 Downing, *Radical Media*, p. 46.
- 11 UNESCO began its community radio campaign programmes in 1980, with the first community radio in Africa being built in Kenya in 1982. In Asia, UNESCO and Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) facilitated the first community radio in Sri Lanka. C. Fraser and S.R. Estrada, *Community Radio Handbook*, UNESCO, 2001, pp. 8–12.
- 12 Servaes, 'Linking theoretical perspectives', pp. 15–17.
- 13 See M. Kaufman, 'Community power, grassroots democracy, and the transformation of social life,' in M. Kaufman and H.D. Alfonso, *Community Power & Grassroots Democracy*, Zed Books, London, 1997, pp. 1–24.
- 14 A.E. Siregar, *Indonesia: Democracy, Economic Development and the Media*, 2002. Available <http://www.magazine.org.tw/events/fippseoul/presentation/S-I%20amir.pdf> (Accessed 22 April 2005).
- 15 Interview with Ali Pangestu, 6 April 2007.
- 16 Kompas 27 May 2002.
- 17 Akhmad Nasir, a founder of Angkringan Community Radio, argued that to promote community radio in Indonesia, the stations had to raise their profile to gain greater attention from policy makers involved in the process of drafting the Broadcasting Act. In 2002, this led community radio stations to consolidate their power, building an association and networking (Interview 25 July 2006).
- 18 The NGOs included Yogyakarta NGO Forum (Forum LSM), the Legal Aid Institute (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum), the Environmental NGOs Forum (Wahana Lingkungan Hidup), KAPALA, USC Satu Nama, Combined Resource Institution and LAPERA. (Interview with Mart Widie, the secretary of the JRKY, 11 May 2006.)
- 19 This process of building social coalitions was part of the community radio movement strategy everywhere. Experiences in various countries, such as in Latin America, showed that community radio was given legal recognition as a result of a long process of struggle. They were often opposed by the government and corporate media (see C. Rodriguez, *Fissures in the Mediascape. An International Study of Citizens' Media*, Cresskill: Hampton Press, 2001, p. 10). AMARC is Association Mondiale Des Radiodiffuseurs Communautaires or World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters.
- 20 P. Kitley, 'Civil society in charge? television and the public sphere in Indonesia after Reformasi', in P. Kitley (ed.), *Television, Regulation and Civil Society in Asia*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, pp. 97–114.
- 21 Interview with Zainal Suryokusumo, 18 December 2006.
- 22 Masduki, *Regulasi Penyiaran: dari Otoriter ke Liberal*, Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2007, p. 130.
- 23 C. Rodriguez, 'From alternative media to citizens' media,' in A.G. Dagron and T. Tufte (eds), *Communication for Social Change Anthology*, p. 764.
- 24 Commission I of the House of Representative oversees Acts concerning information, including the Broadcasting Act No. 32/2002.
- 25 Interview with Effendy Choirie, 16 March 2007.
- 26 One community radio activist involved in the drafting process felt the security issue emanated from the Department of Defence.
- 27 R. Henschke, 'Power to the people,' in *Inside Indonesia*, October–December 2002. Available <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edit72/Theme%20Henschke> (Accessed 6 February 2007).

- 28 In the debates about the KPI and community radio, commercial broadcasting institutions tend to support the government's position (Tempointeraktif, 'KPI dikritik soal kasus MNC,' 9 May 2008. <http://www.tempointeraktif.com/read.php?NyJ = cmVhZA = &MnYj = MTlyNzYO>. (Accessed 9 May 2008). The support of commercial broadcasters for the government can be seen in two cases: first, the judicial review of the position of KPI under the Broadcasting Act No. 32/2002; and second, the head of PRSSNI arguing that the idea of community radio derived from foreign organizations, and that it would erode nationalism and create grass-roots conflicts (Dirgantara Online, vol. 12, no. 3-4 May-August 2002. 'Apa Kabar Radio Kampus?', <http://dirgantara.idxc.org/dirga12/1203b.shtml> (Accessed 3 January 2007).
- 29 AMARC, 'Country Assessment Indonesia.' <http://documents.amarc.org/files/2005-09-08/Indonesia.pdf> (Accessed 13 June 2008).
- 30 AMARC, 'Country Assessment Indonesia.'
- 31 Networks include Indonesian Community Radio Network (*Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia*), Community Radio Network for Democracy (*Jaringan Radio Komunitas untuk Demokrasi*), Indonesian Farmers' Solidarity Radio Network (*Jaringan Radio Himpunan Kerukunan Tani Indonesia*), Farmers' Voice Radio Network (*Jaringan Radio Suara Petani*), Fishermen's Voice Radio Network (*Jaringan Radio Suara Nelayan*), Indonesian Campus Radio Forum (*Forum Radio Kampus Indonesia*) and Urban Poor Consortium (UPC) Community Radio.
- 32 Lindsay, J., 'Making waves: private radio and local identities in Indonesia', *Indonesia*, no. 64, October 1997, pp. 106-7. Available <http://e-publishing.library.cornell.edu/Dienst/Repository/> (Accessed 25 May 2005). C. Wild, 'Indonesia: a nation and its broadcasters,' *Indonesia Circle*, no. 43, 1987, p. 19.
- 33 Kementerian Penerangan-Djawatan Radio Republik Indonesia 1953, p. 12; Wild, 'Indonesia: a nation and its broadcasters,' p. 19.
- 34 This was stated in the forum on Advocacy Strategies for Community Broadcast Institutions ('Strategi Advokasi Lembaga Penyiaran Komunitas'), 14 May 2002, Jakarta. See Laporan Lokakarya Nasional Strategi Advokasi Lembaga Penyiaran Komunitas, Jakarta 12-15 Mei 2002, p. 32.
- 35 K. Sen and D.T. Hill, *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 16
- 36 F. Lucas, *Primer on Community Based Radio*, Manila: Asian Social Institute and World Association for Christian Communication, 1995, p. 5.
- 37 Rodriguez, 'From alternative media to citizens' media,' p. 766.
- 38 Rodriguez, 'From alternative media to citizens' media,' p. 774.
- 39 Interview with Kisno, 13 September 2006
- 40 Puskat means Pusat Kateketik or Catechetical Centre. It is an Indonesian Jesuit Institution. Audio Visual Studio is a part of that institution, hence the studio is better known as the Studio Audio Visual Puskat (SAV Puskat). Well-known as the centre of media production based on people centred development, the SAV Puskat was established in 1969 as a laboratory to support educational activities at Pradnyawidya Catechetical School (see <http://www.savpuskat.or.id/profil.php?ver = eng>, Accessed 2 November 2009).
- 41 Although the BBM compound was established by a Catholic institution, there is no church there and BBM is not used by SAV Puskat for religious activities.
- 42 S.A. White, 'The concept of participation: transforming rhetoric to reality,' in A.G. Dargon and T. Tufte (eds), *Communication for Social Change Anthology*, p. 482.
- 43 Interview with Kusuma, 13 May 2006.
- 44 A. Tanesia, 'Seni dan budaya Desa Minomartani,' in A. Nasir, A. Tanesia, I. Prakoso and M. Amri, *Media Rakyat: Mengorganisasi Diri Melalui Informasi*, Yogyakarta: Combine Resource Institution, 2007, pp. 102-05.
- 45 Interview with Giovanni, 14 March 2006.
- 46 White, *The concept of participation*, p. 484.

- 47 'Since it began, Radio BBM has supported cultural preservation,' said Margio, a member of Community Broadcasting Board of Radio BBM (Interview 8 March 2006).
- 48 RCTP consisted of three series: the first 'Mendung di Kartasura', had seven episodes; the second, 'Bumi Sesigar Semangka', had 14 episodes; and the third, 'Tahta Semusim', had ten episodes. Other programmes include Traditional Jokes (Dagelan Mataram), Ethnic Music (Jajah Nusantara), Mbah Tro Mulur (Nambah Mitro Ketemu Sedulur [To add friends and to find family]), Educational items and Children's Fairy Tales (Dongeng Anak).
- 49 C. Fraser and S.R. Estrada, 'Community radio for change and development,' *Society for International Development*, vol. 45, no. 4, 2002, p. 70. Available <http://proquest.umi.com/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/> (Accessed 17 January 2005).
- 50 Data of Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of Yogyakarta Special Region shows that in Sleman Regency in 2006, where Minomartani is located, the population density per square kilometre was 1,754.05 (Susenas, BPS Provinsi D.I. Yogyakarta, available <http://www.bps.go.id> [Accessed 30 May 2008]).
- 51 Tanesia, 'Seni dan budaya Desa Minomartani', p. 105.
- 52 R.M. Alfaro, 'Popular cultures and participatory communication on the route to redefinitions,' in A.G. Dagron and T. Tufté (eds), *Communication for Social Change Anthology*, pp. 745–46.
- 53 Interview with Surowo, 3 March 2006.
- 54 On 28 July 2004, the Constitutional Court approved a judicial review of the Broadcasting Act No. 32/2002 that stripped the KPI of the authority to issue broadcasting licences, returning that authority to the government, as had been the case during the New Order. Amelia, a member of the KPI, asserts that government broadcasting regulations are not oriented to ordinary people (personal communication 26 March 2007). Pointing to Government Regulation No. 51/2005, she argues that it is more complicated to establish a community broadcasting institution than a commercial one, reflecting a policy bias against community radio.
- 55 Sen and Hill (Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia, p. 16) argue that Yogyakarta has an important position in Indonesian politics since it is seen as the cultural capital of the Javanese, the ethnic majority in Indonesia. It is well known as a student city and home to hundreds of higher-degree institutions.
- 56 J.L. Hochheimer, 'Organising Community Radio: Issues in Planning', *Communications*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1999, p. 451.
- 57 H. Antlov, 'Not enough politics! Power, participation and the new democratic polity in Indonesia,' in E. Aspinall and G. Fealy, *Local Power and Politics in Indonesia, Decentralisation & Democratisation*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003, p. 73.

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