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

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REMEDIATION OF MINANGKABAU COMMERCIAL RECORDINGS

Nowadays local societies, in Indonesia and elsewhere, engage not only with audio recording media, but also with other modern electronic media technologies. The Internet has been used by the diasporas of ethnic communities all over the world to express their identity in the contemporary virtual age (Landzelius 2006; Longboan 2011). Unlike print media, these modern media practices have significantly altered traditional cultural forms and performance and have encouraged the increasing commodification of local cultures in Indonesia. The contemporary globalized world is marked by increasing interconnection and intersection among diverse modern electronic media, a phenomenon often referred to as media convergence. And the Minangkabau, the first ethnic group of the outer islands to adopt European modernity (see Graves 1981), are not free of this phenomenon.

This chapter looks in historical perspective at the reception and dissemination of West Sumatran recording industry products in other media. It describes the roles played by radio, mobile phone, and various Internet-based social media in extending the mediation of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs. I will discuss how this phenomenon affects the West Sumatran recording industry and consumers, considering that interconnection between various media in our global world is becoming stronger and more complex, especially as regards the circulation and distribution of one medium on other media. I argue that remediation of Minangkabau cultural products on radio and new social media, which has been accelerating down to the present day, has brought new ways for Minangkabau people to construe their local culture. I conjecture that the vast use of social media for disseminating Minangkabau cassette and VCD content, as seen in the last ten years, has changed the way producers produce, distribute, access and re-use cultural repertoires. The changes have resulted in an increase in producers' and consumers' autonomy, increased participation, and increased diversity. Theoretically, the ultimate consequence of this process is the emergence of new perceptions among local communities in understanding their own culture and identities.

To make this clearer, I will look at the differences between conventional media like radio and new social media like blogs, YouTube, and Facebook, in order to understand how the distribution of the products of the West Sumatran recording industry now is very different from one or two decades ago. The changes are not only because of the invention of new social media, but are also due to the significant political changes in Indonesia following the fall of Soeharto's New Order regime in 1998, which led to a shift in cultural policy for Indonesia's regions.

This chapter aims to comprehend the history of remediation of West Sumatran recording industry products, the intersection of different media with the West Sumatran recording

industry, and the changes in West Sumatra's mediascape that, to some extent, represent changes in regional cultural life throughout Indonesia. Through the diachronic description of the use of modern media for representing Minangkabau culture, this chapter gives a historical sketch of media involvement in Minangkabau culture and society and how deeply that culture has engaged with electronic media.

MEDIA CONVERGENCE

The discussion in this chapter looks at radical changes in media characteristics. An important term is what media experts call 'media convergence'. Media convergence refers to the interconnection of information and communications technologies, computer networks, and media content. There are many notions about media convergence. But let's first understand Bolter and Grusin's definition: they say that media convergence is *remediation* – 'the representation of one medium in another' (1999:45). This happens as a direct consequence of the digitization of media content thanks to innovations in mobile phone technology and the popularization of Internet. Media convergence involves five major elements: technological, industrial, social, textual, and political.

This section is not aimed at describing the technical process of media convergence. Rather, it looks at the changes this technological transformation has brought about and their cultural significance. In other words, what is the position of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs in our contemporary 'convergence culture' (to borrow the term of Henry Jenkins 2008)? The interconnections among today's media have enabled entirely new forms of content to emerge. Media convergence has decreased the role of long-established media like television and radio, and increasingly uncouples content from a particular medium, which in turn presents major challenges for public policy and regulations. 'Convergent media technologies have exacerbated that complexity, and debates over the contested roles of policy, social norms, markets and technological architecture are a key part of current regulatory tensions' (Meikle and Young 2012:195).

As we can see in our contemporary world nowadays, social media have enabled individuals to engage in communication not only one-to-one, but also one-to-many and many-to-many, which has altered the ways people live and think. The growth of social media platforms has been phenomenal. As an illustration, in 2012 it is estimated that over 72 hours of video a minute were uploaded to YouTube, including images dealing with local repertoires from many different countries. One can only imagine how significant the impact is of such huge cultural (re)mediation activities.

Social media like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have allowed individuals to participate as producers as well as consumers. They have eroded the monopolistic, one-way, top-down characteristics and asymmetrical relationship between producer and audience in conventional media like radio. Howard Rheingold (2002) notes that social media have three core characteristics: 1) they make it possible for everyone in the network to be simultaneously acting as producer, distributor, and consumer of content; 2) their power comes from

connections between users; 3) they allow users to coordinate activities between themselves on a scale and at a speed that were not previously possible.

So, the important shift associated with media convergence, as applied to the new social media, is the rise of user-created content, with users changing from audience to participants. On the other hand, the rapid horizontal communications thanks to the invention of these new social media technologies has the potential to ‘destroy the privacy and basic liberties’ of human beings – to quote the whistleblower Edward Snowden, referring to world superpower states using the data from these huge communications networks to spy on their own citizens and citizens of other countries.

This chapter deals with more than the remediation of Minangkabau commercial cassette and VCD content on new social media. It also traces remediation in ‘older’ media, especially radio. The remediation of West Sumatran recording industry products occurred long before the invention of Internet technology in the 1990s. My description in the following sections moves chronologically from such ‘older’ media to the new social media.

RADIO

Radio is the media technology first used to remediate commercial recordings of Minangkabau repertoires. This occurred even before the gramophone era. Radio, as in other parts of the world (Bessire and Fisher 2013:364), remains central to everyday lives of many people in Indonesia. As described in Chapter 2, this media appeared in Indonesia in the early 1920s. In the 1930s some radio stations in Java broadcast music programs containing Minangkabau music. As noted in Chapter 5, the remediation of recordings of Indonesian (local) repertoires on radio before the 1950s shows that the radio stations that operated in those days took their music programs partly from commercial gramophone discs (Yampolsky 2013a; Yampolsky 2014). As Susumu (2006) mentions, in the 1930s and 1940s (see Chapter 2), the music genres broadcast on the colonial government’s NIROM stations were quite diverse, and most of that music had also appeared on commercial gramophone discs, making it likely that the songs broadcast by these stations were taken from gramophone discs. During the Japanese occupation (1942–1945), Minangkabau songs were broadcast by radio stations in some major Javanese cities, as can be determined by the lists of programs of radio stations (Program Siaran Radio Indonesia) published in the vernacular press at that time (see Chapter 5).

In the homeland, West Sumatra, it is difficult to ascertain exactly when Minangkabau commercial recordings were first remediated on radio; I could find no information on this. What can be noted here is that Padang was one of the first cities in Sumatra where a radio branch station was set up by NIROM, which was owned by the colonial government. Founded in 1933, but officially established in 1934 (see Chapter 2), NIROM had branch stations all over the Dutch East Indies, and one of them was situated in Padang (Kementerian Penerangan 1953:226). In 1942 NIROM was closed following the Dutch surrender to the Japanese in World War II. The new invaders set up a new radio broadcasting company named Hôshô Kyoku, with branch stations in eight Javanese cities and other stations in the outer islands.

In Sumatra, Hôso Kyoku branch stations were established in Medan, Kutaraja (now Banda Aceh), Palembang, and in the West Sumatran towns of Padang and Bukittinggi (Kementerian Penerangan 1953:227). The programs were broadcast in two languages: Japanese and Indonesian (Djawatan Penerangan Propinsi Sumatera Tengah [1953]:850). The Padang and Bukittinggi radio stations continued to exist after the Japanese left Indonesia in 1945. The name 'Radio Republik Indonesia' (RRI), which also applied to its branches all over Indonesia, including in Padang and Bukittinggi, was used from 11 September 1945, though it was officially inaugurated only on 10 November 1950, according to a letter of agreement by the Department of Information of the Republic of Indonesia no. 20144, 1 October 1950 (Djawatan Penerangan Propinsi Sumatera Tengah [1953]:859).

Programming of government-owned broadcasters like RRI, as in other countries, tends to be adjusted according to national, regional, and international political changes. During the war of independence, the programming of RRI Padang and Bukittinggi, like other RRI branches, was dominated by political speeches of national leaders, slogans of independence, and patriotic songs, in order to foster the spirit of struggle of the people (*rakyat*). In the years after independence, RRI Padang was on the air from 5.55 a.m. till 11 p.m., with two breaks at 8.00-12.00 a.m. and 2.00-4.00 p.m. Music and local arts, which had been disregarded previously, began to be broadcast, besides political announcements from central and regional governments, national and regional news, and news from abroad.³³⁰ Among the local programs broadcast at that time were the hybrid Minangkabau music *gamad* performed by the group Tikam Tua ('Old Thrust') led by Djaafar, and the Chinese-descent Orkes 'Gambang' Tionghowa headed by Lie Leng Goan.³³¹ I could not ascertain whether they were broadcast based on disc recordings or from live performances, since there is no detailed information available. However, commercial discs containing regional songs were available in the markets of West Sumatran towns at that time, and were probably what radio stations used for their musical programs. The relayed music programs from RRI's central station in Jakarta included Balinese and Moluccan songs. There were also foreign music broadcasts, such as 'Slow-Fox' and 'Orkes Ferey Faith', while Hawaiian influence was manifested in a program called *Irama Lautan Teduh* ('Pacific Ocean Rhythm'). In the mid-1950s, RRI Padang also produced some small scale recordings on discs, containing some 45 Minangkabau and Mentawai songs. The studio had some 2000 discs which contained local, Western, and Middle East songs (Thaib and Dasiba 1956:295).

Compared with the pre-independence era, foreign music broadcasts seem to have decreased markedly. The administration of the newborn Republic seems to have reduced foreign influence in the cultural field, a cultural policy that was most clearly visible during the last decade of President Soekarno's administration. During the PPRI³³² revolt (1958-

330 'Diantara programma jang urgent jang harus dipenuhi ketika itu ialah menjiarkan pengumuman pemerintah, baik pusat maupun daerah, berita-berita luar dan dalam negeri dan berita-berita daerah jang diselang-selingi musik dan kesenian-kesenian daerah jang selama ini kurang diperhatikan dalam penjiaran dan tidak mendapat tempat dalam programma.' (Djawatan Penerangan Propinsi Sumatera Tengah [1953]:861)

331 See 'Atjara Siaran RRI Padang, Rebo 7 Maart 1951', *Haluan*, 7 March 1951.

332 For more on the PPRI revolt, see Kahin 1999 and Zed and Chaniago 2001.



Figure 8.1: Radio Republik Indonesia Padang branch station, at Jalan Proklamasi No. 38A-B, Padang (photograph by Suryadi, 2005)

1961) which hit West Sumatra severely, national soldiers (*tentara pusat*) sent by Soekarno's regime prohibited Minangkabau people from listening to the radio because the radio station operated by PRRI rebels from the Bukit Barisan jungle often broadcast propaganda in the Minangkabau language to seek support from the Minangkabau people in continuing their war against Soekarno's regime.

Like its predecessor, Soeharto's New Order (1965–1998) tightly controlled RRI and private radio stations operating in West Sumatra, as well as in other regions across the country. RRI Padang, RRI Bukittinggi and the private stations were allowed to broadcast Minangkabau music and verbal arts as long as they did not endanger law and order. In the 1980s and 1990s the music for such programs was taken from Minangkabau commercial cassettes produced by West Sumatran recording companies. But the political reform (Reformasi) that began in Indonesia in 1998 allowed radio stations to serve their central function as a medium for dialogue among citizens as well as between citizens and the state (Jurriëns 2009). Such a circumstance was impossible during Soekarno's Old Order and Soeharto's New Order. With the introduction of the national government's policy of decentralization as one result of the Reformasi, RRI Padang, like other RRI branch stations, began to devote much more of its airtime to local programs. From its office in Jalan Proklamasi No. 38A-B, Padang (Fig. 8.1), RRI Padang broadcasts national programs relayed from the RRI central station in Jakarta, as well as regional programs. For instance, RRI Padang daily broadcasts Minangkabau pop music and major Minangkabau verbal arts genres like *bagurau*, *dendang Pauah*, *rebab Pesisir*

Selatan, and rebab Pariaman. The musical content of the programs is taken from Minangkabau commercial cassettes. RRI Bukittinggi also broadcasts programs containing such local repertoires, but the majority of its news and information programs are still relayed from RRI Jakarta (see Laporan 2002).

The business of private radio stations in Indonesia is always interesting. The number of private radio stations increases every year. They can be found even in many regency (*kabupaten*) capitals across the country. According to the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia, or KPI) West Sumatra office, there were 26 private radio stations operating in the province in 2005.³³³ Several stations were established in West Sumatra after the Reformasi. Among these new stations are Radio Gumarang (in the Tanah Datar regency), Radio Pariaman FM and Damai FM (in the Padang Pariaman regency), Radio Payakumbuh FM, Planet FM, and Aprilia AM (in the 50 Kota regency), and seven stations in the Solok regency (Radio Gapilar Rasosania, Radio Vanesa, Radio Citra, Radio Semarak FM, Radio Rosalinda, Radio Solok nan Indah, and Radio SMA Alahan Panjang), Radio Elsi FM (in Bukittinggi), and four stations in Padang (Classy FM, Pesona Padang, Favorit FM, and Sushi 99.1 FM).

The significant development of private radio stations in Indonesia has brought stiff competition in its wake, nationally as well as provincially, especially in terms of advertising. Each station tries to distinguish itself from other stations in terms of programming. In its musical programming, a station often specializes in a particular genre of music, such as classical music, *dangdut*, Western rock or regional music (Sen and Hill 2000:91). This phenomenon can also be seen in West Sumatra. The private radio stations there present a variety of programs but always allocate space for programs with local content like Minangkabau music and verbal arts. The Minangkabau songs and verbal arts they broadcast are taken from commercial cassettes or VCDs produced by West Sumatran recording companies. There are even stations that specialize in programs with local content, as exemplified by Radio Harau Megantara Angkasa (100.6 FM), situated in Harau, Payakumbuh. Likewise, Sushi 99.1 FM, situated in Padang. Having the motto 'Radio orang Padang' ('Radio for the Padang people'), Shusi offers a special call-in program 'Pantun Balega', an interactive presentation of *pantun* verses in the Minangkabau language. Its advertisement in a local daily, using a mixture of English and Indonesian, reads in translation:

Listen to the Rhythm of the new inspiration in Sushi 99.1 FM. Enjoy our special programs from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m. every day. Cik Indun and Mak Tilul always faithfully accompany Sushi's audiences every Monday to Thursday from 7 to 9 p.m. on the 'Pantun Balega' program. Sushi's audience can participate by calling telephone number 70555885 and via SMS [Short Message Service] on mobile number 08126600991. There are attractive prizes every day from sponsors for the verse senders. So, make sure that Sushi's audience do not pass up this 'Pantun Balega' special program.³³⁴

333 See '14 Radio Tak Lolos Verifikasi; Tak Penuhi Syarat, Dilarang Beroperasi', *Padang Ekspres*, 1 October 2005.

334 Listen to the Rhythm of the new inspiration in Sushi 99.1 FM. Enjoy our special programs from 5 am to 1 am every day. Cik Indun dan Mak Tilul selalu setia menemani Sushi Mitra setiap hari Senin sampai Kamis jam 19.00 sampai jam 21.00 di Pantun Balega. Sushi mitra bisa ikut berbalas pantun di no telepon 7055885 dan di

Other Sushi programs broadcast Minangkabau verbal arts genres such as *balanse*, *rabab Pesisir Selatan*, and *Salawat dulang*. Some other stations present special programs of Minangkabau traditional cultural genres like *saluang*, *rabab Pariaman*, and *rabab Pesisir Selatan*. Most stations offer regional song programs, while advertisements using the Minangkabau language have increased. Such programs are usually in an interactive format: by phone or SMS the audience call the presenter asking for a song to be aired which they want to dedicate to someone (usually friends or family).

The diversity of programs and the increased attention given to regional content by many radio stations all over Indonesia, including in West Sumatra, is clearly connected with the political changes in post-New Order Indonesia. The Reformasi era has had a significant impact on the radio business in Indonesia, and it has affected the content and format of programs. Many regional private stations, including in West Sumatra, have allocated more space in their programs for local repertoires. In this regard, the West Sumatran recording industry has directly or indirectly benefited because more of their products, like *pop Minang* songs or recordings of verbal arts, are being broadcast by these radio stations.

As the number of private radio stations has increased, tension among them has also escalated. In June 2003 there were some 740 radio stations registered with PRSSNI,³³⁵ the only private radio broadcasters association in Indonesia, formed and spied upon by the authoritarian New Order regime. Other sources list some 978 stations in Indonesia, including RRI's station branches.³³⁶ However, in reality the number of stations is higher than these data indicate. Since the start of the Reformasi era, a great number of new stations have an 'illegal' status, meaning that they are not registered with the government branch offices of the Ministry of Information (Departemen Penerangan) or with a private radio association such as PRSSNI.

Minangkabau migrants have also used radio technology to express their ethnic sentiments in *rantau*. Such radio stations operated by these Minangkabau migrants are called *radio urang awak* ('our people's radio'). Their broadcasts are specifically intended for Minangkabau audiences (Lindsay 1997). *Urang awak* radio stations can be found in several major cities across Indonesia where many Minangkabau migrants live. They have played a key role in forming and spreading an image of Minangkabau ethnicity to a national and inter-ethnic audience. Most of them are situated in Jakarta and outskirts (Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, and Bekasi/Jabodetabek) (Table 8.1). *Urang awak* radio stations mostly produce Minangkabau-language programs, and they use Minangkabau pop music and verbal arts from commercial recordings produced by West Sumatran recording companies.

SMS 08126600991. Ada hadiah menarik setiap harinya untuk pemantun dari sponsor. Jadi, pastiin Sushi mitra tidak melewatkan program special Pantun Balega ini. (*Padang Ekspres*, 2 August 2008)

335 See: <http://www.prssni.or.id/anggota/htm> (accessed 4-6-2003). PRSSNI is Persatuan Radio Siaran Swasta Nasional Indonesia ('Association of Indonesian National Private Radio Broadcasting'), which was established on 17 December 1974 in Jakarta.

336 See: <http://www.idxc.org>, portal: 'Radio Directory' (accessed 9-6-2003).

Table 8.1

Urang awak radio stations in Jakarta, Bekasi, Tangerang and Bogor which broadcast Minangkabau programs

No	Name of station	Broadcasting schedule		Frequency	Presenter	Address
		Day	Time			
1.	Minang Maimbau RRI Pro 4	4 x seminggu; Rabu malam	20.00–22.00	FM 92.80; MW 1332; SW 9686	Yus Parmato Intan; Hj.Mislin Asmi Arti	Medan Mardeka Barat Jakarta; Tlp. 021.3440798; 021.3483435
2.	RRI Bogor	Rabu malam	20.00–22.00	93.7 FM	Bandaro Labiah	Jl. Pangrango No. 34, Bogor
3.	Gurindam Minang 'Radio Samhan'	Selasa malam; Kamis malam	21.00–01.00; 18.00–22.00	AM 630	Chen St. Caniago; Puti Lenggok Geni	Deren Sawit Jakarta Timur
4.	Radio Multazam	Minggu malam	20.00–23.00	AM 1017	Yus Panduko Nan Putiah; Nur ABG	Tanjung Priuk
5.	RPM Radio Pusako Minang	Acara Minang; setiap hari	04.30–24.00	AM 972	St. Muncak; Yanto Jambak; Sidi Maco	Tangerang
6.	Radio Palanta Minang	Acara Minang; setiap hari	04.00–22.00	AM 531	Ida Zoraida; Alam Batuah; Zairul Bandaro	Tangerang
7.	Radio S.B.Y	Rabu Siang	13.00–16.00	AM 666	Angku Ramdhan Ahmad	Matraman Jakarta
8.	Radio P2SC			AM 936	Zainal Almai	Kemayoran
9.	Radio Pelangi Nusantara	Minggu malam; Jumat sore	21.00–24.00; 13.00–16.00	AM 888	Asri Sikumbang; Ajo Manih (Boy)	Taman Mini Indonesia
10	Radio Elangga	Senen Malam	19.00–21.00	FM 101	Bagindo Markurai; Deni Madaliko	Bekasi

(Source: Azmi Dt. Bagindo, General Secretary of Lembaga Adat dan Kebudayaan Minangkabau, 'Minangkabau Custom and Culture Institution', Jakarta branch)

Ongoing innovation in computer technology has also had an impact on radio broadcasting. Nowadays, radio stations in West Sumatra, as in other regions, have equipped their studios with a computer and Internet network that enable programmers to collect songs in MP3 format and use them for their music broadcasts. The same goes for other genres like Minangkabau verbal arts. So, there has been double remediation of Minangkabau cassette and VCD content here: from cassettes and VCDs to MP3 format, and from MP3 to radio broadcast. This is different from the situation in the 1990s and earlier, when much of the music broadcast by radio stations was taken directly from cassettes, because at that time MP3 technology, which began in 1997, was not widely known in Indonesia. It has now become common in interactive programs that communications between the presenter in the studio and listeners use the short message system (SMS) facility via mobile phone, Facebook or Twitter. So, it must be said that contemporary radio broadcasting studios are places where media convergence and interconnection between different media can be seen.

Nowadays, political reform has given much freedom to radio stations to determine their own programming without fear of being censored by the government. The radio as a medium for ordinary people, such as community radio (*radio komunitas*), which brings empowerment to local culture, has developed significantly (see Birowo 2011). In the Reformasi era, radio programs have become more diverse than before: foreign programs are relayed without

restriction³³⁷ and domestic programs contain more local elements. The recording industry has benefited from this phenomenon.

FROM BROADCAST RADIO TO INTERNET RADIO

These days, radio service is an activity in which media convergence is high. This can be seen in the Internet radio technology which has been used in Indonesia since about 2000. Internet radio is audio service transmitted via the Internet using streaming media or the streaming radio on internet (Black 2001:403). The invention of Internet radio marked a new way in radio communications, and led to a change from broadcasting to social media. Pioneered by Carl Malamud in 1993, Internet radio use is now phenomenal. In Indonesia the technology is called 'radio streaming' or 'radio online'. By renting a server, those who have Internet access can produce their own online radio. Four types of online radio services are found in Indonesia: 1) those operated by private conventional radio stations; 2) those operated by individuals as a hobby in cyber technology; 3) those operated by local communities; 4) those operated by diasporas of particular ethnic groups. Such online radio services are usually accessible from anywhere in the world. Online radio in Indonesia, like traditional radio service, offers news, sports, talk shows, religious preaching, and various genres of music, and presents listeners with a continuous stream of audio that cannot be paused or replayed, much like traditional broadcasting media. From their computer, presenters can find out the number of listeners who are listening online worldwide.

Minangkabau ethnic communities, in the homeland and in *rantau*, have also started using this technology. Since 2005 several radio stations in West Sumatra have added online radio service in addition to traditional radio service (type 1). By adding online service to their broadcast programs, stations can expand their audience outside their broadcast coverage areas. The technique is by connecting the conventional broadcast with a microphone for radio streaming; so the conventional broadcast can be listened to by using a radio set, while the streamed version can be listened to worldwide by using a computer, laptop, or smart phone (BlackBerry, Android, etc.). Using this technique, when the conventional broadcast ends, its online counterpart also ends.

There are some 63 online radio services operated by Minangkabau people these days, some of them initiated in the homeland and some in *rantau*, including what is called *Radio Online Minang* ('Minangkabau Online Radio').³³⁸ This is the online radio service that emerged among Minangkabau diaspora communities worldwide. The emergence of *Radio Online Minang* was pioneered by Minangkabau migrants through the organization *Cimbuak* (literally, a water dipper for cleaning feet), which established *Radio Online Cimbuak* in Jakarta in 2004 (see <http://www.radiocimbuak.16mb.com/>; Fig. 8.2). It is part of *cimbuak.net*, a website on Minangkabau

337 The New Order government prohibited radio stations from relaying foreign broadcasts from 1971, although the implementation of this rule did not prevent underground stations from doing so (Sen and Hill 2000:94-5). In the current Reformasi era there is no more prohibition.

338 For more on radio streaming in Indonesia, see <http://www.radiostreamingindonesia.com/> (accessed 12-5-2013).

culture which provides articles and a chat facility (which they call *palanta*, literally a long bank in a coffee shop), but it does not have a mailing list. Initially, *cimbuak.net* was established by migrants from Sungai Puar, a *nagari* (village) in Agam regency, West Sumatra, who were living in Jakarta. The website was intended as a medium of communication for people originating from Sungai Puar.

In the course of time *cimbuak.net* has offered articles which deal not only with the *nagari* Sungai Puar, but also with other parts of Minangkabau. The membership of *cimbuak.net* has also been expanded: not only people from Sungai Puar, but those from other villages in Minangkabau can now join. *Cimbuak.net* also has a charity that gives scholarships to Minangkabau children. Listeners of Radio Online Cimbuak are not limited to those who come from the same *nagari*; Minangkabau migrants from other *nagari* and those who are living in the homeland also listen to it. It seems to have inspired Minangkabau migrant communities from other *nagari* to set up similar radio services. These days several other organizations of Minangkabau migrants have their own online radio service, for example Radio Minang Saiyo, Radio Online Sulita, Radio Ranah Minang, Radio PKDP, and Radio Urang Minang Sedunia.

Belonging to type 4 of the aforementioned categorization, Radio Online Minang services aim to form a good relationship between Minangkabau migrants in *rantau* and those living in



Figure 8.2: Virtual banners of Radio Online Minang Cimbuak, the pioneer of Minangkabau online radio that emerged among Minangkabau migrant communities in *rantau* (https://www.facebook.com/groups/Radio.Online.Minang.Cimbuak/559147790814373/?comment_id=559158440813308¬if_t=group_comment_reply; accessed 10-6-2013)

the homeland. They do not seek profit. Hence there are no advertisements in their programs. The DJs (disk jockeys) – the term used by the management to refer to presenters – work voluntarily and most of them are amateurs. They participate as DJs motivated only by the spirit of ethnicity among these Minangkabau migrants. Their function is just to greet listeners and play the songs they request, but some of them have created programs other than songs, such as presenting *pantun* verse and promoting migrants who are considered successful in their career or have rendered services for their Minangkabau homeland. The DJ's function is shared among listeners living a great distance from each other. So, online radio shares an important characteristic of social media, where the participant can alternate status as consumer/listener and producer. The management organizes the performing schedule of the DJs. Radio Online Cimbuak, for example, has DJs in Jakarta, Bontang, Palembang, Jambi, and Pekanbaru, while its overseas DJs dwell in Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Egypt, the United States, and Japan.

Radio Online Minang services are filled with a Minangkabau traditional cultural atmosphere, in part due to the many Minangkabau jingles. Likewise, the songs and music they present are dominated by traditional Minangkabau sounds. The most prominent is the sound of two Minangkabau traditional musical instruments, *saluang* and *talempong*. The bulk of the programs are filled with Minangkabau pop songs. Other program content includes Minangkabau verbal arts and Islamic religious preaching. All content of the programs is presented in MP3 format, and is taken from Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs. Radio Online Minang services strongly encourage the emotional bond between listeners (mostly Minangkabau migrants in *rantau*) and their homeland. This can be seen, for example, in one of Radio Online Cimbuak's jingles which says '*Radio Online Cimbuak, batagak di ranah virtual, manyapo sanak di rantau, paubek hati taragak*' ('Radio Online Cimbuak, stands for virtual world, greets relatives in *rantau*, and cures homesickness') and '*Radio Online Cimbuak dot net, kampuang nan jauh di mato, samakin dakek di jari*' ('Radio Online Cimbuak dot net, homeland so far away, but close to one's fingers'³³⁹).

Erwin Moechtar (54 years old), one of the founders of Radio Online Cimbuak living in Bogor, mentions that the virtual relationships among listeners are intimate and warm. They feel like a big family, although most of them meet only in the virtual world. Online participants listen to the songs (audio) they request while keeping in touch with each other via Facebook, a chatting facility, and texting (SMSs) using a mobile phone. Sometimes they gather in Jakarta or other places to meet each other in person (*kopi darat*). Erwin mentions that there are some 80 to 100 listeners online with Radio Online Cimbuak every day, indicating that it is fairly popular among Minangkabau migrants worldwide. Because the songs presented are mostly pop Minang, and the language used by the DJs and among the listeners in chatting and on Facebook is very colloquial Minangkabau language, so the longing for the homeland among participants can be satisfied. Radio Online Cimbuak has been credited with bringing together three Minangkabau couples, Erwin told me. They met in the virtual world facilitated by this radio service, and then

339 This jingle means that thanks to sophisticated media technologies these days, Minangkabau migrants can easily keep in touch with their families and relatives in the homeland just by pressing buttons on their computer or mobile phone.

decided to get married. No royalties are claimed by the singers whose songs are presented on Radio Online Cimbuk, because this online radio service is not profit oriented (pers. comm., 12-5-2013). Nevertheless, the singers feel that the fans' spontaneous actions to spread their songs through online radio or YouTube gives them a non-material advantage, by promoting their singing. So, we can see the complex media intersection and interconnection in online radio communication activities among Minangkabau migrants where the recording industry (through its products) has become one of the supporting elements.

I could not verify how far this phenomenon is unique for Minangkabau, since I did not find any reference to cases of other ethnic groups; there have been some studies of internet use like mailing lists (see Landzelius 2006; Hepp 2009; Longboan 2011), but the use of online radio technology to create translocal communities among an ethnic diaspora seems to still be overlooked in cultural studies of modern media. Minangkabau, with its *merantau* tradition, is an ethnic group that has used online radio (and now also other kinds of social media) to maintain cultural connections in virtual space, blending indigenous values and cosmopolitan perspectives, which in turn motivate listeners to make direct physical contact (*kopi darat*) with each other.

MOBILE PHONE

Like other countries in the world, Indonesian society has already engaged with the modern communications medium of the mobile phone (better known in Indonesia as hand phone, or *HaPe*). First introduced in Indonesia in 1998, the mobile phone has reached all levels of Indonesian society. Ranking as the sixth country in the world in mobile phone use, after China, India, the United States, Russia, and Brazil, Indonesia has some of the world's most voracious consumers of mobile phones. With a population of over 250 million, Indonesia is a potential market for various brands of mobile phone, including the newer brand of BlackBerry³⁴⁰ which is very popular in the country in recent years.

The invasion of the mobile phone among the Indonesian people has unavoidably had socio-cultural impacts. As Indonesia is known as the nation with the largest Muslim population in the world, use of the mobile phone has been domesticated in Muslim religious circles, and many people use Muslim ringtones (see Barendregt 2009). The Minangkabau in West Sumatra are no exception: mobile phones have reached even the remote areas in the province, affecting people in various ways. This can be illustrated by a weekly satirical column entitled 'HParangai' published by a local newspaper in Padang, which satirically records behavioural and personality changes brought about by the mobile phone.³⁴¹ For instance,

340 Invented by the Canadian company Research in Motion (RIM) in 1997, BlackBerry is a cellular phone technology that has the ability to do email, telephone, short message service (SMS), surf the Internet, and various other wireless capabilities. It was first introduced in Indonesia in mid-December 2004 by the operator Indosat cooperating with StarHub, the successor of RIM (see <http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/BlackBerry> ; accessed 14-8-2011).

341 See Yusrizal KW and Cornelis's column 'HParangai' in Sunday editions of *Padang Ekspres* (first edition: July 2010). 'HPrangai' is written in the Minangkabau language. 'HParangai' is a play on words in the Indonesian language: 'Perubahan-perubahan perangai orang karena HP' ('Changes in people's behaviour caused by the

one tends to chat simply and briefly with family members but feels comfortable talking much longer with other persons on the mobile phone about things that are unnecessary.³⁴²

The domestication of the mobile phone in Indonesia is not just in the religious domain (predominantly Islam), as discussed by Barendregt (2009), but has also entered the local cultural sphere. In a Minangkabau cultural context, two aspects can be identified: 1) ringtone and ringback tone (RBT)³⁴³; 2) texting, or short message service (SMS). But only RBTs using favourite songs taken from Minangkabau pop albums produced by West Sumatran recording companies are relevant to be discussed further here. Other RBTs available are the sounds of Minangkabau musical instruments like *talempong* and *saluang*, *bansi*, and *pupuk sarunai*.

In 2008 the regional government of West Sumatra signed a memorandum of understanding with the mobile phone operator Telkomsel, which operates *Hallo*, *Simpati* and *AS* SIM cards, to use three favourite Minangkabau pop songs as ringtones and ringback tones. The songs are 'Minangkabau', 'Malereng Tabiang' ('Cliff slope'), and 'Malam Bainai' ('Merry first evening'). Part of the proceeds from their sale will be donated to the development of the Grand Minangkabau Mosque (Mesjid Raya Minangkabau) in Padang.³⁴⁴ Telkomsel did the same thing in 2009 in order to raise money to help survivors of the earthquake which rocked West Sumatra and caused serious damage. Surfing in Google, we can find some favourite Minangkabau pop songs that can be used as the ringtone of a hand phone. Today one can download a Minangkabau song from Internet for one's mobile phone's ringtone by using Bluetooth technology. An Internet blog with the address <http://budy-pasadena.blogspot.com/> (accessed 26-7-2011) informs us about dozens of Minangkabau pop songs that are used as ringtones and RBTs by several mobile phone providers in Indonesia and Malaysia. Most of them are taken from Elly Kasim's albums, which contain standard *pop Minang* songs of the best quality. Based on observations in the field, I have the impression that ringtones and RBTs of Minangkabau music are favoured not only among Minangkabau people living in the homeland but also among those settled overseas (*rantau*). A Minangkabau migrant in Kuala Lumpur I interviewed said that he used a Minangkabau song for his mobile phone ringtone because its sound satisfies his longing for his homeland in West Sumatra.

From the description above, it can be seen that the mobile phone medium has been utilized as a means for representing the products of the West Sumatran recording industry in particular and Minangkabau local culture in general. New technology has made it possible to remediate some of the musical and lyrical elements of Minangkabau commercial recordings

hand phone').

342 'HParangai' column: 'Ado Urang Nan Suko Maota Lamo-lamo di Hape Tantang Hal-hal Nan Indak Paralu', *Padang Ekspres*, 21 August 2011.

343 A ringback tone (RBT), which in the Indonesian language is called *nada sambung* ('dial tone'), 'is an audible indication that is heard on the telephone line by the caller while the [mobile] phone they are calling is being rung. It is normally a repeated tone, designed to assure the calling party that the called party's line is ringing, although the ringback tone may be out of sync with the ringing signal' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ringback_tone; accessed 14-6-2011).

344 See: <http://padanginfo.wordpress.com/2008/05/22/telkomsel-bantu-bangun-masjid-raya-minangkabau/> (accessed 25-7-2011).

for ringtones and RBTs of mobile phones, which suggests that in the Indonesian local context, mobile modernity has provided space for rejuvenating ethnic culture.

BLOGS

Blogging is a social media service which exists worldwide and, as in other parts of the world, is very popular in Indonesia. Blogging is still popular now, though its popularity has suffered from competition from newer social media like Facebook and Twitter. Blogging emerged in the late 1990s, and until 2009 most blogs were the work of a single individual, although more recently multi-author blogs have developed significantly. In Indonesia bloggers first appeared in 2001, but blogging activity only became popular from 2004 (Lim 2012:131). In 2011 Indonesia had around 5 million bloggers (Lim 2013:639). Functioning mostly as personal online diaries, blogs combine text, images, and links to other blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual, but there are blogs that focus on art (art blogs), photographs (photoblogs), video (vlogs), music (MP3 blogs), and audio (podcasts). Having an interactive format, blogs allow visitors to leave comments and even messages; this characteristic distinguishes them from static websites (Mutum and Qing 2010). The interactive format is an important contribution to the popularity of blogs.

My searching on the Internet turned up several blogs with content dealing with the West Sumatran recording industry. Three categories of blogs remediate products of the West Sumatran recording industry. First, those that provide transcriptions of Minangkabau pop song lyrics – the category of textual blogs. For example, a blog named ‘Kumpulan Lirik Lagu Minangkabau/Lagu Sumatra Barat’ (‘Compilation of Minangkabau song lyrics/West Sumatran songs’) (<http://liriklaguminang.blogspot.nl/>; accessed 7-5-2013) and a blog named ‘Lirik Lagu Minang Lamo’ (‘Standard pop Minang song lyrics’) (<http://laguminanglamo.wordpress.com/>; accessed 9-7-2013) provide transcriptions of many Minangkabau pop songs. However, I found no blog that provides transcriptions of recordings of Minangkabau verbal arts (see Chapter 6). Second, blogs that show photos of the covers of Minangkabau commercial recordings – discs, cassettes and VCDs – the category of photoblogs. Some blogs in this category also provide images of disc covers of songs other than Minangkabau songs, for example a blog named ‘Madrotter’ (<http://madrotter.blogspot.nl/search?q=Minang>; accessed 20-1-2011). Third, blogs that provide the audio content of Minangkabau commercial recordings in MP3 format – the category of MP3 blogs. Such blogs provide the audio track of Minangkabau commercial recordings of *pop Minang*, Minangkabau children’s pop, and (rarely) Minangkabau verbal arts. The blogs in this category tend to specialize in pop songs (including Minangkabau children’s music). For example, ‘Lagu Minang Free Download’ (‘Minangkabau songs which are free to download’) (<http://minanglagu.blogspot.nl/>; accessed 10-5-2013; Fig. 8.3) contains *pop Minang* songs and Minangkabau children’s pop songs in MP3 format which can be downloaded. Blogs offering Minangkabau verbal arts are rarely found. I think this is because recordings of verbal arts are usually too long, so that they are not suitable to be uploaded to blogs with limited space. Besides the aforementioned categories of blogs, there are also blogs that provide information (text) about Minangkabau music and verbal arts.

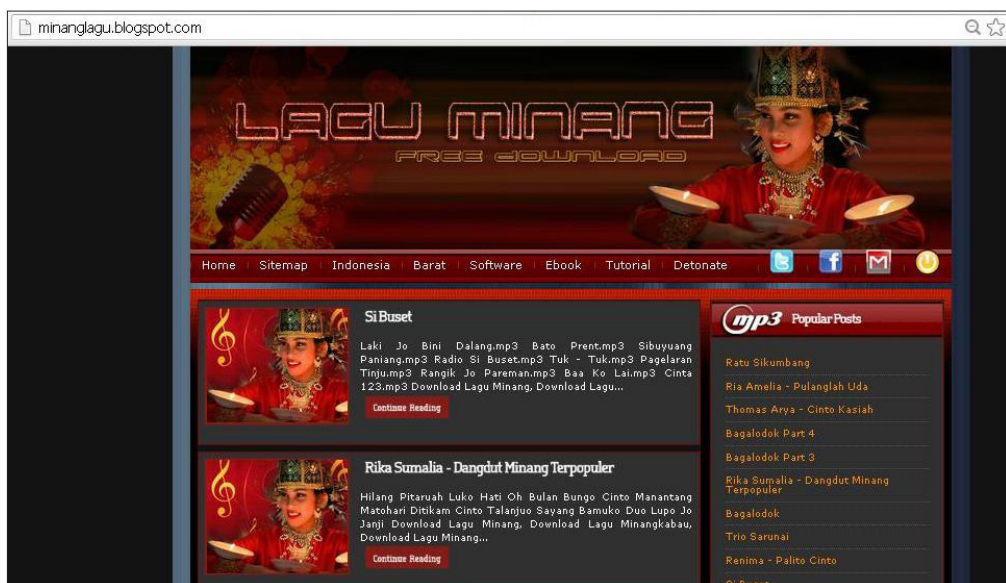


Figure 8.3: Personal blog offering Minangkabau pop songs in MP3 format

Blogs often provide information about their owners (bloggers). Many Indonesian blogs have a part containing personal data, usually called ‘tentang saya’ (‘about me’). Although ethnic background is not usually specified, I was able to identify owners of blogs of Minangkabau ethnicity if the place they were born was in West Sumatra or if they had Minangkabau names. In other cases, with a place of birth outside Minangkabau, it was nevertheless clear that the blogger had emotional and cultural bonds with Minangkabau. This was the case for some bloggers who had (Malay) Malaysian names. I suspect they are Minangkabau descendants who have been living in the Malay Peninsula for generations. This is evidence of the consumption of Minangkabau commercial recordings by Malays, as discussed in the next chapter.

Unlike other social media, a blog typically represents the keen interest of its owner in a specific topic. It differs from Facebook, for example, where users deal with a whole range of matters, from cultural to political, from social issues to private affairs. Most bloggers are well-educated individuals. A blog might represent not only a hobby but also the blogger’s intellectual or scholarly concerns. In this regard, it can be said that bloggers who have blogs dealing with the products of the West Sumatran recording industry can be assumed to have a strong interest in Minangkabau culture and society. In the context of Indonesian society, such an interest tends to be motivated by genealogical and cultural ties.

YOUTUBE

These days all three categories of West Sumatran recording industry products (see Chapters 5, 6, and 7) can be found on YouTube. They are taken from Minangkabau gramophone discs, cassettes, and VCDs. MP3 technology (invented in February 2005) is utilized actively for promoting and disseminating these products of the West Sumatran recording industry on

YouTube. MP3 technology is the easiest and most popular way these days to collect songs, most of which are pirated. And if we want to understand this widespread sharing of pirated music files, ‘we also need to understand the long history of music piracy’, which takes many forms such as cassette and VCD recordings, ‘and the history of software piracy’ (Sterne 2003:338). My examination of YouTube shows that almost all *pop Minang* songs have been uploaded to this video-sharing website. The same is true of various Minangkabau verbal arts genres and media-bound genres like modern Minangkabau drama and Minangkabau children’s pop songs. But not all commercial recordings of verbal arts genres, especially very long stories, are available in their entirety on YouTube. This is understandable, because YouTube is usually used to upload quite short audio-visual recordings.

On YouTube one can find most of the early and standard songs of *pop Minang* of the 1960s (Nurseha and Elly Kasim’s generation) right up to the most recent new *pop Minang* songs of the 2000s (Lepoh and Buset’s generation) (see Fig. 8.4). Visual images for songs sung by the younger generation of singers just show pictures of the singers. An examination of what is available on YouTube shows us that many of the songs from the 1960s and 1970s have been re-sung (re-recorded) or recycled by younger singers from later generations. The transfer of songs from disc or cassette to YouTube is usually done using MP3 technology. Sometimes uploads use MP4 technology. As YouTube can be used by anyone, there are also many Minangkabau songs sung by ordinary people uploaded to the website.

My searching on YouTube also shows that products of the West Sumatran recording industry were uploaded to the website as early as 2007 and then in successive years (up to 2013). Some Minangkabau pop song albums were even uploaded in their entirety to YouTube. The number of viewers ranges from thousands to hundreds of thousands, indicating that enthusiasm for Minangkabau pop songs is quite high. This shows that YouTube has become a significant medium for disseminating the products of the West Sumatran recording industry.



Figure 8.4: A posting of *pop Minang* on YouTube

YouTube has become a virtual place where (almost) all reproduced Minangkabau sounds are accumulated, which reminds us of a principal notion of this book: that reproduced sounds from the past cannot be separated from the reproduced sounds of today. Here, they are all there together on YouTube.

It seems that Minangkabau pop music and verbal arts from commercial discs, cassettes, and VCDs are not usually uploaded to YouTube by the producers or the singers, but by other individuals. Surveying the names of the uploaders, I have the impression that they are names characteristic of Minangkabau, Javanese, and Malaysians. Some singers I interviewed mentioned that they have never uploaded their own songs to YouTube. They were surprised to learn that many songs they have sung or released have been circulating on YouTube. This means that West Sumatran recording industry products have often been uploaded to YouTube by fans living in *rantau*, including those living in neighbouring Malaysia. (For more on the distribution and reception of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs in Malaysia, see Chapter 9.) Numerous songs have been uploaded several times by different individuals.

YouTube, like other social media, has empowered audiences to be creative. And as Meikle and Young (2012:125-6) mention, ‘creative audience behaviour is social – it connects people who organize, write, manipulate, collaborate upon and share media texts – and it allows them to develop their media literacies in new and creative ways, becoming more engaged, active and critical viewers, readers and listeners’. The singer Nedi Gampo says that he is happy to hear that many of his songs are available on YouTube. He believes this has directly or indirectly promoted him and made him more popular, though he suspects it might harm the producers (by reducing their sales). YouTube, thus, provides ways of promoting and disseminating products of the West Sumatran recording industry where consumers play an active role. It can be said that the existence on YouTube of Minangkabau repertoire taken from commercial recordings reflects consumers’ interest and passion for them.

As this book deals with regional recording and ethnicity, it is important to look at not only the Minangkabau repertoire uploaded to YouTube but also the comments left by viewers. Generally speaking, such comments are mostly written in the Minangkabau language, and smaller numbers of them in Indonesian or Malaysian Malay or English. It is likely that the viewers are mostly Minangkabau (and probably living in *rantau*) or have blood and cultural relations with Minangkabau. A smaller number of viewers appear to be living in Malaysia and do not understand the Minangkabau language but are interested in the songs for their music. Most comments reflect longing for the homeland in West Sumatra.³⁴⁵ Viewers often write that listening to the songs brings their minds to the homeland, which they rarely visit. Such comments by Minangkabau migrants are often responded to by their ethnic fellows living in the homeland by saying: ‘Please visit the homeland (*kampuang*) if you miss it.’ For example, commenting on Elly Kasim’s ‘Bapisah Bukannyo Bacarai’ (‘Separate but not detached’) (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rl9MiTI7JoA>; accessed 8-5-2013) one viewer says:

345 Of course there are also other comments, such as comments expressing praise. Some comments tell of viewers’ life experiences related to the themes and morals of the songs. There are also comments discussing the quality of the song clips.

‘Listening to this song makes me miss my late father, who always played Minangkabau songs, though his children have never visited the homeland [West Sumatra]. My tears flowed.’³⁴⁶ This comment, inspired by listening to a song, suggests the viewer’s emotional bond with the homeland. It is evidence that for Minangkabau migrants in *rantau*, like the commentator and his late father, Minangkabau songs they can listen to now in *rantau*, thanks to modern technologies, are the means for satisfying their longing for their homeland and the family members left behind there. Like many other comments found on YouTube, this is empirical evidence that demonstrates a main notion of this book: that Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs, including their derived forms remediated on other media like YouTube, serve a significant function in maintaining a sense of Minangness among the Minangkabau, wherever they live.

FACEBOOK

Facebook is another social medium that has been used to disseminate products of the West Sumatran recording industry. Though Facebook is a media technology related to writing, it is important to discuss here because Facebook walls are very often used to attach links to Minangkabau recordings available on YouTube (see Fig. 8.5). By disseminating Minangkabau recordings in this way, Facebook users attract their online friends to enjoy the products of the West Sumatran recording industry. As in other countries, Facebook is very popular in Indonesia. Myrna Lim, in her research on digital media in Indonesia, notes that Facebook started being used by people in Indonesia in 2007, became popular in 2008-2009, and increased greatly in popularity during the following three or four years (pers. comm., 07-07-2013). By 2012 Indonesia had become the third largest nation for Facebook, with 43 million users (statistics by SocialBakers quoted in Lim 2013:639). According to A. Yogaswara (2010:18) Indonesia is a country which has very active Facebook users: of 94,748,820 users in 2009, 6.84% of them posted each week. Facebook, like other (social) media, has experienced domestication in Indonesia. Generally speaking, many Indonesian Facebookers are not shy about expressing their feelings related to private affairs on their Facebook walls. Gossip and religious affairs figure prominently in Indonesian Facebookers’ postings. Facebook is very popular in Indonesia, because of its capability to virtually facilitate Indonesian oral culture and communality. Facebook has helped many Indonesian people to find, for example, their old friends from primary and secondary school. When former classmates are located in this way, meetings in cyberspace are usually continued with face-to-face meetings.

But an important thing here is to look at Facebook use in relation to local culture and ethnicity in Indonesia. Facebook is used to express matters dealing with ethnicity, including among Minangkabau people. Among the materials posted on Facebook by people assumed to come from the Minangkabau ethnic group, are *pop Minang* songs (Fig. 8.5) and Minangkabau verbal arts genres. Most people seem to have copy-pasted from YouTube. So, after being remediated in YouTube, these Minangkabau recordings are remediated again in Facebook.

³⁴⁶ ‘Mandanga lagu-lagu ko rindu [awak] jo almarhum apak awak nan salalu mamuta lagu-lagu Minang, walaupun kami anak-anaknyo alun pernah pulang kampung. Badarai aia matooooo...’



Figure 8.5: Pop Minang postings on Facebook walls copy-pasted from YouTube

Other postings present the transcription of *pop Minang* song lyrics. It is almost certain that most of the responders who comment on such postings are fellow Minangkabau. The non-Minangkabau responders can be identified from their comments. They state, for example, that they do not understand the song lyrics, and ask the person who posted the song to translate the lyrics into Indonesian.

Indonesian Facebookers are eager to form Facebook groups or Facebook forums for their own ethnic group in which they discuss, even harshly debate, various topics. Minangkabau people also have such Facebook forums, with participants living in *rantau* as well as in the homeland. There are sometimes bitter debates. Generally speaking, those who confront each other in such virtual debates are the defenders of traditions and *adat* versus conservative Islamists (see Suryadi 2012; Hendra 2013). Some Facebook forums were extended from earlier old-fashioned mailing lists. The main example is *Palanta RantauNet*.³⁴⁷ Established in 1993 by Indonesian students from Minangkabau who were studying in Canada and the United States, *RantauNet* was claimed by its founders to be the first Minangkabau mailing list. During the first years of its existence, the members of the *RantauNet* mailing list were mostly living abroad, since the Internet was still rarely used in Indonesia at that time. (The first commercial Internet was established in Indonesia in the mid-1990s; see Hill and Sen 1997:72-3.) Since the early years of its existence, the members of the *RantauNet* mailing list have

347 At <https://www.facebook.com/groups/palanta.rantaunet/> (accessed 12-10-2010).

predominantly been Minangkabau *perantau* white-collar workers – diplomats, government employees, lecturers, and businessmen. The mailing list has administrators. The current administrators live in Jakarta (previously in Washington). Called *urang dapua* (literally, people in the kitchen), the administrators function to guide the content of the mailing list and the behaviour of subscribers, as the mailing list has regulations (called *tata-tertib RantauNet*) one of which states that issues discussed on the mailing list should be related to the motherland (*ranah bundo*, Minangkabau). The *RantauNet* mailing list still exists these days, alongside its Facebook forum counterpart. But not all *RantauNet* mailing list members joined the Facebook forum. The members of the *RantauNet* Facebook forum are more diverse in terms of social class: from white-collar workers to street vendors, both those living in *rantau* as well as in West Sumatra.

As can be seen in Figure 8.6, using a logo that is like a Minangkabau ‘big house’ (*rumah gadang*), the Facebook forum (also its mailing list counterpart) is called *Palanta RantauNet*. In



Figure 8.6: Front wall of Minangkabau ethnic-based Facebook group *RantauNet*

the Minangkabau language *palanta* means a long bench made of wood which is always found in coffee shops (*lapau kopi*) in Minangkabau. There the men sit while chatting about current events. So, the cyber 'Minangkabau coffee shop' RantauNet, like real coffee shops in West Sumatra, is used by its members to discuss a variety of topics while expressing nostalgia for their Minangkabau homeland. They tend to discuss issues dealing with Minangkabau culture and the situation in the homeland (West Sumatra). Postings on the RantauNet Facebook forum contain Minangkabau songs taken from YouTube, or from threads on Minangkabau pop music. Though discussions sometimes deal with national and global issues, participants tend to connect them with Minangkabau and West Sumatra. RantauNet members treat the Facebook forum (and also its mailing list) like a real Minangkabau coffee shop in West Sumatra, where people discuss current hot issues, political, economic, cultural, and religious (see Bagindo et al. 2008).

The number of postings of *pop Minang* songs and Minangkabau verbal arts on Facebook has multiplied the remediation of Minangkabau commercial cassette and VCD content with a speed that could not previously have been imagined. With this capability, Facebook, like YouTube, can be credited with disseminating the Minangkabau cultural repertoire that is recorded on commercial cassettes and VCDs. With its facility to share postings easily, it is not surprising that Facebook postings of *pop Minang* and other genres that originated as Minangkabau commercial recordings have vastly proliferated, reaching a far larger audience in terms of geography, social class, ethnicity and race. Considering that Facebook is only one site in a complex social media network, such postings are often rearticulated or translated to other social media like Twitter and Flickr. The strong ripple effect of social media is undeniable. But at the same time, remediation of Minangkabau cassette and VCD content on Facebook is more intensive than on other social media. This is made possible by the characteristic of Facebook which prompts users to routinely and frequently post new information on their walls. This encourages users to openly respond to postings and in this way become aware of others' reactions.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown how the products of the West Sumatran recording industry are situated in today's convergent media environment. Though the Minangkabau culture of West Sumatra has engaged with media technology ever since the 'talking machine' era (Chapter 2), the remediation of this culture by different electronic media technologies greatly increased since the early 1970s, and has become vastly more complex due to the interconnection and intersection among many media these days. This has brought about a gradual transformation of the previous transformation, infused with new local meaning.

The remediation of Minangkabau commercial recordings initially occurred in 'old' media like conventional broadcast radio. Later, such remediation made use of social network media. These days Minangkabau commercial recordings are disseminated on social media like Internet radio, blogs, YouTube, and Facebook. Audio fragments from Minangkabau commercial recordings have also been used in Indonesia for mobile phone ringtones and

RBTs. In a convergent media environment, as information becomes more and more replicable, scalable, and searchable worldwide (Boyd 2011:45-8), the dissemination and consumption of Minangkabau commercial recordings has crossed beyond Minangkabau ethnic boundaries.

Remediation of the products of the West Sumatran recording industry has involved consumers much more than producers. This has marked a new way of promoting and disseminating such products. Today's convergent media environment has given birth to 'creative audiences' (Meikle and Young 2012:103) where, unlike in broadcast media, distinctions between producer and audience have become blurred and where the label 'consumer' in this interactive virtual communication seems to be out of date. Such proliferating remediation of Minangkabau cassette and VCD content on social media networks has positive as well as negative effects on the West Sumatran recording industry. On the one hand producers can now advertise their products without necessarily spending any money. On the other hand, Minangkabau cassette and VCD producers no longer have complete control over their products. This may challenge the continuing existence of small-scale West Sumatran recording companies as institutions which tend to be profit oriented.

The ways in which media convergence has been used to remediate products of the West Sumatran recording industry has affected cultural perceptions in local and global contexts. With multifaceted remediation and multilayered representation of Minangkabau cultural repertoire recorded on commercial cassettes and VCDs on radio and various social media, the Minangkabau culture itself has been transformed and Minangkabau people's perception of their own culture has altered, both in the homeland and in *rantau*. At the same time, outsiders' images and perceptions of the Minangkabau ethnic group and Minangkabau culture have shifted.

The entire discussion in this chapter suggests that, from their place of origin, Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs have spread everywhere in the world as a result of being remediated on various media. Such a process of remediation has been carried out mostly by consumers rather than by singers or producers. On the other hand, the distribution and reception of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs in a conventional way – taking pleasure in music by playing cassettes and VCDs on cassette and VCD players – is still happening. The following chapter (Chapter 9) traces how Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs, outside of remediation routes in other (social) media, find their way to consumers overseas. It will look at the distribution and consumption of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs in Malaysia. The chapter aims to identify what factors have influenced the prevalent consumption of products of the West Sumatran recording industry in its neighbouring country.

BEYOND HOMELAND BORDERS

MINANGKABAU CASSETTES AND VCDs

OUTSIDE WEST SUMATRA

Having described the complex nature of Minangkabau pop music and its commercial recordings in the homeland, in this chapter I explore the (re)production, circulation, consumption and reception of pop Minang outside the region of its origin.³⁴⁸ I distinguish two areas: foreign countries (focusing on Malaysia) and the national (Indonesian) context (focusing on Riau province). Both Malaysia and Riau have close connections with Minangkabau in terms of religion and culture. Historically, both regions were destinations of the early migrations of Minangkabau people (De Josselin de Jong 1985; Kato 1997). By taking these regions as case studies, I want to explore the distinctions between the (re)production, dissemination, and reception of Minangkabau pop music in the home country and outside the home country. How have the products of the West Sumatran recording industry been received outside West Sumatra? I observed that the reception of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs outside the place of their origin goes far beyond the main audiences among Minangkabau *perantau* communities. I argue that commercial recordings of regional music are an important means for the ethnic diaspora, Minangkabau in this case, to keep up their emotional ties and satisfy their nostalgia for their homeland. I believe that the conception of the nation-state influences the perceptions of regional music of a given ethnicity. This is because every state has its own cultural policy. The extensive and vigorous dissemination of regional music recordings beyond their original geographical boundaries and across nation-state boundaries in Southeast Asia, which is inhabited by many different ethnicities, has some bearing on (re)constructing identities among migrants in many urban areas of the region.

Demographically, in Southeast Asia, we see many ethnic communities that have out-migrated to places outside their homelands. This has affected the socio-cultural and political domains of each region, because humans tend to have difficulty disengaging with their own culture. Migrants tend to continue their own cultural practices in the new places, including practices related to music. Thanks to modern recording technologies like cassettes and VCDs, ethnic cultural elements like music have now become portable and therefore can be distributed far outside their original cultural area. Migrant populations across the world contribute to transnational and diasporic audiences. The Minangkabau ethnic community in Indonesia is an example. Well known for a strong tradition of *merantau*, Minangkabau migrants (*perantau*) can be found in many places in Indonesia as well as in some neighbouring countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Australia.

348 This chapter is based on Suryadi 2007 and partly on Suryadi 2005.

The research findings discussed in this chapter are the result of fieldwork trips to the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur in February and December 2004 and two short visits in January 2008 and August 2009. Besides my observations and interviews with music shop owners and customers in the Chow Kit district in Kuala Lumpur, which carries the nickname 'miniature Indonesia', I also visited Pahang, capital of the Malaysian state of Kuantan, and Seremban, capital of the Malaysian state of Negeri Sembilan, where many Minangkabau descendants live. Chow Kit is largely occupied by Indonesian migrants and you will find many music shops selling music albums of Indonesian regional and national music. Most of these albums are in cassette or VCD format.

As recording media can shape and bring about cultural images, this chapter looks at the distribution and reception patterns of regional cassettes and VCDs, Minangkabau in this case, tracking demographic changes in Indonesia and surrounding regions, and examines how these regional recordings serve as 'binding' for the Minangkabau people in their migration destinations. It is important to understand the relationship between ethnicity and regional cassettes and VCDs in contemporary Southeast Asia in the context of ethnic communities' increasing mobility beyond their initial geographical borders.

MINANGKABAU MIGRANTS IN MALAYSIA

Historically, Minangkabau people have long out-migrated to the Malay Peninsula, which now forms part of Malaysia. This was one of the oldest Minangkabau *rantau* destinations. Most of the residents of the Malaysian state of Negeri Sembilan, in particular, have ancestors originating from Minangkabau in central Sumatra. They trace their historical origins to Minangkabau (Swift 1965). Minangkabau people had out-migrated to Negeri Sembilan since the fourteenth century, when it was still under the authority of the Sultanate of Malacca (see De Josselin de Jong 1985; Gullick 2003). As witnessed by a European observer of the region in the early nineteenth century, Minangkabau migrants in Negeri Sembilan set up communities based on the traditions of their hometowns in West Sumatra (Newbold 1835). Therefore the two regions maintain strong cultural relations up to today (Saifullah 2008). Like the Minangkabau in West Sumatra, the people of Negeri Sembilan are Muslims and they have matrilineal kinship (De Josselin de Jong 1985; Hadler 2008). The people of Negeri Sembilan call their customs *Adat Perpatih*, and state that these customs were brought by their ancestors from Minangkabau. It was a tradition from the 1790s to 1870s if the king of Negeri Sembilan died, that its nobles looked for a new king as his successor from the Minangkabau kingdom of Pagaruyung in West Sumatra (Panghulu 1970; Idris 1970; Sati 1983; Ajisman et al. 2009), which suggests strong cultural and political ties between the two regions. An old Negeri Sembilan proverb says: 'Beraja ka Johor, Bertali ka Siak, Bertuan ka Minangkabau' ('Have a king from Johor, have an ally with Siak, have a master from Minangkabau'), which means that the ancestors of Negeri Sembilan's monarchy came from Minangkabau and settled temporarily in Siak (now located in Riau province) before they crossed the Strait of Malacca and reigned in Johor (Idris 1968:19-20).

Descendants of Minangkabau migrants in Malaysia continue to play a significant role in the political, military, intellectual, and religious fields up to the present. For the earlier period, we can mention that the coup against Sultan Mahmud of Johor Kingdom in the early eighteenth century was launched by a Minangkabau adventurer from Pagaruyung named Raja Kecil (Andaya 1976; Barnard 1994). Minangkabau descendants became prominent religious and political leaders in the Malay Peninsula, both during the colonial era and the modern period (see Aziz 2003; Chaniago 2010; Musda 2010).

Besides those of Minangkabau descent living in Negeri Sembilan, there are many more Minangkabau people who have migrated to Malaysia since the 1960s. These, and other immigrant groups from Indonesia, are classed by the Malaysian authorities as *pendatang haram* ('illegal migrants'), a term often used by the ruling regime to invoke the unity of the Malaysian ethnic group (*Bangsa Malaysia*) (Holst 2012:133-35); blaming the immigrants is a political strategy used by the regime when elections are coming up to maintain its power and political hegemony. Many Minangkabau migrants in Malaysia have intermarried with local Malay women. They live there amid fluctuating political sentiments between Indonesia and Malaysia as often reflected in public discourses on culture, sports, and the economy. Malaysia's significant economic development in recent decades has stimulated many Indonesian labourers as well as white-collar workers to migrate there.

Chow Kit, discussed below, is a busy district in Kuala Lumpur where many people from Minangkabau run their businesses as traders and restaurant owners offering Minangkabau cuisine. Minangkabau descendants in Malaysia and Minangkabau migrants who came to the country later still maintain their ancestral customs. During my fieldwork in the Chow Kit district, I heard the Minangkabau language being used in communication among the Minangkabau migrants settled there. I speculate that the high consumption of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs in Malaysia is closely related to the significant number of people of Minangkabau descent living in the country.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF POP MINANG IN MALAYSIA

The recordings of *pop Minang* songs that are distributed in Malaysia are (re)produced independently by recording companies in Malaysia. Some of the *pop Minang* VCDs circulated in Malaysia are copies of original versions produced by West Sumatran regional recording companies; others are recom compilations featuring a selection of songs from various albums and compiled into a whole new album with a newly created cover. Most of the *pop Minang* albums distributed in Malaysia are recorded in VCD format, although you might still be able to find some in cassette format. Malaysian distributors are able to sell these albums at a lower cost than imported albums because they are (re)produced locally in Malaysia and are therefore free from foreign import tax. This seems like a good business strategy employed by local Malaysian recording companies to avoid the high taxation imposed by the government.

There are at least a dozen Malaysian producers and distributors who produce and distribute *pop Minang* albums in Malaysia. Most of these recording and distributing companies are owned by Malaysian Chinese. In Southeast Asia ethnic Chinese involvement in introducing modern technologies in business has long been occurring. Since colonial times, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Indonesians of Chinese descent have long been involved in marketing gramophones and discs in Indonesia. But, as described in Chapter 5, they cannot be credited with contributing to the establishment and development of West Sumatra's recording industry.

The producers of *pop Minang* VCDs in Malaysia are mostly located in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur and its immediate surroundings. As a cosmopolitan city, Kuala Lumpur has burgeoned in tandem with the nation's huge economic success. The pop music industry has developed significantly, and the recording industry has been part of this. Minangkabau cassette and VCD producers have enlivened the recording industry in Kuala Lumpur in particular and Malaysia in general. Outside Kuala Lumpur, *pop Minang* albums are also produced by other recording companies located in Malacca City.

Pop Minang VCDs (re)produced by Malaysian recording companies are distributed legally in Malaysia, as evidenced by the fact that they bear a sticker of certification from Lembaga Penapisan Filem Malaysia ('Malaysian Film Censorship Board') that states that the content of the album is not 'harmful' (Figs. 9.1 and 9.2) and has successfully been passed by the censors. But there is no guarantee that the Malaysian producers of such VCDs have got permission from the West Sumatran recording companies that initially produced them. Some West Sumatran producers I interviewed stated that they were unaware that the *pop Minang* albums they produce have been reproduced by Malaysian producers and then officially and legally sold in Malaysia. Likewise, some singers I interviewed in Padang and Bukittinggi said they also did not know that their albums have been reproduced and marketed in Malaysia. This suggests that music piracy in Southeast Asia has become transnational. It is not merely a case of national as well as regional music being pirated within one country, but also national and regional pop music from other countries. As in Indonesia, pirated VCDs are also circulated in Malaysia. Likewise, Malaysian songs by prominent singers are also pirated in Indonesia.

A number of *pop Minang* VCDs are authorized only for distribution in West Malaysia (Fig. 9.1). I have not yet uncovered the reasons behind such a limitation. My guess is that there is a different office for registrations in East Malaysia, so the office in Kuala Lumpur issues permits for West Malaysia only. Perhaps this relates to regulations on the music business issued by the Malaysian government, or perhaps to this relatively authoritarian state's cultural policies that tend to consider foreign music 'harmful' to national stability which may negatively influence the Malaysian public and their values (see Côté 2011). However, there are some *pop Minang* VCDs that are distributed throughout Malaysia.

In Malaysia, a *pop Minang* VCD sells for about RM 12–14 (roughly US\$ 4–5 or Rp 36,000–45,000). This is far more expensive than the selling price of the original genuine VCD in Indonesia, which is about Rp 17,000–25,000 (roughly US\$ 1.5–2). Minangkabau songs that

are distributed in Malaysia are mostly pop, including Minangkabau children's pop music (Chapter 7). Other traditional Minangkabau genres sold are *saluang* (Chapter 6) and the hybrid genre of *gamad* (Chapter 5).

During my fieldwork in Malaysia, I did not see cassette shops and stalls selling recordings of Minangkabau verbal arts. But I know from some Chow Kit residents from Minangkabau that they bought such recordings on visits to West Sumatra. The reason that Malaysian producers and sellers do not sell recordings of Minangkabau verbal arts might have to do with the market segment: presumably these recordings would only be attractive to migrants who come from particular regions of West Sumatra, and they tend to be popular only among the older generations of Minangkabau *perantau*. So, from a marketing perspective, the production and sales of recordings in Malaysia likely are not considered to have the potential to be profitable.



Figure 9.1: VCD cover of Opetra album *Dangdut Minang* (distributed by Team Music Enterprise Sdn Bhd, 2004) with the sticker of certification issued by the Malaysian Film Censorship Board

As described in Chapter 4, the *jua putuih* ('outright sale') contract offered by producers to Minangkabau pop artists is not beneficial for the artists. In this regard, the (re)production system of *pop Minang* music in Malaysia definitely exacerbates the financial loss of West Sumatran local artists. Moreover, it is very likely that such losses will increase in the coming years due both to rampant piracy within Indonesia and to the rising (re)production of *pop Minang* outside its region of origin (especially in Malaysia) that does not give any compensation (be it financial or moral) to Minangkabau artists.

CONSUMPTION AND RECEPTION OF POP MINANG IN MALAYSIA

My research in Kuala Lumpur reveals that *pop Minang* songs in Malaysia are largely consumed by Minangkabau migrants residing in that country. This is understandable, as *pop Minang* songs are in fact regional songs featuring lyrics in the Minangkabau language. From conversation with several Minangkabau migrants in Chow Kit, I got the impression that they still use the Minangkabau language in communicating with each other. But they are actually trilingual: they use the Malay language of Malaysia for communication with locals (other Malaysians), the Minangkabau language within the Minangkabau community and at home, and the Indonesian language for communication with Indonesians of other ethnicities that are migrants in Malaysia. The Minangkabau community in Malaysia, despite being absent from their homeland, maintain a sense of ethnic identity partly by listening to *pop Minang* songs. In Chapter 8 I have shown, by referring to comments on *pop Minang* songs posted on YouTube, that Minangkabau migrants satisfy their longing for their homeland and family members left behind there by listening to *pop Minang* songs. For Minangkabau migrants who have resided in Malaysia for a long time, nostalgia for their homeland is satisfied partly by listening to these *pop Minang* recordings that are easily available locally. For the diaspora, Minangkabau music functions as a representation of their homeland and conveys a sense of familiarity. Having the power to connect across time and memories, such ethnic-branded sound 'holds meaning and significance that reaches beyond the immediate context and physical confines of the home[land]' (Tacchi 2003:281). Through this nostalgic practice, 'the past, imagined or real, [...] can be brought into the present, as a feeling that alters the present, and can further be projected into the future' (Tacchi 2003:293). This illustrates the cultural function of portable music recordings among ethnic-based diasporas in today's globalized world.

In Malaysia, the reception of *pop Minang* music is related to the social class of Minangkabau migrants in the country. Most of these migrants are of the lower-middle class. According to a survey, 99 percent of Minangkabau migrants in Malaysia are traders, and a large majority achieve success (Padang Ekspres, 28-2-2006). In a *rantau* destination like Kuala Lumpur, Minangkabau migrants, surrounded by fellow migrants, retain strong emotional bonds with their ethnic origins, manifested in the form of associations with a regional character based on place of origin. This is especially so for those who come from the same village in West Sumatra. This indicates their strong relationship with their homeland in West Sumatra. Gamawan Fauzi, Governor of West Sumatra, has visited Malaysia on various occasions to encourage a sense of togetherness among Minangkabau migrants so that they may one day return and contribute to their homeland. Such a strong ethnic sentiment can be found in Chow

Kit: Minangkabau migrants form unions such as PIKM (Persatuan Ikatan Minang-Malaysia, 'Association of Minang Society in Malaysia'), and those from the same village seem to remain on very familiar terms with each other. For example, Minangkabau migrants from Sulit Air, a *nagari* in Solok regency in West Sumatra which became famous because of the success of its *perantau* in business in various *rantau* destinations in Indonesia and abroad, formed an association called Sulit Air Sepakat (SAS, 'Sulit Air in Harmony') Malaysia branch in 1996.³⁴⁹



Figure 9.2: Music shop in the Malaysian city of Kuantan that sells Indonesian national and regional cassettes and VCDs (above) and its classification of types of Indonesian music (below) (photographs by Suryadi, 2005)

349 Sulit Air Sepakat is an association of Minangkabau migrants from the *nagari* Sulit Air in Solok regency, West Sumatra. It has branches in many *rantau* destinations, including in Malaysia. SAS was founded by Rainal Rais, a successful businessman from Sulit Air living in Jakarta. He borrowed money from banks and then credited them just to his fellow-migrant traders from Sulit Air. With such financial assistance, many Sulit Air migrants in *rantau* destinations successfully developed their businesses (see Rainal Rais's biography edited by D'Kincai 2003; 'SAS dari Organisasi Sosial ke Ekonomi', *Kinantan*, Edisi Percobaan/no. 2, Mei 1995:22-23). SAS demonstrates the cohesiveness of Minangkabau migrants from a particular homeland village in *rantau* destinations.

The largest Minangkabau organization in Malaysia is the *Pertubuhan Ikatan Kebajikan Masyarakat Minangkabau* (PIKMM, 'Minangkabau Community Benevolent Association')³⁵⁰ (*Padang Ekspres*, 28-2-2006). Minangkabau migrant traders in Kuala Lumpur also established *Koperasi Minang Kuala Lumpur Berhad* ('Minangkabau Cooperation of Kuala Lumpur Private Limited'). The cooperation and community spirit of the Minangkabau people in Malaysia is thus exemplified by the unity of people from the same province, regency or village.

Minangkabau songs are particularly well liked in the Malaysian states of Kuantan and Negeri Sembilan, and it is there that *pop Minang* VCDs are sold in local markets. In fact, some retail cassette shops are owned by Minangkabau migrant traders. For instance, one of the retail cassette shops in *Pasar Taman Tas*, Pahang, capital of Kuantan, is owned by Abizar, a Minangkabau migrant from Pariaman. He sells many Minangkabau albums issued by Malaysian cassette companies. Abizar said that the main customers for these cassettes are Minangkabau migrants residing in Kuantan and surroundings, who share his cultural background (pers. comm., 28-7-2005).

In music shops and stands in Malaysia, as I saw in Abizar's shop, Indonesian music recordings are categorized ethnically and nationally, suggesting that both sellers and consumers recognize these music products as markers of local and national identity. Indonesian national pop songs, labelled *pop Indon* ('Indonesian pop music'), are distinguished from Indonesian regional pop like *pop Minang* ('Minangkabau pop music') and *campursari* (literally 'mixture of essences'; a crossover of several contemporary Indonesian music genres, mainly Javanese *langgam Jawa* and *dangdut*) (Fig. 9.2). But when I asked the sellers about Indonesian songs, they referred me to all the VCDs containing music from Indonesia, the national as well as regional varieties. So, in Malaysia, unlike in Indonesia, Indonesian regional music like *pop Minang* bears two 'identities': as Indonesian music as well as an ethnic music from Indonesia.

MUSIC AND DAILY LIFE IN CHOW KIT

As Chow Kit is home to a large number of Indonesian migrants from various regions, the large majority of Minangkabau migrants in Kuala Lumpur also live there. Most of them sell textiles or Minangkabau food (*masakan Padang*). Most of the Minangkabau who have opened businesses in Chow Kit migrated to the Malaysian Peninsula after 1960. They may differ from earlier Minangkabau descendants from Negeri Sembilan who have become Malaysian. A large number of Minangkabau migrants in Chow Kit married fellow Minangkabau, while others intermarried with local Malays. The interviews I carried out in Chow Kit show that most of these Minangkabau migrants rarely return to their hometowns in West Sumatra. Most said that Malaysia's immigration policies make it difficult for them to make frequent trips in and out of Malaysia. Still others are in Malaysia illegally, which makes it even harder for them to move across the borders.

350 This association is now headed by H. Buchari Ibrahim, a Minangkabau migrant from Batusangkar, Tanah Datar regency, West Sumatra (information from rantaunet@googlegroups.com, posted by Firdaus HB on Saturday, 19 March 2011).

Chow Kit is often called 'little Indonesia' in Kuala Lumpur. It can be recognized by its musical atmosphere, which is dominated by Indonesian music, national as well as regional styles. As Ray Allen and Lois Wilcken (1998) and Lloyd Bradley (2013) suggest, music, whether live or recorded, is a cultural element that tends to be preferred to express a sense of group identity among overseas immigrants living in the world's metropolises. There are dozens of music shops in Chow Kit selling Indonesian music in cassette or VCD format. The shops are owned and managed by ethnic Chinese or by Minangkabau migrant traders. It is common knowledge that these two migrant communities, along with ethnic Indians, lead the trade sector in Malaysia's urban areas, while Malay Natives tend to become government employees. In Chow Kit you can hear songs from Indonesia as you walk along the shopping streets. In fact, musical sounds from Indonesia are heard more often than the sounds of music from Malaysia. Based on my observations, music shops in Chow Kit sell mostly Indonesian pop and *dangdut*, together with some Indonesian regional songs, mainly from Java and Minangkabau, with a few Sundanese. There are also Melayu-Riau songs from the Indonesian province of Riau, but Malaysian Malays probably feel sufficient ethnic and linguistic affinity with these Melayu-Riau songs to regard them as their own. This musical atmosphere illustrates how ordinary migrants in Southeast Asian cities prefer music of their own country or ethnicity in their place of migration. A further question can be posed: how does this preference influence the construction of migrants' identity overseas? And how does this emotive power of music relate to sentiments of nationalism? Further study of this notion might be of interest.

As in Kuantan and other places in Malaysia, the Indonesian music marketed in Chow Kit is labelled in various ways: besides pop Minang, *campursari*, and *pop Indon*, there are also *Indon song* ('Indonesian songs') and *disco dangdut* (*dangdut* to a house music beat). The term *Indon song* seems to be used to refer to genres that do not fit any other label. Recordings of songs in VCD format are more numerous than those in cassette format. In Malaysia, as in the majority of Southeast Asian countries, although cassette players are still used, their numbers are steadily dwindling. Since the late 1990s, Southeast Asia has been flooded by various brands of VCD players hailing from Japan, Korean and Taiwan. Such models are cheaper than those made in Europe and America and are thus easily affordable for the lower economic classes.

In Chow Kit, nationalism, regionalism and globalism intermingle and are expressed uniquely in a complex system where music plays an important role. In line with their 'increasingly complex and globalized world', these Indonesian immigrants 'carry distinct, often conflicting, personal identities with regard to gender, race, (and, I would add, religion and social class), ethnicity, or nationality' (Josselson and Harway 2012:3). For Malaysian citizens in Kuala Lumpur – an identity that only began to exist towards the end of colonial rule in the Malay archipelago in the 1950s – Chow Kit sits on a social periphery. It holds a very lowly status in the eyes of everyday Malaysians. Since most Chow Kit residents are Indonesian, the district is frequently referred to as *Indon* (abbreviation of the word 'Indonesia'), which has a negative and derogatory meaning.³⁵¹ This low status was reinforced after the economic and political crisis in Indonesia in 1989.

351 Though initially the word *Indon* was neutral in meaning, it now tends to be used to mock and disparage the Indonesian domestic workers and labourers working in Malaysia. 'The adjectives used around *Indon* ranged

It is commonly known by residents of Kuala Lumpur that Chow Kit is a district that houses many illegal Indonesian migrants. Therefore the Royal Police Force of Malaysia often conduct raids there. To avoid detection and deportation, illegal migrants receive shelter from other Indonesian migrants. In such a situation, a nationalistic spirit emerges due to empathy between citizens of the same status, of the same fate, and usually of the same ethnicity. During my fieldwork in Chow Kit, I was frequently told stories of how Minangkabau migrants sheltered their illegal counterparts to avoid detection by the police. However, they were also known to shelter illegal migrants of other ethnicities as well, as long as they were Indonesian. Here it is evident that nationalism is expressed spontaneously when fellow-countrymen encounter one another in a foreign host country, particularly if they share a minority status, whether consciously or not. I have also heard that you can get just about anything you want in Chow Kit, including fake passports – often used to obtain residential permits and other necessary documents. This reinforces the negative image of Chow Kit in the eyes of Malaysian Kuala Lumpur residents.

My core interest here is: how does the musical atmosphere in a cultural enclave in a foreign country where migrants from other countries live influence not only individual and communal matters but also socio-political issues? A recent public and political discourse that has influenced socio-political relations between Malaysia and Indonesia deals with cultural heritage, including song and dance. The Indonesians accused the Malaysians of unilaterally claiming ownership of certain items of cultural heritage. It seems that Indonesians are envious of Malaysia's success in utilizing their cultural heritage – although some of the items originally came from Indonesia – to promote international tourism. Indonesian protestors criticizing Malaysia use the word *Malingsia* ('Malaysian thieves') or *Malingsial* ('unlucky Malaysian thieves').

Minangkabau too claim that their cultural heritage has been stolen by Malaysia, for example, the song-dance 'Indang Sungai Garinggiang', which was performed by a Malaysian tourism delegation at the Asian Festival in Osaka, 12-14 October 2007. The Minangkabau critics mention that the song-dance claimed by Malaysia as its own creation was originally created by the Minangkabau singer Tiar Ramon in 1981.³⁵² The Indonesian side also accused Malaysia of claiming Minangkabau *talempong* music and its *rendang* culinary specialty as their own cultural heritage.³⁵³ Similar controversy has also occurred with other items of material culture such as manuscripts and traditional textiles. These contested claims of cultural heritage ownership

from sexy to stupid' (Martin 2012). Issues around the disparaging use of the word *Indon* have also entered the political field and influenced diplomatic relations between Malaysia and Indonesia.

352 See Azwar 2007; see also report entitled 'Tambahkan lagu kita yang dicuri oleh MALINGSIAL', <http://www.topix.com/forum/world/malaysia/TS27C8H4J4OKTCLUI>; 'Malaysia kembali 'bajak' lagu daerah Indonesia di Osaka', *Antara News.com*, Thursday, 25 October 2007. (<http://www.antaranews.com/view/?i=1193310660&c=SBH&s=>) (accessed 26-11-2011).

353 See Nusyirwan 2011; http://www.harianhaluan.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5182:talempong-minang-dan-klaim-malaysia&catid=46:panggung&Itemid=198 (accessed 14-10-2011); see also 'Klaim Malaysia untuk rendang Indonesia', *Gatra*, Thursday, 15 September 2011 (<http://www.gatra.com/politik-1/2695-rendang-made-in-malaysia-merambah-dunia.html>; accessed 10-2-2012). For more on cultural contestations between Indonesia and Malaysia, see Clark 2013, Clark and Pietsch 2014.

have even influenced diplomatic relations between these two neighbouring nations of the same descent (*bangsa serumpun*). Malaysian policy patenting such cultural heritage has been criticized by the Indonesian side.³⁵⁴

In these problematic socio-political relations between Indonesia and Malaysia dealing with cultural heritage, Minangkabau migrants and other Indonesian migrants living in Malaysia have also been affected, which influences people's attitudes. When I asked Minangkabau residents in Chow Kit about this, they actually blamed Malaysia. This attitude of course is also related to the way Malaysian authorities have treated them as migrants from overseas. My investigations in Chow Kit and other Malaysian towns show that the Minangkabau migrants settled there retain strong emotional bonds with their home villages in West Sumatra. Such emotional bonds are a cultural phenomenon commonly found among minority migrant groups living as enclaves among majority groups in the world's urban centres. It is too naïve, I think, if we ignore the function of music as one of many elements which play a role in constructing these cultural feelings among Minangkabau migrants in foreign countries. In this regard, migrants' strong ongoing nostalgia for their homeland may have contributed to the cultural and political problems in the Malay world, which today is split up into several nation-states as a result of boundaries drawn by European colonization in the past.

MINANGKABAU MIGRANTS AND RADIO BROADCASTS IN PEKANBARU, RIAU

Chapter 8 discussed the remediation of Minangkabau commercial recordings on radio. In this section I take the reader to the situation in the field. I describe how Minangkabau *perantau* in Pekanbaru, Riau province, are indirectly engaged in Minangkabau commercial recordings. To do this, I examine radio programs that broadcast Minangkabau music intended for Minangkabau migrants in Riau, especially Pekanbaru, the capital of the province. I take as a case study a private radio station called Radio Soreram Indah (henceforth RSI) which specializes in local programming using regional languages. Its programs focus on regional pop songs, especially pop *Minang*.

As noted in studies on regionalism and radio programs in other regions of Indonesia,³⁵⁵ after the media reform introduced by the Reformasi, many radio stations in the provinces seem to be more fervently enthusiastic in representing local culture. RSI is an example of how local radio stations use the opportunities offered by the policy change to promote a sense of regionalism. As Tod Jones observes (2005:211-15; see also Jones 2012; Jones 2013), Indonesia's political decentralization in the Reformasi era has led to a growing assertion of ethnic and local identity, including in regional politics. In this new era, various radio stations, including those situated in Pekanbaru, have created specific programs to provide a

354 For a list of items of local cultural heritage that have been registered by the Malaysian government, see <http://www.ruanghati.com/2009/09/28/inilah-200-benda-dan-seni-budaya-yang-sudah-dipatenkan-malaysia-gamelan-wayang-nasi-goreng-dan-sate-termasuk/> (accessed 14-10-2012). Those marked with red font are claimed by Indonesia as Indonesian ownership.

355 See for instance Arps 2003, Jurriëns 2004, Putra 2009 and 2014, Creese 2009, Birowo 2011, and Putra and Creese 2012.

new conduit for marginalized ethnic, linguistic and social groups to address issues of their identity in an increasingly globalized and decentralized Indonesia. In Edwin Jurriëns's words (2009), Indonesian radio programs now present dialogues rather than the typical top-down monologues as sternly practised during the New Order regime. The drastic Indonesian political change, which brought about media freedom, has led to local radio stations flourishing and enabled them to expand and diversify their technology, programming and ownership. This development is reflected in the great variety of broadcasting stations that have arisen: *radio komunitas* ('community radio'), *radio anak kampung* ('village people's radio'), *radio satelit* ('satellite radio'), *radio wong cilik* ('common people's radio'), *radio siaran* ('broadcast radio'), *radio pemda* ('regional government's radio'), *radio Internet*, *radio 'digital'*, *radio mahasiswa* ('student radio'), etc.

The population of Riau province is ethnically heterogeneous, and 'culturally or politically Riau was never a bounded entity' (Kato 1984:3-4). The urban economy of Riau, especially Pekanbaru, the capital of the province, situated on the banks of the Siak river, is dominated by Minangkabau³⁵⁶ and Chinese traders, both of whom – like the Buginese from Sulawesi – began migrating to what is now Riau before the European colonization of the region. The Riau regencies of Kampar, Kuantan, and Inderagiri, located near the Minangkabau border, are inhabited by local communities who are culturally affiliated with Minangkabau. In Minangkabau traditional historiography, these areas are called Minangkabau's earliest eastern *rantau*.

In Riau, one of the richest in natural resources of Indonesia's provinces, politics and ethnic relations are hot issues. The local Malays feel that they were impoverished and disempowered by Jakarta during the New Order and that this situation has not changed much since the Reformasi. Because the recent economic development of the region has not created a more prosperous life for Malays in Riau, some have charged that outsiders have benefited from exploiting the natural resources of their land. Only a small number of Riau Malays have found work in the modern industrial sectors of oil extraction, large-scale plantations and forestry, and the high-technology industries of Batam, which have generated enormous profits for those perceived as 'outsiders', thereby causing resentment among Malay Natives towards other ethnic groups (Al azhar 1997; Wee 2002). The majority of Malays are merely spectators, it seems, of the economic developments in their own region (Mubyarto 1997).

RSI's programming reflects the diversity of Riau's population. Responding to the market opportunities created by the ethnic diversity of Pekanbaru's inhabitants, RSI's programs reflect how the media view ethnicity or, conversely, how regionality is represented in the media. RSI is owned by Tuti Suparyati, a woman who is half Javanese and half Malay. According to Tuti, 60 per cent of RSI's programs express a distinct feeling of locality and ethnicity. Two prominent RSI programs aimed at Minangkabau listeners are 'Gendang

356 According to the Indonesian census of 2000, when Riau still comprised a single province, Minangkabau migrants were 11 per cent of the total Riau population of 4.7 million (see BPS Propinsi Riau 2001:34-40).

Acu' and 'Ranah Minang Maimbau'.³⁵⁷ The musical content of the programs is taken from commercial cassettes.

'Gendang Acu' is an interactive program that broadcasts songs from the Kampar regency in the northwestern part of mainland Riau along the Kampar river. Administratively the regency is part of Daratan Riau, but culturally its inhabitants are more closely related to Minangkabau (West Sumatra) than to Riau Malays. In Minangkabau cultural terms, the Kampar region is called '*ikua darek kapalo rantau*' (literally 'tail in the motherland, head in the place of migration'), meaning that here is where the *darek* (Minangkabau heartland) ends and the (eastern) *rantau* region begins. 'Gendang Acu' literally means 'older brother's drum'; *acu* or *ocu* is a word for greeting one's older brother in the Kampar dialect and is also used by local girls referring to their boyfriends or to men who are slightly older. 'Gendang Acu' is a daily program, broadcast for one hour. The announcer takes phone calls from listeners who request one or two 'Kampar songs', 'Bangkinang songs' or 'Acu songs'. Callers often dedicate a song to friends or relatives, as well as to the studio announcer.

Commercial cassettes and VCDs featuring music from Kampar have been on the market since the early 1990s; they are produced by Minangkabau producers situated in Bukittinggi and Padang in West Sumatra, such as Minang Record, Tanama Record and Sinar Padang Record. The number of local singers in the regency is rising, and performers such as Yanti Ahmad, Oren Gompo, H. Surya Abdullah, Ali Agumond, Bahrin Benny, Rio Star, Emy Nurlita, Yasir Yatim have become a source of pride for Kampar society. The titles displayed on these cassettes, such as *House Acu* and *Disco House Acu*, *Dangdut Acu Millenium 2000*, and *Dangdut Acu* (Fig. 9.3), are a good illustration of the strategy adopted by local cultures facing globalization. They reflect the stylistic diversity and musical variety of Kampar local songs and clearly serve as a new cultural symbol for people of the regency. Their distinct identity is reflected in the popular term *kaset Acu* ('Acu cassette'), as opposed to 'Minangkabau cassette' or 'Malay cassette'. They have made Kampar a vibrant and proud local culture.

RSI's program 'Ranah Minang Maimbau' is especially intended for Minangkabau migrants in Pekanbaru and surroundings.³⁵⁸ Like 'Gendang Acu', 'Ranah Minang Maimbau' is an interactive musical program, broadcast by RSI since 1996. Literally 'Ranah Minang Maimbau' means 'The Minangkabau land calls': the homeland (West Sumatra) calls the Minangkabau *perantau* to return home. The program is broadcast weekdays for one hour. Pekanbaru is a major destination of Minangkabau migrants in Sumatra. The city's music

357 Other prominent RSI programs are: *Pantun Melayu* ('Malay pantun'), an interactive program in which listeners participate by submitting *pantun* couplets either over the telephone or through the mail; *Syair Melayu* ('Malay Poetry'), an interactive program structured like *Pantun Melayu*; *Dongeng Melayu* ('Malay Legends'), an interactive program that features a guest who plays the role of storyteller. For two hours, the guest gives a presentation of traditional storytelling, often reciting Malay legends, sagas and myths that are available in print, such as *Lebai Malang*, *Pak Belalang* or *Lang-Lang Buana*.

358 Statistical data from the 2000 census mention that 38 per cent of Pekanbaru's population of 568,146 is Minangkabau, compared to 27 per cent Riau Malay, 15 per cent Javanese, 10 per cent Batak, 1 per cent Sundanese and 7 per cent others (BPS Propinsi Riau 2001:34-40). All these groups represent prospective market segments for the radio business.



Figure 9.3: Cover image of a Kampar Acu cassette produced by Minang Record in Bukittinggi, 1995

shops offer Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs. The Minangkabau community in Pekanbaru further expanded when some Minangkabau pop artists, like Riyan, Devi Prima, and An Roys, migrated there following the earthquake that shook West Sumatra in 2009 (Haluan, 8-2-2011). In fact, these Minangkabau artists who migrated to Pekanbaru formed an organization called Forum Komunikasi Artis dan Seniman Minang, or FORKASMI ('Communication Forum for Minangkabau Artists'). Many private radio stations in Riau aim their programs at a particular ethnic community, as is also the case in Medan and Palembang. On RSI's 'Gendang Acu' program, the announcer takes phone calls from listeners who request one or two Minangkabau pop songs played from commercial cassettes and VCDs which echo 'the sound of "longing for home"' (Barendregt 2002).

RSI's success with local programs seems to have inspired other radio stations in Pekanbaru to create similar programs, including some for Minangkabau migrants. For example, since the end of 2003, Radio Clapita Emas (RCE), established in 1989, has broadcast an interactive program called 'Minang Hit'. As the title suggests, 'Minang Hit' is intended especially for Minangkabau migrants in the Pekanbaru area. Broadcast on weekdays, the program presents Minangkabau pop songs requested by listeners. A presenter from RCE says that the program has received an enthusiastic response from listeners, which suggests that urban listeners do not consider a local focus in programming to be out of date (Dedi, pers. comm., 23-3-2004).

The variety of programs broadcast by radio stations in Pekanbaru like RSI and RCE represent the ethnic diversity of the city. While RSI initially focused on Malay culture, listener demand led to the development of programs that would appeal to other ethnic groups living

in Pekanbaru as well, such as 'Gendang Acu' and 'Ranah Minang Maimbau'. It may be that local programs aimed at specific ethnic groups broadcast by Riau's radio stations, whether intentionally or not, encourage urban listeners to distinguish different ethnic 'blocs'.

The playing of *pop Minang* music on radio broadcasts in Pekanbaru shows the importance of music as a communications tool and as a way to maintain a sense of togetherness and belonging among Minangkabau migrants. This form of remediation is one way the products of the West Sumatran recording industry have been used in *rantau*. Another way of reception is the conventional one: purchasing Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs from music shops. And the most sophisticated form of remediation is through social media, as described in Chapter 8. The different ways that Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs are used outside West Sumatra suggest that the West Sumatran recording industry has hooked into other (social) media, enabling Minangkabau music and verbal arts to acquire a new image and new audiences.

PIRATED NEW POP MINANG VCDs IN EASTERN INDONESIA

It appears that Minangkabau commercial recordings, especially VCDs, have also had an influence on other ethnic groups. I found that many albums of the genre called *new pop Minang* (*pop Minang baru*) in eastern Indonesia are pirated. I saw them for sale in places in Southeastern Sulawesi and North and Central Maluku, the homelands of ethnicities like Buginese, Butonese, Muna, Tolaki, Ambonese and Ternatean. I found pirated VCDs of *new pop Minang* being sold in eastern Indonesian towns like Makassar, Maros, Kendari, Bau-Bau and Ambon. A Minangkabau friend of mine who migrated to North Maluku told me that local people are very fond of *new pop Minang* albums, in Ternate and surrounding districts, where many Minangkabau migrants (especially from Bukittinggi) migrated during and after the 1958 PRRI revolt in West Sumatra. Possibly the presence of the Minangkabau community has caused local Natives to become interested in Minangkabau music in Ternate. The pirated *new pop Minang* VCDs are frequently played on buses, ferries and other public transportation. Local people don't understand the lyrics, but they like the music (Denny Setiawan, pers. comm., 10-10-2011). It surprised me during my trips to Buton (the most recent one was in January 2009) to find that many Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs of *new pop Minang* were for sale in Bau-Bau, capital of Buton regency, so far away from the Minangkabau homeland.

The covers of these pirated *new pop Minang* VCDs tend to show images of sexy girls, often Western, wearing bikinis (Fig. 9.4). Why do pirates present such images on VCD covers? If the images are intended to attract consumers' sexual desire, then the producers seem to imagine that the main consumers of such pirated VCDs are men. This phenomenon suggests that there are gender issues involved in the production and marketing of commercial recordings of this type of music.

The album title on the pirated cover is usually a humorous one and is written in the Indonesian language or a local language, for example 'Joget Pele Putus' ('Dance like cars in a chain collision'), 'Goyang Cakar Bongkar' ('Scratching and stabbing dance'), '14 Lagu



Figure 9.4: Front and back covers of a pirated Minangkabau VCD made and distributed in eastern Indonesia

Pilihan Minang Plones' ('Fourteen selected pop Minang songs in dangdut style', which consists of several volumes), 'Minang Bali Pili' ('Selected pop Minang songs'), and 'Joget Anjing Aer' ('Dance like an otter's motions'), but the titles of songs on the front and back covers are written in the Minangkabau language (Fig. 9.4). So, the pictorial and visual images of these VCDs (the cover and clips) do not always correspond with their audio aspects (the songs). These pirated VCDs are not distributed in West Sumatra.

Some purchasers I interviewed in Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, said that they don't understand the lyrics of the songs because they do not speak Minangkabau, but they are fond of the songs because they are cheerful and are good for dancing. A Butonese linguist and a Butonese cultural observer told me that in the Butonese islands, Southeast Sulawesi, the majority of young people liked new pop Minang songs. They proposed a historical claim to explain this phenomenon: that the ancestors of the Butonese came from Johor and Sumatra, possibly from Minangkabau (Abidin [1968]). This claim linking an interest in foreign music with the origins of an ethnic group is very interesting: as if music has become an important cultural element that can serve as evidence of the genealogical relationship between different ethnicities.

In the Butonese islands, new pop Minang songs are very popular not only as accompaniment for *joget* (dance) events, but also for playing on passenger boats, especially when the boats are docked in ports of the Butonese archipelago such as Bau-Bau, Muna, and Wanci. Local sailors are very fond of such new pop Minang songs. The *joget* style of dance is very popular among Butonese young people and new pop Minang songs are the type of songs generally played for this kind of dancing (Asrif and Sumiman Udu, pers. comm., 10-10-2011).

There is no doubt that these pirated Minangkabau VCDs have been made by local pirates because their clips commonly show local people dancing. In addition, there are many errors in the text of the Minangkabau-language song titles on the back covers of these pirated VCDs, indicating that the pirates who have made these VCDs are not familiar with the Minangkabau language.

The Butonese people I interviewed said that many of the rhythms of new *pop Minang* songs are suitable for the musical tastes of Butonese people, who are very fond of dancing (*berjoget*). Due to the popularity of new *pop Minang* songs distributed by pirated cassettes, local producers and pirates have created songs locally that adopt the musical rhythms of new *pop Minang* songs. In this way, local producers in Wanci, Bau-Bau, and Muna have produced Butonese pop songs by adopting the rhythms of new *pop Minang* songs, and substituting lyrics in local languages such as the Ambon Malay dialect of Maluku or the Wanci language of the Tukang Besi islands. Most such songs are called *joget Minang*. This term is never used for *pop Minang* music in West Sumatra.

This phenomenon indicates that elements of regional music of a particular ethnicity, new *pop Minang* in this case, have been creatively adopted by other ethnicities in eastern Indonesia. This adds one more way that products of the West Sumatran recording industry have acquired audiences beyond the Minangkabau ethnic group: not only through social media like YouTube, which copy-paste the original content, but also through a process of adaptation of some of their characteristics as in local Butonese versions of new *pop Minang* VCDs distributed in eastern Indonesia. Actually, this indicates that Indonesian regional recording industries develop in their own ways, which may not be detectable in Jakarta, which is preoccupied with grand discourses on national and international politics and economics, national and international terrorism, and global modernism. I would say that regional cassettes and VCDs, due to their distribution beyond ethnic boundaries, have provided a new site for diverse ethnicities to become acquainted with each other through music.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the circulation and reception of Minangkabau commercial cassettes and VCDs beyond their place of origin in West Sumatra. Taking as case studies the Chow Kit district of Kuala Lumpur (outside Indonesia) and Pekanbaru (inside Indonesia), this chapter has shown that the distribution and consumption of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs has been mostly among Minangkabau migrants in urban centres. But the distribution of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs outside West Sumatra has also crossed ethnic boundaries, as suggested by the reception and popularity of new *pop Minang* albums among several ethnic groups in eastern Indonesia. In this sense, commercial recordings produced by the West Sumatran recording industry can be credited with facilitating horizontal cultural contact and understanding between the Minangkabau and other ethnic groups in Indonesia.

The reception of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs outside West Sumatra takes place in two conventional modes. First, by purchase of these cassettes and VCDs, including pirated copies; second, via radio broadcasts on which the content of Minangkabau commercial recordings is remediated in music programs. Several more modes of reception have been made possible by new (social) media technologies (Chapter 8).

For Minangkabau migrants, the consumption of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs has helped them to construct a feeling of their homeland in the far distant *rantau*. Music of their

homeland can help maintain a sense of togetherness for Minangkabau migrants living in *rantau*, where they tend to live in cultural enclaves. As the number of Minangkabau migrants dwelling in various cities in Indonesia and neighbouring Malaysia is quite high, some people see economic prospects: they reproduce Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs, including by way of 'legal' pirating, as practised by dozens of Malaysian producers in Kuala Lumpur and Melaka.

Unlike in their place of origin, the (re)production of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs in Malaysia involves ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs. Many Minangkabau commercial recordings, particularly the (sub)genres of *pop Minang* (Chapter 5), have been reproduced by Malaysian producers. But the marketing of such products still involves Minangkabau migrant traders. The (re)production of Minangkabau pop music by Malaysian entrepreneurs is carried out without being noticed by the original producers or singers in West Sumatra. And yet the distribution and marketing of these products in Malaysia is legalized by the Malaysian authorities. This means that there has been transnationalization of the piracy of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs, where the destination state, direct or indirectly, supports or facilitates this illegal activity. In a national context, the piracy of new *pop Minang* songs and the adaptation of this music in local recordings by producers in eastern Indonesia is an example of adoption rather than replication.

The extensive migration of ethnic groups in Southeast Asia is the main reason for the distribution and marketing of regional cassettes and VCDs beyond their place of origin. The consumption of Minangkabau cassettes and VCDs among Minangkabau migrants outside West Sumatra has created a translocal site to reinforce collective memory, authentic culture, and a sense of Minangness in *rantau*. Like other electronic media, recordings have enabled people to create a virtual community without requiring physical contact or proximity (Lysloff and Gay 2003).

Political relations between Malaysia and Indonesia fluctuate. One contributing factor is controversy about the ownership of items of cultural heritage shared by these two nations of the same descent. Regional songs are such items of cultural heritage that are claimed by both countries. The complex cultural and political relations between Malaysia and Indonesia have an impact not only on the reception of Indonesian regional music, Minangkabau in this case, in Malaysia, but also on the meanings of such items of Indonesian cultural heritage among consumers there. In the Chow Kit district of Kuala Lumpur, where identities of migrants are labelled by state authorities in a prejudicial way, music tends to emphasize residents' differences rather than their similarities.