

2006

## **Onanistic feminism -- a feminist perspective : a case study of Indonesian feminist media**

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**Onanistic Feminism—A Feminist Perspective:**

**A Case Study of Indonesian Feminist Media**

**By**

**Meike Bhariana**

**December 2006**

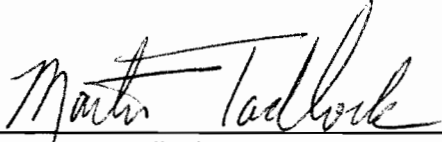
**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Education  
At California State University Monterey Bay**

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**ONANISTIC FEMINISM—A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE:  
A CASE STUDY OF INDONESIAN FEMINIST MEDIA**

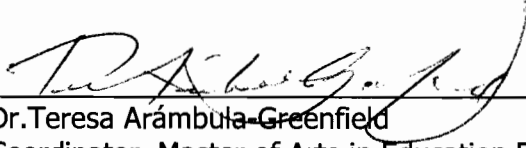
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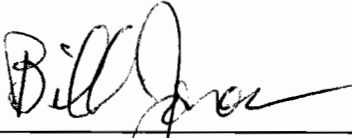
  
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## ABSTRACT

Feminist media production constitutes a key vehicle for envisioning and politicizing women's life experiences and their cultural meaning in the contemporary world. This research pursued questions on how Third World feminist media producers voice women's issues, and the obstacles they faced in building unity within their organization. Four journalists of women's radio RJP in Jakarta, Indonesia were interviewed and observed to conceptualize their lives, work, and backgrounds within feminist practices. Radio scripts and organization documents were also used to provide the detailed in-depth picture of "the making of radio program."

This study exposed a lack of unity of effort between radio producers and their management organization. Two sets of issues were responsible for this lack of unity. The first relates to the old cultural paradigm *'konco wingking'* (literally meaning "woman is friend from behind"), or construct, that governs Indonesian life. The second set of key issues revolves around the power relations caused by the organization's dependency on foreign or global funding, which created a hierarchical, undemocratic working environment. Both sets of issues essentially crippled the organization in that they precluded the development of a strategic focus related to the nominal feminist mission of the organization. This lack of focused goals led the journalists to follow their own designs and simply fantasize the fit and implementation of their personal goals in order to survive their commitment to the organization. These factors led to low staff sustainability and retention.

This study suggests that this Indonesian feminist media women's NGO (non-government organization) needs to re-assess its efficacy for social change by building its

own strategy, and by developing and implementing fund-raising efforts that will support those strategies. The ability to form their own direction will better serve their efforts and better assist the Indonesian people.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I started my graduate study at CSUMB, I never thought that research would be my companion in the incredible journey toward my deepest passion about women's studies and politics. This research has helped me grow as a person and as a scholar in establishing my sense of identity. I am truly blessed to have some caring people in my life who have helped me along the way. My deepest thanks go to the following people.

First, my thanks go to my thesis advisor Dr. Terry Arámbula-Greenfield for all the guidance, patience and advice you granted me during the preparation of this thesis. You have been a mentor and a navigator model to me and there are so many ways that I admire you. Thank you for helping me find my own voice, and I hope to share our voices in the years to come.

I thank my capstone advisor Dr. Bill Jones, for always being willing to work with me, even "remotely" (on-line) and for the time he devoted to my work. Thank you for your interest and encouragement of my work over the year during the capstone course.

My thanks also go to my significant "cohort" in life, Lance Iskandar, for every intellectual discussion we had. Thank you for your whole-hearted support and for always being yourself to me. You have never doubted that I could do this, even when I was not sure myself – *matur nuwun sanget!*

My deepest thanks to my teenage daughter and touchstone for my future, Farametha, who has never stopped giving me a reason to survive.

Thanks also to Lutfy Baria, another womanist in my family. Thank you for your help in gathering rare Indonesian women's literature that I need for this research.

The host during my time of data collection travels also deserve, and receive, my thanks. Thank you to Uung, Sofi, Kinyur, Lita and Venny for generously giving me their stories, their trust, and their time during interviews. I hope that I treated them with care.

Finally, special gratitude to my father Muhammad Subagiyono for being proud of me during his short life. He is and always will be my inspiration.

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# **Onanistic Feminism—A Feminist Perspective:**

## **A Case Study of Indonesian Feminist Media**

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM**

##### **Introduction**

The center of my research is the illumination of the lives and work experiences of a particular group of contemporary feminist journalists in an elite Indonesian women-centered organization as they deal with emerging feminist issues. This research was drawn from my own desire and commitment to feminist education in Indonesia, which stems in turn from my background growing up as a young Indonesian girl, during which I had experienced some degree of acceptance of patriarchal values in the way I was brought up. As a marginalized group who has to face a patriarchal society in their daily lives, Indonesian women have struggled in time and space throughout the history of Indonesia to express their own voices, with relatively few venues for doing so. One potential venue, available throughout most of the nation, is radio, most especially Indonesian feminist radio.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to research ways in which Indonesian feminist radio serves as an educational agency for women by examining the ways in which they voice women's issues, and their reasons for doing so. More specifically, I will discuss how feminist journalists involved in the Indonesian feminist medium *Radio Jurnal Perempuan* (RJP) work to redefine women's issues and feminism in their efforts to educate the public about issues related to gender inequity. I also will examine the ways in which they educate their audience on awareness of their rights, as an important element in empowerment. The Indonesian feminist media *Radio Jurnal Perempuan* (RJP) is one part of the independent

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in Indonesia called *Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan* (YJP), where they are known as *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat* (LSM – Indonesian for NGO). According to the foundation that supports the RJP, the *Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan* (YJP), media and most especially radio is a very powerful tool and thus useful and necessary to use in Indonesia to socialize the public concerning issues of gender equity and gender mainstreaming in all aspects of Indonesian lives (Arivia, 2002).

In 1998, Indonesia started a new phase of political change, referred to as *reformasi*. This change required democratization, which included a call for the government to rise to the call of LSMs (non-government organizations) in Indonesia (Suryakusuma, 2004). The impact of *reformasi* on Indonesian feminist media is similar to what occurred with the women's movement in the United States in the mid-1960s, as described in *The Feminist* (1973), when groups of women engaged in various forms of political actions, networking, theoretical development, and consciousness raising. Through this work, and using the media as a tool, they attempted to educate themselves and others about the inequities they experienced as women (Smith, 1993). As described by Smith (ibid.), women's movement media grew out of a specific historical period characterized not only by the richness of its protest and dissent, but also by its desire for alternative ways of living and working (Gardner, 1976). Understanding what happened, and what is happening, within Indonesian feminist circles is important to improving the educational opportunities of Indonesian women with regard to feminist issues, perspectives and women's experiences. Mass media plays a significant role in informing and educating the public about women's concerns. It therefore is important to know what kinds of issues need to be addressed and to select the correct approach to address these issues.

The lack of attention to the behavior of feminists in Indonesia, including in the general media, is what brings this research to the surface. Two factors led to these situations becoming my concern. The first is that RJP is the first and only women's organization in Indonesia that provides women with information and education through their journal and radio program. The second is that, as a women's LSM (non-government organization), RJP women's radio strongly emphasizes the importance of gender inequality, discrimination, and violence against women as issues requiring community and government action, rather than discussing them simply as women's welfare issues.

### **Personal Background Relative to the Problem**

My concerns about Indonesian feminist education emerged from my sense of wonder as an Indonesian woman who, by family choice, have detached myself from my home and have been living in the United States for a long time. This dislocation of culture has created different perspectives and ways for me to perceive the lack of intimacy between my home culture and myself. If I had not traveled and lived my life in a whole different dimension, I believe I probably would not have passion and commitment toward Indonesian feminists. Being away from home for so long has created a great separation between my memory of living as an Indonesian and my new perspective about my life as Indonesian single mother living in the United States. This research idea was borne from this separation and from my curiosity to frame feminism as it is understood and defined by Indonesian feminists who live in Indonesia.

I was raised in a protective environment, by interracial parents who worked as government officials, under a national ideology referred to as *Pancasila*. *Pancasila* Democracy is a unique perspective of Indonesian political ideology; it is neither western liberal democracy nor socialism. As with any other Indonesian family, my middle class

Moslem family accepted the patriarchal values inherent in *Pancasila* raising my siblings and me. As norms and values historically are passed almost as laws from one generation to another, I believed that feminist journalists at RJP feminist radio also would have had to face the same patriarchal situation and would experience frustration trying to break free and speak out.

With this background, I came to RJP with a great expectation to spend my time every day learning about the local feminist culture by living and working with my participants. I learned early on that a focus on feminism was not considered especially relevant or important, even by the women in my family. Just having the word “woman” in the topic of my research paper brought my first comment—from my own mother. She asked me why I chose to learn about women and education, wondering if I was going to try to teach other women how to become rebels to their husbands. With the strong Pancasila cultural context in which both my mother and I were raised, and with my great respect and love for my mother, I never answered her back; instead, I had to respond to all comments and subtleties with silence, since I realized there was no way I could find a good explanation in my short visit.

I had planned to stay at least two months in the field. But even in the first week of my research, I felt a growing boredom as I realized that what I was seeing was not the picture that I had in mind about how feminism works, from the reading I had done before I left California. The culture I had anticipated was not there to explore, perhaps because the people worked in an office, or maybe because I was not that familiar with the culture. And although I came as an American researcher, I am as brown as my participants. Nonetheless, they treated me as a ‘foreign person’; they did not particularly think of me as American, but they still saw me as a foreign person. From this

challenge, I decided to conduct more in-depth, long interviews with my participants, instead of the long observations I originally had planned.

### **Problem Statement**

The major purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which Indonesian feminist radio serves as an educational entity for women, and how the experiences of those who work there, as well as their perceptions about feminism, might contextualize the work they do in educating the public about women issues. In particular, I wanted to investigate any obstacles they might experience in producing a radio program. I also wanted to explore the extent to which their work, organization bureaucracy, and funding agencies are interconnected in producing women's radio programs. Finally, a more abstract goal of this study is to work with RJP to identify or refine strategies that might enhance their efforts to educate the public through their radio program. Essentially, I wish to help the workers at RJP raise their efficacy in the women's movement. As cited by Smith (1993), feminist media traditionally have relied on consciousness-raising in their attempts to educate themselves and others about the inequalities they experience as women (*Feminist*, 1973). I believe there is a need for ongoing research to examine how the feminist media producers educate themselves and their radio audience. I will therefore examine thoroughly their meanings of their experiences with feminism since the first time they became interested in women issues.

### **Theoretical context of the study**

My own experience as a part of Indonesian women's history contributes to the philosophical framework for this research, and became the platform for laying out the struggle of Indonesian women in a historical perspective. My study is being conducted and analyzed within the context of feminist theory. More specifically, I will draw from

the writings of a series of third-world feminists such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Aihwa Ong, Cherryl Johnson-Odim and bell hooks to analyze the ways Indonesian feminist media voicing women issues. One major idea that I will be using to analyze my research includes the importance of feminist education in building critical awareness, to help draw a definition and agenda of feminism in an Indonesian context.

Before I left for my six-week research trip to Jakarta, I read several feminist research books, mainly focusing on ethnography and ethno-methodology. I realized, though, that there is much more to learn about feminism, especially feminism in an Indonesian context. As cited in *Feminist Theory and Research*, Uma Narayan (1998) comments that different cultural contexts and political agendas may cast a very different light on both the "idols" and the "enemies" of knowledge as they have characteristically been typed in western feminist epistemology (2002). As a part of the map of the Third World region, Indonesian women have to express their views about women's issues through a unique Indonesian culture that has been shaped over generations by the power relations between class, religion, and internal structure. Odim (1991, p. 316) has written: "...Third World women's visions of feminism as a philosophy and a movement for social justice ... [were] inclusive of their entire communities, in which they were equal participants, and which addressed the racism, economic exploitation, and imperialism against which they continued to struggle."

In this context, the use of women's radio as a mass-based educational movement is crucial. RJP is a rural radio station that has the potential to significantly raise public awareness of important women's issues by providing information to the public as part of a broad educational effort. In 2003, according to BPS (Indonesian Statistics Bureau) radio was the second most important mass media tool in Indonesia,

being accessed by 50.29% of the public; the most accessed mass medium was television (84.94%), and the third was newspapers or magazines (22.06%). The relatively low access rate for print media is due to the economy and the illiteracy rate in many parts of the archipelago; in fact, it is common for people to buy television and use it as an informative media instead learning how to read. Thus radio plays a very important role in reaching the public, and feminist radio plays a particularly important role in educating the public about feminism and women's issues. Not fulfilling this role allows the mainstream patriarchal mass media to remain the primary place where people learn about feminism; in this context, most of what they learn is negative (hooks, 2000). To educate Indonesian women about feminism requires feminist educators to determine what women's issues are and then develop the skills to communicate and "translate" those ideas and that knowledge to a diverse audience.

These ideas will be explored further in Chapter II. For now, suffice to say that, through the lens of Third World feminist theories, I expect to portray clearly how feminist theory and practice fit into the frame of Indonesian feminist mass media.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used throughout this thesis and most are unfamiliar to American women and colleges because they relate only to the Indonesian social context. I will provide brief explanations of these organizational terms and how they are perceived in this thesis in order to better explain to the reader their role in Indonesian feminist movement.

RJP (Radio Jurnal Perempuan): During the peak of the Indonesian reformation movement, a program was seriously launched by a non-profit media organization, Internews, in 1999, to help develop gender-sensitive radio journalism skills. By 2003,



RJP had successfully established a network of 162 radio partners that broadcast more than 334 featured programs all over the Indonesian archipelago. RJP programs relate to topics such as domestic violence, women's health and reproduction, women and politics, women's rights and women's labor, all placed under their main slogan of "Voicing women's rights."

LSM– *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat* (NGOs-Non-Government Organization):

Non-Government Organization in Indonesia literally translates into the Institution of Societal Empowerment. The main themes of Indonesian NGOs (LSMs) are Third World issues such as agriculture, education, environment, advocacy, democracy, health, urban studies, etc. (Situngkir, 2003). LSM is the term that NGOs called themselves after 1983 to make them appear as being non-confrontational to the government (Suryakusuma, 2004). LSMs are part of Indonesian society. They are variable in sizes, shape, sector, funding agency and ideology orientation.

The role of an LSM in Indonesia is far from being an easy one. For some LSMs such RJP, dependency on foreign funding agencies can be a source of tension. This is simply because of the requirements imposed by these agencies. Overdependence on such funding can erode their legitimacy. Foreign funding can also have negative consequences for their internal organization and operating style, and render them vulnerable to accusations that they are being used as part of a new strategy of capitalist penetration into the less accessible hinterlands of the Third World (Eldridge, 1988).

Given the diversity of LSMs (non-government organizations) in Indonesia, Eldridge (1988) suggested that such organizations can be categorized into three models based on their ideological orientation and strategies: High Level Partnership (Grassroots development), whose orientation is more toward development rather than mobilization

and operates with official programs; High level politics (Grassroots Mobilization), with an emphasis on awareness of rights and structural analysis as an important element in popular empowerment (NGOs in this category develop their networks with the military and government); and Empowerment of Grassroots, with local a focus and emphasis on consciousness-raising and awareness of rights rather than on campaigns to change policy. The RJP appears to fit the third model best, because the concept of mobilization emphasizes 'consciousness-raising' and awareness of rights rather than active campaigning to change policy, while pursuing goals of autonomous group formation (Suryakusuma, 2004).

YJP – Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan (Women's Journal Foundation): YJP was founded in 1995 by Gadis Arivia and Asikin Arif with the initial purpose of providing informational materials on Indonesian women's problems in a scientific way, to different groups of audiences like NGOs, universities, professionals, and the general public. To implement their vision of feminist education, YJP focuses their operations on five main programs: women's journal, women's radio, publications on women study programs, women's video, and women's digital world (online). In this research, I highlight their feminist practices in women's radio (RJP)

In the next chapters, I provide a research-based context for my study, a description of the methods of data collection and analysis I used, a detailed discussion of my findings and their meaning within the research context provided earlier, and the recommendations I derived from my study.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Living everyday life under the mainstream beliefs of patriarchal values has given Indonesian people ways of perceiving feminism that differ from how it is perceived in other contexts. It is within this paradigm that I seek to explore the phenomenon of the lived experience of a feminist in Indonesia. I want to understand what RJP's activists experience as feminist media producers in their past and present, and in the expectations for their future. Within this context, I have found it troubling to attempt to use a western concept of feminism to interpret what these women experience, and how they live. I approached my literature review from this perspective, and have contextualized it within two themes that have been profoundly helpful to me in taking a comprehensive portrait of the elite feminist media in Indonesia: the history of the feminist movement in Indonesia, and the roles of the feminist media.

#### **History of the feminist movement in Indonesia**

I organized the history of the women's movement in Indonesia into two different time frames, pre-Suharto (colonial to 1998) and post-Reformasi (1998 to present).

##### Pre-Suharto Period

The women's movement was initiated by a Javanese noblewoman, Kartini (April 21, 1879 – September, 13 1904), who pioneered education for girls, monogamy, and the development of Javanese arts. For Kartini, who experienced an inner struggle as a noblewoman within the strong boundaries of the Indonesian patriarchal system (including her own situation in the middle of a polygamous marriage), her desperation for equality became her legacy.

Elizabeth Locher-Scholten describes feminism in colonial Indonesia as companionate feminism. According to her, despite the Western education of the elite, Indonesian gender discourse was formulated in opposition or contradistinction to the West, in Javanese terms with an Islamic touch. Morality, harmony, and female companionship with men comprised the focus of this difference. In a companionate feminism, this ideal of Javanese harmony found its ultimate form (Locher-Scholten, 2003).

The first women's congress in Indonesia was held in December 22, 1928. As of today, we celebrate that day as *Hari Ibu* (Mother's Day). In contrast to Mother's Day in the United States, the Indonesian mother's day celebration is filled with the remembrance of the Indonesian unity. The very notion of this women's congress foregrounded its nationalist drive. Most participants framed their speeches in nationalist terms, linking the pursuit of women's interests to issues of national unity and independence (Blackburn, 2001). In that time, as an Indian scholar explains, this reform movement could be understood only in relation to the growth of nationalist consciousness in Indonesia. The women's movement thus was closely interlinked with the Indonesian nationalist movement, and also interacted in diverse ways with its main currents, namely nationalism, Islam and socialism (Jayawerdana, 1987).

In the Indonesian post-independence state (after 1945), the women's movement fell under the auspices of the national ideology *Pancasila*. Extolled as uniquely Indonesian, neither communism nor capitalism, the *Pancasila* ideology, drafted by president Sukarno in 1945, consists of five principles: belief in One God; a just and civilized humanitarianism; national unity; democracy guided by the inner wisdom and deliberations of representatives; and social justice (Suryakusuma, 1990). As in the pre-independence period, the women's movement emerged from a progressive nationalism,

influenced by Dutch intellectuals. During the 1950s and 1960s, women went to school in increasing numbers, entered the professions, were politically active in and out of the party system—though they had to fight for influence, enlisted in the bureaucracy at all levels, established their organizations, campaigned for change, and publicly took positions on major social and political issues (Lev, 1962).

The New Order state, or Suharto regime (1965-1998), was described as State *Ibuism* (*Ibu* means mother) by Julia Suryakusuma. During this period, women's organizations were under the agenda of government activities. According to *Ibuism*, women should serve their men, children, the family, the community and the state; according to *housewifisation*, their labor should be provided freely, not associated with what were considered "inappropriate" costs and even free from any expectation of real prestige or power (Suryakusuma, 1991). The politics of gender became prominent with the beginning of this New Order regime in 1966: many existing women's organizations were banned; left-leaning women activists were jailed or killed in massacres; and the national women's organization Kowani (*Kongres Wanita Indonesia*, Indonesian Women's Congress) was paralyzed (Sunindyo, 1999). This state existed until 1998.

#### Post-Reformasi Period

In 1998 the Reformasi occurred, when Indonesian economic and political crisis broke out following the Asian crisis a year earlier. A women's organization *Suara Ibu Peduli* (SIP), or voice of concerned mothers, was formed by three leaders who were deeply involved with *Jurnal Perempuan* (JP): Dr Karlinah Leksono, Dr. Gadis Arivia, and Wilasih. The SIP was politically and socially active, raising issues such as the price of food and milk, women's health and reproduction, children's problems, and poverty; they also criticized the government's food policies (Kolibonso, 1999). At this point, most of

Indonesia's NGOs threw their support to the women's groups working on rape, violence, the problems of rural women, labor and so on. As cited in Siregar (1998), these non-government women's organizations used a feminist perspective to address various women's problems. They accepted ideas of liberal, radical, and socialist feminism from American and European feminists. But they would not become devout followers of those feminists because Indonesian women had different and very complex problems that could not be addressed adequately through only one perspective within feminism (Rahayu, 1996).

The feminist movement, then, really was just born in Indonesia, and has not become a unifying umbrella for feminist organizations. As Marilyn Porter explains, there is no formal structure and there are no criteria for membership; there are not even common programs or campaigns involving all women's groups, even in Jakarta. Nonetheless, it is increasingly easy to disseminate information about women's issues now that the restrictions of the Suharto era have been lifted, and women's groups, like others, are taking full advantage of the new possibilities to reach each other as well as the wider public (Porter, 2001).

One year after the 1998 demonstration by SIP activists, RJP, or *Radio Jurnal Perempuan* (Women's Journal Radio) was founded and started its program. As stated earlier, its initial purpose was to provide informational materials on Indonesian women's problems in a scientific way, to different groups of audiences like NGOs, universities, professionals, and the general public. After its initial efforts, YJP (the mother organization of RJP) planned to focus its operations on five main programs: women's journal; women's radio; publications on women's studies programs; women's video; and women's digital world (online). YJP wished to deliver information to a broader audience

using less academic language in their radio programs. With help in learning to develop journalism skills in gender sensitive media from the non-profit media organization Internews, YJP opened a new women's medium, *Radio Jurnal Perempuan* (RJP-Women's Journal Radio). Under the umbrella of YJP, RJP was operated along with the vision and mission of YJP, raising awareness of women's rights and women's issues through information, publications, and research.

### **Role of feminist media**

Mass media plays a major role in informing and educating the public about women's concerns. In Indonesia, radio still tends to provide negative images about women's roles through its talk shows and advertising. As cited in *Wanita dan Media* (1999), Tomagola argued that Indonesian women's magazines, though including scientific and technology issues, also continue to present the "Indonesian ideology of harmony" in the Indonesian version of civil society. His conclusion was derived from studying many articles from four women's magazines, which demonstrated that Indonesian mass media still represents the three "Pancasila" roles expected of Indonesian women in the public sphere: 1) '*Ibu Sejati*', i.e., women should bear their responsibility as a true mother and wise wife; 2) '*Dua belah dari kesatuan*', which means men and women are equal but their responsibilities are different in that while men are responsible for duties outside their home, women are responsible for domestic duties; and 3) '*Konco wingking*', which means women act as partners to, but behind, their men; when compelled by cultural tradition to join in social settings with their men, that becomes their social sphere (Tomagola, 1990).

The existence of a unique Indonesian harmony was developed via the post-Dutch-colonial sense of Indonesian nationalism. This same post-colonial national attitude has in turn developed a strong perception that people will be defined by roles, which is supposed

to support social harmony. Indonesian cultural tradition, inspired by the same attitudes that drove Indonesian nationalism, has developed a communal application of politics in the decision-making process, and has lent itself to the creation of a very centralized system. Additionally, this kind of political atmosphere has—by default—been heavily influenced by “global” urban personalities from Jakarta. Similarly, this same communal tendency supports a belief that the standards and habits of prominent urban figures will also be adapted in the villages (Yatim, 1993).

It is a commonly held thought in developed countries that public perceptions and attitudes held toward facts and opinions presented by the media actually result in very little action. There is a sense that mass media presentations tend to bring a kind of social equilibrium and a positive acceptance of certain issues by the general public. In Indonesia, this applies to the definition of gender roles as defined by “Indonesian tradition”. In this case, media supports the *status quo* (Yatim, 1998). Research by Parameswaran (2001), who conducted a media ethnographic study on a group of Indian women who read western novels, urged feminist scholars to pay attention to the politics of representation of audience in media studies. She underscored the implications of research by non-western feminist scholars conducted in their own cultures as feminist media ethnographies, and emphasized the need for media reception research in the cultural studies tradition (Prameswaran, 2001). In contrast, my research argues for the politics of representation of women in media, by exploring how the radio journalists deliver their ideas and emergent feminist issues into the lives of Indonesian women.

Marilyn Crafton Smith (1994), in her feminist media study, examined the ways in which feminist media opposes the mass media to offer alternatives to women’s movement supporters and to analyze the implications of women’s media. Feminist media was founded



upon the assumption that, to facilitate social change, women must establish various media formats through which they communicate their own words and images, i.e., their own expressions of what feminist politics means (Smith, 1992). Hence, it is critical to see how feminism actually is put into practice in mass communications media. According to Carolyn Byerly and Catherine Warren (1992), feminism in news making is a collection of strategies and subsequent activities used to resist and overcome male hegemony in news organizations and content (Women in Mass Communication, 1993). The news-making process was also influenced by rationalized norms of journalists. Joan Byrd (1992) stated in the Washington Post "...that as long as journalists have no more motives than to keep the public informed, no personal or political axes to grind, most news judgment is fair." According to her, fairness is based on the impartial or detached observations of a reporter (as cited in Creedon, 1993, p. 14).

In Indonesia, radio has a very significant role in the process of Indonesia's democratization because, more than any other medium, it emerged with a legal and economic framework that is resistant to monopoly control by large capital interests and to centralized control by Jakarta (Sen, 2000). BPS (Indonesian Statistic Bureau) reported that, in 2003, mass radio was the second most accessible media in Indonesian society.

**Table 1. Accessibility to Mass-Media (Biro Pusat Statistik Indonesia)**

Accessibility to Mass Media (Percentage of Population Aged 10 years and over)	
Media	
Radio.....	50.29
Television .....	84.94
Newspaper/Magazine.....	22.06

The highest-rated station in Jakarta (and by default, the nation) reached a daily listening audience of over half a million in the mid-1990s (Sen & Hill, 2000). With a sense of social and political freedom, a non-biased educative radio program can become a significant tool to create awareness and attention, and to shape behavior toward socially desirable objectives (Sen & Hill, 2000). From this perspective, many postmodernists, feminists and postcolonial scholars believe that "local" knowledge and experiences will provide practical solutions and revive the consciousness and self-confidence of target audiences. This of course leads to the question of what could be considered to be "local." As Lindsay explains in her detailed study of Indonesian radio, popular stations do not simply broadcast to a given geographical area; they attempt to create and maintain audience loyalty by manufacturing a communal identity and continually 'refining' their interpretation of what is "local" (as cited in Sen & Hill 2000).

In the context of global feminism, Suharko (1997) argues that activists must explore ways to define a counter-culture attitude toward gender roles in the local context to minimize global feminist influence (Ibrahim, 1998). In addition to communal identity of the audience, language and media play significant roles in constructing the reality of issues, not just emotional sensuality. Women's identities emerge when women enter a world where they feel their language expresses who they are (Supeli, 1998).

In Indonesia, NGOs can be categorized into seven types based on their organizational forms: foundation, forum, group, federation, association, cooperatives, and social organization. Most of the 1980s NGOs were foundations, as that was the easiest way to obtain government permission for the NGO as well as a very strategic way to obtain funds. Women's NGOs can be grouped into those that have a "feminist" orientation, and

those that do not. The non-feminist NGOs aim primarily to improve women's socioeconomic status, and to that end they engage in training and the development of cooperatives. But they make a clear distinction between helping women and being feminists: they say "even though we struggle for women's rights, we are not feminists" (Suryakusuma, 2004). Some also see their work merely as a job, a means to earn living, while they look for a better job (Suryakusuma, 2004). In contrast, the feminist NGOs question power relationships between men and women, gender-based divisions of labor in the household, the construction of social roles, and the need for structural change. As members of women's NGOs, feminist media workers develop their networks and collectives in order to maintain their values and further political goals. As explained by Coward (1980), feminism can never be just the product of the identity of women's experiences and interests; it is an orientation unified by its political interests, not just its common experience (Cited from *Woman in Mass Communication*, 1993). Integrating feminist perspectives into media practices in Indonesia will be an ongoing process.

## **Summary**

There is not a lot of research in the field of feminist media in Indonesia. Some scholarly works have been done by western researchers about Indonesian women's organizations at the grass roots level, but few Indonesian scholars have conducted research about elite and so-called middle class women's organizations.

In this study, I will examine how feminists in an Indonesian female radio station (*Radio Jurnal Perempuan* - RJP) located in Jakarta may contribute to the representation of feminism in a patriarchal society and find ways to present emerging feminist issues through the media. RJP works to retain the values and ideas of feminism across generations, by raising a gender consciousness in women and society, and transforming the social and

political identities of women. This study will critically assess RJP's efforts to reinforce feminism in a male-dominated society. In doing so, the findings will help to bring the RJP to the next level of its development, which is to achieve recognition throughout the Southeast Asian region.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

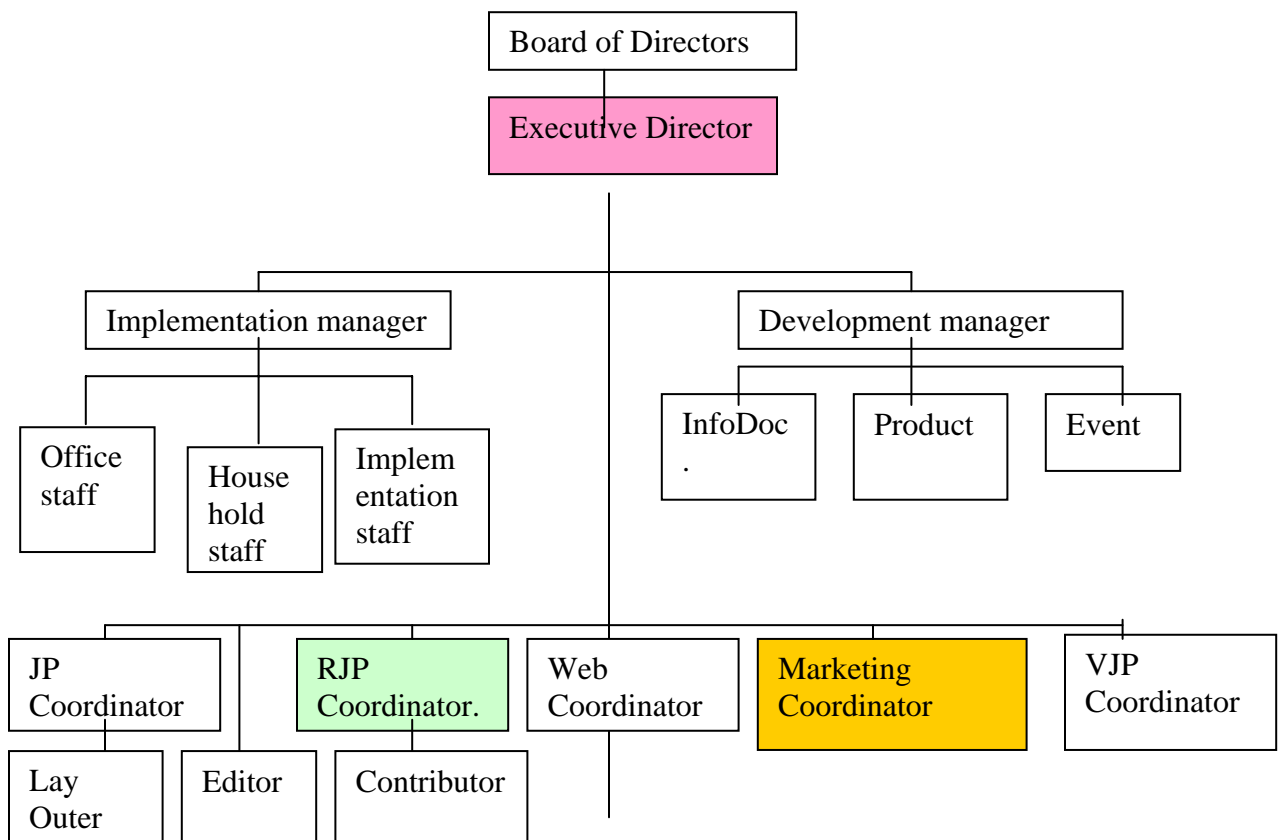
#### **Introduction**

This qualitative case study seeks to illuminate an emergent feminist education voice in Indonesia through examining the work and lives of a group of Indonesian women radio journalists. I profoundly consider this group of Indonesian feminist journalists as a unique and important case because of their perspectives, their background, and their existence in the making of Indonesian history. Feminist media research is rarely done in Indonesia and there has not been any evidence of feminist media research that uses the journalists as the focus of study. To proceed with this study, I used ethnographic research strategies to draw on four sources of information, including: in-depth interviews, observations, company documents, and radio scripts. These all will be described in this Chapter.

I believe that my own experience as an Indonesian feminist woman provides me with a baseline view of Indonesian culture and societal tensions. However, living outside of my country also allows me to have a broader, "outsider's view" regarding feminist education issues in Indonesia. The combination of these factors can also allow a broader view of feminist education than perhaps my research participants might have. The participants I chose comprise a group of journalists who develop and broadcast women's radio programs for RJP (Women's Journal Radio) in Jakarta. For several months, as I conducted my research, I developed relationships with these individuals based on in-depth interviews to allow me access to the inner workings of the organization. Given the environment that has been fostered between me and my research participants, I hope that my research will be of some use to RJP as they continue their education efforts.

## Description of Radio Jurnal Perempuan

*Radio Jurnal Perempuan* (RJP), the only non-profit women's radio organization in Indonesia, is under the management of its mother organization, *Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan* (YJP or as translated into English: Women's Journalism Society, or Foundation)—a female journalism foundation. In 1998, YJP accepted an offer from Internews Indonesia to launch a new program called RJP that was expected to bring women's issues and problems to the public's attention. Unlike the other divisions of YJP, which are oriented to appealing to middle-upper class and urban audiences, RJP'S focus is to attempt to reach rural and working class audiences. In terms of their membership and decision-making hierarchy, RJP and YJP have interchangeable roles. Figure 1.1 shows the structure of the whole management Indonesian feminist organization YJP.



**Figure 1.1 Organization structure of RJP and YJP management (Cited and translated from [www.jurnalperempuan.com](http://www.jurnalperempuan.com))**

The offices and facilities of RJP are located in an urban, middle class area in Jakarta. It is important to note that RJP does not own broadcast facilities; rather, the organization produces programming for distribution to existing broadcasting facilities. Annual financial support for the programming comes from international organizations such as USAID, UNICEF and the Ford Foundation.

From the year 2000 to the present, RJP has aired 258 programs on 165 local radio stations across Indonesia. Each of the 10-minute programs is packed with entertaining messages, and is programmed to enlighten its audience of women about feminist issues. Since RJP programming aims to broaden the audience base and expand YJP'S circle of influence, the radio programs are simple in style, use popular language, and incorporate attractive sound bytes. Moreover, in comparison to commercial women-oriented radio stations, RJP program content aims to be carefully selected based on local interests. There are four different styles of programs: features, special reports, profiles and discussions. RJP seeks to leverage a significant amount of networking with local radio stations to insure a geographically widespread and diverse audience. In order to insure credibility and operational continuity within RJP, the management undertakes regular training and ideological conditioning for its staff. These sessions cover media, gender issues and community building. Most employees are women who have finished their college education; the majority of the staff received their education from institutions on the island of Java, the main island of the Indonesia archipelago. The educational background of most of the feminists of YJP is in philosophy and mass media, and some of them have computer engineering and other degrees.

## **Participants**

### The researcher

My interest in Indonesian feminist education and its relation to the lives of Indonesian women has roots inside my personal struggle and confrontation with the politics of memory, location, and identity, as an Indonesian woman who was raised in the normative culture of Indonesia. Eleven years ago, I departed from Indonesia as the young wife of a scientist headed to the United States. Since then, my experiences have led me to a liberation of the mind. The expectations I had as an Indonesian girl were uprooted and changed in every aspect of my life while living in the West. These changes, along with knowledge that arose as a by-product of this experience, enabled me to recognize in myself a commonality with other Indonesian women who live their lives as feminists in Indonesia.

As an Indonesian woman researcher, I believe I am well positioned to conduct this study, in that I carry a view based on a life experience that is not the norm for an Indonesian woman. Women's groups in Indonesia are made up predominantly of urban, middle-class, and well-educated individuals, although this education is "Indonesian centric." This educational and societal environment is heavily reflected in the staff of RJP. I am able to interact seamlessly with this group because my education and experiential background are similar to theirs. And because I am Indonesian, I also share a similar culture, both academically and professionally, with the RJP staff. Yet, because I am currently out of Indonesia, I hope to be able to see and interpret, from the outside, the cultural interaction and communication among these RJP women whose lives and work are dedicated to educating and representing others.



### Radio producers

RJP programs are developed by four journalists who commute every day from suburban Jakarta to work from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday with occasional extra hours on weekends. These four journalists, who come from different ethnic and religious backgrounds (Sumatran and Javanese), were selected to be my participants. They range in age from 25 to 40 years old. By choosing four different people from different age groups and management levels (see Figure 1.1 for highlighted positions) as well as different ethnic backgrounds, I intended to get a rich description of these feminists' interactions and communications as they planned and developed their feminist programming. Although I describe their work at the time of my research, subsequent to this each has now left the organization; most left within a few months after my departure from Indonesia.

The first participant was Uung, a 30-year-old male journalist who worked as editor and program mixer for RJP Jakarta. He grew up as the only son of a well-educated contemporary Moslem family in rural West Java. His father was a public school teacher and his mother a housewife. Typical of an Indonesian teacher's family in the 1980s, Uung's family struggled to provide the basic needs for their children. His background, and his education in social and political science at Jendral Sudirman University, caused him to be drawn towards a Marxist ideology, which he referred to as "left east". He considered himself to be a liberal Moslem. Uung was the oldest and longest-working RJP journalist of this group, which made him the most experienced person at the feminist radio station.

The second participant was Sofie, a single, 24-year-old brand-new sociology graduate from Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta, famous as Indonesia's city of culture and education. She grew up in a well-educated civil servant family who believed that higher

education was as important for girls as to boys. Like Uung, Sofie considered herself to be a liberal Moslem.

The third participant was Kinyur, a single, 32-year-old journalist who started his journalism career as a campus reporter. He was graduated from Brawijaya University, Malang, in East Java. He grew up in a very devout Moslem family who adhered strictly to patriarchal values in all aspects of family life. He has one sibling, a brother. Kinyur's limited exposure to things feminist was through the influence of his mother.

My fourth participant was Lita, a single, 30-year-old female journalist who was the most technically experienced broadcaster of the group. She finished her graduate degree in tourism in Mexico, and came back home in 2001 to work at RJP. Her passion for feminism grew from her own life experience as a girl whose roles and duties were defined and constrained by her family's customs and religion. Lita's family is Christian. She was the only journalist not from Java, her home town being on the island of Sumatra. Lita also was the only one of my participants who was educated outside of Indonesia.

*Other RJP staff.* To better understand the synergy and communication in the RJP environment, I also conducted interviews with the Executive Director, who served as the supervisor of my participants' daily work. In order to build a trusted relationship with my research participants, I also informally interviewed some of the auxiliary employees, which gave me a clearer view of the day-to-day activities of the broadcast staff and their interactions with the public.

## **Data Sources**

### Interviews

*Interviews of radio producers.* I conducted a total of 9 interviews of the three radio producers, during the times that were most convenient for them while they were executing

their duties. The duration of each interview was approximately 45 minutes. The interviews were taped. Most interviews were conducted in the Indonesian language. I followed up the interviews with additional phone conversations and meetings, which enabled thorough, intimate communication with the women about their experiences and interpretations. Interviews all were semi-structured, and included the following questions.

- a) How would you describe women's lives in Indonesia? Why is feminism important for Indonesian women?
- b) How did you become interested in feminist issues? What was your family's reaction to you becoming a feminist?
- c) How do you describe the focus and purpose of RJP, and why you work for them? What do you hope to achieve through your work?
- d) What has RJP done to educate women about feminist issues, and how has it done this?
- e) What has been successful and what has not worked as well?
- f) How do you know when you have been successful?
- g) How do you know when something is not working?
- h) What do you think needs to be improved or done to more effectively educate Indonesian women about feminism?
- i) Is there anything else you would like to say about educating Indonesian women about feminism?

*Interviews of RJP staff members.* I also conducted interviews once a week with each of the staff members, which resulted in 5 to 6 interview sessions a week. Interviews with the customer service representative, secretary, and documentation staff were conducted during their break times and after work. Each interview took ca. 45 minutes, and each

participant was interviewed weekly for 4 weeks. Interview questions for the RJP support staff also were semi-structured, and included the following questions.

- a) How would you describe the purpose of RJP? Can you describe to me your understanding of what is going on? Why do you work here?
- b) What do you think about the programs?
- c) How can the programs be made more effective?

### Observations

To support the interviews, I engaged in participant observation, which involved utilization of my existing role as a feminist to observe aspects of the unfamiliar setting (working with Indonesian feminists in the radio station). Some observations (such as meetings, lunches, interviews, on-air shows) were recorded to fill the inevitable gaps that I might find while analyzing interviews. Mainly, I conducted deep observations during the planning meetings, feminist training sessions, and marketing meetings. Through the observations, I hoped to fill in gaps related to symbolic relationships inherent in the women's interactions including communication, seniority, dress code, gestures and subtleties that I might overlook in the interview.

### Radio Scripts

A radio script is the only written evidence of the journalists' perspectives, i.e., their thoughts, creativity and representation of women's issues and feminism to their audience. I made use of my participants' radio scripts to triangulate my interview data, using the scripts to verify similarities in work found through my interviews, and to compare the differences within themes.

## Company Annual Reports

Demographic information was collected from the Information and Documentation section (Indok) of RJP. The data included network and broadcast coverage maps, budget, program style (regarding the nature of the program), as well as geographic data about audiences.

### **Data Analysis**

I developed my data analysis via the transformation process suggested by Wolcott (1994) and Creswell (1998) using three aspects: description, analysis, and interpretation of the cultural-sharing group. After transcribing interviews and recorded observations, I then searched for patterned regularities and aggregated the data into about six categories, then collapsing them into patterns or themes. The following topics in my research questions parallel the five patterned regularities that emerged from my interviews and research questions:

- women's life in Indonesia;
- feminist identity and family background;
- radio focus;
- career expectations;
- evaluation of success and failure.

I then constructed a thematic narrative by using the triangulation of ideas from the research I conducted, the research I surveyed on a third-world feminist perspective, and follow-up interviews with the radio management. The triangulation of data helped support the development of five themes (Denzin, 1970), each of which is described in detail in my next chapter (Chapter 4). The next step in analysis was to draw my conclusions to personalize

the interpretation, using sense findings and self-reflexivity. These conclusions form the basis of my final chapter, Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

During my visit to RJP in Jakarta, I was offered great and warm hospitality. This was the only thing during my visit that made me think: “God, it’s good to be home again,” due to the familiar greetings and friendly gestures. In the front door was the security guard sitting in the hot dusty urban Jakarta air. A few women wore the *Hijab* (head cover) while others wore regular professional clothing typical of Indonesian working women. After I entered the RJP building, Nunung, the JP secretary who was wearing a fashionable head cover, greeted me as warmly as she always had when we had spoken on the phone before my arrival. She took me to the office of the executive director of YJP (*Jurnal Perempuan* Foundation), a woman named Venny. I made my introductions to Venny and then Nunung showed me a little room across from her desk, which turned out to be YJP’s library. I guessed Nunung’s open cubicle to be the administrative center for the building. Every wall on the first floor had photographs from each JP journal cover, from the first magazine published up to the present edition. They were nicely put together on the wall, giving the office a nontraditional appearance compared to other offices in Indonesia. It gave me similar nuanced feelings, much the same as when I entered the department of International or Global Studies in an American university. Within an hour, around 9 a.m., I was introduced to Lita, Sofie, Ung and Eko. I told them why I was there and why I needed their participation in my research. They understood and signed the permission forms I gave them. I was really eager to observe how these feminists got involved in the Indonesian women’s movement, and I began my interviews as quickly as possible.

In this chapter, I describe my findings based on those interviews and on the analysis of all my triangulated data sources. These data sources yielded five major themes, which

include the following: (1) *Konco Wingking*—Women’s lives and the politics of gender; (2) College-hatched feminism; (3) Onanistic feminism—Questioning the advocacy; (4) Women’s radio and women’s issues—A marriage of convenience; and (5) Feminist future—Rethinking commitment.

As described in the previous chapter, the themes were generated from similar codes in the interviews, radio scripts, and field notes, aggregated together to form a major idea. Building these themes was linguistically complicated and the coding analysis process required the researcher to break apart some answers into separate sentences to assure consistency of high frequency words from all of the participants. The identified themes are interconnecting chronologically, starting from participants’ early experiences with feminism to the time of this research, when they all were involved in the Indonesian women’s movement. As Creswell suggests, the use of interconnecting themes means that the researcher connects the themes to display a chronology or sequence of events to generate a theoretical and conceptual model (Creswell, 2005). The themes are grounded in two perspectives: perceptions of (western) feminism, and representing others. Within each perspective, I describe two or more concepts that are central to the formation and development of the theme.

### **Perceptions of Feminism**

The way the participants perceive western feminism is derived from their fundamental perception of the word “feminist”, and the translation of this perception into their works is the basis of how they represent themselves to their audience. This feminist perspective acts as a two-way mirror to me as I observed their words and activities to draw a whole picture of their organization. Two of my themes, Women’s lives and the politics of



gender ("*Konco Wingking*"), and College-hatched feminism, fall into this perspective. Each of these two themes is defined and explicated in the next sections.

### Theme 1: *Konco Wingking*: Women's Lives and the Politics of Gender

I asked my participants questions about women's lives in Indonesia, including their own life experiences, and how they became interested in women's issues and feminism. The combined responses composed a picture portraying women's lives rooted in values derived from indigenous cultural and religious norms, colonial experiences, and the influences of the Indonesian state. To understand contemporary Indonesian women's life, for me, means walking down memory lane and recounting the historical status of women through those norms and experiences.

The Javanese term "*konco wingking*" was borrowed from one of my participants when he described the women's domestic position as man's partner, who always stays behind the man. This is a traditional Islamic influence; however, the state places more emphasis on this principle than do religious institutions. Former president Suharto and his "New Order" cabinet (1966-1998) established as national policy a set dual role of women, and re-emphasized that policy within the body of Indonesia's 5<sup>th</sup> national five-year plan, referred to as REPELITA (1984-1989). REPELITA is the Indonesian national five-year development plan initiated during President Suharto's regime of The New Order that started from 1969 and ended in 1994. The plan was presented to Legislative Bodies (DPR) every five fiscal years as an overall proposal of economic objectives, including the desired growth rates to be achieved in major economic sectors such as agriculture, mining, and industry. It also included more detailed proposals for selected activities that were of particular concern during the planning period.

At first glance, this plan and women's role in it were looked upon as a part of Indonesia's attempt at modernization. On the surface, the plan appeared as though the state were giving an opportunity to women to define their freedom. However, deeper analysis revealed that this is not the case. For example, Julia Suryakusuma explained the politicization of *kodrat* in that "Kodrat" is translated as God's omnipotence defining women's fate. As pointed out clearly in her essay "*Confronting kodrat*", ....one recognizing women's role outside of the family, was in fact a tacit acknowledgement of the 'multiple burden' of women as there was no role for men" (Suryakusuma, 2004, p. 131). This ideology permeates throughout all of Indonesian society and ensnares every aspect of life in each Indonesian state civil service bureaucracy, including the Indonesian household. (This is even true of those individuals and families that are entrenched in my own family, as we have a long tradition of working inside the Indonesian Department of Justice.)

In order to begin efforts to raise awareness within the demographics of the present generation of Indonesian women and men, it is essential to deconstruct the gender concept within the "*konco wingking*" frame of reference. One of my participants, Lita, shared her sad story of her experience witnessing the life of a family during her travels to remote NTT (Nusa Tenggara Timor). She said "I witnessed a mother, grandmother and female grandchildren as they ate in the kitchen, while the men of the family ate in the dining room." Regardless of ethnicities, education level and religion, women's roles in Indonesian patriarchal life have been stereotyped as the caregivers, nurturers of life, of family, and of the society.

When I asked my participants about the importance of feminism in Indonesia, I got two different impressions from them. My male participants answered differently from their female counterparts. Both of my male participants, Uung and Kinyur, used the structural

elements of Indonesian society and culture as the grounds for their argument, while Lita and Sofie responded with skepticism and discouragement. Lita said: "Feminism... my family, who mostly are graduates from overseas universities, still misunderstand and cannot accept [feminism] as common sense. Now, you can imagine how it works in the rural and village areas where most people only have religion as their main education." As Bernighausen's (1991) research suggests, education level cannot be used as a sole parameter of how receptive one is in accepting new knowledge.

Sofie recounts her thoughts and experiences as she was growing up and recalls that her thinking and life patterns as an adolescent were much disturbed by all the requirements and rules that came with the state's efforts to define gender roles for females. For instance, girls have to wake up earlier in the morning than boys. This is a striking example representing the socialization of a gender concept in the lives of Indonesian youngsters. This kind of requirement is continually imposed to insure the strength of traditional Indonesian nationalism in the construction of the state economy, as well as the fabric of social and political bodies. The reconceptualizing of gender can help to open this thick layer of commonly held beliefs that create repression, domination, and hegemony towards one sex: female (Ibrahim & Suranto, 1998).

Unlike my male participants, my female participants, Lita and Sofie, had experienced direct exposure to woman's life by experiencing their own upbringing under the influences of State-defined gender roles, as well as having seen their mothers' living their presumed duty and responsibility as full-time mothers, and their survival in the patriarchal culture. The male participants, on the other hand, described woman's life through a comparison of their early life as boys with their observations of their sisters and their mothers, or their wives.

Female participants expressed their anger and dissatisfaction while growing up as a girl as being integral to their passion for feminism later in life. Moreover, both female journalists agreed that women's resistance to surrendering the comfort of living to men under the status quo of patriarchy is the main reason why feminism became the number one women's enemy. Lita said "If there is violence, people blame the women, and in the case of rapes, people again blame the women, and ironically women also believe that this is their mistake." Feminist media can provide a fertile ground to take women's minds out of their comfort zone and develop a new gender perspective. I agree with Mary Daly when she states that women must remove themselves from under a false sense of comfort and security that comes with living under an order of patriarchy. Women, in particular, who may be perceived as seemingly incapable of a high degree of self actualization, have been made such by societal structures that are products of human attempts to create security (Daly, 1973).

### Theme 2: College-hatched Feminism

Listening to what my participants said about women's life provided me with a preliminary comparison about who they are and how they see feminism within an Indonesian middle class perspective. The above-mentioned themes emerged from my research questions about these women's family and education background. I asked them to speak to me freely about themselves and how they became interested in feminism. To most Indonesians, feminism is seen only as a label for an activist group of misbehaving people who take away the meaning of love and family. The participants in my study, however, believe that the idea of feminism is an action plan that can applied in two different situations: the major structural elements of Indonesia (state and law), and the ideological superstructure of those elements. Ung's first reaction to my question was: " ....think about

Kartini; we are supposed to have more Kartini who are willing to defend women's fate..." [Kartini refers to the elite, Dutch-educated Javanese noblewoman who during the 19<sup>th</sup> century struggled for women's rights and feminist role models for Indonesian women within the colonial power structure.]

As mentioned earlier, education level cannot be used as the sole parameter of how receptive one is in accepting a new idea. The journalists in my study agreed that Indonesia needs the existence of the idea of feminism; however, it is not the same idea of feminism as in Europe, North America, Latin America, or even in the neighboring Asian continent. At the present time, the awareness of women's rights is still far away from becoming a commonly held view in Indonesia. Therefore, to reform the present cultural structure of gender means providing a constant wake up call to women to recognize the importance of women's issues. As Julia Suryakusuma stated, "...they must strive to overcome the interest barrier by conducting education of women to the effect that politics does matter for their everyday lives and broad social interest" (Suryakusuma, 2004; p. 157). It is therefore important for feminist media journalists to thoroughly research their information and programming, and package their programming in such a way as to provide an ever-present educative message that will frame women's issues in an egalitarian context.

My participants' answers to my research questions about family background and feminist interests helped me to understand how the processes of knowing and learning gender concepts were developed by these journalists in their lives. Their foremost reason for their career choice as a feminist journalist in RJP originated from their early exposure to sexism in their family, and their dissatisfaction with the attempts of two Indonesian former presidents, Sukarno and Suharto, to align the country's political and economic situation with their Guided Democracy and The New Order cabinet. Both authoritarian credos convinced

people that they really were being governed democratically, until 1998 when Suharto was forced to step down.

There is a fine line between gender, class and ethnicity in Indonesian society that makes the efforts to frame Indonesian women's issues within western and global feminism overwhelmingly impractical. The childhood culture of sexism in almost all Indonesian middle-class households developed uncontested gender issues in my participants' lives. Sofie said, "My family is academically oriented, and my nuclear family all believe that men and women have the right to earn the same education. The discrimination [I encountered] came from extended family. However, they still think of my profession as odd and tomboyish. To them, lecturer, journalist and political activist are male-occupied professions." In a similar context, Ung recalled his experience as the boy in the family. He said "...we boys watched television after dinner while our sister washed the dishes. When I was in college and read gender literature, I realized how I took advantage of it. It was a privilege of being a boy."

This cultural burden met its peak when these journalists went to accredited colleges around the years 2000 and 2001. College did not only give them space to read gender and sociology literature, but also provided a space to exercise their new gender concept. My research participants graduated with majors in sociology, journalism, and accountancy, with the exception of Lita, who did not mention much about her school during an open-ended interview. For these participants, the university campus became a space where they could think differently without feeling uncomfortable or be misjudged by their relatives as odd, lesbians, or apostates. However, the campus environment does not really promise to be an ideal place for female activists. First, as Sofie said, "in my department of sociology, we have less people interested in women's issues because they are men, and men are not

gender biased, but they are gender neutral." Second, the common misperception by female students about feminists, e.g., as lesbians and apostates, holds back the growth of gender-related movements on campus.

It is a passionate thought these journalists have in making their choice to work in situations where they are trapped between family hierarchical life and their emerging concept of gender and justice. Even though they are paid for this profession, I still think that they have made a passionate choice to raise people's awareness of women's issues. They truly believe that feminism is important in Indonesian life. However, because the current definition of feminism in Indonesia is misleading, they are still not able to define what a feminist is. But even if they cannot define themselves as feminists, they are able to define a feminist agenda. In developing, or third world, nations, the need to define feminism and its agenda is fundamental. As Odim suggests "If there is no term or focus, no movement which incorporates the struggle against sexism, women run the risk of becoming invisible" (Mohanty, Russo, and Torres, 1991, p. 319).

RJP is an organization where people from similar socioeconomic and education backgrounds work together trying to educate each other and the public about gender discrimination and women's issues. The emergence of feminism among these individuals has provided the impetus for these journalists to draw upon their personal interests. Initially, most of the journalists felt RJP was the perfect incubator for their ideological perspectives during their formative experiences with RJP (first and second years of employment). Now, working in a feminist media field, they still had some degree of reluctance to accept their role in feminist media. They did not have a vision nor conceptualize what feminism really means, in regard to guiding their journalistic efforts. hooks, in explaining visionary feminism, said that one of the difficulties we face while

spreading the work of feminism is to separate feminism from female gender issues. Too often, any issue that is important to feminism is often seen as necessarily connected with the female gender; even if a particular female gender issue may not have relevance to, or contain a feminist perspective (hooks, 2000). Regardless of the political position of an individual feminist perspective, these participants did not attempt to define feminism. Thus, the organization is missing the crucial elements of real focus and unity of effort. I believe it is crucial for participants in the feminist movements of the developing world, especially in the venue of feminist media, to strike a balance. Involved individuals must understand and be dedicated to a unified political education action plan as opposed to just focusing their efforts on romancing their own personal freedom.

According to bell hooks, most attempts at defining feminism reflect the class nature of the movement (hooks, 1984). As I examine the notion of personal freedom and feminist belief, I think feminism is not how we women experience discrimination in life; rather, it is more important to understand how discrimination is experienced, viewed, and learned by others. It is the art of imagination rather than disciplined knowledge and it takes the deepest passion from anyone who is willing to see and go beyond the veneer of women's lives. Lita mentioned her objection to being categorized as a feminist. She said "I care about women's problems and I have something within me, and my family background to share... and RJP is the facility to airing what is inside my heart and my mind." Here again we see the sensuality and romance of personal freedom, and taking a stance to put politics into one's agenda is still overwhelmingly limited to certain social strata in Indonesia due to the hegemonic mental condition in almost every layer of Indonesian class, ethnic and religion.



When I asked Uung if he would describe himself as a feminist, basically his answer was no. He said he did not like to be bothered with the label of feminism. He said: "...feminism is only choices... The important thing is how we profoundly motivate the citizenry and do something about injustice. If I cannot eliminate the problem... at least I can raise the awareness..." But how does his "...Do something..." attitude fit into the organization vision? The critical element, again, is unity of effort; it is a missing link that I am going to discuss in the next theme. Again, the key lies in having a focus on a defined and clearly articulated goal and unity of effort in attaining that goal. As bell hooks (2000; p. 112) said: "...to start again with the basic premise that feminist politics is necessarily radical... that the representation on feminism as a life style or commodity automatically obscures the importance of feminist politics."

Besides the external factors concerning why feminism is hard to accept and define among Indonesians, there is a major internal factor and that is the degree of comfort experienced by almost every woman who lives within a patriarchal society. This comfort is the comfort of being a mother, a housewife, and a good role model. Interestingly both of my female participants expressed their disappointment with this notion in their interviews. When explaining why she is reluctant to socially accept her role as a feminist, Sofie said: "They (women) see this as a benefit; they don't have to work for money, don't have to mess around with public space, just waiting for their husband to come home. I don't think that is wrong, but it has to be their choice, not conditional and forced by anyone." This shows how Indonesian women are stuck in a mental trap. However, this is not a dilemma, if each individual is willing to take their stance to break out of this limit. And Mary Daly suggests that women surrender this comfort, which creates false security. She said: "women... seemingly incapable of a high degree of self actualization have been made such

by societal structures that are products of human attempts to create security" (Daly, 1973, p. 23).

It is important to note that all my participants' ages ranged from the twenties to the thirties. And some of their perspectives were formed by their education background, and the political situation on the campuses where they attended university. It also is important to note that the major influence in forming their perspectives was that of the "New Order" national philosophy and its significant impact on their family and community lives. The university campus has always been a place that seems to offer students a perception of freedom of speech and other liberties. However, living in a social system where, on the one hand, the primary belief holds and extends the perception that the family is the only entity where love and peace grow stronger, and on the other hand institutionalizes sexism, is a significant challenge, so much so that it is mentally risky, even for members of highly educated Indonesian families, to become themselves. Within this context, Lita expressed this frustration: "...when a woman is raped, they (society) blame her, and ironically even women themselves blame her. Here at (RJP), in order to open people's minds, we need to open ours first... living as a part of a community is a very important way of life in Indonesia, and for this, however, it costs people in that they give up their freedom and opportunity to be intelligent..." In her book *Beyond God the Father*, Mary Daly explains why most women feel uncomfortable about changing: "....It means facing the nameless anxieties of fate, which become concretized in loss of jobs, friends, social approval, health, and even life itself" (Daly, 1973, p. 24).

### **Representing Others**

The first part of this chapter discussed the perspectives of Indonesian feminists, or activists (as we know that they do not like the term "feminist"), toward feminism in

Indonesia. The journalists agreed that Indonesia needs feminism, a force that can facilitate change in Indonesian life at the individual and structural level. However, what plan of action do they have that can make changes happen? None of the participants could remotely define and articulate a solid idea of what their political stance is toward Indonesian feminism and gender issues. In this part of the chapter, we will discuss the journalists' commitment to an ideology, their understanding of RJP's mission and restructure, and what their work means to them, and ultimately how their individual needs collide with the organization's mission. We also try to interpret what is actually behind the RJP "raising awareness" philosophy by examining their work and imagining what their feminist education plan should look like in the future.

### Theme 3: Onanistic Feminist—Questioning the Advocacy

*"We feel that we have a commitment, and it is important to do something about it.....it's like producing something and we don't know whether we actually accomplish something or not.....it's only orgasm, our social masturbation on women issues."*

The term "Onanistic Feminist" is derived from one participant's point of view about his work in the organization and his ideological orientation. This theme is very critical because it questions the efficiency and effectiveness of the program. Three of my research questions fell into this theme: (1) How did you start working at RJP? (2) Describe to me the RJP focus and goals? and (3) What has RJP done so far in educating Indonesian people. Overall, participants' responses shared similarities that could be traced back to their ideological orientations and the original platforms of their feminist backgrounds.

With respect to beginning work at RJP, one commonly-stated reason related to educational or professional background. Two of my participants finished their major in sociology from accredited universities, and two did not (Eko, who has an accounting degree, and Lita, who studied tourism), but all of them had some degree of familiarity with journalism, especially print media, and some understanding of gender issues before they

started their careers at RJP. Most of them had spent time in street protests during their college years. Loaded with degrees in social science, history and political science, their educational experience had led them to work in feminist media. This had never been a hard choice for them, e.g., choosing between work as a banker (a common denominator for the first job of a fresh college graduate in Jakarta) or as a feminist media journalist. When I asked about the choices they made, Sofie said, "Because this is my world. My school was sociology, and sociology teaches us strategy and solutions toward better living." RJP appear to be a venue where they can exercise the theory they learned in college in the mass communication business. As suggested by bell hooks (2000), women scholars who are truly committed to the feminist movement and feminist solidarity are eager to produce theory that would address the realities of most women. Additionally, RJP was seen as a stepping stone for the pursuit of their extended education goals. As a matter of fact, almost all of them started their work at RJP in 2001, and ended their work, pursuing other aims, a few months after I conducted this research in August 2005.

I pursued further questions about the conditions and thought processes that had led these individuals to decide to work in a media format such as radio. In a discussion of a previous theme, I found that a college education along with western theoretical perspectives such as Marxism had guided them toward addressing gender and feminist activism. This philosophical drive appears to have guided the participants collectively to RJP's mass media business. As cited in *'Women in Communication,'* feminist media worker/researcher Joyce Rothschild-Whit (1979) argued that people join collectives to gain substantial control over their work, which enables them to structure both the product and the work process in accordance with their values and political goals (Creedon, 1993, p. 66). From my interviews, I found the participants, during their first year of employment, held a

common sense of challenge and a spirited sense of lofty goals. They were more excited with radio programs than they were with print media, because of the “creativity” required to create a radio program. As Ung said: “... (at) that time radio was an extremely new thing to me and I was so interested because of the creativity and imagination aspects of it. The good or bad of (the content of) a program depends on how imaginative we are at making the radio come alive. It is not like being a regular reporter who only interviews and writes.” This creativity and imagination, which Lita referred to as the “beauty of broadcasting”, are the common key words mentioned in almost every part of the interviews as participants repeatedly emphasized words like “good program,” “imagination,” and “creative packing”—but referred more to the process of creating the show than to defining the needs or responses of their audiences. It seemed that broadcasting a “beautiful” and lively program is not necessarily defined as making a connection with one’s audience; rather, it refers to creating something that temporarily fulfills onanistic feminist desires on the part of the journalists. That is, it seems to be more about the fun of the process than the usefulness of the product. This will be discussed further in the discussion of the next theme.

In this light, it was not surprising that responses to my questions about RJP’s focus and goals for educating Indonesian people, and what it actually has done in educating Indonesian people, were somewhat antagonistic to each other. The focus of RJP as a women’s NGO (non-government organization) is to deliver enlightenment messages with simplified language and more interesting topics to Indonesian people, especially women at the grassroots level. In an educational context, RJP’s goal is to raise awareness by informing people (their audiences) about women’s issues through its messages. As Phillip Eldridge (1995) suggests, this model of NGO is an “Empowerment of Grassroots,” which means that their organizational concept is focused on consciousness-raising and awareness

of rights rather than on a campaign to change policy, while pursuing goals of autonomous group formation. The belief is that eventually a strong, informally structured popular movement will emerge (Suryakusuma, 2004, p. 266). To RJP, delivering messages about women and gender injustice play a major role in long-term investment, and this means a very long time. As Lita, the coordinator who gives the final approval for a program, said: "The success of RJP is in the later day. We believe that if we deliver this [message] and keep talking about this all the time, people are going to change, and that is what we consider to be success." While important, this belief clouds the need for an actual action plan for RJP in promoting social change.

Essentially, RJP's goal is to open people's minds rather than to educate people. As Lita said "we don't teach people, but inform them and open their mind about what is going on." The logical question would then be how one can open people's minds and promote changes without educating them through their news. Otherwise, it is just a one way information flow with no educational effect at all on the audience. However, the one major criterion for good programming at RJP seemed to be that the program is linguistically acceptable by any class in Indonesian society. In their training, RJP's journalists had been taught to write a program with "down to earth" language, as the stated purpose of the program is airing gender awareness to people who might or might not read. RJP is thus a simpler version of the JP journal, with simpler topics. Thus language requirements and program theme selection were actually the key words to maintaining the goals of raising awareness, and as long as these two elements were fulfilled, the program was considered to have met its goals and standards.

Responses to my questions about what RJP has done thus far to reach their organization's goals all converged on this same idea: onanistic feminist desire. These

program producers did not fully know what happened to their program once it left their computer desk. As Eko said, “this is a great opportunity. We are mass media; we have tools and *power* to inform women’s lives as much as possible.” Indeed, mass media is a powerful tool for mobilizing the public mind, but again what power are we talking about here? Is “power” a cleverly-worded message about feminist principles, or civil rights? Who is supposed to benefit from it? If Indonesian women are to be beneficiaries of it, then which women? Indonesia is an archipelago. As Laurie J. Sears shares, as an historian of Southeast Asia, “...something so elusive as ‘women’ in Indonesia has led me to join those who see all feminism conditioned by questions of class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, seniority, and ideology (Sears, 1996, p. 12). This is no fun question, and soon or later the JP organization cannot deny the fact that they have been shooting with no target.

Although participants described their first year at RJP as a year with challenges, it also was the best year for them to learn a new media format and it provided an instant space for them to feel involved with women’s studies. But this period of a heavenly, fully-committed relationship with the organization was tested, and gradually changed, when they learned that their ideological orientation collided with management requirements. This will be discussed further under the next theme; for now, suffice to say that this collision was fundamentally around the radio program themes chosen to be aired to the public. As these themes were actually the center of the business, it is important to understand who developed them and how they were chosen. This is not a simple situation, because RJP’s operation, as an NGO, depends on funding from global organizations. This sometimes caused difficulties during interviews, as participants had to be sensitive to realities such as this. Questioning the journalists’ view of advocacy in RJP means questioning their motives and commitments, and more than that is questioning power relations between management

and journalists. Some participants were open and free in their responses, but others censored their speech through observable subtleties and redundant words. I let them talk freely, using their own expressions about the organization. I was there not to judge them, but instead to help the organization to redirect its feminist agenda.

As mentioned earlier, this theme is very critical because it questions the efficiency and effectiveness of the program. From careful observation of the working environment, daily routine and the going's-on within daily office life at RJP, I can see clearly the aim of the organization: That aim is funding. Even as sensitive as gender issues are, when the main goal of this organization is to acquire funding, all focus and effort become skewed, and the intended purpose of the organization becomes a secondary priority. In this regard, everything to which organization labors toward negotiable, including ideology. It is especially noticeable in Indonesia, a country whose societal construct was formed via Dutch colonial influences and by the multi-ethnic and extreme bureaucratic culture brought on by nationalism. Negotiation and compromise is a "must-understand" principle that drives the engine of Indonesia.

#### Theme 4: Women's Radio and Women's Issues—A Marriage Of Convenience

*"RJP is to raise awareness of local issues of women, who so far are considered to be insignificant and not existing." (The Executive Director)*

*"The focus and target of RJP is grassroots women from the middle and lower classes." (The editor/journalist)*

Do the above quotes above mean the same thing? Or do those statements bear out some individual and agenda-driven expectations from both management and the journalists of RJP? And how are local issues supposed to become news for women? Doubts and curiosity emerged after I read the interview transcripts, as I pondered the organization's stated aims and observed the actions of each individual.



This major theme was derived from participants' responses to three research questions, as well as from the triangulation of other data. The research questions related to this big theme are: (1) Describe to me how you make a radio program here? (2) How do you judge your success or failure? and (3) Describe to me your group dynamics and hierarchy. Other data that contributed to this theme stemmed from the organization's annual report, its radio scripts, and the program-making process flow chart. Because of the complexity of responses, I organized them under two sub-themes: Radio program themes, and the Radio program production routine. My analysis enabled me to understand what I called "collision between ideology and organizational practices" as described in the previous themes and relate these problems directly to the mechanism of developing radio themes and programming in RJP.

#### *Radio program themes*

RJP's stated goal is to raise awareness of and campaign for feminism, women's issues, and gender equity. To convey knowledge about these issues requires RJP's journalists to make educational news programs in three different styles: magazine, profile, and feature. As described earlier, the message is repetitive and follows a one-way communication model in hopes of putting new knowledge in people's minds so that one day they will change. The particular theme of each news program can be complicated to choose, partly because the journalists cannot exercise total freedom of creativity with respect to programming, as they do not have the final word on what themes will be chosen. Rather, the journalists indicated that the management has the ultimate power over theme selection. Nonetheless, the program editor explained that some creativity is required from each journalist to make a program, as "creativity will die if we only work on ordered programs."

Further, as RJP's goal is to serve Indonesian women from middle and lower classes all over the archipelago, the use of much simpler language and interesting topics became a necessity in making a program, and this is one of the requirements that the organization expects the journalist to fulfill. Sofie pointed this out as a challenge, saying "actually, I faced some difficulties in my first year with RJP... mainly the challenge to translate women's issues into light and interesting topics. I used to write research and academic papers."

Another reason choosing program themes is difficult is because they are supposed to be addressing women's issues at the local level, with information and critical content relevant to that particular area. However, most themes are born in RJP's editorial meeting in Jakarta. (I did not have a chance to observe any of their organizational meetings, because they did not have any management or editorial meetings scheduled during my time there. The only meetings I attended were YJP's organization commemoration birthday event, and some meetings with people from other NGOs.) After editorial meetings, if a particular theme requires a journalist to travel out of Jakarta, the organization will send the journalist to the location for three days to a week to gather their interview data. But as Eko said, "...with themes, sometimes is hard to find one. It's easier to be directly in touch with the theme if we get it here. If these are developed in Jakarta only... sometimes themes reach a dead end." The journalists realize that it is important to connect program theme building with information from the local area where an issue or theme emerged. As indicated by Parpart (1995), local knowledge and experiences used to solve local problems are not only practical but they will resuscitate these subjugated knowledge systems and boost the self-confidence of the local people, the women, and the other marginalized groups and individuals (in Steeves, 2001, p.41).

At RJP, during an editorial or news budgeting meeting, management and journalists define tasks for each program theme for that month, and some themes such as women's reproductive health and HIV/AIDS have been on their agenda since 2003. As journalist Uung indicated, "one issue is sometimes our creativity is inadequately supported by the management. If we want to make a program outside the defined tasks, outside of the agenda, we are easily told that they don't have funding for it."

A related issue impacting on program theme development is that, to run their operational practices, RJP receives a great amount of foreign funding. In this context, Uung expressed his dead-end working field as "Humanitarian Business." He said, "this NGO involves a lot of money. The process works like a market... our market is actually the funding agencies who like to buy and pay for the product, and the consumer is our people. Just like a market, it has a trend and always changes—from human rights, politics, law, and gender, to the environment, and it is going to change again following the trend." To feminist mass media producers, following the trends strictly means losing control over their work. What they had done so far did not fit their ideological orientations. When the program theme chosen did not match their feminist principles, the making of a program became only a task, losing its feminist vision. When I asked Sofie about what she wanted to achieve by working in RJP, she expressed her own personal vision of feminism and said that the women's movement in Indonesia did not grow because of people ignoring the importance of youth groups, never thinking about "cadre-isation".

But an NGO's relation to funding agencies can be a double-edged sword, and their dependency on foreign funding agencies can be a source of tension due to the many requirements imposed by these agencies (Suryakusuma, 2004). Foreign funding can have negative consequences for NGO's internal organizations and operating style, and render

them vulnerable to accusations that they are being used as part of a new strategy of capitalist penetration into less accessible hinterlands around the Third World (Eldridge, 1988, in Suryakusuma, 2004, p.262).

Program themes in the year 2005 for both the RJP radio program and the JP Journal are listed in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below. RJP produced one program each week, while JP published a journal issue every two months. As can be seen in the tables, women's health's was the primary program theme for both formats. RJP had a greater variety of themes, because of greater audience coverage provided by radio.

**Table 4.1. RJP's radio programs produced in 2005**

<i>Edition</i>	<i>Theme</i>
RJP 279	Radio drama women's health reproduction
RJP 286	Health reproduction for adolescent (Film)
RJP 291	Women's health reproduction in Bali
RJP 292	Women with AIDS/HIV
RJP 293	Women's health reproduction in Kendari
RJP 301	Abortion in Medan
RJP 303	Women' s health reproduction in Samarinda
RJP 304	Cultural factor in mortality rate of mother in Indramayu
RJP 306	Women's health reproduction and prostitution in Pekanbaru
RJP 309	Women, poverty and HIV/AIDS in Merauke
RJP 315	Women's health
RJP 316	HIV/AIDS and health service for pregnant women
RJP 323	Regulation for abortion, do we need it?
RJP 295	Trafficking in Pekanbaru
RJP 296	Trafficking in Bali
RJP 332	Migrant worker and trafficking in Kupang
RJP326	Regulation on trafficking
RJP 280	Islam accused polygamy
RJP 283	Tsunami in Aceh
RJP 284	Regulation on pornography, do we need it?

**Table 4.1. RJP's radio programs produced in 2005 - Continued**

RJP 285	Sumarsih, the human rights hero
RJP 287	Impact of oil price raise
RJP 288	Media awareness for youth
RJP 289	Violence to female adolescent
RP 290	Tjandra Wibowo ( Film director of documentary movie 'Anganku')
RJP 294	Girls school in Ciliwung
RJP 298	The seaweed women in Palopo
RJP 299	Women and Moslem school
RJP 300	Women in Aceh
RJP 302	Feminism and neoliberalism
RJP 305	Ayu, bomb victim from Aceh
RJP 307	Malnutrition in NTB (Nusa Tenggara Barat)
RJP 309	Women refugee in Ambon city
RJP 310	Women and poverty in Kendari
RJP 311	Women social worker
RJP 314	Women and modern theater
RJP 317	Citra Devi and Randa ntovea, women in theater in Palu
RJP 318	Sexuality
RJP 319	Girls and coral reef
RJP 320	Amendment on health regulation

**Table 4.2. Women's journal JP published in 2005**

<i>Edition</i>	<i>Theme</i>
39	Domestic labor
40	Women post natural disaster
41	Sexuality
42	Analyzing poverty, where is the women?
43	Protect women from HIV
44	Alternative education for girls and women

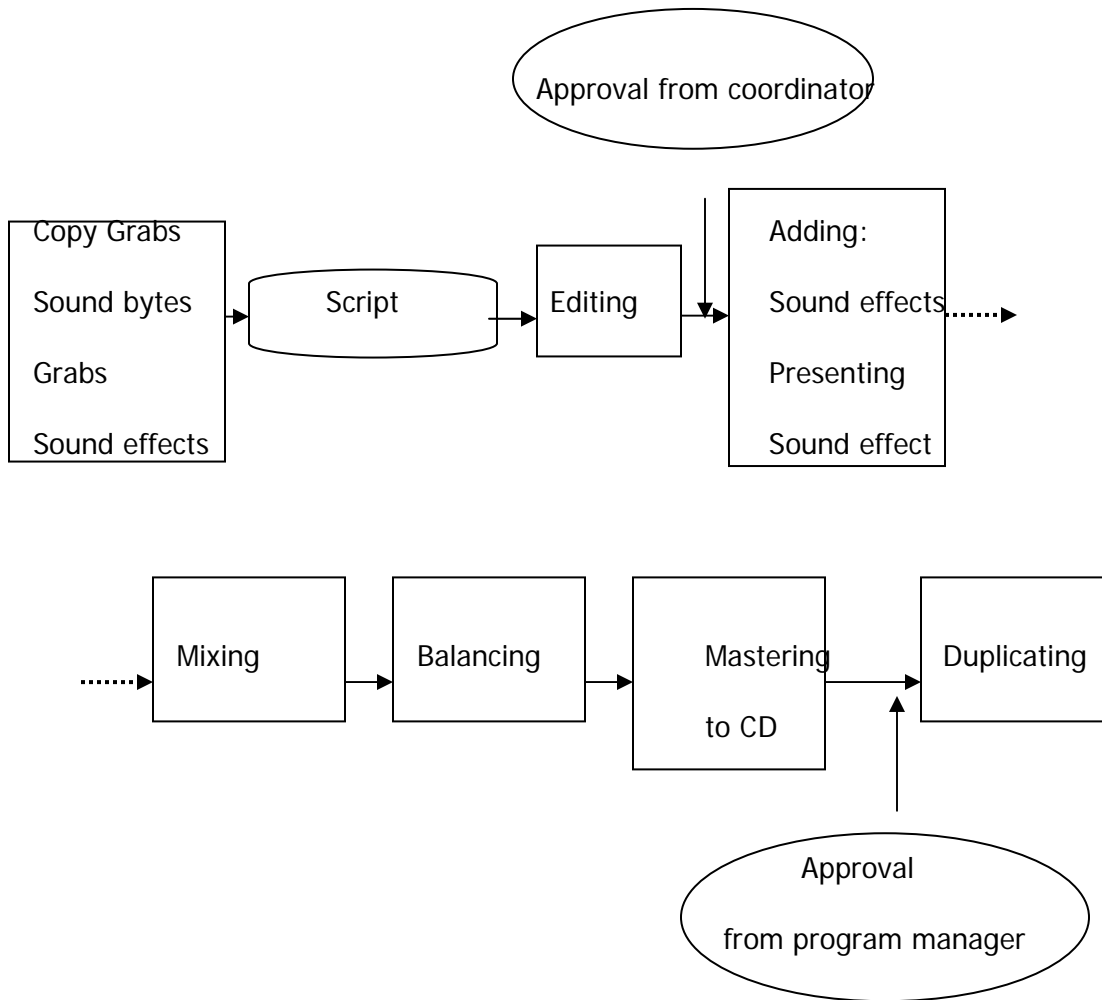
In 2005, RJP distributed its radio program to about 167 partner stations throughout Indonesia. However, there are no data that measure the actual audience reach or impact of the program, or even whether or not the programs were ever broadcast.

#### *Radio program production routine*

According to the RJP/JP executive director, the organizational structure of RJP/JP is very vulnerable to any changes required by the management. As illustrated in the organizational chart in Chapter 3, RJP is just one part of the whole foundation, YJP, which also produces a women's journal, JP video, the JP website, and publications and documentation. The organization YJP requires its staff to be able to work in any kind of media format, so the radio staffers sometimes also have to write for the journal and maintain the YJP website. There are three hierarchical levels in the organization: the management, the coordinator, and the staff. Journalist Eko said, "there is the director and three managers in the management, and under them, there is a coordinator who spends most of her time in the warehouse. We have three managers... and each of them has coordinators. The last [level] is staff."

In the process of making a program, the task is structurally divided between two levels—management and the journalists (the staff). The process of making a radio program begins with the editorial meeting, at which time the program themes and tasks are defined and personnel assigned to the effort. Following this meeting, each journalist writes a proposal defining their approach to accomplishing their assigned tasks. This effort consists of further definition of themes, the population segment that they are going to interview, and the development of a timeline for implementation of their activities. Below is a rendition of the flow chart the editor, Uung, drew as he described the process to me.

**Figure 4.1. The process of making a radio program in RJP**



There are two points at which a journalist is required to receive approval to produce a particular program. The first is when presenting the initial proposal and the second is when the radio script is ready to be mixed by the studio editor or “mixer man”. RJP had two people at that time who were capable of doing the mixing, Ung and Lita (the coordinator). Another process essential to producing a program is a “Grab”, which literally means grabbing sound bytes. When a “Grab” is performed, the data consist of pieces of interviews, or other sound bytes, sound effects, or narrator’s speech. Selecting “Grabs” is the most important task done by the journalists as they edit their works upon their return

from the field. Eko described a grab as a chunk of interview with the informants, selected creatively to develop a story or topic. In the process, the coordinator has the power to approve or disapprove the segment. Lita, the coordinator, comments on this: "...We need to look for the right angle... fit to women's issues... In RJP'S organization, we need people who understand gender issues, for example abortion, to decide whether abortion is related to health or rape... We used to have one female journalist that was against this philosophy, and thus was against our mission."

I asked the journalists to describe their working dynamics on a typical day and how they judge the success or failure of their work. One, Sofie, described her typical work day in this feminist media organization as, "It's routine.... I cannot really answer whether it's lively or not." After observing their work in the studio, I asked each of the participants about "creativity" in developing and making programming. Uung, who performs as the mixer man and has more experience in media than the other journalists, said that creativity is very important, especially in a radio format. However, he said, "if it [programming] was dictated by our dependency on the funding source...it means it's dictated by the logic of a market." As indicated earlier, the NGO's dependency on foreign funding agencies referred to as the "market" for the radio program themes by Uung, can be a source of tension due to the many requirements imposed by these agencies. In this context, the relationship between women's radio and women's issues can indeed reflect a marriage of convenience as much as a commitment to feminist issues.

#### Theme 5: Feminists' future: Rethinking Commitment

This theme emerged from participants' responses to the question: "How do you see yourself five years from now?" I asked the same question of the journalists, the coordinator, and the executive director. The journalists all believed that they would be somewhere else



in five years. Each journalist had her/his own mission and perspective about their careers and ideological orientation; however, they all agreed that YJP's organization needs to establish "cadre-ization" to continue their efforts toward enlightening Indonesian society. Uung said that his interest in the organization is waning, or dried up. He said, "I think I am done here, because to me this is just like school.... giving me lots of lessons. To me, this experience is good for my curriculum vitae. Maybe I will be working in humanitarian aid, but in a more business-oriented way." I followed up by asking him how his sense of commitment will survive in a new organization. He replied, "My commitment is to injustice; however, I have to subsidize myself to insure I have the spirit, energy, and fate to survive in an unfortunate situation... just to keep my commitment."

For Sofie, who was more quiet and soft spoken, RJP was an extension of her academic efforts in women's studies. She said, "my dream is to raise awareness of gender equity among adolescents." In this context she is doubly committed, with a solid commitment toward her own personal mission, and a commitment to the organization. But she intimated that it was sometimes difficult to maintain that strong commitment now that her first year was completed. Lita said, "this is not a career, especially because I spent a lot in order to study overseas.... Maybe one day I will have a boutique, or restaurant in Mexico... After two years of working here, it's time for me to think about myself."

Based on these interviews, there is clear evidence that there is some degree of disappointment of the unmet needs and a sense of reward among the participants. Within this context it is interesting to note the remarks of the executive director of JP: "JP hopes to have loyal journalists, so in the context of human resources, we can be a sustainable organization."

## Summary

In this chapter, I described the five major themes that I derived from the triangulation of interview data and working documents. These themes include: (1) *Konco Wingking*—Women's lives and the politics of gender; (2) College-hatched feminism; (3) Onanistic feminism—Questioning the advocacy; (4) Women's radio and women's issues—A marriage of convenience; and (5) Feminist future—Rethinking commitment. The identified themes are interconnected chronologically, starting from participants' early experiences with feminism to the time of this research, when they all were involved in the Indonesian women's movement. "*Konco Wingking*" is a common paradigm of a portrait of women's lives rooted in values derived from indigenous cultural and religious norms, colonial experiences, and the influences of the Indonesian state. "College-hatched feminism" refers to the origin of most participants' backgrounds in gender and feminism that led them to their media work. The term "onanistic feminism" describes the core of this research project, referring to the complexity of these participants' struggle to fantasize their ideological orientations of feminism within the realities of their organizational context. "Women's radio and women's issues—A Marriage of convenience" is essentially the flip side of "Onanistic feminism", describing how the journalists tried to align this fantasy to the organizational structure. "Feminist future—Rethinking commitment" identifies the fulfillment of values, solidarity and material gain that influences the sustainability of human resources, including the careers of this study's participants. In the next chapter I will discuss these themes further in the context of the literature reviewed earlier, and suggest some recommendations for RJP to help them analyze and perhaps enhance their strategy to serve as an educational vehicle for feminism

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND EPILOGUE

#### Discussion

The purpose of my study was to examine how women' radio RJP (*Radio Jurnal Perempuan*) serves as an educational agency for women in Indonesia, in particular, how it serves as a feminist education vehicle. Overall, my findings revealed that women' radio RJP does produce and deliver a great deal of informational programming to its audience, and that the great bulk of this programming concern's issues thought to be of importance primarily to women. This in itself is significant, as the cultural and political context in Indonesia does not lend itself easily to an educational focus on women. However, my research also illuminated some issues that make it difficult or even impossible to evaluate the role of the organization as a feminist education vehicle under its current organization and working environment. These issues include the following:

- a lack of unity of philosophical orientation between the journalists and the organization;
- the absence of a strategic focus in defining the priorities of their projects and activities;
- the lack of a definition, or criteria, to measure the success of their program;
- poor criteria in hiring RJP's journalists; and
- a lack of independent budgeting to support the organization's efforts.

The first issue ties together all the remaining issues, and is the central problem discovered in RJP during my research. As I stated in the body of this work, the overarching problematic theme is what I defined as "onanistic feminism". There are two main elements to this theme which, as mentioned earlier, reflect the idea of the Indonesian feminist media

organization as a coin with two faces: the face of ideology and the face of organizational hierarchy. The journalists' attraction to feminism, and hence to RJP, grew out of personal agendas and turned into fantasy when they found that the organizational structure of RJP had no defined goals that could support a feminist movement, or their own feminist goals. This is because, as an NGO in a feminist media field, the organizational practices of YJP (*Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan*) or the JP (*Jurnal Perempuan*) foundation have been conditioned by the historically strong cultural politics of *konco wingking*; this put the radio producers and journalists as a body into a marginalized group even before they began. The paradigm *konco wingking*, as described earlier, means "from behind". Females are taught this mindset initially by religious practices and further conditioned in it through the Indonesian state educational system. This paradigm is a thick barrier that serves to protect every aspect of traditional organizational practices from experiencing visionary change. In the regard, the ideology and work ethic of the journalists was challenged and thus impeded because RJP does not support the growth of freedom to implement their beliefs into action. And thus *konco wingking* is reinforced as RJP's ill-defined goals allow for personal agendas and incompatible ideological orientations to impact adversely on the organizational practices.

The second issue above, which is the lack of a strategic focus of RJP programming, was interpreted in my theme "Women's radio and women's issues: A marriage of convenience"; this also relates to the other defined issues. The lack of interaction between the workings of ideology and its relationship to the organizational structure has created unfocused radio programs. RJP does not have a research and budgeting process that can support its efforts at mapping their audience (Appendix C). Thus RJP journalists do not have any information about who their audience is, or even if they actually have an

audience. Without this information, they are unable to formulate any kind of definition of, or criteria for, what would constitute the success of their programming and educational efforts. Their only informational and measurement tool is their infrequent receipt of letters and comments from a few interested listeners. For them, the process of making a radio program about women's issues has become an individual effort, and a point of tension between the journalists and their coordinator. Because there is a lack of strategic focus, individualistic politics take root and come into conflict with the organization's goal; thus the first thing damaged in the effort is personal commitment. As long as RJP does not lay out a clear strategy for marrying their politics with their feminist plan, the lack of unity of effort will remain the status quo and this means low sustainability of their radio staff.

With respect to sustainability of staff, the YJP organization also should work on developing clear criteria for the selection and retention of key personnel, and these criteria should stem from the organization's goals and priorities. For example, if the organization firmly believes in feminist programming, then a feminist background should be among the criteria for hiring. Currently, there appear to be no well-defined and consistent hiring criteria beyond an advanced education. Further, YJP could try to strategically unite their members' individual commitments and politics, even during the period of "cadre-isation", or recruitment. Cadre-isation means regenerating the unity of ideology, not deepening the gap between the staff and management, and potentially could provide a strong philosophical foundation when recruiting and hiring RJP journalists. These efforts would be especially important not only to retaining qualified staff, but also to recruiting them. Without attention to this, the turnover of staff will continue to be a problem, and the recruitment of new staff will not be effective in addressing the problems.

Another major issue that impacts the organizational structure and professionalism of RJP is their reliance on foreign funding. Consequently, their efforts are predefined by their relationship with those foreign funding sources: program themes are determined by the conditions under which RJP has agreed to accept funding. This power relationship is reflected in the hierarchical nature of the work routine in the making of a program. In that process, from selecting the original program themes all the way to their mass production, “creativity” is defined primarily in terms of making an artistic and ear-catching program based more on form than on [feminist] substance.

### **Recommendations**

From all themes or problems occurred in the research, I have derived some suggestions for RJP and YJP in order to help them better serve the role of an education vehicle for Indonesian people, especially Indonesian women.

1. Develop strategic plans. Currently, there is no real sense of a strategic vision that would support the development of a strategic planning process. Thus the organization has no plans in place that direct the organization's day-to-day efforts, the development of programming targeted to specific audiences, and the focusing of research-based data collection efforts on specific regions and their associated demographics. This is important because a lack of strategic vision will not support clear and focused efforts in budgeting and spending.
2. Re-define budgetary priorities. In analyzing the annual reports from 2003 and 2005, it became apparent that RJP lacks a focused budgetary and spending process. One cannot examine the financial metrics and determine what money is spent where. For example, one cannot determine how much is actually spent on research. In addition, the lack of strategic focus means there is no process through which RJP

- can target fund-raising efforts. It is recommended that RJP establish clearly-defined financial metrics to insure maximum flexibility to reappportion funds towards programming directions it has found to be critical—and successful—for their audience.
3. Establish a metrics process to capture data from the individual broadcast regions. Currently, the organization does not have a clear picture of how their programming is received, what the actual broadcast coverage may be, or how often their programs are actually broadcast. It is recommended that they develop such a process, that would include regular face-to-face contacts with the management of all the servicing broadcast facilities, the use of surveys and other statistics collection methods, and regular interaction with the listening population.
  4. Develop a personnel process that will insure that the organization can select, hire, and retain journalists that fit the strategic aims of RJP. The group in this study was composed of individuals hired via a set of vague selection criteria. It appears that RJP was interested in having employees that possessed the credentials of advanced education, but not necessarily equipped to support feminist media efforts.
  5. Develop long range “professional development” and continuing education plans and programs that are germane to the organization’s goals. This will assist RJP in insuring that their staff stays current in the issues that are relevant to the organization’s aims, and thus having sustainability as mentioned by RJP’s management. Such efforts can include seminar and conference attendance, RJP-sponsored seminars and conferences, and other activities that will encourage global networking.

Through this research, I have hoped to provide suggestions that RJP and other feminist media organizations in third world countries might investigate for ways to evaluate their implementation plans, and significantly redirect their paradigm towards a mass-based, feminist educational movement. Such changes could help feminist media workers rethink and redefine their organizational practices in ways that would maintain their working ideologies in the face of their relations with funding agencies. This research provides a crucial foundation for further research on women's NGOs, and on the roles and activities of feminist media in producing and disseminating feminist knowledge. For example, in my study there was very little data found about feminist media producers and their participation in feminism, and it is important to understand their intentions and their work towards educating the public about the women's movement. The lack of research about this aspect highlights the need for an ongoing comprehensive evaluation of women's NGO projects in order to assess their efficacy for social change.

## **Epilogue**

It has been a challenge to find research and literature on feminist media and associated women's NGO (non-government organization) efforts in Indonesia and Asia in general. There have been some brief reports from researchers from Indonesia and other continents, which examined mainly literature, printed media and cinema. And women's radio is a new and emerging format in regard to feminist education in Indonesia. Most aspects of feminist media research efforts are related to how to present content; little attention—and thus resources—is given to research efforts to insure their material is marketable to an audience. Research that targets the philosophical and financial foundations of Indonesian/Asian feminist media outlets is more rare. Although this



potentially makes the contributions of the current study more valuable, it also makes the contextualization of its findings and perspectives more complicated.

As I conducted this research, I continually asked myself whether the findings would construct the same perspective if I were a western female researcher. Ultimately, I realized that feminist research in Indonesia required me to go beyond what I could only see with naked eyes; it is an effort in which one cannot simply go to the libraries or “Google” searches to find lists of critical information. All gestures, language, smiles, silence, talking, physical settings, and everything I could sense while conducting my research became a major part of my analysis. The experience of my cultural mores caused me to produce more pages of field notes and transcribe interviews than I can write. Thus if I were not Indonesian, I would have overlooked many critical points and clues from the very first day of my research. It took me, as a researcher, to have the feeling of *being* Indonesian but also of *thinking* as a non-Indonesian scholar. This is the most challenging obstacle I had to overcome in order to understand both cultures and politics and make a thorough interpretation of RJP journalists and their interaction within their group.

The great challenge of power relations among the elite participants in third world feminist research perhaps creates environments in which individuals are reluctant to journey forward to conduct initial research into feminist issues. For Indonesia, feminist education has just begun to emerge. Because feminism defined in an Indonesian context is truly vague, there is as yet little connectivity to feminist issues and feminist education; as such this too is an obstacle. My intent in conducting this research is to establish an ice-breaking prologue in order to overcome identified obstacles and to set a baseline for further research on Indonesian/Southeast Asian feminist media, as well as regional feminist cultural politics.

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## APPENDIX A

### *Sample of Consent Form*

#### **Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, CSUMB CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**Title of Project:** Emerging Feminist Education: A Feminist Perspective. A Case study of Indonesian Feminist Media

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We would like you to participate in a research study conducted by Meike Bhariana to be used for her Master of Arts in Education (MAE) thesis at California State University, Monterey Bay. The purpose of this research is to help an Indonesian feminist media to educate women about women's issues more effectively.

- You were selected as a participant in this study because you are one of Indonesian media feminist whose works and experiences is the center of my research.
- The benefits of participating in this project include professional development and access to the results of the study, if you are interested.
- If you decide to participate in this research, you will be expected to be interviewed 2 or 3 times a week an hour each at your convenience time and some events that you are involved will be observed.
- If you indicate below that you are available, you may be contacted later for one 20-minute follow-up interview.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your written or witnessed verbal permission or as required by law. The participant interview and observation will be read as anonymous description. The purpose is to try to gain understandings and freedom from participants to voice themselves in their own language. Some comments may be quoted anonymously. The thesis will be posted on CSUMB MAE website and archived in the CSUMB library as part of the MAE program.

Taking part in this project is entirely up to you. You can choose whether or not to be in the study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so

The project has been reviewed and accepted by California State University, Monterey Bay. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions about CSUMB's rules for research, please call the Committee for Human Subjects Chair, Dr. Brian Simmons, CSUMB Health, Human Services and Public Policy, 100 Campus Center, Building. 86D, Seaside CA 93955, 831.582.3898.

You will get a copy of this consent form. . If you want to know more about this research project or have questions or concerns, please call me at 831.582.4094 and Dr. Theresa Arambul-Greenfield, 831.582.3574. Thank you for participation.

Sincerely,  
Meike Bhariana, MAE Candidate, CSUMB

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Consent Statement

I understand the procedures described. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I freely agree to participate in this study. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

I have been given a copy of this Consent Form.

---

Signature

---

Date

---

---

Signature of Researcher

In my judgment, the participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

---

Signature of Researcher

---

Date

## APPENDIX B

### *Interview Protocol*

Project: Emerging Feminist Education: A Feminist Perspective. A Case study of Indonesian Feminist Media

Day:

Time of Interview: Start: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of interview:

Tape #: \_\_\_\_\_ A / B

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Gender: F  M

(Briefly describe the project):

Maksud penelitian saya adalah untuk melihat secara langsung dan juga berperan serta dalam kegiatan kerja feminis di RJP dalam menghasilkan produk siaran-siaran radio yang bertema isu-isu perempuan Indonesia. Selama peran serta saya dalam kegiatan-kegiatan jurnalis di RJP, saya akan mempelajari dengan dalam bagaimana latar belakang dan dinamika kerja di RJP membentuk sebuah budaya feminis.

*Research Question: (Circle the questions for today!)*

- a) Could you describe women's live in Indoenesian? Why is feminism important for Indonesian women? *Tolong digambarkan kehidupan perempuan di Indonesia. Kenapa feminisme itu penting bagi perempuan di Indonesia?*
- b) How did you become interested in feminist issues? What was your family's reaction to you becoming a feminist? *Ceritakan bagaimana asal mulanya kamu bergelut dengan feminisme and isu-isu perempuan? Bagaimana tanggapan keluargamu tentang itu?*
- c) Could you describe me the focuse and goals of RJP and why you work for them? *Tolong dijelaskan fokus dan tujuan RJP dan kenapa kamu bekerja disini?*
- d) What do you expect by working in RJP? Apa yang kamu ingin capai dengan bekerja di sini?

- e) What has been done so far by RJP to educate women about feminist issues? *Apa saja yang telah dilakukan RJP dalam mendidik perempuan Indoensia tentang masalah-masalah hak-hak perempuan?*
- f) Can you describe how your group works together when you plan, produce, and implement a radio program? *Tolong digambarkan kerja sama yang terjadi sewaktu anda dan rekan-rekan memproduksi sebuah program radio.*
- g) How do you judge your success or failure? *Bagaimana anda bisa mengatakan bahwa sebuah program itu sukses atau gagal?*
- h) How do you describe the hierarchy of your working situation here at your station or offices, and what impact do you think it has on how decisions are made (e.g., selection of program themes and program features), as well as on the general working environment? *Tolong digambarkan bagaimana hirarki kerja dalam pengambilan keputusan (misalnya pemilihan tema atau topic), juga dalam lingkungan kerja secara umum?*
- i) Could you describe to me the solidarity and seniority among members? *Tolong digambarkan solidaritas dan kerja sama di antara anggota RJP dan manajemen?*
- j) What do you think that needs to be done in order for RJP to more effectively educate Indonesian people about feminist issues? *Menurut anda apa saja yang perlu diperbaiki atau dilakukan agar program radio RJP lebih efisien?*
- k) Is there anything else you like to say? *Apa ada lagi yang anda mau ceritakan kepada saya?*

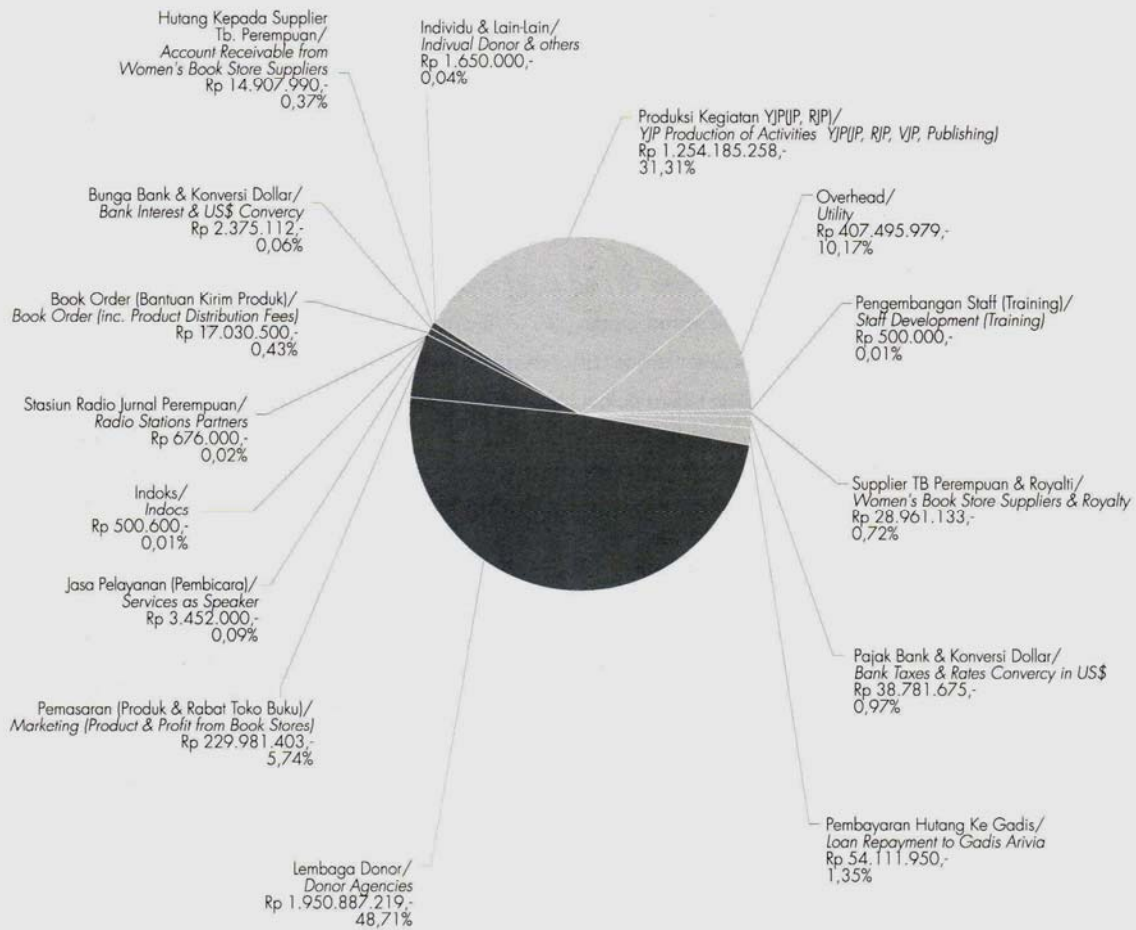
(Thank individual for participating in this interview. Assure her/him of confidentiality of responses and potential future interviews)



## APPENDIX C

### Finance Annual Report of YJP 2003

#### GRAFIK PEMASUKAN DAN PENGELUARAN 2003 YJP FINANCIAL REPORT YEAR 2003



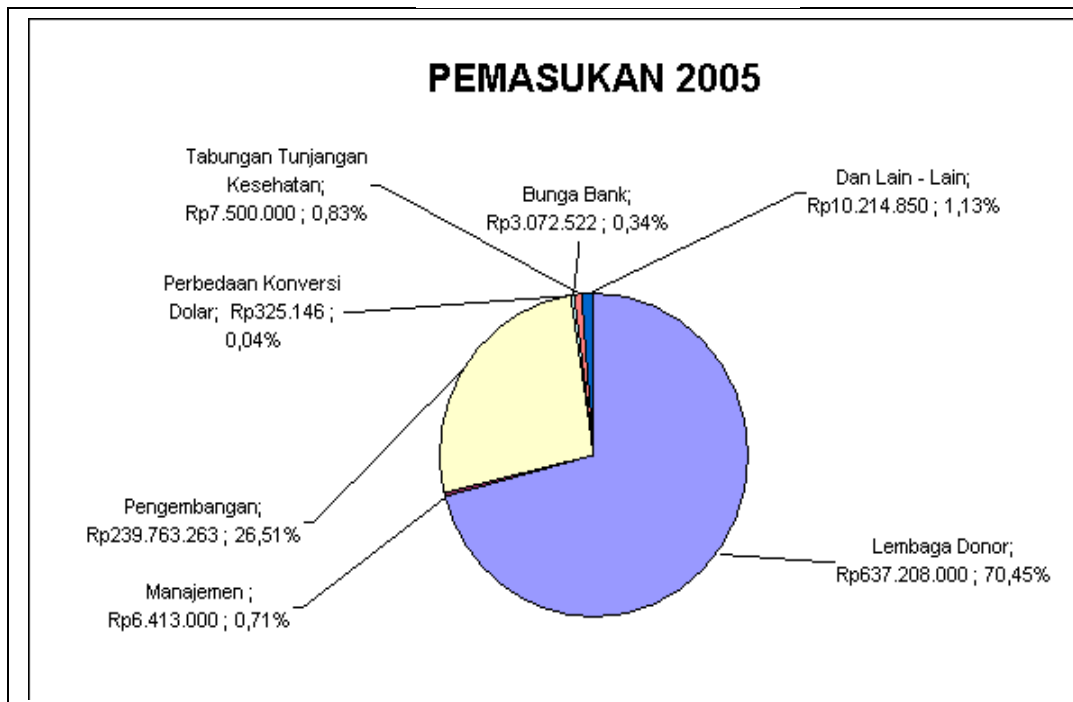
## APPENDIX D

### *Finance Annual Report of YJP 2005*

#### *(Income)*

- Lembaga donor: Donor agencies
- Pengembangan: Development
- Dan lain-lain: Others
- Bunga Bank: Bank interest
- Tabungan Tunjangan Kesehatan:  
Saving of health insurance
- Perbedaan konversi: US\$ converycy

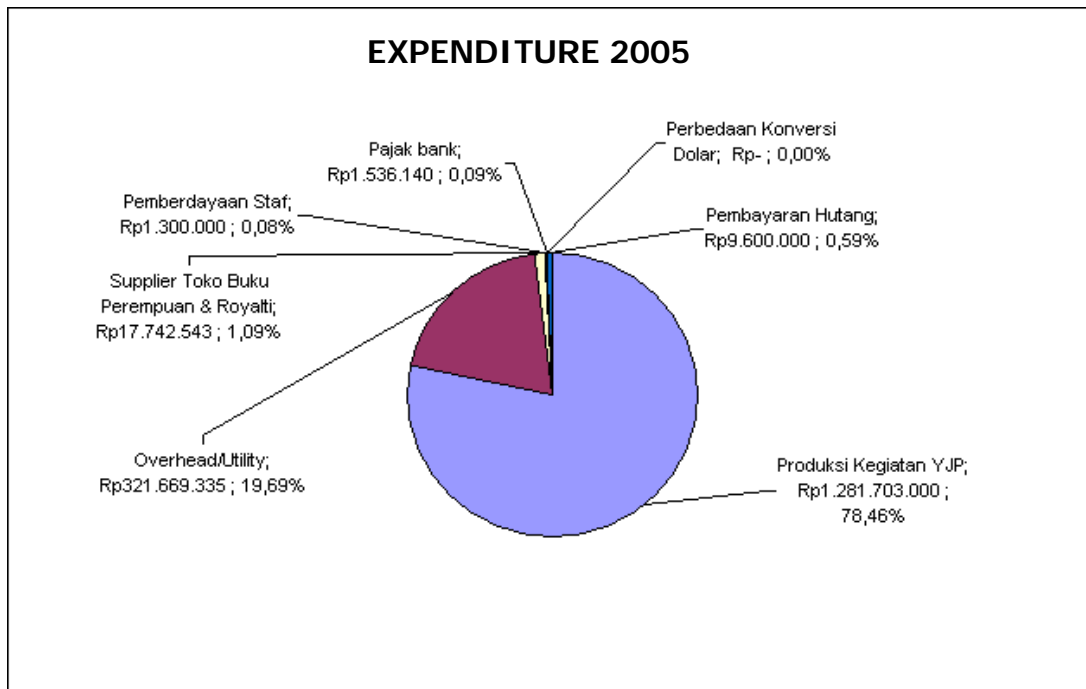
#### INCOME 2005



## APPENDIX E

### *Finance Annual Report of YJP 2005*

#### *(Expenditures)*



Produksi kegiatan YJP: YJP Production of activities

Pemberdayaan staf: Staff training and development

Pajak bank: Bank taxes

Pembayaran hutang: Loan repayment

Perbedaan konversi: US\$ conversion

Supplier toko buku &royalty: Women's book store suppliers and royalty