The Role of Community Radio in Multicultural Integration

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Abstract. In Indonesia, various community radios have been established as a form of representation of the diversity of the community with its various needs. Mitra FM community radio is the oldest community radio in North Sumatra. Mitra FM is located in Hamparan Perak, Deli Serdang Regency. The population of Hamparan Perak is dominated by the Javanese tribe. In addition to the Javanese tribe there are also residents from the Banjar, Minang, Malay, Batak and so on. This research aims to analyze the role of Mitra FM community radio in the multicultural integration of Hamparan Perak residents and how community radio members view the position of community radio in the multicultural integration process. This research uses a qualitative approach with data collection through interviews, participant observations and literature studies. The informants of this research consisted of three broadcasters of cultural entertainment programs as well as three community radio members from Javanese, Minang and Banjar ethnicities, and a radio manager. This research found that Mitra FM Community Radio plays a role in the cultural integration process through Minang, Banjar and Javanese language entertainment programs. Mitra FM members become accustomed to languages and cultures outside their native culture. In fact, this acceptance has led to intercultural marriages among Mitra FM members.

Keywords: Multicultural Integration, Community Radio, Mitra FM

1   Introduction

In everyday life, every human being experiences encounters and interactions that bring them together with other people from different cultural backgrounds.Young Yun Kim in [1] explains how people can move from one culture to another, either as a sojourners, immigrants, or refugees who then performs cultural integration with the local culture. Cultural integration is an important process in a global society, especially when dealing with multiculturalism and globalization [2]. The Oxford English Dictionary in [3] defines multiculturalism as "the characteristics of a multicultural society" as well as "the policies or processes by which the identities of cultural groups in such a society are maintained or supported." From this definition, multiculturalism has two meanings, namely the presence of several "cultural groups" in a society, and also as a "policy" to

"support" this condition. This research takes the first definition of multiculturalism, which is how in a society, in this case the community in Tandam Hilir II Village, there is more than one cultural group. Integration is often assumed that one has to let go of parts of their own culture and adapt to the new culture they are in in order to enter or be recognized as part of the host society. Whereas when people are recognized in terms of identity and various ties, they will feel accepted and identify more with the society in which they live. One strategy to encourage people to connect with the wider society is to create space for diversity and allow people to some extent to live out their identity [4].

Indonesia is a country with a large number of ethnicities. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik/ BPS) census in 2010, there are 1340 ethnic groups in Indonesia. The Javanese are the largest group in Indonesia with 41% of the total population [5]. The condition of Indonesia with many ethnic groups certainly has the potential for cultural conflict. The concept of multicultural integration is an alternative to reduce the conflict between cultures. In society, each culture from different ethnicities coexists, appreciates, and learns from each other. This condition will result in equal status for all cultures in society. Thus, there is no longer a so-called dominant culture and minor culture [6]. The (mass) media are a very influential agent in the transmission and socialization of culture because of its enormous reach [7]. Nowadays, radio as the oldest broadcasting medium, is more or less replaced by new media. However, this does not mean that no one listens to radio anymore. Radio has proven its existence when television came along. Predictions that radio would sink and die with the arrival of television were not proven. Bessire dan Fisher in [8] states that despite the emergence and massive use of new media in people's lives, radio remains the most widely used electronic medium worldwide.

The internet offers convenience in human interaction. But it turns out that not everyone can feel it. This is experienced by those in the 3T- Tertinggal, Terdepan, and Terluar (underdeveloped, frontier and outermost) areas. The condition of Indonesia's territory, which consists of 38 provinces and approximately 17,000 islands, has an impact on the inequality of information for all citizens. One solution to this condition is through the existence of community radio. Kalinga Seneviratne, Ph.D in [9] said that for an archipelago like Indonesia, even public broadcasters are unable to reach the entire community. In fact, to empower themselves, people need information. Community radio is media from, by and for the community. Its characteristics are different from commercial radio, especially in terms of broadcast programs. Programs are usually delivered using local or regional languages [10]. Community radio is non-profit, programs are tailored to the needs of its community members, and depends on the participation of its members both in terms of funding and management. The growth of community radio in Indonesia has accelerated since the enactment of Law No. 32 of 2002 about Broadcasting. Various kinds of community radio have been established, representing the diversity of Indonesian society with different needs [11].

The number of community radios in Indonesia continues to grow in line with the opening of access to information, technological advances and the desire of the community to form media that can answer the needs and problems they face. Seneviratne in [12] stated that from the data released by the Indonesian Community

Radio Network (Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia/ JRKI) there are approximately 700 community radio stations spread across Indonesia. Most of these community radio stations are located in rural or suburban areas. Although they come with different names, characters, visions and missions, the goal is the same: to enrich the repertoire of information. In addition, the advantage of this community media is that it is hyperlocal and non-centralized. [13]. Eric Falt and Yasmin Ali Hague in the foreword to the book titled Communicating the Sustainable Development Goals: A Toolkit for Community Radio [14] said that community radio has a role to play in the successful achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The contribution of community radio in the development of a number of countries has been proven. As an example, is the role of community radio in community development in Bangladesh. Community radio can focus the voices of vulnerable and marginalized populations, facilitate rural development, serve as a medium for agricultural promotion and ensure good governance and accountability at the local level. In addition, community radio also plays a role in managing disaster preparedness, ensuring gender equality, empowering communities while protecting local culture and community culture in Bangladesh [15].

Other research has also shown how community radio plays a role in development, especially in terms of information fulfillment among farmers and women's empowerment. Community radio can provide programs that convey actual information in the field of agricultural development. Farmers are aware of government policies broadcast by community radio so that the resulting policies and programs can be put to good use by farmers [16], [17]. Community radio also plays a role in cultural preservation. Radio Komunitas Seni Budaya (RKSB) Maja 107.8 FM in West Java, which is still trying to preserve wayang golek (puppet theater) [18]. RKSB uses a social and behavioral change communication model to raise listeners' awareness so that they are willing to participate in the preservation and development of Sundanese cultural arts. RKSB Maja FM also actively utilizes media and social networks to collaborate with other communities in promoting Sundanese culture. [19]. In addition to RKSB, Cahya Swara Giwangkara Community Radio, which is located in a Vocational High School (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan/ SMK) in Sumedang, also actively promotes Sundanese local wisdom through its broadcast programs. The language of instruction for radio broadcasts is 70% Sundanese, and 30% Indonesian. The musical entertainment format broadcasts Sunda Kawih, Sunda Buhun, Kecapian, Tembang Sunda, and so on. In addition, the flagship program of this community radio, namely: Mumuluk, Sariak Layung, Sundanese Fairy Tales and Pop Sunda [20].

In North Sumatra, community radio is also diverse. One of them is Mitra FM which is located in Tanjung Anom village, Tandam Hilir 2, Hamparan perak District, Deli Serdang Regency. Mitra FM was established in August 2006. In Tanjung Anom the majority of the population works as farmers with food crops of rice, corn, cassava, vegetables, and so on. Most of the population is Javanese descent. In addition to the Javanese tribe, many descendants of the Banjar, Minang, Melayu, Batak, and Karo tribes also live in the Mitra FM broadcast coverage area. The descendants of the Javanese and Banjar tribes and other tribes besides Malay, Batak and Karo who live in Tandam Hilir Dua are migrants in Sumatra (North). Of course, they experience cultural integration that has certainly started several generations before them. The slogan of

community radio Mitra FM is Penebar Pesona Kharisma Budaya Bangsa. The slogan is represented in radio programs that not only convey information about agriculture, health, and all about women. Some of Mitra FM's entertainment programs have Javanese nuances such as gending, campur sari, and so on. Wibowo in [20] explains that in the context of community culture, radio has a duty as a means of information, education and entertainment to build a more humane and humane society.

Based on the brief description above, this research aims to analyze the role of Mitra FM in the multicultural integration process that occurs in the Hamparan Perak District. In addition to analyzing from the medium side of the radio station, this research also looks at the point of view of the members of the community radio regarding the multicultural integration process they undergo.

2   Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Qualitative research was chosen to get a detailed and in-depth picture from the perpetrator's point of view, in this case the manager of Mitra FM and community members of the community radio. Case study design is chosen because researchers want to get a contextualized picture and know in depth the world of experience of the subject or research informants. The case study in this research is a single case, namely Mitra FM. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with manager and broadcasters, especially broadcasters of cultural entertainment programs. In addition, members of the community radio or listeners with Javanese, Banjar and Minang ethnic backgrounds are also become the informants. There are seven informants in this research. Data collection is also done with participant observation techniques and literature studies. Participant observations were made to see how members of the community radio with different ethnic backgrounds interacted with each other at the monthly arisan event (social gathering). Data analysis was done by looking for patterns, insights or concepts that appeared in the verbatim data. This emerged when interview data from informants were juxtaposed with each other. The stages carried out as stated by Miles and Huberman in [21], that the researcher placed the information into different arrangements, created categories and placed evidence in those categories, created data displays to check the data, tabulated events, and organized the information chronologically.

3   Results and Discussion

3.1   Background of the Establishment of Mitra FM

Mitra FM community radio was established in August 2006 by Yayasan Bina Keterampilan Pedesaan Indonesia (BITRA Indonesia). The coverage area of Mitra FM is almost twenty (20) villages spread across four sub-districts in Deli Serdang, North Sumatra. Since its inception, Mitra FM's studio has been located in the house of Mr. Damiri, who is currently also the person in charge of Mitra FM. The vision of the establishment of community radio by the BITRA Indonesia Foundation is the

realization of changes in the people to become independent in the social, economic and cultural fields that are democratic and respect the diversity of customs. Community radio is established as a medium for its members to learn and develop their potential so that they become smart, critical, and aware of their role as members of society.

Currently, the Community Broadcasting Executive Board (Badan Pelaksana Penyiaran Komunitas/ BPPK) of Mitra FM is chaired by Suyetno. The Community Broadcasting Council (Dewan Penyiaran Komunitas/ DPK) is chaired by Damiri. Although Mitra FM's listeners and managers are predominantly older people, young people still participate both as broadcasters and fan members. Some on-air activities that provide enlightenment such as dialogues related to Earth Day, the environment, folk culture, and so on. Mitra FM broadcasts from 8am to 11pm. Entertainment and music are the dominant broadcast formats, accounting for 40% of all airtime. Traditional music dominates 50% of the entertainment and music programs..There are also many off-air activities such as: mapping training; working with Warsi for reforestation in the form of mahogany planting; clean water programs, and so on. All programs to be broadcast must be in accordance with the wants and needs of the community. The aim is to serve the interests of the community's needs for information, education and entertainment [22]. Mitra FM's program is also tailored to the characteristics of its audience, which in terms of occupation is dominated by farmers and housewives.

3.2   The Role of Mitra FM in Multicultural Integration in Hamparan Perak

In its early days, Mitra's cultural entertainment broadcasts were very Javanese. This was due to the fact that the majority of the population in Tanjung Anom Village, where Mitra FM is located, are of Javanese descent. The *gending*, *campur sari* program was presented by the broadcaster using Javanese language. The *macopatan* program is also broadcast. However, since the three announcers of the program have passed away, the macopat program is no longer on air. As said by Damiri:

> "There used to be three people who performed macopat every Friday night. My late father was one of them. Since the three macopat announcers died, the program is no longer on air."

Mitra FM also accommodates cultural broadcasts for other tribes. Cultural entertainment broadcasts are hosted by broadcasters who come from the tribe or have lived in a particular area. For example, the Karo song broadcast is hosted by broadcaster Dolat Tarigan, the Batak song broadcast is hosted by a broadcaster with Batak ethnicity. The Minang song broadcast was hosted by Mrs. Tuti. Mrs Tuti is a javanese, but being born and raised in Payakumbuh makes her fluent in Minang language and culture. In addition, Mitra FM also has a Banjar cultural entertainment program which is presented in Banjar language.

Yan Paris, a broadcaster of Banjar language entertainment programs, is happy with Mitra FM. He feels that there are no Banjar songs played on the radio other than on Mitra FM.

> "This Banjar song is not popular, no one knows it. Once there was Mitra, Banjar songs were lifted up. People around here know Banjar songs through Mitra FM."

Mitra FM used to have a program called Ada Saja, hosted by the late Yusuf Tan. He hosted a program where he used mixed languages. When broadcasting he used all the languages of the various tribes in Hamparan Perak. He speaks in the village language (Malay), Banjar language and Javanese language, he himself is of Chinese descent.

Figure 1. The Announcer in Mitra FM's broadcast room

Listening to cultural entertainment programs also helps community members to learn other regional languages beyond their own. They also come to like regional songs other than their own tribal songs. As Wak Payau said, although he is a Banjar tribesman, he has come to like Minang, Malay, Javanese songs, and so on. Even when he meets people from the Javanese tribe, he can respond to conversations in Javanese.

> "Now there are no more boundaries, we have blended. We meet Javanese people, we us Javanese language."

Damiri also emphasized that Hamparan Perak is also used to mixed marriages. If in the past, around 1980s, the Banjar tribe would be prohibited from marrying a Javanese tribe, this is no longer the case. For example, Suyitno has a Karo wife, Jawak is

Javanese and has a Banjar wife, and Muji is Javanese and has a Banjar wife. This process of multicultural integration through cultural broadcast programs also helps community members not to view people from other ethnic groups on the basis of stereotypes. Integration as a sociological process in which society brings together heterogeneity and produces something new. Integration is a dynamic process in the creation of a society based on individual and community cooperation [6].

Cooperation is one of the elements to support the continuity of community radio. Cooperation becomes social capital for organizations such as community radio. A further impact of cooperation for community radio is the feeling that the broadcaster is in good hands and can continue to produce broadcast content [23]. The challenge faced by Mitra FM in its efforts as a medium for multicultural integration in the Hamparan Perak area is how to find broadcasters who can replace the deceased cultural entertainment program broadcasters. Apart from macopat, cultural broadcasts in Batak and Karo languages are no longer continuing. However, if there are broadcasters who are able and willing to present programs in Batak and Karo, then of course the cultural entertainment program in Batak and Karo will air again.

3.3   Mitra FM Members' Views on Cultural Diversity

In accordance with Mitra's FM motto of *Penebar Pesona Kharisma Budaya Bangsa* (Spreading the Charm of the Nation's Cultural Charisma), the radio program is in line with the slogan. Radio helps them in the process of recognizing cultures outside their own. Although they are not fluent in other regional languages, such as Banjar, they understand the meaning of conversations made by people from the Banjar tribe. In addition, Mitra FM members also increasingly like songs from other cultures. During *arisan* (social gathering), they are also accustomed to singing Malay songs, Karo songs, Batak songs, and so on.

Figure 2. Arisan atmosphere at the house of one of Mitra FM Community Radio members

Suyitno does not want to say that Mitra FM has succeeded in the process of multicultural integration. However, if there are community radios that see what they are doing as something good, then please follow or emulate it. Members of the Mitra FM community feel they have gained a new family through the community radio. After getting acquainted, greeting each other and sending greetings on air, they meet through social gatherings. This social gathering is a place to familiarize each other with each other. In addition, a form of respect for cultures other than the culture of origin is seen in one of the broadcasters named Boy. Boy is Javanese, but because his younger sister married a man from the Karo tribe, he had to be given a clan. He received the Ginting clan. Since then, Boy has pinned Ginting behind his name. With the cultural diversity found in the Mitra FM Community, they see it as something "complete". Cultural differences are no longer considered something that needs to be debated.

4   Conclusion

Mitra FM Community Radio plays an important role in the multicultural integration process in Tandam Hilir II village, Hamparan Perak, Deli Serdang Regency. The radio slogan is in line with the radio programs they broadcast. Entertainment programs in regional languages, be it Minang, Banjar, or Javanese, make community members learn about cultures that are different from their own. The Banjar people are also happy because they feel that their culture has a place in Sumatra. Mitra FM community members see the cultural diversity that exists in their area as something complete. They no longer view people from other cultures on the basis of cultural stereotypes. In fact, many intercultural marriages have occurred among them. Although the area where Mitra FM broadcasts is dominated by Javanese, people from other ethnic groups do not feel like a minority. Similarly, Javanese members do not feel like the majority.

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