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

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The recording industry and ‘regional’ culture in Indonesia

The case of Minangkabau

This book explores chronologically, for the first time, the representation and redefinition of Indonesia’s regional cultures through recording media, from the introduction of the gramophone record through the current video compact disc (VCD) era, taking as case study the Minangkabau ethnic group. Based on extensive fieldwork and historical research, the author follows the Dutch East Indies colonial society’s initial encounter with recording media and the later adoption and social uses of various types of recording media among the Minangkabau of West Sumatra and its diaspora. The transformation of Minangkabau culture and identity that came with the extensive reproduction of Minangkabau cultural sounds on commercial recordings is examined. This transformation was facilitated by the West Sumatran recording industry, founded in the early 1970s along with the spread of the audio-cassette in Indonesia. The author describes the workings of the West Sumatran recording industry and how its products become the preferred medium of cultural expressions of the Minangkabau ethnic group to hold on to its identity and existence in the face of a changing world. The representations of Minangkabau culture in regional commercial recordings explored in this study 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.

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