

**Community radio movement in Indonesia: a case study of Jaringan Radio  
Komunitas Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta Community Radio Networks)  
By Mario Antonius Birowo  
Atma Jaya Yogyakarta University/Media Asia Research Group-Curtin University  
of Technology**

**Abstract:**

The fall of Soeharto's administration in 1998 created the opportunity for grass-roots people to have more access to information through their own media. Considering that situation, the emergence of community radio in Indonesia in the end of 1990s can also be seen as a part of a social movement that supports grass-roots people in gaining more power, and in participating in the decision making process at the village level. It also should be considered that the people's participation in the management of community radio is a part of democratic consolidation. Jaringan Radio Komunitas Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta Community Radio Networks) has been experiencing in organising community radio stations in Yogyakarta to gain political and social acknowledgement.

This paper will show how community radio allows grass-roots people to organise their interests based on their own culture in order to gain more benefits from the social changes process in their village. Any increase in people's participation in the public sphere will raise the issue of governance. Hence, community radio movements are seen as efforts to enable grass-roots people to participate in the process of democracy.

**Keywords:** democratization, social movement, community radio, grass-roots people, participation, and Indonesia.

**Background**

In Indonesia, participatory communication is not an easy ideal to be achieved because grass-roots people, after long periods (1966-1998) under linear and authoritarian communication of Soeharto's administration, need time to learn how to participate in the communication process, especially in making important decisions for their own future. They had been put in the passive position as object of communication process in the one way flow communication system. This difficulty is created not only by the political

situation, but also by the cultural one. Therefore, in promoting grass-roots democracy among the people, cultural aspects should be considered because access to information by itself will not open any magic doors. There must be opportunities for discussion and interchange, in order to deal with existing and new information, to relate different or contradictory viewpoints and opinions, to feed a communication process where people can become aware of what they are thinking and what they are doing, to weigh the various information and points of view exchanged, and to take their own decisions.

Community radio can be used as media for grass-roots people to realize those opportunities by providing a forum for capacity building.

To elaborate how community radio is used in supporting the grass-roots democracy, this article will discuss (1) community radio as media for grass-roots people, (2) social movement in establishment of community radio in Indonesia, and (3) a case of the development of community radio in Yogyakarta Special Region, Indonesia.

#### Community Radio as media for grass-roots people

Lucas (1995: 5) argues that mass or massive media, such as commercial media (owned by private institutions) and state media (owned by the government), in its present form and structure has become the most effective tool in the pursuit of globalisation and hegemony of ruling elites. He states that the majority of the people have difficulty in accessing the media communication technologies. These often involve high cost, highly professionalized skills, and high control. In most developing countries, only very few people can access these media, and this domination of communication technologies by only a few people, particularly those in power, has created an imbalance in the flow of

communication. Consequently, the mass media do not provide a space for people to participate in the process of production, which causes a gap between the mass media and the people. Therefore, the mass media does not have a significant role in participatory social change because it does not have roots within the people.

On the other hand, much evidence in development communication studies show that the media can function as a tool for people to participate in social change, especially in the development process, by providing a forum for debate, analysis, and exchange of ideas (Jurriens 2003, p. 203). The most important factor in creating participation is the accessibility of media, both as receivers and producers of media content. It has been argued that the characteristics of community media: small, proximity, and participatory are suitable to provide both accesses. On the contrary, it is difficult for mainstream media to provide access as a producer.

Rather than focus on contradiction between mass media and community media, Peruzzo suggests a notion that both media are complementary (Peruzzo 1996, pp.165-166). To support his argument, he cites Grinberg's notion about the relation between mass media and community media. Grinberg indicates that there is a need to develop another media to fill the lack of mass media. Although the mass media is powerful, the media is not omnipotent. For him, the alternative ways of information-communication is an inevitable process from the bottom of social life. Alternative media can be seen as an attempt to break the blockade of the predominant informative structure (Peruzzo 1996, p.166). To

fill the gaps in the mass media system, community radio has been chosen by grass-roots people.

A key element of democracy is media access because media enable people to gain information concerning public matters. Meyer and Hinchman, in their book “Media Democracy: How the Media Colonize Politics” (2000, p. 5) explain that there are three theoretical models of democracy: the model of democracy as marketplace, the model of participatory democracy, and the model of a democratic civil society. First, the marketplace model of democracy believes that every citizen has an opportunity to vote between at least two competing political elites. Second, the model of participatory democracy argues that democracy will be legitimized if citizens are involved in the decision making process related to their own interests. Their participation is not only in the elections. Third, the model of a democratic civil society is also called “grass-roots democracy”. This model proposes that democracy can be built from the local scope which enables people to participate in formulating democratization based on their local political culture. The local scope consists of the smallest administrative region, namely the village. In the model of grass-roots democracy, community radio is seen as important media to democratize villages. Related to this democracy, community radio has the ability to provide a public forum because this media is cheap and easy to access, including by people with low levels of literacy (Hendy 2000, p. 2; Dagrón 2001, p. 19).

The existence of community radio within grass-roots people is related to the paradigms of multiplicity and communitarian. Servaes (1996, p.29-43) uses the term of multiplicity

paradigm and Tehranian (1996, p.44-63) uses communitarian paradigm. Referring to this paradigm, Servaes (1996,p.217) contends that there is interdependence among all nations and cultures in the world. They exist together in the one world, so they should build cooperation. The growth of positive attitudes of global development toward democracy; multicultural consciousness; the availability of cheap media, and the creation of alternative communication networks enable this cooperation. Because of the uniqueness of each society, there is no single model of development in the world. Furthermore, Servaes concludes that each society should develop themselves their own strategy which is appropriate to their local context.

Incorporating the uniqueness of each society, multiplicity paradigm supports the use of cultural approach in order to enable grass-roots people participate in development process. Cultural approach does not ignore the capability of local people to develop their future. Local wisdom or indigenous knowledge obtained from their culture is their strength in improving their condition based on their own resources.

Popular since the 1970s, the multiplicity paradigm has influenced the development of community radio in the world, especially by UNESCO programs that facilitate the use of community radio in the developing countries.<sup>i</sup> Promoting democracy and participation, this paradigm enables grass-roots people to gain their rights as citizens through the use of small scale and community base media, community radio in particular.

In the context of communication process, community radio provides horizontal communication among participants. The horizontal communication is based on the principles of community access to media production and decision making. For grass-roots people, these principles are important in encouraging them to contribute ideas by expressing their interests. It is intended to promote dialogue and a cyclical communication. It is also a two-way process and interactive because it shares meaning and establishes and maintains social relationships. The participatory perspective instills greater focus on the process of understanding. Diversity of opinions is allowed because there are differences among participants' experiences, so there is no exactly similar interpretation of a problem or issue among them. Democratization may trigger new ideas for the solution of a problem based on their own situation. It is often argued that political democracy is not possible without providing a public sphere that gives people opportunities to participate in the decision making process (Meyer & Hinchman 2000, p.1). In the situation of contemporary Indonesia, I will show how grass-roots people have been participating in creating public sphere for accommodating their interests based on local context by establishing community radio.

#### Social Movement in the Establishment of Community Radio in Indonesia

Indonesia has a long history in the use of mechanistic approach in its mainstream development communication by emphasizing diffusion of innovation as a tool of social change, especially in rural areas. It has been argued that the use of mass media in Indonesia is a result of the use of modernization paradigm by Soeharto's administration. Soeharto's policies in development are well-known as pro-Western policies. The

emergence of *Orde Baru* regime is supported by Western countries in order to fight against communism in South-east Asia (See Vatikiotis 1993). Governments emphasize the important of modernization by defining development as a process of replacing the traditional or old things with modern or new ones. In the communication field, it means that the traditional media must be replaced with mass media based on communication technologies. As a result of this, communication has often come to be identified all too synonymously with mass communication controlled by the government in Jakarta. Tehranian (1996, p.48) states that the government's focus on the expansion of the communication infrastructure is often in order to pursue the centralization of political control and administrative penetration. In Indonesia, during New Order regime, the government used Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) and Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI) to spread the government's messages. At that time, private radio stations were required to relay news from RRI 18 times a day. Here, it is obviously that the role of media communication is to spread messages from the government, such as so-called development programs throughout the country. Similarly, Fraser & Estrada argue that many governments which centralize planned economies use the media to realize their political aims and to consolidate their power (2001, p.7).

As such, the mass media system in Indonesia is dominated by big capital companies which own various mass media such as television, radio, and printed media. Most mass media conglomerates grew with the regime of Orde Baru/New Order and were sponsored by Soeharto's family members and cronies (Vatikiotis1993, p. 152; Sudibyo 2004, pp.15-

16; Kingsbury 2005, pp. 123-124). Currently, they are still playing dominant role in media industry in the country.

The fall of the Soeharto regime in 1998 generated a movement for democratisation in the flow of information through press freedom, access to information, and freedom of expression. According to Siregar (2002, p.1), General Secretary of the Indonesian Newspaper Publishers Association, freedom of information was denied to the people during the New Order, from 1965 to 1998, and this legacy has not entirely been discarded. In the current time, Indonesia is attempting to establish a democratic information, media and communication system.

Since 1998, thousands of radio broadcasting has been establishing in Indonesia. There is no a fix data about the total of radio stations in Indonesia<sup>ii</sup>. It can be estimated that the total is not less than 3000 stations consisting of private radio, public radio, and community radio. They are joining in various organizations such as Persatuan Radio Siaran Swasta Nasional Indonesia/PRSSNI (Indonesian Private National Broadcasting Radio Association), Asosiasi Radio Siaran Swasta Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Private Broadcasting Radio), Asosiasi Radio Siaran Lokal Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Local Broadcasting Radio), Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia (Indonesian Community Radio Networks), Jaringan Radio Komunitas untuk Demokrasi (Community Radio Networks for Democracy), Jaringan Radio Himpunan Kerukunan Tani Indonesia (Association of Farmer Solidarity Radio), Jaringan Radio Suara Petani (Farmers' Voice Radio Networks), Jaringan Radio Suara Nelayan (Fishermen's Voice Radio Networks),

Forum Radio Kampus Indonesia (Forum of Campus Radio in Indonesia), and Urban Poor Consortium/UPC Community Radio.

The development of radio broadcasting has been caused by euphoria of freedom of expression among Indonesia citizens as a response to the new era called *reformasi* (reform). Two important points of changes in reform era are decentralization and democratization in political sector which then in turn affects other sectors such as social, economic, and culture sectors. These points have been becoming dominant issues in the transition of Indonesia which have replaced the system of centralization and authoritarianism of Soeharto's administration (Siregar, 2002). According to Zainal Suryokusomo (personal communication, July 12, 2006), a prominent figure in radio broadcasting in Indonesia, says that in many occasions local governments in various places in Indonesia, in the name of decentralization or regional autonomy, gave permits to media broadcasting in their regions. This phenomenon has contributed in creating chaotic situation<sup>iii</sup> in the broadcasting field in Indonesia. It is not clear who has an authority to give a broadcasting permit. Local governments argue that they refer to the Local Governance Act No. 22/1999, while in another side Jakarta (the national government) argues that, according to the Broadcasting Act No.32/2002, only the national government has an authority to allow a radio station to have a broadcasting permit.

Related to the recent political condition, community radio has been mushrooming in the country, especially in the village area. As result, the number of community radio stations

in Indonesia is uncertain, since there is no official data on the exact number of this media. In Yogyakarta Special Region, based on the data of *Jaringan Radio Komunitas Yogyakarta/JRKY* (Yogyakarta Community Radio Networks), there are 34 community radio stations (Herawati, Listiorini & Halomoan 2005). In Jawa Barat (West Java) Province, Rachmatie, a member of *Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia Daerah* (Regional Broadcasting Commission), reports that there are 400<sup>iv</sup> community radio stations. Combined Resource Institution, an NGO working in promoting community radio in Indonesia, says that in 2003 there were 500 community radio stations in Indonesia. Based on information provided by Bowo Usodo, the Chairman of Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia, currently there are 700 community radio stations (personal communication, January 2, 2006).

Recently, only 85% of Indonesian areas can be reached by radio broadcast, more than forty thousand villages cannot enjoy radio broadcast. Most the private radio stations are located in big cities. The disproportion of distribution on radio location and radio orientation due to commercialization has caused partiality of information access. Orientation on Jakarta life style is commonly met on private radio stations programs, especially radios with teenagers as their target listeners. It can be found throughout Indonesia, Jakartanese language style becomes a tendency preferred by radio presenters. “MTV” style, which combines Bahasa Indonesia and English, what we call it as *bahasa gado-gado*, is popular among radio presenters. The use of foreign language (English) can be easily found in private radio station program titles. This phenomenon has indicated that the pop style rush has forced several local private radio stations throughout

Indonesia. Many private radio stations have to adapt themselves in order to survive. However, according to Ecip (2006, p.xi) Indonesia is not Jakarta. People should have protection relates the need for the diversity of content. The content of broadcasting media, included radio, must be allowed to diverse rather than be monopolized by the content of broadcasters from Jakarta. To fulfill this gap, there is a need to establish more community radio stations.

Community radio enables grass-roots people to express their ideas or interests based on their own daily experience. This kind of opportunity is hard to be obtained in mainstream media. Therefore, community radio is perceived as being a potential voice for the voiceless. Although community radio provides opportunities for grass-roots people to improve their condition as citizens, it is not easy to establish this media in Indonesia.

It can be said that the community radio movement in Indonesia began since 1990s when civil society fought for the freedom to express opinions and obtain information in Indonesia. Some universities and NGOs initiated the setting up of community radio as alternative media and a part of civil society movement for generating grass roots democracy. They have seen that during New Order mass media were controlled to become a tool of propaganda of the government. Therefore, it has been argued that the existence of community radio in Indonesia is to break the monopoly of information from the government. According to Lilik, head of Jaringan Radio Komunitas Yogyakarta, democracy in media is presented in the form of the diversity of ownership and diversity

of content (personal communication May 17, 2006). The existence of community radio, in this context, is to enable the democratization of media in Indonesia.

In Yogyakarta, an attempt to support community radio movement is Community Radio Seminar on September 4, 2001 sponsored by UNESCO. This seminar can be seen as a stimulant in supporting community radio movement in Indonesia, Yogyakarta in particular. During the seminar, the prospects of community radio were discussed in an academic environment and got attention from wide public. Participants came from various backgrounds, such as academics, activists of NGO, journalists, radio practitioners, and politician. Because of this seminar, many other seminars, discussions, conferences have been organised to promote community radio in Indonesia. Soon after that, some NGOs and universities support the community radio movement by facilitating workshop, seminar and discussion. According to Mart, the secretary of Jaringan Radio Komunitas Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta Community Radio Networks), some of them are Forum LSM, Lembaga Bantuan Hukum, Wahana Lingkungan Hidup, KAPALA, USC SATU NAMA, Combine Resource Institution, and LAPERA (personal communication May 11, 2006). They were organised in a forum, namely Jaringan Pendukung Radio Komunitas/JPRK (Community Radio Supporters Networks). Their aims were establishing a broadcasting independent regulatory body and encouraging house of representatives to acknowledge community broadcasting by putting it into broadcasting act.

Soon after that, to support the existence of community radio, 30 community radio stations and 23 NGOs founded Jaringan Radio Komunitas Yogyakarta/JRKY (Yogyakarta

Community Radio Networks). This organisation was declared on May 6, 2002 in Gedung Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (Yogyakarta Provincial House of Representatives) to indicate that the struggle of community radio is a part of the democratic movement. Likewise on the national level, Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia/JRKI was declared such on May 15, 2002 in Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (House of Representatives), Jakarta. At that time, the Broadcasting Act No. 32/2002 was in the process of legal drafting. Community radio activists and civil society groups endorsed the acknowledgement of community broadcasting institution in the broadcasting act. In the beginning, the government rejected the possibility of community radio being acknowledged in the system of mass media in Indonesia. It was presented in the statement of the government's representatives in the process of drafting of broadcasting act number 32/2002. The government argued that community radio would waste radio frequency bandwidth and threaten the stability of society. It seems that community radio is suspected in creating national disintegration or conflict within society. By suspecting community radio, the government was fear of freedom of information.

This rejection faced opposition from civil society who saw that community radio could be used to break the media monopoly by elite and the government. In turn, grass-roots people can use community radio as media for democratization at the village level. It will give them the ability to preserve their interests and to be more involved in the decision making process in village governance.

After a long campaign, finally community radio, as a part of community broadcasting, is included in the Broadcasting Act No. 32/2002. The definition of community in the context of community radio in Indonesia, based on article 21 clause (1) of the Broadcasting Act No. 32/2002, is influenced by the geographical term.

“...a broadcasting institution in the form of an Indonesian corporate body, which is established by a certain community, independent and non-commercial in nature, with low transmission power and limited broadcasting coverage to serve the interests of its community.”

This geographical definition states that community broadcasting should have a low power and limited area of coverage. There is an argument that this definition is not sufficient to accommodate people who have similar interests such as ethnicity, profession, and religion. Some experts analysed that the geographical definition was used in order to limit its influence within society and to prevent conflict among groups of community in Indonesia<sup>v</sup>.

There have been discussions about the geographical definition. The supportive argument states that the limited area enables community members to participate actively in communication activities. It is suitable to the principles of participation in access to message production and consumption. Conceptually the Broadcasting Act No. 32/2002 also refers to the community service approach, where community radio should serve people in education and development.

Another argument says that community is not only based on geography but also there is community based on interest. Putting only one definition will limit the role of the media in society. Civil society group suspected that the use of security approach during debates

in the parliament house determine the definition of the community broadcasting. As a result, in the broadcasting act No. 32/2002 the coverage area of community radio should be limited to 2.5 km, within a village. Many critiques emerged toward this limitation of coverage area because it was based on Java oriented. This coverage area is unfit for area with low density population such as Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua.

As I mentioned earlier, community radio is defined as participatory media. This definition does not include radio which is based on hobby and personal ownership. Therefore it cannot be said community radio is similar to hobby radio. However, many community radio stations started its operation based on initiative of a person who has hobby in radio communication. In Indonesia, radio hobby had been popular in 70s-90s during Soeharto's era. This radio is usually run by students.

Although community radio is labeled as *radio gelap* or *radio liar* (illegal radio or wild radio), but not all *radio gelap* or *radio liar* is automatically catagorised as community radio. The term of *radio liar* or *radio gelap* comes from the fact that broadcasting radio outside of commercial radio and public radio was not allowed by the previous broadcasting act so people who did so did not have broadcasting permits from the government.

From the 34 members of Jaringan Radio Komunitas Yogyakarta/JRKY in 2002, currently there are 15 radio stations that broadcast daily. A problem of community radio is how to sustain its programs. Some community radio stations failed to get support from its

community because they started from the radio station. Other community radio can survive because they are community oriented, not media oriented. This means that creating community is more important than creating a radio station. Here, the radio station is seen as a tool for community communication, and the subject is the people/community itself. This approach to communication entails the democratization of people involved in the process. Therefore people become subjects, rather than objects of communication, so they can develop their full potentials as individuals and groups. The community uses radio to help them in improving self-confidence, building their capacity to communicate their interests, and identifying their situation through their involvement with their own culture.

Below are two cases of community radio in Yogyakarta that describe the dynamic of grass-roots people in developing good governance in their village. The first community radio, namely Pamor, was initiated by inhabitants of Tirtomulyo village located in the South of Yogyakarta city. While Radio Komunitas Balai Budaya Minomartani located in the North of Yogyakarta city was initiated by a private institution which has a focus of attention in developing grass-roots communication. Both radio stations managed and controlled by local people.

The oldest community radio in Yogyakarta Special Region is Radio Pamor FM located in Tirtomulyo village, south of Yogyakarta city. Most inhabitants work as rice plant farmers. They are living in traditional environment. Some groups of traditional artists in the village want to sustain Javanese culture, such as *karawitan* (traditional music),

*wayang*, and *ketoprak* (traditional drama). They see that radio can be means to express their cultural identity because this media is cheap, easy to operate, and available to most inhabitants. Participation of grass-roots people can be seen in the background of the founders of radio Pamor. They were ordinary citizens without a formal position in the structure of village government. To establish the radio station, they invited inhabitants to participate and mobilize their resources and contribute various things, such as audio cassette player, audio mixer, compact disc player, and amplifier. One inhabitant provided a room in his house to be a “cool box” and studio as well. The studio is very simple, without soundproof wall, and the door always open. It can be said that inhabitants build their own radio without depending on external resources. The location of this studio is surrounded by wet rice field. People are easy to reach this location, because the location of radio Pamor is in the edge of village path. It indicates that the radio can be accessed by all.

Carrying vision *Piranti Memetri Budaya Jawi* (media to preserve Javanese culture) and mission to encourage inhabitants’ interest toward traditional culture and to entertain inhabitants, radio Pamor was founded on May 15,1995. The name of Pamor is an abbreviation of Javanese language, *Pangudi Mongkokkin Roso* (to find feeling satisfaction).

Radio Pamor broadcasts daily from 17.00 up to 24.00. The existence of radio Pamor supports the existence of the local groups of traditional arts. They can use radio Pamor for performing and socializing their cultural activities. All performances use live format.

Often they come to the studio to exercise their ability. Other community members can hear this process because the exercise is broadcasted by Radio Pamor.

The radio wants to provide alternative programs by taking positions focusing on local culture. Community needs these programs which are relevant to their situation and not provided by mainstream radio (commercial and public radio). Information about their village and news from mass media is broadcasted in order to provide the latest information for the community. Sometime specific events are broadcasted directly from location. Because its consistency to broadcast local situation, inhabitants enthusiast to participate in the programs of Radio Pamor.

The development of communication technology has influenced the way community members participate in an interactive program. The members can use hand phones to send information, requests, greetings, and express their opinions to other members of the community. The use of hand phones and landlines telephone helps radio operators to provide interactive programs. Also, this participation enables this radio provides daily information. Sharing information and opinions have been created public awareness about their village.

Through local programs, Radio Pamor builds local identity which in turn creates cohesion and solidarity among community members. Cultural approach is used in the process of bringing about individual's interest in public sphere. This effort creates common awareness which is useful to create collective action. At this time, cultural

activities are used to bring the media need into the village. Therefore, inhabitants will have capability to communicate their ideas through community radio, in order to wide public know what their needs. Through activities using community radio, step by step they develop self-confidence in communicating their interests.

The cultural approach is also used by Radio Balai Budaya Minomartani/Radio BBM. This radio is located in Minomartani village, in the North of Yogyakarta. Minomartani consists of two words, mino means fish, while martani means field. So the name of Minomartani refers to the past situation of the village where there were many fish farm and field rice. Nowadays Minomartani village is full with housings.

Radio BBM was founded in 1999 with support from Studio Audio Visual Puskat, a well known Jesuit institution working in media. Puskat provided a house, as a radio studio, and some equipment in Balai Budaya Minomartani compound. This compound consists of staff's housing of SAV Puskat and *balai budaya* (cultural hall). Since 1995, that cultural hall has become a centre of cultural activities of Minomartani inhabitants. They often use it for performing traditional culture such as *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet), *ketoprak* (traditional drama), traditional dance, and *karawitan* (traditional music). However, these cultural activities become the foundation of the existence of Radio BBM. For them these cultural activities are also a medium to express their creative feelings.

In short, locating within Balai Budaya Minomartani compound gives an advantage for the sustainability of the radio. First, the existence of Radio BBM is supported by the cultural environment which has become the heart of Radio BBM. Second, Radio BBM can reduce

its operational cost because the radio can use the facilities in Balai Budaya Minomartani freely. Third, the staffs of SAV Puskat living in that compound can contribute their expertise and knowledge in the development of Radio BBM. So, inhabitants are not dependent on the village government to operate radio BBM.

The studio of Radio BBM consists of two cool boxes and one common room. One box with a sofa is used for a talkback program, and another box is for the operator. The studio, although simple, is build semi soundproof. There are two Personal Computers, an audio mixer, audio player, and amplifier to support the radio. To fill the needs of its community members, this radio broadcasts daily from 18.00 up to 24.00. A favorite program or Radio BBM is Mbah Tro Mulur, an abbreviations of Nambah Mitro Ketemu Sedulur (To add friends and to meet relations). This program consists of Javanese music, often created by them.

Community communication through Radio BBM gets attention from the local government. The village government uses Radio BBM to get inputs from inhabitants or to spread information about the government's policies. Radio BBM broadcasts the latest information not only through news program, but also through talkback. Village chief, for example, informed the village government activities through this program, and then inhabitants gave their responses through telephone. They discussed public matters in the open space. This communication process creates accountability of the village government.

Without having a broadcasting permit, community radio is categorised as illegal radio. Thus, all community radio is being object of closure from the Local Broadcasting Monitoring Institution. To avoid being closed, community radio must have acknowledgement from the local government. In order to gain political acknowledgement, in 2002 Radio BBM invited the Sultan/Governor of Yogyakarta to visit the studio. In Yogyakarta, the Governor is not only a political leader, but also a cultural leader. So, the visitation by the Governor had a positive impact on Radio BBM, and other community radio in Yogyakarta Special Region. They are not closed from local government toward community radio, even though community radio runs without having broadcast permit.

The idea of building community radio was thought by SAV Puskat since 1980s with its concept of media village. This fact does not indicate that Radio BBM is owned by SAV Puskat. Although SAV Puskat initiates the process of establishment and provides facilities, Radio BBM is independent from that institution. Currently, this radio is owned and managed by the community of Minomartani. Some inhabitants participate as volunteers in the operation of this radio.

#### Conclusion: Giving space for local culture

Jaringan Radio Komunitas Yogyakarta shows that the use of cultural approach in the development of grass-roots democracy is the process in which inhabitants achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality. It is very obvious that this type of

communication entails democratization of people involved in the process in which people become subjects, rather than objects of communication, so they can develop their full potentials as individuals and groups. This communication model is possible occur in the limited scope such as in village area where participants' interests can be accommodated through communication channel.

Accordingly, the emphasis on the cultural context in the communication process could be very important in helping the people develop themselves. In the development process, people should not be pulled out from their roots or culture. Servaes (1996) says that the participatory approach stresses the importance of the cultural identity of local communities. Here, the preservation of traditional culture by community radio in order to maintain identity that is useful to develop their community. This identity is a key to the development of solidarity among members of a community. According to Lilik Kusbiantoro, head of Jaringan Radio Komunitas Yogyakarta, relations between democracy and community radio is "In Community radio there are elements of identity, representation, interdependency, and what we call it as negotiation among them. These are democratic pillars. In this context, I may say that is democracy.<sup>1</sup>"

Related to democracy, also, it is important to determining what kind of development favors specific of the local situation. Within the Indonesia mass media system, which dominated by big and commercial media, community radio has become media alternative

---

<sup>1</sup> "Di sana ada unsur identitas, ada unsur representasi, ada unsur interpedensi, ada unsur apa namanya negosiasi-negosiasi di antara mereka. Nah ini kan sebenarnya pilar-pilar demokrasi kan. Dalam konteks seperti itu mungkin lalu saya mengatakan ya itu demokrasi." (Personal communication with Lilik Kusbiantoro, 17 May 2006).

for grass-roots people. Community radio is used to serve people by providing a forum for expressing their interests without ignoring cultural identity building. The dynamic of grass-roots people in developing their own media and preservation their own culture can be seen as an effort to against cultural hegemony distributed by mainstream media. It can be seen as a resistant strategy against cultural hegemony.<sup>2</sup> In fact Indonesia is not a mono cultural country. It consists of people with cultural diversities such as various traditions, religions and languages. It will be disproportion when most radio use “one similar language”, that is Jakarta (or big city) style, to people throughout Indonesia. Among the pop style tendency, community radio stations give another possibility by giving more space to the local culture. Through autonomy to determine their radio programs, grassroots people fell that they are represented by their own culture. By doing so, community radio has contributed to the cultural diversity preservation which is important for plural people in Indonesia.

---

<sup>2</sup> Personal communication with Lilik Kusbiantoro, 17 May 2006

## References

- Birowo, MA, Herawati, A, Sasangka, DD 2000, *Khalayak potensial radio publik di Yogyakarta*, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta.
- Carpenter, N, Lie, L and Servaes, J 2003, 'Community media: muting the democratic media discourse?,' *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 51-68. Retrieved: December 6, 2004, from <http://proquest.umi.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/>
- Dagron, AG 2004, Media, freedom and poverty: A Latin American perspective, *Media Development*, 2004 no. 2. Retrieved April 22, 2005 from <http://www.wacc.org.uk/wacc/content/pdf/413>
- Dagron, AG 2001, *Making waves: participatory communication for social change*, The Rockefeller Foundation, New York.
- Deleuze, G & Guattari, F 1987, *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Dervin, B & Huesca, R, 'The participatory communication for development narrative: an examination of meta-theoretic assumptions and their impacts', in Servaes, J, Jacobson, TL & White, SA (eds.), *Participatory communication for social change*, Sage, New Delhi, pp. 169-210.
- Eldridge, PJ 1995, *Non-government organizations and democratic participation in Indonesia*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Fraser, C & Restrepo-Estrada, S 2001, *Community radio handbook*. Retrieved April 6, 2005 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001245/124595e.pdf>
- Fraser, C & Restrepo-Estrada, S 2002, 'Community radio for change and development,' *Society for International Development*, vol. 45, no.4, pp. 69-73. Retrieved January 17, 2005 from: <http://proquest.umi.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/>
- Hendy, D 2000, *Radio in the global age*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Herawati, A, Listiorini, D & Halomoan, P 2005, *Pengaruh motivasi bermedia terhadap tingkat kepuasan bermedia: studi pada drama radio rona cakrawala tanah perdikan episode tahta semusim pada pendengar Radio Balai Budaya Minomartani*, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta & Studio Audio Visual Puskat, Yogyakarta.
- Howley, K 2005, *Community media: peoples, places and communication technologies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- Huesca, R 1995, Subject-authored theories of media practice: The case of Bolivian tin miners' radio, *Communication Studies*; Fall 1995/Winter 1996; 46, 3-4; Academic Research Library pp. 149-168.
- Jurriens, E 2003, 'Community radio in Indonesia: new Brechtian Theatre in the Era of Reform?,' in H.C. Nordholt & G. Asnan (eds.), *Indonesia in transition: work in progress*, Pustaka Pelajar, Yogyakarta, pp. 201-218.
- Kivikuru, U 2004, *Top/down or bottom/up? Radio in the service of democracy: experiences from South Africa and Namibia*, IAMCR, Porto Alegre July 2004.
- Lindsay, J. 1997, 'Making waves: private radio and local identities in Indonesia', *Indonesia*, no.64, October 1997, pp. 105—124. Retrieved May 25, 2005 from <http://e-publishing.library.cornell.edu/Dienst/Repository/1.0/Disseminate/seap.indo/1106953536/body/pdf?userid=&password=>
- Lucas, F 1995, *Primer on community based radio*, Asian Social Institute & World Association for Christian Communication, Manila.
- McQuail, D 2000, *Mass communication theory*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, Sage Publications, London.
- Meyer, T & Hinchman, L. 2002, *Media democracy: how the media colonize politics*, Polity Press.
- Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia Deluxe 2004
- Mody, B 2000, 'The Context of Power and the Power of the Media', in KG Wilkins (ed.), *Redeveloping communication for social change: theory, practice, and power*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, Maryland, pp.185-195.
- O Connor, A 1990, The Miners' Radio Stations in Bolivia: A Culture of Resistance, *Journal of Communication*, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 102-110. Retrieved June 22, 2005 from <http://proquest.umi.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/pqdweb?index=43&did=1688732&SearchMode=3&sid=1&Fmt=6&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1119422788&clientId=22212&aid=1>
- Peruzzo, CMK 1996, 'Participation in community communication', in Servaes, J, Jacobson, TL & White, SA (eds.), *Participatory communication for social change*, Sage, New Delhi, pp. 162-182.
- Pusey, M 1987, *Jurgen Habermas*, Routledge, London.
- Rodriguez, C 2000, 'Civil society and citizens' media: peace Architects for the New Millennium', in KG Wilkins (ed.), *Redeveloping communication for social change*:

*theory, practice, and power*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, Maryland, pp. 147-160.

Rudolph, J 2000, 'The political causes of the Asian crisis', in J Uwe, J Rudolph & J Gomes (eds.), *The political dimensions of the Asian crisis*, Select Books, Singapore, pp. 13-93

Schönwälder, Gerd 1997, 'New Democratic Spaces at the Grassroots? Popular Participation in Latin American Local Governments' in *Development and Change* October 1997 - Volume 28 Issue 4 pp. 753-770. Retrieved January 2, 2005 from <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/servlet/useragent?func=synergy&synergyAction=showTOC&journalCode=dech&volume=28&issue=4&year=1997&part=null>

Servaes, J 1996, 'Linking theoretical perspectives to policy', in Servaes, J, Jacobson, TL & White, SA (eds.), *Participatory communication for social change*, Sage, New Delhi, pp. 29-43.

Shenhav, Y 2003, 'The historical and epistemological foundations of organization theory: fusing sociological theory with engineering discourse', in H Tsoukas & C Knudsen (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of organization theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 183-209.

Siregar, AE 2002, *Indonesia: Democracy, Economic Development and the Media*. Retrieved April 22, 2005 from <http://www.magazine.org.tw/events/fippseoul/presentation/S-I%20amir.pdf>

Tabing, L 2002, *How to do community radio*, UNESCO, New Delhi.

Tabing, L, *The Development of Community Media in South-East Asia*. Retrieved August 8, 2005 from [http://www.unesco.org/webworld/publications/community\\_media/pdf/chap5.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/webworld/publications/community_media/pdf/chap5.pdf)

Tehrani, M 1996, Communication, participation and development: comparative political ideologies, in Servaes, J, Jacobson, TL & White, SA (eds.), *Participatory communication for social change*, Sage, New Delhi, pp. 44-63.

Vatikiotis, MRJ 1993, *Indonesian politics under Suharto: order development and pressure for change*, Routledge, New York.

---

<sup>i</sup> UNESCO often takes initiatives to introduce community radio in Africa and Asia. This organization began launch its community radio campaign programs since 1980 started with cooperation with The Economic Commission for Africa on local broadcasting. The first community radio in Africa was built in Kenya in the 1982. In Asia, UNESCO and Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) facilitated the first community radio in Sri Lanka (Fraser & Estrada, 2001: 8-12). Another foreign institution, Internews has been taking an important role in promoting community radio in Indonesia by supporting legal drafting of broadcasting act 32/2002.

<sup>ii</sup> This statement is based on information from Amelia of Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, Zainal Suryokusumo of Indonesian Press and Broadcasting Society, Slamet Mulyadi of Persatuan Radio Siaran

---

Swasta Nasional Indonesia, and Agnes Widiyanti of the Department of Communication and Information Technology of Republik Indonesia.

<sup>iii</sup> Sudibyo observed that this chaotic situation (*carut-marut*) in the Indonesian broadcasting world was caused by political and economic interests of elites in Jakarta and provinces. His report on this situation can be read in his book *Ekonomi Politik Media Penyiaran* (2004).

<sup>iv</sup> Rachmatie, a member of Indonesia Broadcasting Commission of West Java, in discussion during Asia Pacific Conference on Community Radio, Jakarta November 24-26, 2005 argues that the vast growing of community radio in Indonesia indicates community radio has a big potential in the future.

<sup>v</sup> The government asserts that the implementation of geographical approach is to prevent conflicts within society related the use of community media.(Interviews with Senior Officers at the Department of Communication and Information Technology, Republik of Indonesia, July 14, 2006).