

Javanese Cultural Content and Identity Construction: Study on Javanese Transmigrant Descendants in Lampung, Indonesia

DHANIK SULISTYARINI*
University of Lampung, Indonesia

WAHYUDI KUMOROTOMO
RAJIYEM
Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the role of media, especially Javanese cultural content, in the construction of the cultural identity of the Javanese transmigrant descendants in Lampung, Indonesia. The formulation of the problem in this study is how the role of Javanese cultural content in the construction of the identity of the descendants of Javanese transmigrants—in particular third and fifth generation—in Lampung? It is further divided into three research questions, which are how is Javanese cultural content displayed in the media in Lampung? What media are consumed by the descendants of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung? How does Javanese cultural content in the media play a role in the construction of the cultural identity of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung? This is a case study research, and the data was collected through in-depth interviews with 8 descendants of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung, 3 local media managers, and participative observations. The results showed that the descendants of Javanese transmigrants used both traditional and digital media. Elderly informants used print media (Javanese-language magazine), radio, and television, as well as a small amount of digital media. Meanwhile, adolescent informants consume Javanese cultural content through digital media, especially YouTube and TikTok. These results prompted researchers to argue that media and technology play a role in the construction of transmigrants' identities. The Javanese cultural content helps transmigrants to maintain their Javanese cultural identity.

Keywords: *Media, identity construction, transmigration, cultural identity, Javanese culture.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of media and technology has affected numerous and varied aspects of people's lives. One of the most prominent of these is how the media influences identity construction in diasporic societies that arise due to the movement of people from one place to another. Such movement has occurred for millennia on global and local scales alike. Media and technology are some examples of tools people of a diaspora can use to connect with their place of origin and culture; for example, Bollywood films help the Indian diaspora in the Netherlands familiarize themselves with Indian culture and generate a desire to visit India (Nanjangud & Reijnders, 2022). A number of studies on the role of social media for immigrants who are refugees due to war in their home countries—for example, research on the role of smartphones and social media for Syrian refugees in Europe—have also been conducted across a range of settings. Findings from this research include that social media can serve a variety of purposes, such as maintaining relationships with loved ones in their home country (Perez & Salgado, 2020), providing information (Melki & Kozman, 2021), helping Syrian refugees caused by warfare in their home country (Alencar et al., 2019; Miconi, 2020),

supporting social, health, and identity (Udwan et al., 2020), or assisting in the process of adaptation to a new place (Smets et al., 2021; Miconi, 2020). Examples of book-length studies on this topic include Karim's (2003) *The Media of Diaspora* and Alonso and Oiarzabal's (2010) *Diasporas in the New Media Age: Identity, Politics, and Community*, which examined the use of media by diaspora communities in various countries, including the Indian diaspora community in Australia and the Middle Eastern diaspora in Los Angeles.

In the broadest sense, McQuail (2010) describes media institutions as concerned with producing and distributing knowledge to society that allows people to understand their experiences and social environment. For most people, messages obtained from the media, whether in the form of images, ideas, or information, are the primary source of awareness about their past (i.e., history) and their present experience. Moreover, media provides a memory of where they were and who they are (i.e., building an identity) and can provide an orientation toward the future; it can even be part of perceptions and definitions of social reality and become a primary source for standards, models, and norms. Due to this significant influence, media can be an important part of society. Crucially, scholars should examine the extent to which the media can intercede between individuals and the social reality around them and thus mediate contact with social reality (McQuail, 2010).

Due to their presence across many societies, the media and technology also contribute to cultural identity construction within transmigration societies. In Indonesia, people have historically moved from one densely populated island to another island—a process known as transmigration—which has occurred since the Dutch East Indies era amid the Dutch “Ethical Policy.” The first transmigration event occurred in 1905 when 155 families migrated from the Bagelen area in Purworejo of Central Java to Lampung (Asyik & Trisnarningsih, 2015). Lampung was the leading transmigration destination during colonization and until independence. Over time, Lampung has remained one of the destination areas of transmigration from Java Island. Javanese has historically been the largest ethnic group in Lampung, comprising 64.06% of the population—much larger than the local ethnic community, Lampungnese, which constitutes 13.56% (Lampung Provincial Population Census, 2010).

The movement of people entails both physical movement from one region to another as well as the movement of culture from its place of origin to a new one; in the new location, these different cultures interact. Several studies on the cultural identity of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung show that Javanese descendants of transmigrants generally still maintain a Javanese cultural identity but have somewhat adopted Sumatran culture. Scholars vary in their proposed reasons for this cultural shift: first, Javanese people have lived in the Lampung region for more than a century under the influence of Lampung culture (Elmhirst, 2000; Tirtosudarmo, 2015; Nurdin, 2019), or second, how Javanese culture is socialized in families has influenced the adoption of Sumatran or Lampung culture (Aryanti, 2015).

In this research, we argue that some environmental factors can affect the cultural identity of the Javanese transmigrant descendants in Lampung. One of them is exposure to the media. Indeed, digital technology has now penetrated numerous aspects of people's lives, introduced different cultural values and potentially encouraged a process of negotiation and cultural identity construction among Javanese people living in Lampung. In multicultural societies such as Lampung that have undergone transmigration, the media functions as an intermediary between the Javanese transmigrant community and the surrounding social reality and between other people or cultures in their environment, a process termed media mediation.

Javanese migrants constitute most people in Lampung, far outnumbering the local community. Accordingly, media content in Lampung displays much Javanese culture, including Javanese songs (*campursari*) or shadow puppet shows (*Wayang*). Based on observations and interviews with local radio managers, every local radio station broadcasts a program of Javanese songs, and listeners' enthusiasm for the programs was quite high. In addition, Javanese transmigrants consume other media infused with Javanese cultural content, making it important to study the role of this cultural content in constructing cultural identity among the Javanese transmigrant diaspora in Lampung. The primary question motivating this research is: What is the role of media mediation, especially Javanese cultural content, in constructing the cultural identity of the Javanese transmigrant community in Lampung? This question is divided into three research sub-questions: (RQ1) How does the media in Lampung display Javanese cultural content? (RQ2) What media is consumed by the descendants of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung? (RQ3) How does media content about Javanese culture influence the cultural identity construction of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on media use in preserving ethnic identity has been conducted by Sarifin et al. (2021), who focused on the second generation of the Bawean ethnic group in Malaysia. Although their work has similarities with the present study—both examine media use and identity in diaspora communities—it also has several differences, such as the ethnicity of the studied population, the research setting, and the historical context of the communities examined. For example, the Bawean ethnic community is composed of descendants of migrants from Indonesia and does not constitute the majority in Malaysia; conversely, this study's population of interest, Javanese people transmigrants, migrated to Lampung through a transmigration program managed by the government or independently, ultimately becoming the majority ethnic group in Lampung. In both Sarifin et al.'s (2021) and our research, this context will affect the conditions of the local media industries and the media exposure received by the transmigrants. Finally, this research was conducted in the Pringsewu, Lampung. We chose this location as it is home to the largest Javanese ethnic group in Lampung, constituting 84.6% of Pringsewu's total population (Lampung Population Census, 2010).

The novelty of this research is its focus on Javanese transmigrants in Lampung as local migrants within a country. The literature contains scant research exploring the role of media in local, within-country migration communities. We argue that studying media use among diasporic communities who migrated within a country is no less important than studying it among diasporic communities who migrated between countries. Indeed, the impact of transmigration is highly complex, with multiple contributing factors; it involves more than the physical movement of people, relating to cultural, social, economic, and other aspects (Warganegara & Wiley, 2021). This study seeks to address another gap in the literature: how intergenerational differences in Javanese cultural content—those of traditional and new media—affect or manifest in the transmigration diaspora community. Although recent research in this area has been conducted on media and diaspora communities, it primarily concerns the role of social media (Alencar et al., 2019; Leurs, 2019; Miconi, 2020; Perez & Salgado, 2020; Sarifin et al., 2021). Therefore, this intergenerational study is important because it enables us to assess differences among generations of Javanese transmigrants in

Lampung who are reconstructing their cultural identity. Moreover, it endeavors to fill existing gaps in the literature by examining the Javanese transmigrant diaspora community of Lampung according to its use of media and technology and how this influences its construction of cultural identity.

Many experts have described and conceptualized cultural identity. For example, Gudykunst and Nishida (2000) stated that cultural identity is a form of social identity possessed by individuals, discernable from how they identify as members of their culture. Stuart Hall (1994) explains that identity, in general, is not as simple as people think, a continually changing “production” that is never finished, which also applies to cultural identity. According to Hall’s (1994) *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, this concept can be viewed from two perspectives: the first view views people’s cultural identity as relating to one overarching culture—a kind of collective “one true self” shared by people with the same history and ancestors; the second view views cultural identity as a profoundly complex and diverse process related to “becoming” and “being.” In the former view, cultural identity is reflected in shared historical experiences and shared cultural symbols, which provide a stable and unchanging framework of knowledge and meaning. In the latter view, cultural identity is the subject of history, culture, and power, is connected to past and future history, and is always transforming. In other words, cultural identity belongs to the past as well as the future. Likewise, Jameson (2007) contends that cultural identity constitutes an individual’s feelings that originate from formal or informal membership in a group that transmits knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions, and ways of life.

Media and communication are critical aspects to consider in discussions of cultural identity, including when evaluating how migrant communities remain connected to their culture and place of origin or how they negotiate and construct their cultural identity. Today, the rapid development of communication technology and globalization makes access to traditional media and digital media increasingly easier, and local and global content can be accessed easily; however, not all media content circulated through modern technology will align with the values of a given culture. Media and technology thus catalyze and accelerate the dissemination of information, values, and beliefs, spread global culture, and have a significant impact, interacting in complex ways with diasporic cultural identity. Indeed, Alonso and Oiarzabal (2010) stated that the different experiences and ways diaspora communities use technology to enrich their “sense of identity” and that the information environment or “info-sphere” has changed how national identities are created and reproduced (p. xi). The presence of communication technology like the Internet, mobile phones, and satellites has caused myriad changes, including vertical ones across various media (television, newspapers, radio) as well as horizontal, complex ones as audiences become more active and transform the identity-formation process. Presently, the media and culture industry shape individual identity in such multifaceted ways that culture can no longer be positioned as a homogeneous concept, mirroring how everyday life is no longer considered homogeneous—instead, it is culturally constructed and highly contested (Bennet, 2005).

Regarding conceptual and methodological approaches in previous research on this topic, Chen and Lin (2016) stated that cultural identity can be studied from various perspectives, depending on the researcher’s orientation and assumptions. Indeed, scholars generally argue that cultural identity is a construct that encompasses areas related to group identity, including citizenship, race, ethnicity, age, gender and sex, sexuality, socioeconomic status, regional identity, ethnolinguistic identity, political affiliation, and (dis)ability.

Moreover, this concept is relational, forming and being shaped by communication choices, behavior, and negotiation—especially in intercultural interactions. Cultural identity can be defined as the status, experience, enactment, (co-)creation, (re)negotiation, or contestation of group members, or, more simply, as social identification (often through communication) in a particular context. Moreover, Chen and Lin (2016) emphasize that identities are multiple, intersecting, and simultaneously social and personal.

With ‘cultural identity’ conceptualized as above, Chen and Lin (2016) detailed several approaches to studying it: the social scientific approach, the interpretive cultural approach, the critical/interpretive approach, and the critical approach. The first, the social scientific approach, views cultural identity as requiring inseparable individual and social meaning; it is primarily concerned with the degree or strength of group identification, psychological ties, and the emotional significance a person feels toward a particular group and its values, customs, norms, or communication practices. In the second, the interpretive cultural approach, cultural identity is conceived of as a social and cultural construction that is dynamically strengthened, negotiated, and co-created through interactions with members and non-members of a group. Third, the critical/interpretive approach seeks to understand how people know, become, or negotiate their cultural identification and identity and understand how social institutions such as colonialism, racism, sexism, and class can hinder the depiction and negotiation of identity. Fourth, the critical approach aims to expose and challenge—even emancipate—existing power structures of identity politics that produce and reproduce inequality, domination, and pressure based on factors such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation.

Chen and Lin (2016) further explained that studies on cultural identity in intercultural communication are increasingly developing their analyses of intercultural interactions as well as cultural identity within a technologically mediated context, as various media content—especially entertainment content—is easily accessible worldwide in the era of globalization. Cultural identity thus becomes prominent when entertainment content enters a novel cultural context (Chen & Lin, 2016). Currently, people negotiate their cultural identity in the context of intercultural communication even as they construct their cultural identity by using media platforms (Chen & Lin, 2016).

Given the above, this research assumes that media and technology mediation play a role in the cultural identity construction of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung. Their Javanese cultural identity can be maintained as well as eroded by media influence, making it important to examine how media mediation plays a role in the process of constructing the cultural identity of the Javanese transmigrant descendants in Lampung. This work also examines how transmigrant descendants use media to stay connected with their culture of origin, as well as how they negotiate and construct their cultural identity amidst exposure to media content in the current digital era. This article is divided into several sections. Following this introduction, the next sections respectively detail the method, the results, the discussion, and the conclusions from this research.

METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative research using the case study method to examine how Javanese cultural content in the media plays a role in the identity construction of the descendants of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung. The researcher believes that a case study is most appropriate to use in this research, because this research examines the issue of the role of

media content in a certain context, in this case in the context of Javanese transmigrants in the Pringsewu area, Lampung. Stake (1995) explains that case studies are expected to capture the complexity of a case. Case studies are intended to understand the specifics and complexity of various activities in important situations. Stake further states that in selecting cases to research, one of the important things to consider is the uniqueness and context of the case, in addition to access to the required data.

The community environment setting where this research was conducted is a unique society, where Javanese immigrants constitute the majority of Lampung's population, far exceeding the local population. This is different from Javanese transmigrants in other regions in Indonesia. Therefore, the researcher believes that the community setting will provide colour to this research, so case study is the most appropriate method. Data was collected using several techniques, including interviews with main and additional sources, participant observation, and data from documents about transmigration in Lampung contained in the Lampung Transmigration Museum.

Creswell (2007) explains that to study the same behavior, beliefs, and language patterns in society, researchers must “immerse” into the community’s daily life, making observations and interviews with members of the group being studied. Therefore, we conducted participatory observations on Javanese transmigrant descendants in the Pringsewu Regency of Lampung by staying with one of the families descended from Javanese transmigrants at the research location. We resided with them for approximately one month to observe activities related to the use of media and technology, the type of content accessed, as well as the intensity of use of digital media and technology.

This research is interpretive and qualitative, and we focused on the views and experiences of the informants regarding the use of media and its influence on their cultural identity, as well as the negotiation of their cultural identity in the face of the influx of information and various media content that may not be entirely in line with cultural norms. The in-depth interviews were conducted with informants who were descendants of Javanese transmigrants, especially elderly and teenage ones. We selected information using the snowball technique, and eight informants who were descendants of Javanese transmigrants were ultimately interviewed. In addition, data were obtained from informal conversations, which allowed informants to feel more comfortable expressing their opinions due to the casual, low-pressure setting. We also interviewed three local media (radio) managers in Pringsewu; their workplaces are Rapemda Radio, which is owned and managed by the Pringsewu regional government, and two private radio stations, Saburai Radio and Amanda Radio. The interviews with radio managers were intended to obtain information about media policies relating to locally produced content and the format of the content produced. Finally, documentation data (e.g., notes or photographs) about transmigration in Lampung were obtained from the Transmigration Museum in Bagelen Village in Lampung, Indonesia. The data in this research were thus gathered from observation notes, interview recordings, conversation recordings, notes and transcripts of interviews and conversations, and documentation on transmigration and from the transmigrants of Javanese descendants in Lampung.

The data were processed and analyzed to discern the patterns that occur in people’s lives by describing, analyzing, and interpreting them holistically and thematically. The data analysis steps were as follows: transcribe the interview results, code the data in the form of short notes to interpret the data obtained, create categories, and then develop themes. To

ensure data validity, we used some of the strategies to obtain valid data that Creswell (2007) described, including data source triangulation, which is carried out by using several research data sources. In this case, triangulation involved observation, in-depth interviews, informal conversations, documentation about transmigration, and other demographic data related to the participants studied. We also wrote a detailed description of the object under study (i.e., how this population uses media and technology and how they influence the negotiation and construction of their cultural identity) and thoroughly explained the setting of the area studied. The next strategy is to increase research time and intensive observation in the field, including building trust with informants, studying the existing culture, and checking if there is misinformation from either researchers or informants. We selected these strategies as, among the eight strategies Creswell (2007) identified, these are the most feasible in the context of this research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section will detail the results gathered from the data collection in this research, which seeks to answer the following question: What is the role of media mediation, especially Javanese cultural content, in constructing the cultural identity of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung who have been living in Lampung for a long time? The discussion will be divided into three parts based on the sub-questions identified for this research. The first concerns Javanese cultural content in the media in Lampung; the second details the consumption of Javanese cultural content by the descendants of Javanese transmigrants; the final section pertains to the role of Javanese cultural content in the cultural identity construction of the descendants of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung.

To gather data, we conducted in-depth interviews with eight informants who were descendants of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung and three local radio managers. One researcher also gathered data via participant observation by living at the research location with a family of Javanese transmigrant descendants. The following table summarizes the informants included in this research:

Table 1: Informants in this study

Informant	Age/Gender	Profession
KH	74/M	Retired teacher
KU	88/M	Retired teacher
SP	65/M	Farmer
ML	59/F	Housewife
LE	27/F	Small business owner
YI	74/M	Retired teacher
DI	16/F	Student
GD	16/F	Student
DO	49/M	Radio manager
YU	50/M	Radio manager
AD	35/M	Radio manager

This research was conducted in Lampung, one of the main transmigration destination areas from the Dutch era of colonization, now a site of transmigration during the post-independence and New Order era. As mentioned in the preceding sections of this paper, Lampung was chosen as the research site due to its divergencies from other transmigration areas in Indonesia—specifically, the number of immigrants from Java in Lampung far exceeds

the local ethnic Lampung population of the Pringsewu area in Lampung. Moreover, this location has the largest number of ethnic Javanese residing in Lampung.

In the context of this research, we contend that Javanese identity can be identified as a specific cultural and ethnic identity. Javanese people were born from generations of ancestors with Javanese ethnicity and have ties to Javanese culture that guide and shape their lives. This Javanese cultural and ethnic identity can be seen in various forms, such as language, philosophical outlook, or values. All informants interviewed were born in Lampung, and their grandfather or great-grandfather was the individual who immigrated to Lampung during colonization.

a. Javanese Cultural Content in the Media in Lampung

As described previously in this work, the population composition in Lampung, Indonesia, is unique. Initially, the transmigration program started with Dutch colonization, which the Indonesian government then continued with its official transmigration program, resulting in many immigrants from the island of Java to Lampung. However, apart from the official transmigration program, some migrants (i.e., spontaneous transmigrants) from the island of Java transmigrate independently, often following relatives of theirs who have previously transmigrated to Lampung. This had an impact on the increasing number of Javanese immigrants. Ultimately, the ethnic Javanese community became the majority in Lampung, exceeding the local population of Lampung: specifically, the Javanese ethnic population was 64.06%, while the local ethnic Lampung community was only 13.56% (Population Census Lampung, 2010).

The large proportion of Javanese people in Lampung influences the local media content produced. Based on our observations, Javanese cultural content is widely broadcast on radio, while local television stations and newspapers typically lack coverage of Javanese cultural content. However, the Javanese people in Pringsewu, Lampung, can also access television stations from East Java. Generally, the television station shows Javanese cultural content in the form of *Wayang Kulit* (shadow puppet show) and *Ludruk*, a form of traditional Javanese drama art interspersed with humor.

Based on an interview with one of the local radio managers, the radio broadcasts local Lampung and Javanese cultural content, as radio often focuses and thrives on local content and audiences. They regard it as crucial to consider the local audience when designing a program. Local media—particularly radio—thus generally have cultural programs catering to Javanese and other cultures. Moreover, according to this study's observations of local media in Pringsewu, the most popular Javanese cultural content on radio is *campursari*, a Javanese song program; every local radio station has one of these programs, which is generally broadcast in Javanese. Per the interviews conducted with radio station managers, the program has received a good response from listeners. The audience for *campursari* is not limited to the Javanese diaspora in Lampung but is shared with the Javanese diaspora abroad, including migrant workers in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Indeed, apart from broadcasting conventionally, several local radio stations also broadcast through social media, such as Facebook, including Rapemda Radio, which the Pringsewu regional government owns, and Saburai Radio. By broadcasting on Facebook, the audience can participate through the comment sections and watch or interact with the announcers. In addition to *campursari*, one of the radio stations has shown *wayang* (shadow puppet) shows in the past; however, it has

not continued until now because it is difficult for the radios to find announcers who have mastered various aspects of *wayang*.

b. Media Consumption by Javanese Transmigrants in Lampung

The informants, descendants of Javanese transmigrants, generally consume media to keep updated with the information and the news. This finding is in line with research by Rosales-Viray and Viray (2024) on negotiation of identities among Aeta Ambala, an indigenous group in the Philippines that experienced displacement from their original environment. They found that the community maintains a strong sense of ethnic identity and they use the media as a source of information. Another research also found that the media is important for internally displaced persons (IDPs) for news and information, as well as for communication with their friends and relatives (Elareshi, Ziani & Alsridi, 2023).

They also consume the media containing Javanese cultural content. Based on participant observations in Pringsewu, Lampung, the site of the largest ethnic Javanese population in Lampung, Javanese transmigrants are still closely connected to Javanese culture in daily life. The Javanese people in this area often use the radio to listen to Javanese songs. During the day, one can find people playing Javanese songs on the radio at a loud volume such that the neighbours can hear them. When one of this study's researchers lived with the SP informant's family for one month, the researcher observed that they listened to Javanese songs broadcast on the radio and played them loudly every day. The SP informant said that he did not feel satisfied with listening to these songs if they were not played loud. Informant SP also explained that he had listened to *Wayang Kulit* (shadow puppet show) each night for years on the *Wayang Kulit* CD player that had been saved to the memory card on his mobile phone.

Based on the results of interviews with informants and observations made, the media consumed is quite varied in terms of traditional and new media. On the one hand, the older informants generally consume traditional media such as print, radio, and television; they also use new media such as YouTube, but traditional media is still dominant among this group. On the other hand, teenage informants of Javanese transmigrant descendants consume more new media, such as YouTube and TikTok, which are considered more interesting than traditional media among this group. Regarding content, although both age groups consume Javanese cultural content, differences exist in the type of content consumed. The older generation generally consumes content in the form of traditional arts such as *Wayang Kulit*, *campursari*, and others. Meanwhile, the younger generation consumes content that contains Javanese culture but in a more modern way, such as funny video content in Javanese or stories about Java with historical settings that sometimes add mysticism. Given its findings, this research shows that radio is the main media for Javanese transmigrants in Lampung, particularly for listening to the *campursari* and *Wayang Kulit* programs.

According to this study's interviews, the participants enjoy the radio because listening to it can be done while performing other activities, as explained by informant ML, a housewife and someone active in her community, as follows:

If we listen to the radio, it's fun. If you turn on the radio, it's very entertaining...Even though I do the chores all day, if the radio is on, our feelings are entertained... (informant ML)

Per this explanation, she likes listening to the radio and views it as entertaining, partially because she can enjoy her favourite music while doing household work. This finding aligns with Koehler and Neubauer (2020), who found that listening to music is one of the activities most often carried out among various groups, ages, genders, and cultural groups and has become a part of everyday life. Moreover, Mohamad (2023) explains that radio surpasses the content of broadcasters, news, and music to become about “companionship and connecting emotionally” with listeners. He even found that listening to the radio can improve the social well-being of listeners (Mohamad, 2023). Another example of the popularity of radio among Javanese transmigrants in Lampung was given by informant DO, a radio station manager. He explained that sometimes, listeners share photos on the radio’s social media accounts to show that they listen to the *campursari* program while working, including farming work. In addition to providing conventional broadcasting, these local radio stations stream through social media, especially Facebook.

The popularity of radio media among the people of Pringsewu arises from several characteristics of radio that distinguish it from other media. For example, radio offers various programs such as music and information, talk shows, and others, and, as mentioned above, radio stations will broadcast their shows over social media to attract the audience’s attention, some radio stations like Rapemda Radio (which the regional government owns) and Saburai Radio. Due to its audiovisual and interactive characteristics, broadcasting through Facebook offers a more engaging platform for the listeners. The announcers of the *campursari* program use Javanese mixed with Indonesian when speaking, and listeners can interact with announcers directly or with fellow listeners through the announcers. The listeners are thus united by an interest in Javanese *campursari* songs and Javanese culture.

Based on these observations, the engagement through radio and social media was quite high, as evident from the likes and comments from listeners of the program, made by residents in Lampung and its surroundings as well as other regions in Indonesia, such as East Java and Jakarta, or from the diaspora of Indonesian workers living in, for example, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. Listeners who comment generally use the Javanese language, which aligns with Vidal’s (2019) findings that radio can contribute to forming a sense of community by connecting people and helping in social relationships.

In addition to radio, print media is also an important medium for some informants. In this regard, we identified something unique in the media consumption of two elderly informants (who were about 80 years old). The informants had subscribed to a weekly Javanese magazine called *Panjebar Semangat* since the 1980s—more than 40 years. They like magazines because they can read them at any time with no limitation on when they can browse their content. The Javanese language used in the magazine became the main attraction for the informants, so they subscribed to the magazine for more than 40 years. KU explained that he liked the magazine because it was in the Javanese language and had stories about *Wayang*. The Javanese language used in the magazine is Javanese *ngoko*—a level of Javanese that is usually used to communicate with peers or people you know well—and KU felt more comfortable reading the *Panjebar Semangat* magazine that uses Javanese *ngoko* because the language was simpler and easier to understand. This informant liked the magazine sections about serial stories, the history of certain regions, *Wayang*, and stories related to mysticism. However, KU’s children and grandchildren notably did not read the Javanese language magazines because they did not understand how to read them because,

in everyday life, they use a grade of the Indonesian language other than *ngoko* to communicate.

Other media used in addition to radio and print media are television and new media, especially YouTube and TikTok. The informants used television to watch *Wayang* or *Ludruk* shows broadcast by television stations from East Java. Based on our observations, local television stations in Lampung do not broadcast Javanese cultural programs such as *Wayang* or other programs; they only have a few programs with cultural content, which is usually Lampung cultural content. For example, some local television stations broadcast Lampung songs or a program with voice-over using the Lampung language.

Regarding new media usage, some older informants use new media technology, such as the YouTube platform, to access Javanese content such as *campursari* and *Wayang Kulit*, as told by informant SY:

If there are Javanese songs on YouTube, I'm happy; I watch [them] every day. It's rare [to see] on TV. For example, on YouTube, if we are tired after work, I listen to *campursari* [or] I listen to *Wayang*, just for entertainment.

Informant SY uses new media and media platforms, particularly YouTube, to search for Javanese songs or *Wayang* that he likes. Meanwhile, another informant, KH, who has difficulty using YouTube, is helped by his family to find the content he wants. Notably, although new media like YouTube has audio-visual characteristics, these informants used it as an audio medium, only listening to the sound. Another elderly informant, SU, really likes shadow puppets. He has 30 titles of *Wayang* saved on a memory card on his cell phone that he has listened to every night for years without getting bored.

The teenage descendants of Javanese transmigrants generally use new media by accessing media such as TikTok and YouTube. A teenage informant, DI, said that she likes watching funny content on TikTok that uses the Javanese language. She felt happy being able to understand funny content without having to read the translation. Another teenage informant, GA, explained that she likes watching content or stories about Java with historical settings that contain mystical content through YouTube. He was curious about it. She said that by accessing the story, she could also study history in a fun way compared to studying history at school.

c. Javanese Cultural Content and Construction of Identity of Transmigrants

Based on the results of interviews and observations, media plays a role in the construction of the Javanese cultural identity of the descendants of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung. The media consumed by Javanese transmigrants helps them maintain their Javanese identity. This accords with research conducted by Sarifin et al. (2021), who found that the media plays a role in preserving the ethnic identity of diaspora communities. For example, Informant ML said that when he listened to Javanese songs on the radio, he felt his feelings of Javanese identity getting stronger, stating:

When I hear Javanese songs on the radio, I feel my sense of Javanese-ness getting stronger...I keep remembering the advice of my parents [and] our grandmothers that Javanese songs should not be forgotten (informant ML)

Another informant who has subscribed to the Javanese magazine *Panjebar Semangat* for more than 40 years explained:

I feel proud that we have a magazine that always preserve[s] Javanese culture.
(informant KH)

This statement demonstrates how the media play a role in maintaining the Javanese cultural identity of the informants. Consuming media with Javanese cultural content makes their feelings of Javanese-ness stronger. In addition, media that present Javanese cultural content also convey a sense of pride that Javanese culture is preserved through the media. For example, the Javanese magazine *Panjebar Semangat* has been subscribed to by informants who have lived in Lampung since birth, proving that Javanese culture is still strongly attached, especially to older informants, and the media helps maintain their Javanese cultural identity. The Javanese language used is the main attraction for the informants, so they have been subscribing for more than 40 years.

In the daily lives of the descendants of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung, Javanese is still widely used, for example, in communication within the family, in addition to the Indonesian language. The researchers observed communication in the WhatsApp group in Pringsewu, where the members were Javanese; they used both Indonesian and Javanese to communicate. They generally use Javanese to communicate informally, such as joking between members. They use Javanese *ngoko*, a level of Javanese that is usually used to communicate with people who are already familiar.

Zen (2021) found that Javanese is still highly valued as a marker of ethnic identity in multilingual families. This aligns with Hall (1997), who believes that the relationship between language, identity, and culture is very close. He describes that culture is related to the,

Production and the exchange of meanings—the “giving and taking of meaning” between members of a society or group... language is a link used to give meaning to various things (to make sense of things), such as objects, people, or events. Meaning is what gives us a sense of identity, “of who we are and with whom we ‘belong.’” (Hall, 1997, p. #)

Meaning is thus always produced and exchanged in every social and personal interaction—including in various media and disseminated through mass media. In the context of this research, media such as Javanese language magazines, radio programs that present Javanese cultural content, such as *campursari* songs and *Wayang Kulit*, or social media TikTok and YouTube also play a role in producing and disseminating Javanese culture. These media are used by the descendants of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung to maintain their Javanese cultural identity, even though they were born and raised in Lampung.

CONCLUSION

From the results of this research, the descendants of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung mostly identify themselves as Javanese, even though they were born and grew up in Lampung. The important point from this research is that media is one way for the descendants of Javanese transmigrants to maintain their cultural identity by consuming content related to Javanese culture. However, there are differences in media consumption patterns between

the descendants of older transmigrants (generally the third generation) and the teenage descendants of the transmigrants (usually the fifth generation). Third-generation transmigrants generally consume traditional media such as radio, Javanese magazines, and television, and some informants use YouTube. Meanwhile, the teenage generation uses new media, such as the YouTube and TikTok platforms, to access Javanese cultural content. This shows the importance of media in maintaining cultural identity in diaspora communities.

This is in line with Atashi (2018) who conducted research on diasporic media in the form of reality shows that adapt similar shows from the UK and feature Iranian diaspora as contestants on cooking shows while discussing various matters related to the daily lives of Iranian diaspora in the UK. In this context, diasporic media plays a role as a liaison between the Iranian diaspora community in the UK and their place of origin, including in relation to culture. The Javanese transmigrant diaspora in Lampung uses media with Javanese cultural content to connect with their native culture, namely Javanese culture. Even though they were born and raised in Lampung, they identify themselves strongly as Javanese. Therefore, Javanese content in the media helps them to maintain their cultural identity and connect with their place of origin.

Javanese cultural content in the media is also a representation of Javanese culture for the Javanese transmigrant diaspora community in Lampung. Javanese arts content such as *campursari* and shadow puppets which are accessed via radio, the use of Javanese in the Panjekar Spirit magazine, the topics discussed in the magazine, including learning to write Javanese script, *wayang* stories, historical places, and so on, also show representation of Javanese culture.

The data in this study were collected from the descendants of Javanese transmigrants in Lampung, where ethnic Javanese immigrants constitute the majority in Lampung society. This context may influence the type of cultural content presented in the media. To remedy the narrow scope of this work, additional research can be conducted on Javanese transmigrant communities in other regions where Javanese migrants are not the majority. Despite its limitations, however, this research contributes to showing the role of the media in reconstructing cultural identity among the descendants of Javanese transmigrants.

FUNDING

The authors would like to thank the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, for supporting this research under the scheme student research grant.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest to disclose in relation to this study.

BIODATA

Dhanik Sulistyarini (correspondence author) is a doctoral student at the Doctoral Program in Communication Science, Universitas Gadjah Mada and a lecturer at the Department of Communication Science, University of Lampung. She is interested in areas such as media studies, media and diaspora, cultural communication, communication technology and society. Email: dhanik.sulistyarini@fisip.unila.ac.id

Wahyudi Kumorotomo is a professor at the Department of Management and Public Policy and teaches in the Department of Communication Science, Universitas Gadjah Mada. He acquired his Ph.D in Politics and International Relations from Universiti Sains Malaysia. His research interests include issues in public policy, e-governance, and public finance. Email: kumoro@ugm.ac.id

Rajiyem is a lecturer at the Department of Communication Science, Universitas Gadjah Mada. She completed her doctoral degree in communication at Universitas Indonesia. Her research areas include communication and culture. She is also interested in language and communication. Email: rajiyem@ugm.ac.id

REFERENCES

- Alencar, A., Kondova, K., & Ribbens, W. (2019). The smartphone as a lifeline: an exploration of refugees' use of mobile communication technologies during their flight. *Media, Culture & Society*, 41(6), 828-844. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443718813486>
- Alinejad, D. (2019). Careful co-presence: The transnational mediation of emotional intimacy. *Social Media + Society*, 5(2), 2056305119854222.
- Alinejad, D. (2021). Techno-emotional mediations of transnational intimacy: Social media and care relations in long-distance Romanian families. *Media, Culture & Society*, 43(3), 444-459. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720972313>
- Alonso, A., & Oiarzabal, P. J. (2010). *Diaspora in the new media age: Identity, politics, and community*. University of Nevada Press.
- Aryanti, N. Y. (2015). Javanese cultural socialization in family and ethnic identity formation of Javanese adolescent migrant at Lampung province. *Komunitas*, 7(2), 251-258.
- Asyik, B., & Trisnaningsih. (2015). *Provinsi Lampung: Dari daerah penerima menjadi potensi daerah pengirim transmigran*. Histokultura.
- Atashi, E. (2018). Iranian diaspora, reality television and connecting to homeland. *Media and Communication*, 6(2), 179-187. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v6i2.1293>
- Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Lampung. (2010). Penduduk provinsi Lampung hasil sensus penduduk 2010.
- Bennett, A. (2005). *Culture and everyday life*. SAGE Publications.
- Bucholtz, I. (2019). Bridging bonds: Latvian migrants' interpersonal ties on social networking sites. *Media, Culture & Society*, 41(1), 104-119. <https://doi.org/gfc9xz>
- Chen, Y., & Lin, H. (2016). *Cultural identities*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.20>
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Elareshi, M., Ziani, A., & Alsridi, H. (2023). The perceptions of Iraqi internally displaced persons of social media use during war and conflict. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 39(1), 21-36. <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2023-3901-02>
- Elmhirst, R. (1999). Space, identity politics and resource control in Indonesia's transmigration programme. *Political Geography*, 18(1999), 813-835. <https://doi.org/c349xz>
- Elmhirst, R. (2000). A Javanese diaspora? Gender and identity politics in Indonesia's Transmigration resettlement program. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23(4), 487-500.
- Gudykunst, W. B., & Nishida, T. (2000). The influence of culture and strength of cultural identity on individual values in Japan and the United States. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 9(1), 1-18.
- Hall, S. (1994). Cultural identity and diaspora. In Williams, P. & Chrisman, L. (Eds.), *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory: A reader* (pp. 227-237). Harvester Wheatsheaf. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315656496-28/cultural-identity-diaspora-stuart-hall>
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. Sage.
- Hecht, M. L., & Lu, Y. (2014). Communication theory of identity. In T. L. Thompson (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of health communication* (pp. 225-227). SAGE.

- Ihejirika, K. T., & Krtalic, M. (2021). Moving with the media: An exploration of how migrant communities in New Zealand use social media. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 53(1), 50-61.
- Kementerian Desa, Pembangunan Daerah Tertinggal dan Transmigrasi RI. (2015). *Transmigrasi: Masa doeloe, kini dan harapan ke depan*.
- Leurs, K. (2019). Transnational connectivity and the affective paradoxes of digital care labour: Exploring how young refugees technologically mediate co-presence. *European Journal of Communication*, 34(6) 641–649.
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Melki, J., & Kozman, C. (2021). Media dependency, selective exposure and trust during war: Media sources and information needs of displaced and non-displaced Syrians. *Media, War & Conflict*, 14(1) 93–113.
- Miconi, A. (2020). News from the Levant: A qualitative research on the role of social media in Syrian diaspora. *Social Media + Society*, 6(1), 2056305119900337.
- Mohamad, F. F. (2023). Enhancing listeners' social well-being through radio listening: A qualitative study among Klang Valley radio listeners. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 39(1), 372-385.
- Nanda, A. D., Prasetyo, K. B., & Gunawan. (2017). Reproduksi budaya pada komunitas diaspora Jawa di daerah transmigrasi: (Studi kasus di Desa Bagelen Kecamatan Gedong Tataan Kabupaten Pesawaran provinsi Lampung). *Solidarity: Journal of Education, Society and Culture*, 6(1).
- Nanjangud, A., & Reijnders, S. (2022). Cinematic itineraries and identities: Studying Bollywood tourism among the Hindustanis in the Netherlands. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 25(2) 659–678.
- Nurdin, B. V. (2019). Tanah Lampung tanah harapan: Keluarga Jawa di tanah masyarakat adat Buay Pemuka Rajabasa Bandar Lampung. In Nizar, M. & Abdulgani, F. (Eds.). *Transformasi kebijakan Agraria dan transmigrasi di Indonesia* (pp. 142-167). Pustaka Ilmu.
- Perez, K. M., & Salgado, M.M. (2020). Mobility and the mobile: A study of adolescent migrants and their use of the mobile phone. *Mobile Media & Communication*, 8(1) 104–123. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2050157918824626>
- Rosales-Viray, K., & Viray, J.R.B. (2024). Negotiation of identities: The case of Aeta Ambala's media engagement. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 40(1), 513-525.
- Safran, W. (2011). Diaspora in modern societies: Myths of homeland and return. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 1(1), 83-99.
- Sarifin, M. R., Sukimi, M. F., & Ali, M. N. S. (2021). Penggunaan media dalam pengkalan identiti etnik generasi kedua Bawean di Malaysia. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 37(1), 348-363.
- Smets, P., Younes Y., Dohmen, M., Boersma, K., & Brouwer, L. (2021). Social media in and around a temporary large-scale refugee shelter in the Netherlands. *Social Media + Society*, 7(2), 20563051211024961.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (2015). Identity negotiation theory. In J. Bennett (Ed.), *Sage encyclopedia of intercultural competence* (Vol. 1, pp. 418-422). Sage.
- Tirtosudarmo, R. (2015). The Javanese in Lampung, Stranger or locals? With the reference of Chinese experience. *Jurnal Kajian Wilayah*, 6(2), 161-172.

- Udwan, G., Leurs, K., & Alencar, A. (2020). Digital resilience tactics of Syrian refugees in the Netherlands: Social media for social support, health, and identity. *Social Media + Society*, 6(2), 2056305120915587.
- Warganegara, A., & Waley, P. (2021). The political legacies of transmigration and the dynamics of ethnic politics: A case study from Lampung, Indonesia. *Asian Ethnicity*, 23(4), 676-696.
- Zen, E. L. (2021). Javanese language as an ethnic identity marker among multilingual families in Indonesia. *Linguistik Indonesia*, 39(1), 49-62.