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

Suryadi,

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Author: Suryadi

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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 bacik'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:I, 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 Bamankeh 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,</i> | I am like a kite, |
| <i>Ado angin den tabang tinggi,</i> | When in the wind I can fly high, |
| <i>Angin tahanti den tagamang</i> | But if the wind stops, I become afraid of heights, |
| <i>Dek tabayang jatuh ka bumi.</i> | Imagine falling to earth. |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Itulah nan denai rasokan,</i> | This now is what I feel, |
| <i>Sajak denai bamankeh tiri,</i> | As I have a stepmother, |
| <i>Ado ayah denai disayang,</i> | When father comes back, I am loved, |
| <i>Ayah pai denai dibanci.</i> | If he goes out, I am hated. |

[....]

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Ado si mandeh tiri,</i> | There are other stepmothers, |
| <i>Nyo sayang ka anak tirinyo,</i> | They love their stepchildren, |
| <i>Tibo di diri denai,</i> | In my case, |
| <i>Manga kok denai taseso?</i> | Why do I feel tormented? |

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 Bamankeh 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 manangih!</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 Bemandeh 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 terpatrit 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 Talempong* ('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.