

MENCERDASKAN BANGSA – AN INQUIRY INTO THE PHENOMENON OF TAMAN BACAAN IN INDONESIA

B. A. Thesis



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ABSTRACT

Since 2001, a movement of individuals, neighbourhood and community organizations and NGOs starting and running their own libraries has emerged in Indonesia. Called Taman Bacaans (TBs) - reading gardens - these simple libraries, often hosted in somebody's house, or in a community building, provide easy and informal access to books, as well as frequent literacy programming. This thesis traces the historical heritage of these TBs back to the early renting libraries of peranakan Chinese in the 19th century, through Balai Pustaka and the public library movement under Sukarno. The modern TB emerges in the 1980s, the government attempts a wide-scale implementation of TBs in the 1990s, and a community movement finally emerges in 2001.

Using interviews with informants and newspaper articles, blogs, mailing lists, and NGO and government reports, I describe the process of how the TB movement emerges in Bandung and Yogyakarta. I also identify a number of factors that enabled and supported the movement: inspiring individual role-models, "best-case" libraries, networks and the roles of Islam and nationalism. Finally I provide an overview of the situation today, combining government statistics with the results of a survey conducted in Jakarta, and show that there are three kinds of TBs: those set-up by national, regional or local government (TBMs), those funded by large-scale donors, and independent TBs grounded in the local communities. I conclude with a number of recommendations for government and donors.

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After I returned to Canada, I tried to find out all there was to know about rural/community libraries and development, but realized that the little research that existed was scattered and hard to find. Emily Antze from World Literacy Canada generously shared with me WLC's experiences in India and Nepal, and Nathan Lepp from Under a Reading Tree, Shelley Jones at the University of British Vancouver, Michael Kevane at Santa Clara University and Friends of African Village Libraries and Barbara J. Ford at the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs went out of their way to connect me to people with expertise and useful sources.

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TERMINOLOGY

1001 Buku	<i>1001 Books</i> . A network of volunteers that connect TBs together.
Krisis Moneter (krismon)	<i>Monetary crisis</i> was the Indonesian version of the shock that hit the Asian tigers in 1997-1998.
Orde Baru	<i>The New Order</i> is the name given to the period in which Suharto was president of Indonesia, from 1965 until 1998, a period characterized by a strong, centralistic and “developmental” state.
Pesantren	Indonesian religious schools.
Reformasi	<i>Reformation</i> is the process to reshape Indonesia into a more democratic and decentralized state, after the fall of Suharto in 1998.
Santri	Students at Indonesian religious schools.
Taman Bacaan (TB)	<i>Reading garden</i> . A term that has a very wide range of meanings. I will sometimes use renting library interchangeably for Taman Bacaans whose main motive is profit. whether they occur in the 19th century, or at present. TBs might have many different names (see chapter 4.6.2), but the community always uses Taman Bacaan to talk about the phenomenon/movement.
Taman Bacaan Masyarakat (TBM)	<i>Reading garden for the community</i> . The term used initially by the government in its program starting in 1990, and is generally associated with government supported TBs, however I have seen it used for autonomous TBs as well. I will use it when referring to government funded TBs.
Ulama	Scholars of islam.

MAPS



Map of Indonesia, from Wikimedia Commons.



Map of Java, showing the locations of Jakarta, Bandung and Yogyakarta. From Wikimedia Commons

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgments.....	3
Terminology.....	5
Maps.....	6
Table of contents.....	7
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 My motivation.....	1
1.2 Research question.....	2
1.3 Thesis statement.....	3
1.4 Significance.....	4
1.5 Thesis outline.....	4
2 Methodology/information sources.....	6
2.1 Field work.....	6
2.2 Communication with informants.....	6
2.3 Academic sources.....	7
2.4 Newspaper and other articles.....	8
2.5 Survey.....	9
2.6 Limitations.....	9
3 History pre-2000.....	10
3.1 Earliest libraries, and manuscript lending libraries.....	10
3.2 Chinese immigration and peranakan Chinese.....	11
3.3 The ethical policy, and indigenous organizations before Balai Pustaka.....	13
3.4 Balai Pustaka.....	15
3.4.1 Competition from the peranakan authors and Taman Bacaans.....	16

3.5	The position of Malay in the Dutch East Indies and British Malaya compared.....	18
3.6	The Japanese invasion, and the post-independence movement.....	19
3.7	1970's renting libraries and 1980's precursor of the current model.....	21
3.7.1	Second wave of current model, and first government involvement.....	22
4	The rise of independent Taman Bacaan.....	24
4.1	The fall of the Orde Baru regime.....	24
4.2	Bandung, punk culture and the literary movement.....	25
4.3	Bandung and the literary movements.....	27
4.4	The process in Yogyakarta.....	28
4.5	Inspiring people: Dauzan Farook/Mabulir.....	29
4.6	Rumah Dunia/Gola Gong.....	30
4.7	Networks: 1001 Buku.....	32
4.7.1	How did it grow?.....	33
4.7.2	Activities.....	33
4.7.3	Olimpiade Taman Bacaan.....	35
4.8	Other networks, and best cases.....	35
4.9	Directories, forums, events.....	36
4.9.1	Internet.....	37
4.10	The influence of Islam.....	37
4.10.1	History of Muslim reading.....	37
4.10.2	Iqra! Read!.....	38
4.10.3	Concrete initiatives from the Islamic community.....	39
4.11	Nationalism and reading.....	40
5	Current status of Taman Bacaans.....	42
5.1	Government policy.....	42
5.2	Data on government programs 2000-present.....	44
5.3	Future government plans.....	46
5.3.1	TBMs in places of religious worship.....	47

5.4 Overview of the current situation for non-government TBs.....	48
5.5 Taman Bacaan activities.....	50
5.6 Just a fancy name for “library”?.....	51
5.6.1 Social function of Taman Bacaans.....	52
5.6.2 Naming of TBMs.....	54
5.6.3 The working relationships between TBs and libraries.....	55
5.7 Renting libraries today/new incarnations.....	55
6 Conclusion.....	58
6.1 Findings.....	58
6.2 Consequences.....	60
6.3 Recommendations.....	61
6.4 Further research.....	63
References.....	65
Illustrations.....	73

*To my family
and my butterfly*

1 INTRODUCTION

After several hours in the back of tiny buses, and about half an hour on the back of a motorcycle, we had arrived at the little village. Our host took us through the houses, and on to our goal: The Taman Bacaan (TB) (reading garden). On a *pendopo* (kind of open balcony) around fifty small boys and girls were sitting scattered, reading in deep concentration. Some were by themselves, engrossed in a text, others were in pairs or small groups, with one child reading aloud. When they had finished their books, they went into the small adjacent covered room, and chose another book from the racks. This was Sunday - reading day - and they had started the day by doing physical exercise together. After we had arrived, different children took the microphone and read confidently from their chosen material.

1.1 My motivation

The reason I was in a small village outside Bandung on a Sunday in May, 2007, was that I had met the manager of the Taman Bacaan a few weeks earlier, at the World Book Day fair at the Department of Education in Jakarta. At that time I had spent almost one year living in Jakarta and Tangerang (a suburb of Jakarta) and working for an NGO, and been very depressed by the sad state of public libraries (even in the capital city). During my final month, I took time off from work to begin research on my first thesis topic, the communication networks between Indonesian NGOs in Jakarta. Luckily, because I did not have to spend the whole day in the office, I was able to attend several days of the week-long celebration of the World Book Day 2007, which was celebrated at the Department of Education's main office on Jalan Sudirman. In addition to a number of workshops and lectures, the program also featured a fair with exhibitors ranging from the Harry Potter Society of Indonesia, to various publishers, to a large number of community libraries, Taman Bacaan and groups that worked on promoting literacy and creativity among young people.

During the few days, I spent almost the entire time crosslegged on the carpets of different stands, talking to the different groups about their programs. I intuitively decided that I wanted to do my research on this, and began setting up appointments to visit the different TB. Unfortunately, this

was during the last two weeks of my stay, and there was a lot to be done both privately, and in the office, before I could leave. I was only able to visit one Taman Bacaan, in a small village outside of Bandung, which held a wonderful reception for me, and left me with a very strong impression. The World Book Day fair was the first time I realized that there was a whole range of independent Taman Bacaan, a kind of *people's libraries* in Indonesia, and there were even networks tying them together, and organizations such as 1001 Buku (1001 Books) that helped collect and distribute books to them.

1.2 Research question

After deciding to do research on this topic, I began looking for literature, thinking that there would surely already exist a certain amount of research, and determined to find the “gaps” in that research, where I could add to the pool of knowledge. However, I found extremely little, and even very simple questions such as “how many Taman Bacaan are there”, “when did they start”, “what is the role of the government”, “where does this idea come from” were not easily answerable. In a comparative perspective, I thought that surely there must be a lot of literature on libraries and development, and that I could perhaps use frameworks or theories from other countries, and apply them to Indonesia. Again, I came up short - there are a number of writings about community libraries in developing countries, but they tend to be about specifically analyzing one library or one specific program, rather than providing any kind of framework. What gradually became clear to me when I was back in Canada doing research, and contacting NGOs in the field of community literacy, as well as other researchers, was that the phenomenon of Taman Bacaans in Indonesia was rather unique. Not to say that there are no community-run libraries in any other countries, but the sheer numbers, as well as the level of coordination and cooperation in Indonesia seems rare, if not unprecedented. Thus, a final question arose: what were the factors that facilitated and coincided with this movement of community libraries in Indonesia?

After going through this process of discovery, I formulated two research questions, and a number of objectives needed to answer them. I wanted to map out the current situation and if possible to find out what the factors were that had facilitated and coincided with the emergence of a community library movement in Indonesia. To do this, I needed to understand the history of

libraries (especially public access ones) and book culture in Indonesia, determine when this phenomenon had its genesis, and what was the background for it, examine the factors that contributed to it spreading and growing to its present strength, and try to map out the current situation in terms of numbers and kinds of libraries existing, as well as the past and current government policy towards them. This includes comparing TBs and public libraries from a number of different viewpoints. In my research, I mainly focus on the incarnation of a Taman Bacaan as an autonomous, community-based free lending library and activity center, but I will examine many other phenomena that have gone under the same name, to show their historical and current impact on autonomous TBs.

1.3 Thesis statement

The fundamental idea of the Taman Bacaans originated as renting libraries, first established by the peranakan Chinese communities in Batavia in the late 19th century, that have existed in some incarnation alongside “official” libraries until the present day. In addition, the idea of providing simple but large-scale access to libraries for poor and rural communities goes back to the Balai Pustaka libraries that started in 1908, and is reinforced by the attempt to set up thousands of village libraries run by volunteers in the years after independence. The specific idea of a Taman Bacaan that would be a free library, activity and learning center had its genesis in the 1980’s and was adopted and spread by the *Orde Baru* government in the 1990’s.

It did not take off until 2001, in a general atmosphere of promoting the freedom of speech and access to information after the fall of the *Orde Baru* regime. Specifically, it had roots in the Do-It-Yourself ethos of youth community in Bandung, heavily influenced by punk-rock culture. It spread rapidly because of certain inspiring examples (for example Gola Gong and Farook Dauzan), example-TBs that acted as models to teach the younger ones, and networks to exchange experience, information and resources. It also appealed to a wide swath of the population through the combined idea of promoting nationalism, but countering the perceived corruption of the political system, and the call for literacy within Islam.

1.4 Significance

Indonesia is the third biggest country in Asia, and is still struggling with economic and social development, with its elementary school reading scores at the bottom of the ASEAN¹ ranking. Libraries and access to books is widely acknowledged as a significant factor in education, and more educated Indonesians will not only increase Indonesia's economic and social welfare, but also function as an important safeguard of its young democracy. The phenomenon of Taman Bacaan has the potential to play an important role in promoting these ideals. Although mainly a national movement, some international donors have contributed funding to certain institutions like 1001 Buku. Since 2005, the government has also begun distributing block grants to Taman Bacaan, and plan to make them part of their literacy strategy. Understanding more about the current situation, and the factors that caused it to come about, will enable both the government and national/international donors to focus their contributions in a way that more efficiently benefits marginalized and poor populations in Indonesia.

The Taman Bacaan movement itself is young, and has a very short memory. In interviews with informants, very few have known much about the history of Taman Bacaan, and it is hoped that this thesis will also be a useful tool for the activists in the TB movement to reflect upon their own history, and how they can more effectively move forwards. Finally, the TB movement in Indonesia represents something rare and unique among libraries worldwide, and as such, should be of great interest to literacy/library researchers in general, and both researchers and NGOs that focus on rural/community libraries in other countries especially. While many of the factors that enabled the existence of the community library movement in Indonesia are unique to the country, the phenomenon might offer inspiration and ideas to other similar budding movements around the world.

1.5 Thesis outline

The first part of my thesis is roughly organized diachronically as a historical account, and I will begin by tracing the history of the concept Taman Bacaan from early document lending libraries and renting libraries set up by the Chinese peranakan in Batavia at the end of the 19th century. Through a discussion of the context in Batavia at that time, and the history of the Balai Pustaka

¹ Association of Southeast Asian Nations

set up by the Dutch government, I will also discuss the inception of a modern Malay literature, and the transformation of Malay from a lingua franca in the region to a national language, renamed Indonesian. I will continue by discussing briefly the Japanese occupation, bringing us to the post-independence period and the thousands of village libraries with volunteer librarians that were set up by Sukarno in the 1950's.

I will describe the renting libraries that existed in the 1970's, the first occurrences of a direct precursor to the current Taman Bacaan model in the 1980's, and the attempts by the government to fund thousands of village TBMs in the 1990's. I will then look at how renting libraries, stemming back to the late 1900's, have developed in modern times, some still existing according to the old model, and others having transformed themselves to "book cafes".

The second section is organized more thematically. We will examine the beginning of the current Taman Bacaan, looking at the consequences of the fall of Suharto, examining the special history of Bandung that created fertile grounds for these ideas, and comparing it with the development in Yogyakarta. By highlighting two important cases of community libraries that have inspired many, and the network 1001 Buku, I will then be able to discuss both the concept of networks, and of "ideals" that have influenced people to start their own community libraries, as well as the values of nationalism and Islam. Finally, in the third part, I will examine government policy and programs, look at some perspectives on the relationship between TBs and public libraries, and close by examining the information available about the current situation of Taman Bacaan in Indonesia.

2 METHODOLOGY/INFORMATION SOURCES

2.1 Field work

Because of time limitations, my direct field experiences were minimal and unstructured. They consisted of participation in the World Book Day, participation in a book distribution activity with 1001 Buku, and a visit to one rural Taman Bacaan. In addition to this, I believe that my experiences during the year of living in Jakarta, although in no way structured or planned, have helped me understand and relate much better to my later research. Before the World Book Day, out of interest I had already visited the National Library, and two branches of the public library in Jakarta, as well as one in Yogyakarta. I also had many experiences with "creative and independent Jakarta", from frequent visits to the Taman Ismail Marzuki and Utan Kayu, as well as the cultural center Ruang Rupa, to the used books market at Pasar Senen, and the improvised music seances at WaPres in Northern Jakarta.

2.2 Communication with informants

I was lucky to get to know some very involved members of the library community during the World Book Day 2007. I was at first however reticent about contacting them for more information. I believed that I needed to develop an understanding of the topic first, and then design a thesis which I could "test" through the careful design of an interview instrument. I felt it as a large problem that I knew almost nothing about the topic, compared to the people active in the field of literacy and libraries in Indonesia, and because of the paucity of available sources, I could not easily "read up" on the topic. Finally I realized (also thanks to my supervisor) that I had a too narrow view of "research rigor" as something that had to involve the testing of pre-defined theories. I also came to believe that it would be unethical of me (not to say *sombong* - arrogant) to act as the "expert" in a field where I clearly knew nothing.

I thus began to think about my contacts as "informants" - rather than "interview subjects" - people with whom I would explore the current situation of Taman Bacaan, and the factors contributing to their growth. I have communicated with a large number of people who are active

in community libraries, library networks, research, and the government. My initial contacts put me in touch with some that were helpful, and I also found others through their academic writings or their blogs. Almost without fail they have been incredibly helpful, trying to answer my some times vague and confused questions, and crucially supplying me with documentation and information that could not be readily found on the Internet. I have shared my theories with them, and as my understanding has developed, my questions have changed and become more specific.

This is similar to the approach that O'Brien (2006) used in his field work in China, where he would test his developing arguments directly on his interviewees. This thesis could not even have begun without the support of my informants, and I only regret that I waited so long before I stopped acting as a researcher who knew more than his subjects, and let my subjects and the data teach and inform me. I also shared my first draft with several of my key informants, although unfortunately the fact that it was 70 pages of academic English meant that I did not receive as much feedback as I had hoped for.

My informants can be separated into several groups, although many of them have roles that overlap between several groups. I communicated with a number of Indonesian academics and academic librarians, some that have done research on similar topics. I wrote with several people active in 1001 Buku, and in running TBs. I interviewed people working on TB policy in the government, and I talked to several people that I found through mailing lists for book lovers, that had a special interest in TBs. Finally, I communicated with a number of non-Indonesian academics, mostly with questions regarding their scholarship, but many would recount anecdotes from their years of living in Indonesia, connected to TBs. Significantly, my informants are all highly educated and have access to the Internet (since most of the communication happened through e-mail). I have not attempted to talk to anyone who fit the "target group" for the TBs. This is a good avenue for further research, but would require field work conducted in Indonesia.

2.3 Academic sources

There has been very little academic research conducted on the history of non-formal libraries in

Indonesia, including the recent growth of Taman Bacaans. There are a number of sources on the history of early literacy and book printing in the Dutch Indies, as well as on the history of the Balai Pustaka, however I have had to combine a large number of sources to find the information I needed. As for the current movement of community libraries, the only two sources that I found in English are two presentations given to the International Federation of Library Associations, by Harkrisyati Kamil and Ida Fajar Priyanto (Kamil, 2003; Priyanto, 2006). In Indonesian I have only come across a case study of four community libraries (Septiana, 2007), however it is quite possible that there has been more research conducted, since Indonesian academic literature unfortunately is fragmented and much is not available digitally.

2.4 Newspaper and other articles

Because of the paucity of sources, I have used newspaper articles frequently. Even this is not uncomplicated: some newspapers do not publish their articles online without passwords (which can only be gotten through the use of an Indonesian cell phone account), others take articles down or restructure their websites so that even internal links are broken. I am indebted to the many mailing lists and blogs that republish articles regarding libraries and TBs, some of them even creating extensive clipping archives (a great example is *Kliping Mengenai Taman Bacaan* at <http://mediarent.blogspot.com/>).

I would rather have taken the articles directly from newspaper websites, and have attempted to locate them, in some cases even using archive.org's WayBack Machine (<http://www.archive.org/web/web.php>) and Google's cache function (<http://www.google.com>), however at every single instance where I have found the original source, it has been identical to the one reposted on blogs and mailing lists, and I believe that the articles reproduced on blogs and mailing lists are mostly very faithful to the original. Since many of the articles are reproduced on blogs by the authors themselves, one could almost see this as an open-access movement for newspaper journalism. I have also sometimes used longer articles posted on blogs by significant members of the Taman Bacaan movement, or by professional librarians.

2.5 Survey

It is important to gather more data on TBs in Indonesia, since many questions about topics such as the efficacy of government programs, factors that are conducive or not to the establishment and success of a TB, and others can only be answered in this way. Conducting a large-scale survey was not feasible in the time frame of this research, but as an initial attempt at collecting some useful data, a survey was conducted among TBs that are in the 1001 Buku network. I obtained from 1001 Buku a database of libraries in their network located in the greater Jakarta area², and a research assistant in Jakarta assisted with calling the contact persons. Out of a total of 98 TBs contacted, 11 were unreachable, and four did not want to answer the questions, leaving a response rate of 84%. In most cases, initial contact was established through the phone, and answers to our questions were later returned through e-mail. Because of the high response rate, the statistics can be said to be representative for TBs in 1001 Buku's database, in a specific geographic location, at a specific time. However, the statistics are not representative for TBs in Indonesia in general.

2.6 Limitations

It has been very difficult to find sources for this inquiry, as there is very little relevant scholarly material. In many cases, I am relying on only one or two sources for a certain narrative of a development - one newspaper article, or one informant. Although the sources are seldom completely in disagreement with each other, the small amount of information makes it very hard to establish the importance of different factors in enabling the growth of TBs. I am trying to describe and map out a number of different factors that I believe I can show to have had a certain impact on the phenomenon of Taman Bacaan, but I cannot always determine the exact processes, and the degree or importance of each factor. I have tried to increase the validity of my research by sharing my assumptions and theories with key members of the community as I went along, but there is by no means an agreed understanding about the Taman Bacaan phenomenon. This thesis should only be seen as a first approximation, and I hope that much research will follow, to improve on this work.

² Jabodetabek - Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi

3 HISTORY PRE-2000

3.1 Earliest libraries, and manuscript lending libraries

I will begin by tracing what I believe to be the historical heritage of the current Taman Bacaans. Long before colonial times, a precursor to public libraries could be seen in the libraries founded by courts and kingdoms in Java, Sumatra, Bali and Sulawesi. Going back more than a thousand years in history, these provided very limited access to collections of manuscripts for the select few who could read. More widespread literacy slowly began to be introduced with the advent of Islam to Java in the 13th century, and the building of mosques that would gradually become centers of learning, and provide book collections_(Natadjumena, 1997).

In Batavia, we have found evidence of renting libraries for hand-copied manuscripts operating between around 1790 to 1900. Their existence was unique in the Malay world, and in manuscripts from Sumatra, Riau or Malaysia, there are no notes that indicate the existence of such libraries, likely because of the tradition of manuscripts owned by courts or important families, which lent them out for free to readers. Because of the absence of traditional courts in Batavia (which was established by the Dutch) and the large number of ethnic groups that comingled there, there was a business opportunity for establishing renting libraries for manuscripts (Iskandar, 1981).

These manuscripts, which were written in Malay and Javanese in the Jawi script, were very expensive. Each library might have had around 20-30 different ones, and the owners, many widows, depended on the rental fee for their living (ibid.). Because of the low literacy rates, they were not intended for silent study, but for reading aloud. The information that we have about these libraries is largely based on inscriptions in the margins of the manuscripts that have been preserved. Readers are, for example, exhorted to not spoil the manuscript with stains from chewing betel, or oil from the lamp (ibid.).

Some of the texts have been written down versions of oral traditions, as seen in this manuscript inscription: *“This story was taken from a wayang³ puppeteer, made into a written story so that it*

³ Indonesian shadow theatre

would not disappear, to be read over and over again”⁴ (Chambert-Loir, 1984, p. 195). The exhortations also frequently proclaimed the poverty of the manuscripts owner (often written in rhyme):

*I am very grateful to those who rent this story, who will be informed that the rental fee is ten cents per night, and I hope they understand that I work hard, staying up late with only an oil lamp and paper, to provide for my children and wife, it can be said that I was unemployed since my youth, and have to rely on my mother for food and clothes. Because of this, I hope you will pay the ten cents per night.*⁵(Chambert-Loir, 1984, p. 69)

These lending libraries were scattered all around Batavia, and from the geographical distribution one can surmise that they were largely frequented by Chinese peranakan communities. Indeed the kampungs mentioned in Iskandar (1981), like *Pecenongan*, *Jembatan Lima* and *Kampung Rawa Sentiong* are all areas known still today to house many Chinese. The idea that a large percentage of readers were Chinese is supported by the fact that exhortations in the margins were often also addressed to *baba* (sir/father) and *nyonya* (madam/mother), terms which were mostly used to address Chinese peranakan males and females (Chambert-Loir, 1984, p.54). To understand why Chinese in Batavia were the main consumers of handwritten Malay and Javanese manuscripts written in Jawi, we have to examine the Chinese immigration to Indonesia and the culture of the peranakan Chinese.

3.2 Chinese immigration and peranakan Chinese

The oldest Chinese communities in Java and Sumatra were founded around the 15th century, and began with merchants’ seasonal travels according to the monsoons, and coolies attracted by better wages. Initially temporary residents, many ended up staying so long that they settled permanently. Since there were almost no Chinese women who made it over, the Chinese men often ended up marrying local women, and adapting to the local culture to a certain extent. The

⁴ Ceritera diambillah dari dalang, dijadikan hikayat jangan sampai hilang, supaya dibaca berulang-ulang.

⁵ Saya punya salam takzim pada yang menyewa ini hikayat, dikasih tahu uang sewanya sehari semalam sepuluh sen, lebih-lebih maklum sebab saya sangat berusaha menulis dan bergadang minyak lampu dan kertas buat anak dan isteri saya, boleh dibilang yang saya tiada bekerja dari kecil, menumpang makan dan pakai dari saya punya mama. Maka itu saya minta kasihannya yang sewa ini buat sehari semalam sepuluh sen adanya.

men usually learnt the local language, but the wives also had to make accommodations and adapt to some Chinese cultural traits (Salmon 1985, p. 15).

Carey (1984) suggests that the children were mainly raised by the mothers and had very little contact with their fathers, who were busy working. The children would thus gain much better fluency in Malay, the mother's language, than Chinese, and this would go on to become the preferred language in the peranakan communities. In this way, a community of Chinese straddling two cultures was born. The descendants of these mixed marriages were called peranakan Chinese, as opposed to the totok Chinese, who were born in China (Salmon 1985, p. 15). A Chinese traveller reports that, at the end of the 18th century, there were communities of peranakan Chinese in Java that had converted to Islam and the Javanese way of life, and were thoroughly acquainted with the local languages (Wang Dahai, cited in Salmon, 1985).

There is strong evidence that the idea of lending libraries was indeed introduced by the Chinese immigrants to Java. This was an institution that was common in China, but that existed nowhere else in the Malay world, except in Batavia and Palembang, which both had many Muslim peranakan (Salmon 1985, 15). Towards the end of the 19th century, which supplies more recorded information, we find the first recorded usage of the term *Taman Bacaan* (reading garden) for the lending libraries that in China were commonly called 租书摊 (*zūshūtān* – stand for renting out books - although Lombard and Salmon, 1993, note that a similar term to reading garden was also in use in Tang China). These were found in the districts where Chinese Muslims had their mosques, in Kekurut, Kebun Jeruk and Tembora (Salmon, 1985).

Later, the introduction of printing heralded the beginning of large changes in what material was available, how much it cost, and how people accessed it. The first printing presses were brought to Indonesia to print legal documents for the government, and religious tracts for missionaries (Ahmat 1995, p. 1). Soon after that, the Chinese community acquired a printing press from the Dutch and were the first to begin printing novels in Malay (Salmon 1995). Based on analyzing old records of manuscript rental libraries, Chambert-Loir (1984) believes that the practice of renting manuscripts decreased rapidly with the advent of printed books.

Peranakan authors began by translating large amounts of literature from Chinese and European

languages, and having it printed. They also wrote literature themselves, with a surprising range of literary and cultural settings, depicting the *peranakan* community, inter-cultural marriages, good girls that were too independent and went to waste, and many other topics (Salmon, 1995). Until the 1870s, the native booktrade was non-existent and books had to be ordered directly from the publishers. The Taman Bacaan thus provided a very important way of distributing novels (Drewes 1981). Many stories were also serialized in newspapers, which came into being around the change of century, and were a very important development. Authors, translators and newspaper editors were often one and the same person (Salmon 1995). This sudden increase in publishing did much to promote the use of Latin letters (*hoeroef olanda* – Dutch letters) at the expense of Jawi.

3.3 The ethical policy, and indigenous organizations before Balai Pustaka

The policy of the Dutch colonial government underwent a significant change at the turn of the century. The bloody Aceh war had raged from 1873, and in 1899 a C. Th. Van Deventer, who would go on to become a member of the Dutch parliament, promoted the concept of “debt of honor” in an article, where he wrote that the people of the Netherlands were indebted to the Indies for the profits gained over the past decades. Queen Wilhelmina held a speech in 1901 that was the start of what would be called the “*Politik Ethise*” (the Ethical Policy), consisting of two elements; improving the welfare of the native population, and the gradual development of autonomy and political decentralization.

This latter element, in its turn, created a greater need for educated Javanese to serve in the administrative corps (Nagazumi, 1972, p. 18-19). There were already some missionary schools existing, but in 1907 the Dutch government started the first elementary school class I and II for Indonesians, in 1917 this was extended to a seven year program, and in 1920 the first higher education for Indonesians was available at STOVIA⁶ (Tjoen, 1966).

Around this time several civil organizations formed, focusing on better access to education, and starting libraries. The Javanese organization Tipto Moeljo started a library at Mojo Agung in 1887

⁶ School tot Opleiding van Indische Artsen was the first medical school in the Netherlands Indies which admitted *pribumi* students (the indigenous population), and the first kind of higher education open to *pribumi*.

(Ahmat 1995, p. 97). The Chinese Tjong Hoa Hwe Koan was founded in 1900, originally to protest the decision to grant the status of “honorary European” to Japanese citizens. Later, one of their principal aims became the provision of a library that would be beneficial for the propagation of knowledge and understanding (Riwajat 40 taon, Nio Joe Lan, cited in Ahmat 1995, p. 74). Budi Utomo was founded in 1908, and the student chapter at Weltevreden listed the construction of a library as their 14th point out of a 16 point program (Nagazumi 1972, p. 38). A letter was later sent to the Ministry of the Colonies listing measures to be carried out by Budi Utomo, and here they mentioned “establishing a people's library”, along with establishing girls schools (op. cit. p. 49).

The Islamic reform movement, initiated by returning religious teachers and pilgrims, engaged in a strong effort to combat mysticism and non-Islamic practices, and to make Islam more contemporary and relevant. One result of this was the introduction of regional languages rather than Arabic as medium of religious instruction, sermons and prayers. Muhammadiyah was one of the largest Muslim reform organizations, and they started both libraries and private Islamic schools (Freidus 1977, p. 6-7).

Although we chiefly concern ourselves here with public access to books available to non-Europeans, whether through public access libraries, lending libraries or otherwise, it is worth describing some of the significant official libraries that were started in this time period. The earliest Western-style library opened in Indonesia was the *Batavian Kerkeraad* which dates from around 1624, and which was accessible only to clergy. *The Cultural Organization of Indonesia*⁷ which began as the *Batavia Association for Arts and Sciences*⁸, began operating a library already in 1778 which became a depository library for the Netherlands Indies, requiring one copy of every publication in the colony to be kept there. This library was later to form the basis of the National Library of Indonesia (McGlynn 1998, p. 86). Because it had reading rooms open for public use, McGlynn calls it the first reference library in Indonesia (1998). In 1864, the Free Masons began operating libraries to provide reading materials to less well-off Europeans, and the Catholic church also founded public reading rooms, so that by the beginning of the 20th century

⁷ Lembaga Kebudayaan Indonesia

⁸ Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen

almost every larger city maintained an *openbare leszaal* (public library). In 1920 the *Institution for the Promotion of Libraries in the Netherlands Indies*⁹ had a total of 682 members, including 109 'non-European' (*ibid.*).

3.4 Balai Pustaka

One year after the introduction of the three-year village school, the Dutch set up *the Commissie vor de Volkslectuur* (Commission for Popular Literature) to produce and distribute books in local languages (mainly Javanese, Sundanese and Malay) to supplement the formal aspects of education (Drewes 1981). It grew slowly, and until 1918, it had published 280 books and pamphlets, and set up around 700 *Volksbibliotheek* (libraries) open to the public, often located in schools, hospitals and barracks (Tjoen 1966, Drewes 1960, p. 433, Freidus 1977, p. 26). Before this, the existing libraries had very rarely been open to non-Europeans, and had only provided material in Dutch (McGlynn 1998, p. 87). The Javanologist D. A. Rinkes then took over the institution, which became Balai Pustaka. He reorganized it into an efficient publishing house, acquired a printing press, and began publishing illustrated magazines in local languages, and an almanac that would reach a circulation of 100,000 copies (Drewes, 1981).

In the five first years since he took over, over 500 titles were published, and he oversaw the opening of 2000 additional circulating libraries (Drewes 1960, p. 431-433). None of the libraries got their own building, rather they consisted of a 3 x 3 meter cupboard which would be located for example in a class room (*see illustration*). McGlynn (1998) notes that the small size and the strategic location of the libraries spared the government the cost of a librarian, whose function would be assumed by a headmaster or teacher. This person would also be in charge of keeping meticulous notice of the activities, reports of which were sent to Batavia monthly, and formed the basis for detailed statistics on reader preference and lending numbers. Teeuw (1979) states that these statistics had a significant impact on Balai Pustaka's publishing strategy. The book lendings increased from about 200,000 in 1916 to one million in 1921, and two million in 1939 (McGlynn 1998, p. 87; Teeuw 1979, p. 143). In 1940, the demand for publications from Balai Pustaka was so high that their own printing house could not satisfy it, and all of the printing houses in Batavia had to help out (Teeuw, 1979, p. 143).

⁹ Vereeniging tot bevordering van het bibliotheekwezen

In addition to libraries, Balai Pustaka promoted the distribution of literature in several ways. Book distribution was improved through the opening of its own sales department and store house - previously books had had to be distributed through the government *Depot van Leermiddelen* (Educational Material Depot). It also supported TBs that rented out books, and even introduced ambulant bookstalls – four motorvans the sides of which could be turned into showcases, manned with “salesmen whose voluble tongues warranted them an attentive audience at every village market” (Drewes 1960, p. 433). These salesmen, who spoke local languages, would sometimes spend weeks on the road. Sometimes they would even knock on people’s doors and sing about the books they had in Javanese (Teeuw, 1979, p. 123). The vans contributed a great deal to propagating the name of Balai Pustaka, by enabling access to places where the normal agents were not active (Drewes 1960, p. 433; Freidus 1977, p. 27).

In more remote locations, post offices acted as agents for Balai Pustaka, and maintained complete catalogues, and in some cases sample stock (Freidus 1977, p. 27). In 1925, Balai Pustaka had 58 agents, and used around 250 post offices in remote places to distribute books and take orders. They also had a database of over 20,000 addresses from people who bought their publications regularly (Teeuw, 1979, p. 123, 125).

3.4.1 Competition from the peranakan authors and Taman Bacaans

The fact that all the books published were supposed to support government policy has led to a tradition of distrust of Balai Pustaka by Indonesian intellectuals, but there is no doubt that it contributed significantly to the creation and distribution of literature, and was an important factor in the process of turning Malay into a national language (Tjoen 1966, Drewes 1981). However, in the heydays of the Balai Pustaka, independent publishing houses, mainly run by peranakan, continued to produce and distribute novels and material, most of it in Malay.

To Indonesian historians, the role of the peranakan Chinese in the early development of writing, printing and distributing in Indonesia was both controversial and unwelcome, and this part of the literature has tended to get skipped over by scholars of Indonesian literary history. Whereas the first novel in Malay written by a peranakan was published in 1880, “*Sitti Nurbaja*”, written by Marah Roesli and published in 1920, is generally considered as the first modern Indonesian

novel (see Sutherland, 1968).

Drewes, in his 1981 article, ridiculed C. W. Watson (1971, cited in Drewes) for suggesting that there was a strong link between the *peranakan* literature and the Balai Pustaka, and also completely discounted the Chinese contribution to lending libraries by stating that there had been no significant lending libraries in place before the Balai Pustaka (see below) (Drewes 1981). However, as more evidence of the literary heritage of the *peranakan* has been uncovered (due to a large extent to the tireless work of Dr. Claudine Salmon), the link has become much clearer. Dr. Salmon presents the importance of the Chinese contribution:

It seems undeniable that at one time in the history of Java, members of communities of Chinese origin played a determining role by spreading the habit of reading, through taman bacaan or lending libraries, and then by being the first to take advantage of printing, recently spread by Europeans. Lastly, they suddenly confronted Malay speakers with a considerable volume of historical, philosophical, technical and literary information, translated from both Chinese and European languages. (Salmon 1995, p. 93)

They also played a role alongside the official libraries run by the Balai Pustaka. McGlynn (1998) describes the challenge to the Balai Pustaka hegemony thus:

A truly indigenous library system had inconspicuously developed outside the Volkslectuur. Wandering booktraders or booklenders were spreading numerous non-Balai Pustaka publications, and tradesmen had successfully installed book-lending sections in the back of their shops where they lent out stories of romance and crime as well as political literature. (p. 87)

As mentioned above, Drewes (1981) highly doubted that *peranakan* literature had played an important role compared to the output of the Balai Pustaka, but an amusing episode illustrates the enduring popularity of the *peranakan* literature alongside the government funded “sanctioned” literature. In 1936, the Balai Pustaka became so concerned about the competition from the Chinese publishers, that it sent a mission to inspect all the TBs in Java. The mission found that the most frequently borrowed books all came from private publishing houses.

At the time, *peranakan* literature was portrayed as immoral and sensational, and to counter this threat, Balai Pustaka began promoting TBs that bought Balai Pustaka publications. They also sold whole collections to those who wanted to sustain themselves by running a private library,

and the result of this was that in 1941 there were 1400 TBs that subscribed to publications from the Balai Pustaka. (Balai Pustaka, *sewadjarnja 1908-1942*, p. 29, cited in Salmon 1985, p. 112; Drewes, 1953, p. 145).

3.5 The position of Malay in the Dutch East Indies and British Malaya compared

One of my arguments is that the early establishment of community renting libraries by peranakan Chinese in Indonesia was an important forerunner to the current Taman Bacaan. Given this, it is useful to compare with Malaysia, which also had a large influx of Chinese immigrants, but where the library situation turned out differently. I would argue that this is partly because of the integrating role that Malay played in Indonesia, and did not play in Malaysia.

Compared to the worlds other large ex-colonies, especially countries that were colonized for as long as Indonesia, the strength of Malay/Indonesian in Indonesia is surprising and impressive. Earlier we even heard of large contributions by the peranakan Chinese in Batavia to the literary heritage of Malay – why is it that they chose to write in Malay and not in Chinese? Sneddon (2003) describes how the Dutch from the beginning made use of Malay to a much greater extent than what was common in other colonies. One reason could be because their language was not significant in Europe, and that they therefore were less assuming that it should be imposed on the native population than the English, French and Spanish in their respective colonies (p. 83-84).

Indonesia was also Holland's only large colony, and it was feasible to have schools in Holland preparing colonial administrators, and teaching them the local language (Malay) – something that would not have been feasible for England or France. An important aspect was also the fact that in Indonesia, Malay was not a majority language – in fact it was spoken by only a few percent of the population – and its establishment as the official language presented no threat or favoritism to any ethnic group (Sneddon 2003, p. 13).

In contrast, the national consciousness of the British colonies emerged much later, which is reflected in the position of the national language. As opposed to what happened in Indonesia, English and not Malay continued to be the official language and the language of higher

education in the British Malaya after the Second World War. Only in 1952 was the first congress of Malay held, where they made the choice to use a Latin based writing system, and in 1956 the *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka* (Council of Language and Literature) was established (Sneddon 2003, p. 12). In the British Malaya, ethnic Malays whose mother tongue was *Bahasa Melayu* (Malay) made up half the population, and thus Chinese and Indian populations felt very disadvantaged by the choice of a national language that few of them spoke (Sneddon 2003, p. 12).

3.6 The Japanese invasion, and the post-independence movement

After the 8th of December 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Malaya, the Netherlands immediately joined its allies in declaring war on Japan. The Japanese invasion of Indonesia began on the 10th of January 1942, and the Dutch, gaining scarce support from the Indonesian masses, surrendered on 8th of March 1942 (Ricklefs 2001, p. 244). During the occupation by Japan, all public library service was prohibited in Indonesia (Natadjumena, 1997). The invasion however did much to support the use of Malay as a national language, in a way not foreseen by the Japanese. The Japanese wanted to promote their own language and culture, but they realized that almost nobody in Indonesia spoke Japanese yet, and they therefore accepted the use of Malay as a stop-gap solution. Dutch, the language of their enemy, was banned from all public use (Sneddon 2003, p. 111).

All of a sudden, Malay became the *de facto* language of administration and education, and this, together with the strong Japanese policy of avoiding even Dutch terms within Malay texts, meant a rapid forced development of Malay. Newspaper editors, who could no longer lean on the crutch of Dutch terminology, were forced to come up with new words, often borrowing from Javanese and Sanskrit (*op. cit.* p. 112). When Japanese defeat was imminent, a committee to plan the independence of Indonesia was established, and in their draft of the new constitution, Malay - renamed Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian) - was to be the national language (*op. cit.* 113). Independence was declared on 17th of August, 1945, however Dutch troops tried to retake the colony, and battles lasted until 1949 (*op. cit.* 115). Unfortunately, many libraries were destroyed during the occupation and in the post-independence hostilities (Lee, 1957).

The first president of independent Indonesia, Sukarno, began a program of constructing the new nation. There was a strong connection felt between literacy, anti-colonialism and nationalism, and anti-literacy campaigns were crucial (Hadi, 1956). In fact, revolutionary groups had begun organizing anti-illiteracy courses even before they were supported by the government. In 1946, the government conducted a study of illiteracy, and established a special department which led to large scale activities in 1948 (Hadi 1957). A hierarchy of libraries was designed, with three levels. Level A in subdistricts, designed for those who had finished primary school. Level B in regencies and cities for those who had finished middle school, and Level C in the provincial capitals. In 1959 there were 1,469 level A libraries, 192 level B libraries and 19 level C libraries (Tjoen, 1966).

Indonesia is a country of 16,000 islands, of which 8,000 are inhabited, and as can be seen, these libraries were never really meant, nor could they, provide access to the general masses. Libraries below level A were the responsibility of the local government, together with citizen groups, which were supported by the Jawatan Pendidikan Masyarakat. In 1956, in the heat of the independence movement, Hadi (1956) reported that 16,000 village libraries (called *perpustakaan rakyat* - people's libraries) had been opened under the assumption that "*people can organize library service for themselves, if only the problem of library supply is solved at the national level*". Local committees were formed in villages, and hundreds of volunteer librarians served, with local committees providing adequate housing and volunteer labor (ibid.).

We cannot be sure that these numbers were accurate. Tjoen, in his much cited *Perpustakaan dari zaman ke zaman* (1966), notes that the public understanding of libraries was very weak in the early post-independence period, and lists three common views. The first believed that libraries were only for experts, graduates and intellectuals. The second one believed it was just a book store that rented books to people, and the third had no idea about libraries. There is thus a potential (which is still present to this day) that many of these "libraries" were simply book collections locked away in a public building, not accessible to readers (National Library of Indonesia 2006). As the National Library's history of the period states:

It is understood that during the time of independence and the years following, the government of the Republic of Indonesia was just walking its first few step. They had not

*yet thought about having a unit that especially dealt with libraries and supporting them. Because of this, no documentation was created around the process and results of starting libraries in Indonesia.*¹⁰ (ibid.)

It would be very interesting to do archival research to learn more about these programs, but in any case the enthusiasm was short-lived. Tjoen (1966) explains that because of a shortage of funds, and the political situation in Sukarno's government, these village libraries did not develop further, and many of them were closed down again (see also Anuar, 1983).

3.7 1970's renting libraries and 1980's precursor of the current model

During all this time, the renting libraries that we traced back to the late 18th century are almost entirely absent from all documentation, but it is probable that they existed continuously. It would be a very interesting task to trace the development of these renting libraries during the last hundred years. Natsume (2001) has interviewed several informants in Indonesia, and describes the distribution of Indonesian comic books, that strongly increased in popularity during the 1960s and 1970s, and were distributed through a network which connected publishers of rental books, wholesalers/bookstores in large towns, and Taman Bacaan. They were commercial enterprises, and sometimes earned a bad reputation from also renting out pornography (Menguji idealisme, 2002).

In the early 1980's, a precursor of the Taman Bacaan model appeared, which was surprisingly similar to the model we know today. Inspired by idealism, and the insight that books and reading did not have to "boring" or "stiff" like in formal libraries, non-commercial TBs began to appear, which provided toys and colored pencils, in addition to books. However, it was hard to run on idealism alone, and most of them did not last long (ibid.; see also Septiana, 2007, p. 4-5). An informant from Jakarta confirms that the renting libraries were booming in the 1970s and 1980s, because the purchasing power of readers was very low¹¹ (one book could cost as much

¹⁰ Dimaklumi bahwa pada masa kemerdekaan dan beberapa tahun sesudahnya itu Pemerintah Republik Indonesia baru berjalan pada tahap awal sekali. Belum terpikirkan adanya unit yang menangani khusus tentang perpustakaan beserta pembinaannya. Oleh karena itu, belum juga dilakukan pendokumentasian mengenai proses dan hasil penyelenggaraan perpustakaan di Indonesia.

¹¹ The high book prices were perhaps partly caused by the taxes of up to 50% on importing foreign books (Lee, 1957).

as a pair of jeans) and because there was little alternative recreation. The renting libraries were especially full during Ramadan, when many people chose to read and relax while waiting to break the fast (informant R).

3.7.1 Second wave of current model, and first government involvement

Beginning in 1992, there was a second wave of Taman Bacaans, supported by the *Department of Popular Education, General Department of Non-formal and Informal Education, Sub-department for Literacy*¹², which wanted to provide reading material for new literates to help them keep and improve their literacy, and avoid relapse (Direktori TBM Tahun 2007, 2007). With the government's support, the number of Taman Bacaans - called *Taman Bacaan Masyarakat* (community reading gardens - TBMs) - created was higher than in the 1980's, although the numbers are confusing. According to Ace Suryadi, Director General of Non-Formal and Informal Education, about 190 TBMs existed in 1992, and they seem to have grown to a maximum of about 7,000, although this number seems suspiciously high (Suryadi, cited in Bella, 2007; 5.500 Taman bacaan masyarakat terbenkakai, 2006). The government especially focused on starting TBMs in villages, where illiteracy was the most acute, and in 1995 Suharto declared May the National Book Month (Widjanarko, 2001; Menguji idealisme, 2002).

After the economic crisis in 1996 (*Krisis Moniter* or *krismon* in Indonesian), many government programs were scaled back, and the future of TBMs became very uncertain, with no more word from the government about their TBM strategy (Menguji idealisme, 2002). The book industry was also heavily affected, with the numbers of published titles dropping from 6,000 titles per year before the *krismon* to 3,000 titles per year in 2001 (Pemerintah perlu tingkatkan produksi, 2001). The decentralization movement after the fall of Suharto in 1998 caused the National Library branches in the provinces, which are also responsible for literacy programming according to the constitution, to be transferred to the individual provinces (Pengelolaan Perpustakaan Diserahkan ke Pemda, 2001).

The result of all these upheavals was that from 1999, these TBMs were completely on their own, and eventually the system collapsed. In 2006 there were about a thousand TBMs left from the

¹² Direktorat Pendidikan Masyarakat Ditjen Pendidikan Nonformal dan Informal, Subdit Keaksaraan

7,000 that had been operating at the height of the program. This has been mainly attributed to the advent of regional autonomy (*desentralisasi* - decentralization) which transferred the responsibility to provincial and local governments, and their lack of engagement (5.500 taman bacaan masyarakat terbengkalai, 2006; 5.500 taman bacaan tutup, 2006). Informant Y also notes that the government's TBM plan was designed as a short term project, and never designed to be a long-term sustainable program. The collections were also mainly books about *Pancasila*¹³, government doctrine and political propaganda of the New Order, which made the TBMs uninteresting to the local community, and unlikely to receive support from them.

Examining the large-scale library project using volunteers attempted by the Sukarno government in the 1960's, and the first Taman Bacaan Masyarakat project by the Suharto government in the 1990's, it is tempting to draw parallels to the movement to provide accessible preventive health services to all Indonesian through what were called *Integrated service posts* (Posyandu¹⁴) begun in 1984. These posts focused especially and mother and child health, and were staffed mainly by volunteers from the village, who received training from health personell (Tarimo & Creese). At its most, 66,500 posyandu were in function, however in a similar fashion to the TBMs, this system also collapsed during the *desentralisasi* (Posyandu, 1986). It is particularly interesting to note that the Direktori TBM 2007, published by the Department of Education, uses the exact same word, "*revitalisasi*" (revitalization), when talking about the government TBM program, as is commonly used by foreign NGOs that try to revitalize the posyandu system (Direktori TBM 2007, 2007).

¹³ The five foundational principles in the Indonesian constitution: Belief in One Almighty God; Humanitarianism, righteous and civilized; Unity of Indonesia; Democracy guided by Wisdom in the consultations of representatives; and the realization of Social justice for all the people of Indonesia (Prawiranegara, 1984). This was later adopted as the ideological foundations of the New Order regime (Honna, 1999).

¹⁴ Pos Pelayanan Terpadu

4 THE RISE OF INDEPENDENT TAMAN BACAAN

4.1 The fall of the Orde Baru regime

The end of the 1990's was a time of large-scale change in Indonesia. After big protests, Suharto's regime fell, and with it the *Orde Baru* (New Order) that had lasted for more than 30 years. Several informants mention the excitement, and people's pent-up desire to express themselves and change things, as an important factor in the growth of TBs soon afterwards. All kinds of organizations had been repressed and had their activities limited during the *Orde Baru*, including youth organizations, social organizations and even religious organizations. In addition to their newfound freedom, they were met by a society still slowly recovering from the devastating *krismon* in 1996, which had caused many children to drop out of school for failure to pay the school fees, and some even becoming street children. There was thus a strong drive from many different kinds of communities to come together and provide social services (Informant R). It is also not strange that one important focus of these social services would be to provide education and access to information, since one of the prime features of the *Orde Baru* regime was exactly to control all information and limit people's freedom to express themselves (Informant Y).

The fall of Suharto, and *Reformasi* paved the way for a much more dynamic civil society in Indonesia, and it was perhaps a necessary but certainly not a sufficient cause for the large growth ("*penjamuran*" - mushrooming up) of independent Taman Bacaan, which Menguji idealisme (2002) states sprouted up very rapidly, not just in big cities, but also in small villages beginning in 2001. I will suggest that a number of different factors confluenced, taking the model developed by the Chinese in the 19th century, which had been modernized in the 1980's and which the government attempted to introduce on a large scale in the 1990's, and finally turning it into a popular people's movement after 2000. What is very interesting about the phenomenon, is that it seems to appeal to such a wide range of people. I will show how it probably began its growth in Bandung, in a creative mix of punk Do-It-Yourself (DIY) culture, students and artists, and also describe how the phenomenon came about in Yogyakarta, another creative young Javanese city (a separate study would be to examine the genesis of modern TBs in

Jakarta).

Informant R explained the phenomenal growth with the fact that many of these organizations are run by youth, who are prone to follow trends. If there are some highly publicized examples of a phenomenon which are heroicized, then the youth are likely to want to copy that phenomenon (Informant R). As we shall see below, there were indeed powerful examples that were spread through mass-media and other channels. I will discuss both the eighty year old man bicycling through the streets of Yogyakarta to deliver magazines and books, the handicapped author and adventurer who spent his book royalty on building a Taman Bacaan in his backyard, and also the influence of both Islam and nationalism as powerful ideas. I will also show how networks and best cases contributed to the growth and increase in quality among TBs, with new TBs learning from old ones, and the sharing of both information, experience and resources.

4.2 Bandung, punk culture and the literary movement

An argument has been made that this resurgence to a certain extent originated in Bandung, an educational hub a few hours east of Jakarta in Jawa. Iskandar (2003) provides an interesting account of the unique features of the city that made it such a fertile environment for a new breed of independent literacy movements. The city was founded in 1906, and during the Dutch colonial period, the majority of the inhabitants were Europeans trying to escape the oppressive heat of Jakarta. A much smaller city than for example Jakarta, it later became known for its many sub-cultures, ranging from owners of antique motorcycles and BMX bicycle groups, to a very strong music community, that included hip-hop, electronic, break dance and hard core groups and fans, as well as a very strong punk community.

Soemardi & Radjawali (2004) describes the relationship of Bandung to other big cities in Jawa in this way:

Compared to other cities in Indonesia, Bandung's cultural economy differs in the sense that it is closely related to human creativity. Whereas Yogyakarta is best known as the center of 'traditional' culture, Bali for 'religious' based culture and Jakarta for 'commercial' related culture, Bandung can be described as a city of 'creative culture.

Through a combination of the historical openness of the city, the strong student presence, and

the independent artist communities, an ethics of “*individual awareness, openness, freedom of expression and tolerance among communities*” began to emerge (Iskandar, 2003, City Biography). A dynamic urban culture led to a counter-culture model that popularized the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) message from punk, putting a lot of importance on individual initiative (ibid.).

Sinker (2001) explains the DIY ethics in the US, and it was similar messages, spread through fanzines downloaded from the newly-sprung up internet cafes, which inspired the punk community in Bandung:

The motivation behind punk is almost offhandedly referred to as "DIY" nowadays. That stands for "Do It Yourself". It's taken as a given in punk rock, but it's the foundation that the entire culture is built upon. Punk writers aren't sitting at home hoping that their piece gets published, they're publishing it themselves; fans aren't waiting around for someone to put out a record by their favorite band, they're releasing it themselves; we're not waiting for a club to open up that will book show that cater to the under-21 set, we're opening them ourselves. Punk has never waited for the OK from anyone to step out on its own. DIY is the answer to "Why?" (p. 11)

Small stores sprung up that would sell subculture cassettes, t-shirts and other merchandise, and trade underground records. Gradually these shops began selling clothing from the over hundred local labels that came into existence (Iskandar, 2003; for examples see Bandung Creative Showcase, 2007). These increased rapidly in numbers in 1996 when *krismon* sent the prices of imported clothes through the roof, and since mid-1990's there has been a flourishing community of producers and consumers centered around small stores called *distros*, which sell things that do not exist in main stream shops. At one point there were almost 3000 vendors of recycled fashion in Bandung. These shops started with minimum investment based on a cottage industry model, and could survive with very little capital because they made and sold many of their own products. This trend then slowly spread to other urban centers in Indonesia, such as Jakarta and Yogyakarta (ibid.). In addition to producing music tapes and t-shirts, members of the community were also active in producing and distributing fanzines, both national and international.

In 1997, the group behind Riotic Distro were perhaps the first who began to broaden the discussion to politics, and they became a hub for political agitation within the punk subculture, at a time when Indonesia was on the brink of large changes. Other distros followed, and the movement peaked in 1999-2000, when there was a number of rallies and demonstrations for

human rights, worker rights, food subsidies and other issues (Uttu, 2007). Pickles (2000) describes how the movement of publishing fanzines through alternative distribution systems spread over cities all over Indonesia, promoting ideas such as independent thinking and self education.

4.3 Bandung and the literary movements

In 2001, the potent mix of irreverent punks with their zine-culture and DIY approach, political activists, students, writers and artists created what became known as the the “*komunitas literer*”¹⁵ in Bandung. The focus was on enabling everyone to learn and develop themselves without any limitations. The literacy that they promoted went well beyond the mere interpretation of letters and words that the *Orde Baru* regime promoted, to also include understanding what one read, as well as what was going on in society.

One of the first “new Taman Bacaan” founded was *tobucil*, short for *toko buku kecil* (small bookstore), owned by Tarlen Handayani and Rani E. Ambyo, a book store that used its income to fund a free Taman Bacaan. More than just giving access to books, they wanted a meeting place for activities, and engaging with the community (Wulandari, 2003). As Tarlen, who used to ride around the block on a bicycle and rent books to her friends while in secondary school, explains “*It's not just about reading literature but also reading about the phenomena that occur around us. Many people read but they don't put it into practice or relate it to real life, [...] What one has read must be shared with and be beneficial for others*” (cited in Wulandari, 2003; Febriane, 2004).

The store launched a variety of activities to support reading, such as a Sunday afternoon reading club, story telling for children, a writing class and a film club. The way the story telling is conducted shows us that this is no ordinary New Order library - the *tobucil* volunteers try to enliven books for children with music and instruments, and sometimes bring animals or even a band to accompany the session (ibid.). *Tobucil* has now opened independent branches in Bali and Balikpapan as well (Febriane, 2004).

According to Tarlen Handayani (2007) the number of literary communities in the city has made it an inspiration for a new approach to literacy in many cities in Indonesia. She states that

¹⁵ literary community

national and local media in 2003-2005 talked excitedly about the independent book stores in Bandung as a literacy movement (Ibid.). *The Literary Community Map*¹⁶ which she helped create lists 40 communities and alternative bookstores in the city. It is probable that the dissemination of these examples has been helped by the fact that in 2003-2005 the phenomenon of *distros* and independent music in Bandung gathered national attention, with MTV Indonesia playing music from local Bandung groups, and the hosts even wearing clothes from Bandung labels. This caused Bandung to be seen as hip, and a trend-setter, with thousands of cars from Jakarta clogging the thoroughfares every weekend (Iskandar, 2003). Perhaps the example of *tobucil* and other TBs have also been seen as something “hip and cool”, which has inspired young people in other cities to start similar projects.

4.4 The process in Yogyakarta

In Yogyakarta after the *Reformasi* (Reformation, period after Suharto), NGOs appeared to champion human rights, democracy, culture and arts. They promoted the idea of access to libraries and information as an essential government service. This made the community more and more convinced about the importance of reading, access to information and availability of information for the community (Informant Y). This is confirmed by Yati (2003): “*People begin to realize that access to information and an inclusive public library is a person's rights and that community participation to improve quality of life and social welfare should be open and not dominated by government.*” (p. 3).

Priyanto (2006) notes that alternative libraries began opening in 2003, after young people had met and discussed the importance of literacy and reading habits. There was also a strong growth in publishing after *Reformasi*, with many new publishers established both in bigger cities in Java, and in smaller areas. In Yogyakarta before *reformasi* there were only 42 publishers, and most were members of the government publishing union *Ikatan Penerbit Indonesia, Ikapi* (The Union of Indonesian Publishers), which made them eligible for government printing orders, but also imposed strict control on what could be published. After *Reformasi*, Yogyakarta plays host to 101 publishers, and over half of them are independent of *Ikapi* (Wajah Mereka Cerah, 2003).

¹⁶ Peta Komunitas Literer

In 2005, the organization *Yayasan Seni Cemeti* took the initiative to organize a forum between alternative libraries in Yogyakarta. They found that almost half of all university graduates in library sciences worked for non-profits, many for Taman Bacaan or community libraries, and they could not join the *Ikatan Pustakawan Indonesia, IPI* (Union of Indonesian Librarians), which is reserved for government employees (Merdikaningtyas, 2007a). Standing outside of IPI, they felt isolated, and did not have access to the events and trainings that they needed for professional development. In the forum, librarians in NGOs, community libraries, TBs for children, and even coffee shops that promoted books participated with great enthusiasm. Some of the topics discussed were identifying needs and management systems for libraries, managing money and funding, developing library programs and increasing reading interest among the population (*ibid.*).

There was especial interest in the management of libraries, since they felt that existing training material was not appropriate for the unique circumstances of alternative libraries. They solved this by having “best case” libraries present their systems. How to find money was a common preoccupation, since most of the libraries did not have a stable source of income. Some had tried to solve it by working together with other organizations, start businesses on the side, or “sell” their concept to a donor (Merdikaningtyas, 2007a). To document the alternative libraries, *Yayasan Seni Cemeti* also produced the *Direktori Perpustakaan Alternatif Yogyakarta* (Directory of alternative libraries in Yogyakarta) in 2004 (Merdikaningtyas, 2007b).

4.5 Inspiring people: Dauzan Farook/Mabulir

I believe there were a number of enabling factors supporting the processes that enabled the emergence of independent Taman Bacans in Bandung and Yogyakarta described above. I will first discuss two famous and much chronicled champions of reading and community libraries, beginning with Dauzan Farook and his “*Magazines and Books that Circulate*”¹⁷, which was mentioned by several of my informants. Farook’s father was the head librarian for Muhammadiyah, a large Islamic social and welfare organization, and Farook fought the Dutch in the war of independence after the Japanese were defeated in 1945. He then worked in the batik industry, and went on to sell gold, and distribute books. When he retired in 1993, he decided to

¹⁷ Mabulir - Majalah dan Buku Bergilir

dedicate all his savings, and his monthly pension of 500,000 rupiah, to spread the love of reading (Dauzan, mengabdikan total untuk Islam, 2005). He began by collecting magazines and books, putting small religious messages in the magazines and cutting out pictures that were “uneducational”. He then walked around in Yogyakarta offering them to people he met, from school children to business men (Ardiansyah, 1997).

He gradually amassed more than 10,000 books, both bought by himself and through donations. To manage the operations more efficiently he set up “reading groups” of 4-20 members where someone would take responsibility for everyone in the reading group returning the publications on time (Arif, 2004; Sugarman, 2005). By 1997, he already had 150 reading groups established, and by 2005 he had set up “subsidiaries” in Jakarta, Solo, Purworejo dan Magelang, mostly run by previous subscribers (Ardiansyah, 1997; Dauzan, mengabdikan total untuk Islam, 2005). By the time he passed away in 2007, he was 83 years old and had amassed more than 10,000 books and 4,000 magazines in his apartment consisting of a 3x6 meter living room, and 3x4 meter bedroom. He was spending 1,5 million rupiah each month (mostly taken from his savings) on running the library, including the wages for three employees (Sugarman, 2005; Santoso, 2007).

Dauzan received numerous awards, including *Nugra Jasadarma Pustakaloka* from the National Library in 2005, Paramadina Award in 2005 and the Lifetime Achievement Award from Sabre Foundation in Massachusetts, USA, but as Budhi Santoso, a library blogger from Yogyakarta puts it: “Grandfather Dauzan who became an inspiration to the national literary world still lived in simplicity.”¹⁸ (Santoso, 2007).

4.6 Rumah Dunia/Gola Gong

The other person is Gola Gong, the pen name of Heri Hendrayana Haris, an author and journalist who grew up in Banten. He was handicapped at an early age, losing one of his arms in an accident, but did not let that stop him. He spent time during his youth travelling all of Indonesia, financing his travels by playing badminton at each location. He believes the fact that his *ari-ari* (placenta) was not buried under a coconut tree, as is the Javanese custom, but thrown in the river, is the reason for his *Wanderlust* (Gong, 2006). His father is a retired teacher from a

¹⁸ Mbah Dauzan yang menjadi inspirasi dunia literasi nasional ini tetap hidup dalam kesederhanaan.

teacher's college, and he received a love of reading from home (Hadi, 2004b).

In his autobiography *Menggenggam Dunia* (Grasping the world), Heri states that one of his important motivations was that he himself had partly overcome his physical handicap through the knowledge and wider perspectives that he had gained through reading - learning, for example, about all the handicapped people around the world, who had succeeded and become role models. He hopes that his books will be read by parents and inspire them to start home libraries and in turn inspire their own children (Gong, 2006).

With his background in journalism, he wanted to counter a lack of support for investigative journalism, and he and his friends travelled around in schools, starting school newspapers and wallpapers, and giving trainings. They also started a newspaper called *Banten Pos*, but they were shut down by the *Orde Baru* government for publishing without a license (Gong, 2006). A book partly based on his travels in Indonesia, *Balada si Roy* (Roy's Ballade) was published in two volumes and sold in over 100.000 copies. He used all the money he got from his five novels to buy a 1000m² large field behind his house, where he built the *Rumah Dunia* (The World House) as a place for children and students to study literature, art, journalism and theatre (Gong, 2006). Currently, the library has 4000 books, after growing slowly from one to four buildings (Children's library abuzz with activity, 2006; Hadi, 2004b).

Rumah Dunia's motto is "*My home is the House of the World, I build it with Words*"¹⁹, and it features a packed program seven days a week (Gong, 2006). It begins with storytelling on Mondays. Outdoor drawing classes (called tours to appeal to children) on Tuesdays is one of the most popular activities, attracting about 50-60 children each time. Wednesdays and Thursdays are for composing stories or poems about parents, home, school or other things that interest the children (Children's library abuzz with activity, 2006).

Currently, over 400 children come almost every day from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. after school to participate in these activities. These children also include a number of street children (Hadi, 2004a). On Fridays, the children and visitors explore the theatre on the 7x5 meter stage, and on Saturdays they are invited to express themselves through words or dance. Sunday, students are

¹⁹ Rumahku Rumah Dunia, Kubangun Dengan Kata-kata

the focus of writing workshops that teach journalistic writing, fiction writing and writing for television - and this is the activity that has produced several published authors (Children's library abuzz with activity, 2006; Minat baca burang?, 2003).

Banten is a very new province, only 8 years old, and its struggles with a reputation for being backward and *bodoh* (stupid) (Hadi, 2004b; Khairina, 2006). The intention behind Gola Gong's actions has been to correct this, and seek to promote a critical and educated culture in Banten. For example, he has tried to change the meanings of some words traditionally used in/about Banten, so that when he opened a bookstore at Rumah Dunia in 2004, he called it *Kedai Buku Jawara* (Jawara Bookstore). Jawara traditionally means "backwards", but he wants to change its meaning to "intelligent".

In the same way, he wants to change the meaning of *gonjilengan*, which used to mean "meeting and eating chicken", to meeting and discussing art, culture and education. Finally, *tawuran* which before just meant meeting, is his concept for two schools meeting and producing literature or theatre shows together. Thus, he hopes that in the future, when people Google Banten, they will find it is a synonym for "smart" (Hadi, 2004b). The Rumah Dunia mailing list is also an important network for budding writers, publishers and journalists. Many beginning authors now post drafts of their manuscripts on the mailing list, and several books have been published as a result of this (Gong, 2006).

4.7 Networks: 1001 Buku

In addition to the inspiring examples of individuals, networks have played an important role in connecting people and enabling them to share both material contributions, and experiences. Perhaps the most important such network is *1001 Buku* (1001 Books), a network that collects children's books and distributes them to Taman Bacaan. Their profile explains their purpose thus:

*People say, people's interest in reading in Indonesia is very low. Is that true? Maybe not. Maybe the answer to the question is the difficulty to access books and magazines that are expensive. Well, to give access to books for the wide community, and especially for the children, this is the reason for 1001 Buku's existence.*²⁰ (Profil 1001 Buku, 2003).

²⁰ Kata orang, minat baca di Indonesia tergolong rendah. Apa itu betul? Mungkin saja tidak. Mungkin saja jawab jawabannya terletak pada sulitnya akses terhadap buku dan mahalny harga buku tersebut.

The organization was founded in May 2002, and by December 2002, it had recruited 224 volunteers and distributed 12,000 books to the 34 TBs in its network. It grew rapidly, and by the first half of 2003, it had already recruited 834 volunteers, who had distributed a total (including the previous numbers) of 30.000 books to a network that had grown to 104 libraries. In October, 2006, the organization was formalized and received status as a legal *Yayasan* (foundation) (Akta Yayasan 1001 Buku, 2006).

4.7.1 How did it grow?

1001 Buku is to a large extent based on, and enabled by, Internet technology. It all began when Harvard graduate of the Deveopment Sociology program Upik Djalins (with co-founders Ida Sitompul and Santi Soekanto) started a mailing list on Yahoo Groups (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/1001buku/>). Most of the coordination and recruitment of new members are still done through Internet mailing lists, blogs and websites (Haryanto, 2002; Zidni, 2007).

Part of the reason for their rapid growth can also be attributed to good coverage in mass media - from the founding until February 2004, featured stories about the organization appeared in various Indonesian newspapers and magazines a total of 61 times, including most national and several regional newspapers, MTV, TransTV, a magazine for children and women, and a Muslim magazine (1001Buku media coverage, 2004). The members have also been able to gain the support of donors and companies, including the World Bank, the British Council, the Coca Cola Foundation, *Dewan Kesenian Jakarta* (The Cultural Council of Jakarta), McDonalds, Gedung28, *Aliansi Journalis Indonesia* (Alliance of Journalists in Indonesia), Forum Lingkar Pena (an association that promotes creative writing) and RPX (a logistics company that offered the organization 500 kg of free book freight within Indonesia each month) (*ibid.*).

4.7.2 Activities

1001 Buku runs four main kinds of activites: *jemput bola* (pick up the ball), picking up book donations at people's homes, *sapu jagad*, collecting books in residential areas, *book-a-thon*,

Nah untuk menyediakan buku yang bisa diakses masyarakat luas terutama anak-anak dan dengan harga yang murah, itulah alasan hadirnya 1001buku.

collecting books in public places, like shopping malls, and *book-drop box*, placing boxes in strategic locations, like super markets, which makes it easy to contribute (Profil 1001 Buku, 2003). The volunteers then meet the last Sunday of the month to register the books, choose the ones suitable for children (other books are traded or sold to get more children's books). The books are then distributed to the TBs that are in the *Jaringan 1001 Buku* (1001 Books Network), some of them donated, and some of them loaned for a certain period, after which they are circulated to other libraries (Informant P).

The organization distributes books, but also acts as an important network tying together independent TBs and providing a forum for exchanging information and experience. On the mailing list, not only volunteers, but many managers of TBs are active, and sometimes people who want to donate books are connected directly to needy TBs, without going through 1001 Buku formally. It is probable that they have not just contributed to improving the management of existing TBs, but also to lowering the perceived bar to participation for people who are considering starting their own TB. In their application to the World Bank in 2003 they state that:

All of the organizers of these activities [development and management of children's libraries] can communicate with each other for knowledge sharing and encouragement through the network maintained by 1001buku. This network has encouraged enthusiasm among many to create more opportunities and book stations for children. (Application to World Bank, 2003).

To further this goal, they have also published a manual in how to start a TB for children - "*How to start and manage a reading garden for children*"²¹ (2003) - which is distributed through their website.

²¹ Bagaimana mengelola & merintis Taman Bacaan Anak

4.7.3 Olimpiade Taman Bacaan

In 2006, 1001 Buku also began arranging a yearly *Olimpiade Taman Bacaan* (Reading garden olympics), where children and TB managers from the 1001 Buku network in *Jabodetabek* (the greater Jakarta area) meet and spend a day together. The day is filled with creative activities and competitions centered around skills the children have developed as part of the TB programs, and are designed to foster competitiveness, team work and a good sports spirit (Zidni, 2007). Some of the activities for the children include

*marathon creativity competition, creative wall newspaper competition, group imagination competition, imaginative pictures and coloring competition, cheap children's book fair, exhibition of profile of 1001 Books and exemplary reading gardens, story telling, and workshop on the 1001 Books booklet about how to start and manage an independent reading garden.*²² (ibid.).

The olympics events perform several functions. First, they creates excitement around TBs for both the children and the managers. Secondly, they functions as publicity for 1001 Buku. Thirdly, they are also explicitly designed to be places for TB managers to meet and network: *"Through this activity, we hope that the managers and a part of the reading garden community can get together, get to know each other, and share their experiences in using or managing reading gardens."*²³ (Aryo, cited in *Olimpiade Taman Bacaan*, 2006). This aspect is also clear from the workshop on how to start community gardens, and the exhibition of "exemplary" reading gardens.

4.8 Other networks, and best cases

Starting and running an independent Taman Bacaan is a difficult task, and the people who do it are mostly inspired by their love of reading and their desire to give children and adults the opportunity to learn. They usually do not have special training in librarianship, financial management, or management of an organization. Certainly, many TBs do not last long, but for

²² Lomba marathon kreativitas, lomba kreativitas majalah dinding, lomba imajinasi berkelompok, lomba imajinasi gambar dan mewarnai [...], Bursa Buku Anak Murah, pameran profil 1001buku dan taman bacaan anak percontohan, dongeng dan bedah buklet 1001buku mengenai Bagaimana Mendirikan dan Mengelola Taman Bacaan Mandiri

²³ Melalui kegiatan ini diharapkan para pengelola dan bagian dari komunitas taman bacaan dapat berkenalan, bertemu, serta berbagi pengalaman mereka dalam memanfaatkan atau mengelola taman bacaan.

the ones that do, it is very important to have networks to exchange information and experience, connect with like-minded people, and perhaps even share resources and directly help each other, or collaborate. One of the unique features of the independent TBs in Indonesia seems to be the large variety of types, yet they still work together and help each other. Informant A told me how his library now had enough books, and sent books they collected on to new TBs just starting up. He also travelled to other TBs to share his experience, and frequently hosted visitors at his own, locally well-known TB. Thus it is important to highlight “best cases” - libraries that are especially successful at fund raising, community relations, or pedagogical approach.

4.9 Directories, forums, events

Both in Bandung and Yogyakarta, directories of TBs have been compiled and distributed (Merdikaningtyas, 2007b; Wulandari, 2003). Also, fora have been held for managers of TBs to meet and discuss their challenges, and the forums mentioned in Yogyakarta are good examples (Merdikaningtyas, 2007a). Large scale events function both to promote the idea of reading and TBs, and also provide an opportunity for managers to meet and exchange information. One example is the *Olimpiade Taman Bacaan Anak* held by 1001 Buku, another is the World Book Day arranged by the Department of Education, held annually as a collaboration effort between authors, publishers, distributors, book-related organizations and reading communities. In 2006, the World Book Day was supported by over 100 organizations, and included activities such as a cheap book fair, Taman Bacaan fair, seminars and workshops around literacy, films about literacy, writing competitions and more²⁴ (Assidiq, 2006).

There are also many smaller events, such as the *Festival Literasi Indonesia* (Indonesian Literacy Festival), which had workshops on topics ranging including to repair broken books, how start a student newspaper, how to run a community library, how to integrate community libraries with literacy programs, how to publish your own books, books for women, books for minorities, and even a visit to local TBs (Subhan, 2007). It is instructive to see how these festivals market themselves to a broad audience, here an example from a literacy festival at a university:

For those who admit that they are bookaholics and shopaholics / for comics lovers / for

²⁴ It should be noted that the author of this paper first came across the idea of TBs during a visit to the World Book Day 2007.

*information workers / for those who looove Harry Potter / for those who are crazy about Lord of the Rings / for those who are nostalgic about Karl May's work / for those who love story telling / for those who love literature, theatre and film / for everyone who believes that books are part of a lifestyle / especially for everyone who are interested in the amazing thing called / books...*²⁵ (Fajry, 2007).

4.9.1 Internet

In addition to physical get-togethers, the Internet has played an important role in the movement. As mentioned earlier, 1001 Buku is mostly a “virtual” organization, organized around a very active mailing list, where volunteers coordinate, exchange information, and find people to cooperate with. There is a number of other very active mailing lists, both directly related to TBs, and others more generally related to books and reading, which also feature discussions of TBs. One of the most active mailing lists is the *Apresiasi Sastra* (Appreciate Literature) which was founded in 2005, and has already grown to over 1,200 members and often more than 1,000 messages posted each month (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Apresiasi-Sastra/>). In addition, many of the people active in the movement maintain individual blogs, where they also post clips from articles published about TBs (which have been very useful in this research). Many of the urban TB activists have access to the Internet from work, or through an Internet cafe, but this is probably a lot less common for more rural and village TBs.

4.10 The influence of Islam

Indonesia is a unique in that it is the country with the largest population of Muslims in the world, and yet not a Muslim country. It has six official religions, however about 85% of the population is Muslim, and I would argue that this has been an important underlying influence.

4.10.1 History of Muslim reading

Islam and Christianity are both “religions of the book”, and both put a large emphasis on the ability to read. Indeed, during the colonial times, before the Dutch government ever put much

²⁵ Buat yang ngaku bookaholic & shopaholic / Buat para pecinta komik... / Buat para pekerja informasi... / Buat yang sukaaa bgt Harry Potter... / Buat yang tergila2 sama lord of the Rings.. / Buat yang mau nostalgia sama karya-karya Karl May... / Buat para pecinta dongeng... / Buat semua pecinta sastra., teater, dan film... / Buat semua yang ngerasa buku adalah bagian dari gaya hidup lo.... / Esp. Buat semua yang tertarik sama satu benda ajaib yang bernama / buku...

emphasis on literacy, a large amount of the population would have learnt to read both Arabic and a local language (probably often written with in the Arabic script) through religious instruction, to enable them to read both the Al-Qur'an and other religious texts. According to professor of Islamic history Azyumardia Azra, there is a history of Islamic book collections in Indonesia, starting from the personal collections of *ulama* and *santri*, to libraries in mosques and religious schools (*pesantren*). These collections included both religious texts and general educational material, which were mostly available to anyone who wanted to read (Azra, personal communication, 2008).

4.10.2 Iqra! Read!

Not only the history of Muslim religious instruction, but also the contents of the religious text itself, has had an impact. The very first Surah revealed to the prophet Muhammed began with the word "Iqra!" which both means read and proclaim, and which has widely been understood as a call to knowledge in the Muslim world, with a large number of learning institutions, publishing houses and universities adapting this name. Adam (2002) writes:

The significance for muslims (and all humanity) is that knowledge is light; during any period of Jahiliya & ignorance, it is only knowledge that can bring people out of darkness. Furthermore, before one can 'proclaim' or spread the message, it logically follows that the proclaimer of the message must first 'read' – ie it is our duty to first acquire the knowledge (ie. read) and then spread the knowledge (ie. proclaim).

Tarlen Handayani, one of the pioneers of the literary movement in Bandung, made reference to Iqra in a newspaper interview, "*After we moved, the motto of Tobucil became "Literacy in Your Everyday Life", because we believe that change begins with small things. I understand it as Iqra, not just reading texts, but also reading and understanding what happens around us*"²⁶ (cited in Wulandari, 2003).

As we saw above, Dauzan Farook from Mabulir was clearly inspired by Islam in his sacrifices to spread literacy and reading. Gola Gong from Rumah Dunia also makes extensive references to Islam and its commandments when explaining his inspirations in his autobiography (Gong,

²⁶ Semenjak pindah, moto Tobucil jadi berubah "Literacy in Your Everyday Life", karena kita percaya perubahan dimulai dari hal kecil. Saya memahaminya sebagai Iqra, bukan hanya membaca teks, tetapi juga membaca dan memahami apa yang terjadi di sekeliling kita.

2006). My informants did not bring this aspect up by themselves, but when I suggested there might be a link to Islam, several agreed. *“Stian’s idea is correct, maybe without being aware of it the factor of Islam which teaches about literacy and reading without being aware of it became the basic/original idea of thought.”*²⁷ (Informant R). *“It’s possible, because in my own religion Islam teaches... to read.. There is an Ayat which compels us to read...”*²⁸ (Informant M). Dr. Azra (personal communication, 2008) concurs: *“To a certain extent the doctrine of Islam-especially the first Ayat of the Qur’an, which is ‘Iqra’, read! – has influenced literacy endeavours. Because of this, the order to read, and to demand knowledge became a religious obligation.”*²⁹

4.10.3 Concrete initiatives from the Islamic community

With economic growth in Indonesia from the 1980’s, there has been a growth in literacy and library movements among the Islamic community in Indonesia. Libraries were built in mosques and *pesantren*, and a number of different groups promoted the construction of TBs. The artist Yessy Gusman is well known for her work in spreading *Taman Bacaan Anak* (TBA) (Reading garden for Children), having started over 40 TBAs in different cities, and she has worked together with the *Badan Amil Zakat Nasional* (The National Body of Amil Zakat³⁰) which collect tithes that Muslims are obliged to pay (Baznas Gagasan Taman Bacaan Az Zahra, 2004). There are also religious programs to collect books directly, known as *wakaf buku* (wakaf³¹ books).

²⁷ Pendapat Stian ada benarnya, mungkin tanpa disadari faktor-faktor islam yang mengajarkan tentang literasi dan baca tanpa sadar telah menjadi ide awal/dasar pemikiran.

²⁸ Bisa jadi... karena di agamaku sendiri Islam mengajarkan... untuk membaca... Ada ayat yang mengharuskan kita untuk membaca...

²⁹ Sedikit banyak doktrin Islam--tegasnya ayat pertama al-Qur'an, yaitu 'Iqra', bacalah--turut mempengaruhi upaya literasi. Karena itulah, perintah untuk membaca, dan menuntut ilmu ini menjadi kewajiban agama.

³⁰ Zakat - obligatory payment made annually under Islamic law and used for charitable and religious purposes. (“zakat, n”, OED Online, 2008)

³¹ “Initially, the concept of “wakaf” defined as acres of land belongs to one and or a group of people which is donated for public interest, as mosque and market. Later on, the concept of “wakaf” has a broader definition; “wakaf” could be in a form of personal property instead of the donated land for the public welfare.” (Ali, 2006).

4.11 Nationalism and reading

In the first part, we saw how the role of the new Indonesian language played a key role in bringing together the vast and diverse Indonesian nation, and spread nationalist ideas, and also how certain historical conditions lead the Indonesian national language to play a stronger role than is common in many other ex-colonies, for example comparing with Malaysia. From my review of newspaper articles, organizational websites, blogs and mailing lists, there are some themes that are very frequent.

The concept of a lack of reading interest in Indonesia, and that Indonesian education is very poor compared to other Asian countries, is common in news reporting and personal blogs. Two surveys that are quoted in many newspaper articles (for example Baderi, 2005) are the International Association for Evaluation of Education in 1992, which found that of the 30 countries in which they measured reading skills of elementary school students, Indonesia was the 29th. The other is the World Bank report "Education in Indonesia from Crisis to Recovery" from 1998, which shows that reading skills for elementary school students in Indonesia was the lowest among the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. There are also very frequent references that *minat baca* (reading interest) is too low, and that reading is necessary to advancement, for example reading for *mencerdaskan bangsa* (making the nation smart) to get away from *kebodohan* (stupidity) and *ketertinggalan* (being left behind) .

I have found two interesting references to the founders of the nation, one by Dauzan from Mabulir: "*Books are a richness that can brighten people up. The founders of our nation were people who were very strong in reading, so that their enthusiasm and insight in the nation was very strong.*"³² (Farook Dauzan, cited in Arif, 2004). Another example is this: "*Books are an inseparable part of life, for thinkers, books are like their second wife. This was also done by the founders of the country Indonesia, Muhammad Hatta and Tan Malaka, anywhere they went they always brought crates of books with them. For them, life felt dead if there were no books nearby.*"³³ (Mardana, 2004). Informant F connects criticism towards the current administration of

³² Buku adalah kekayaan yang bisa mencerahkan manusia. Para pendiri bangsa kita dulu adalah orang-orang yang sangat kuat dalam membaca sehingga semangat dan wawasan kebangsaan mereka sangat tinggi.

³³ Buku adalah bagian hidup yang tidak bisa dipisahkan, bagi pemikir, buku bagaikan istri kedua. Ini

the country, with a love for the nation: *"I myself see this phenomenon as at the same time "resistance" and our "feeling of love" towards Indonesia which is overcome by many problems, starting from corruption and other things that are very scary"*³⁴

juga dilakukan oleh pendiri negara Indonesia, Muhammad Hatta dan Tan Malaka, ke mana pun mereka pergi selalu membawa berpeti-peti buku. Bagi mereka hidup terasa mati bila tidak ada buku di sampingnya.

³⁴ Saya sendiri melihat fenomena ini sebagai "perlawanan" sekaligus "rasa cinta" kami terhadap Indonesia yang terlampaui banyak persoalan, mulai dari korupsi dan lain sebagainya yang sangat menakutkan.

5 CURRENT STATUS OF TAMAN BACAANS

5.1 Government policy

In 2005, the government once again decided to get involved with TBMs. They observed that there was much enthusiasm around autonomus TBs, but believed that

*TBM is still not successful in carrying out its function as a place to increase reading interest and reading culture in the community, especially for new literates, because of several factors. The causes are amongst others: the managers of Taman Bacaans are not creative enough, they are not skilled enough, not dedicated enough, with the result that the community's desire to read, and to utilize the Taman Bacaan is still not strong enough*³⁵ (Sujana, 2003, cited in Direktori TBM Tahun 2007, 2007, p. 7)

This is not consistent with what I have learnt about autonomous TBs, and I believe that what is referred to here is the “remains” of the TBMs that were set up in the 1990's. The TBMs funded by the government are as a group very different from the autonomous TBs I have come across in my research.

To help the TBMs reach their goals of increasing the reading interest of new literates, people who study in non-formal educational settings, and the general public, the program Development of Reading Culture and Building of Libraries³⁶ was set up as part of the Strategic plan for Department of Education, 2005-2009³⁷, which in 2006 became became part of the Subdepartment for Increasing Reading Culture³⁸ under the Department of Popular Education³⁹ (Direktori TBM Tahun 2007, 2007). At the time, there was no official data on the existence of TBMs, and one of the subdepartment's activities in supporting TBMs was to organize a directory

³⁵ TBM belum berhasil menjalankan fungsinya sebagai tempat meningkatkan minat baca dan budaya baca masyarakat khususnya aksarawan baru dikarenakan berbagai faktor. Faktor penyebab antara lain: pengelola TBM kurang kreatif, kurang terampil, kurang berdedikasi, sehingga keinginan masyarakat untuk membaca dan memanfaatkan TBM belum penuh.

³⁶ Pengembangan Budaya Baca dan Pembinaan Perpustakaan

³⁷ Rencana Strategi Depdiknas 2005-2009

³⁸ Subdirektorat Peningkatan Budaya Baca

³⁹ Direktorat Pendidikan Masyarakat

of TBMs, to make the existence and services of TBMs known nationally. To a certain extent, the focus of TBMs had changed, from focusing mainly on new literates and simple literacy, to promoting interest in reading and reading culture in general to help turn Indonesia into a learning society (ibid.). The Program for Developing a Reading Culture⁴⁰ wanted to expand TBMs to increase people's interest in reading, support libraries and provide quality and relevant books relevant to the needs of the people, and in turn also support the book industry. They listed the following elements as their focus:

Activities:

- Campaigning and promoting reading culture through mass media and other ways to increase reading culture in general in schools, other educational institutions and for the general public
- The expansion and the increase of quality of TBMs and libraries both from the collection standpoint, as well as other infrastructure
- Supporting the creation of people's libraries using the facilities that already exist in the community
- Increasing the role of citizens, including NGOs and the business world, so that reading facilities are available that support life-long learning
- Educating and training library and TBM staff
- Increasing the diverse functions of TBMs so that TBMs are interesting both to children and youth as well as to parents for them to learn and develop their creativity
- Empowering the TBM staff to turn the TBM into a center for learning resources

Relevant policy:

- Creating TBMs for new literates is a priority in provinces with high illiteracy rates

⁴⁰ Program Pengembangan Budaya Baca

- Supplying infrastructure and reading materials to TBMs that already exist
- Supplying TBMs to special communities in urban areas using ICT
- Creating manual(s) for “The Movement for a People that is Interested in Reading”, and spreading it in all of Indonesia step-by-step
- Evaluating the effect of the increase in reading culture and the efficacy of TBM

(From Direktori TBM Tahun 2007, 2007, p. 8-9, author’s translation)

In addition to supplying block grants to TBMs (see below), the activities of the Subdepartment for Increasing Reading Culture in 2005-2006 also included publishing information material, like the booklet *“Manual on running a TBM”*⁴¹, leaflets with profiles on TBMs and about the program Development of Reading Culture. In a newspaper article, the Director General of Non-Formal Education Ace Suryadi stated that the budget for these activities increased from 8,5 billion rupiah in 2005 to 40 billion rupiah in 2006, and 90 billion rupiah in 2007. 60% of this is a block grant which goes to local government through provincial governments, based on proposals. He added that the department will gradually increase the budget to promote reading culture and informal education. (Dari taman bacaan ke kios buku, 2007).

5.2 Data on government programs 2000-present

As stated above, there has traditionally been very little data available about the governments TBM programs, and even less about the autonomous TBs. The Department of Education’s Directory of TBMs underlines that *“To decide on a policy, the availability of data is very important, and because of this, data need to be archived, made available, printed, copied and distributed to all competent parties.”*⁴² (Direktori TBM Tahun 2007, 2007, p .3). They further state that because of little attention from provincial and regional governments, who do not collect data about the existence of TBs/TBMs, service hours, etc., the only data available is for

⁴¹ Panduan Penyelenggaraan TBM

⁴² Untuk menentukan sebuah kebijakan, keberadaan data adalah sangat penting, oleh karena itu perlu semua data diarsipkan, disajikan, dicetak, digandakan dan didistribusikan kepada berbagai pihak yang berkompeten.

the TBMs that applied for block grants (Direktori TBM Tahun 2007, 2007).

The block grants were distributed as follows: In 2005, a total of 1079 TBMs were supported, and 1014 TBMs received 4 million rupiah, 30 TBMs received 10 million rupiah, 25 TBMs received 20 million rupiah and 10 TBMs received 50 million rupiah. In 2006, a total of 478 TBMs were supported, and 383 TBMs received 10 million rupiah, 70 TBMs received 25 million rupiah and 25 TBMs received 50 million rupiah. In addition to these numbers, an extra 367 TBMs were given 10 million rupiah each at the end of 2006 (all numbers from Direktori TBM Tahun 2007, 2007, p. 9-10). If one adds up the numbers of TBMs that have received support during these two years, and assume that each is only eligible for support once, the total number of TBMs would be 1903, however data has only been collected for 1029 TBMs, and the Department of Education itself thus raises the question of whether the remaining ones exist on the paper only (ibid.). In a newspaper article, Direktor General of the Non-Formal and Informal Education Department stated that *“there are at least 6,000 Taman Bacaan in the National Department of Education’s network”*⁴³, but this number must include autonomous libraries, and is not mentioned anywhere in the Direktori Taman Bacaan 2007 (2007) (Dari taman bacaan ke kios buku, 2007).

As for the TBMs that we have information about, they seem to display characteristics that are very different from the typical autonomous TBs that I have come across in my research. The Direktori Taman Bacaan 2007 states that 82% are run out of Community Center for Learning Activities⁴⁴, and 93% of them do not have full-time staff, but are run by mostly teachers or headmasters. A striking 100%, according to the Directory, do not have any activities except lending out books; i.e., no reading circles, writing workshops or anything else that has become the trademark for autonomous TBs. Only about 10% are open every day, although for some reason the data for “two days and below” has been lumped together with “no answer” (a total of 74%) which makes the numbers very unclear. This data is however supported by Muslih (2003), who writes that many school libraries are often only open for about 15 minutes during breaks, and that most school libraries have no or very few designated opening hours. This is in strong

⁴³ Setidaknya, terdapat sekitar 6.000 taman bacaan yang berjejaringan dengan Departemen Pendidikan Nasional

⁴⁴ Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat

contrast to the survey conducted with independent TBs that are part of 1001 Buku's network - there, all but two said that they were open every day of the week.

Regarding the history of operation, the largest percentage (22%) were reported as having been started in 2006, with only 6% started in 2000 or earlier (Direktori Taman Bacaan 2007, 2007, bab iii). Note that there was no independent verification of any of this data, and it is purely based on self-reporting, which could be skewed, since the purpose was to obtain a grant. In addition to the TBMs that are listed above, there were 127 mobile TBMs in operation in 2007 (Bella, 2007). The survey provides no data on number of trainings provided, but the Government of Jawa Timur provides an account of one training that was conducted over three days for the supervisors of 85 different TBMs from different cities that had been awarded block grants (Peningkatan kecerdasan, 2006).

5.3 Future government plans

For the year 2008, the funding priorities have been divided into four sectors. *"Social pioneer funding"*⁴⁵ is given to government agencies or NGOs that wish to start new TBMs. The support, which can only be given once to each project, is fixed at 15 million rupiah, of which at least 40% has to be spent on books and other reading material, and maximum 20% each for administration, events and furniture/tools (Pedoman Penyaluran Bantuan, 2008). TBMs that already exist can apply for *"Social help to strenghten TBMs"*⁴⁶, fixed at 25 million dollars, with the same distribution criteria as above. *Centers for Learning Activities*⁴⁷ set up by the provincial government, which have received a TBM mobil, can also receive 40 million rupiah for buying books and reading material (*ibid.*). These book mobiles work much like *circulating libraries*⁴⁸ in that they offer direct lending services to individuals in hard-to-reach sites, but they also assist in circulating books between TBMs, to provide more variety for the users (TBM Mobil, 2007). The final category offers 125 million rupiah to government agencies or NGOs that want to hold

⁴⁵ dana sosial rintisan

⁴⁶ bantuan sosial penguatan TBM

⁴⁷ Sanggar Kegiatan Belajar

⁴⁸ perpustakaan keliling

events related to promoting a reading culture (Pedoman Penyaluran Bantuan, 2008).

In the future, the government is planning to set up Taman Bacaans in every kecamatan and every village (counting about 10,000 villages in Indonesia), in addition to providing mobile TBMs, and urban TBMs based on information and communication technology (Bella, 2007; 5.500 taman bacaan masyarakat terbengkalai, 2006). In a newspaper article Ace Suryadi, Director General of Non-Formal and Informal Education, stated that the department will gradually increase the budget to promote reading culture and informal education. The budget increased from 8,5 billion rupiah in 2005 to 40 billion rupiah in 2006, and 90 billion rupiah in 2007, with 60% being a block grant going to local government through provincial governments, based on proposals (Dari taman bacaan ke kios buku, 2007). The Department of Education. The Department of Education has also announced that they want the TBMs to expand from not only lending out books, but also opening cheap bookstores (*kios buku murah*), which they hope will make the TBMs more attractive to visitors, and the community more interested in visiting (ibid.).

5.3.1 TBMs in places of religious worship

A new program was launched in 2007 by the Minister of Religion M. Maftuh Basyuni and the Minister of Education Bambang Sudibyo to promote formal and non-formal education, including TBs, in places of religious worship. Sudibyo contrasted the condition of places of religious worship with those of schools. *“Wherever there are places of religious worship, they are in good condition, because they are so loved by the community. Because of that, we hope that extending formal education and Taman Bacaan to these places will be effective.”*⁴⁹, whereas schools are falling apart. *“It seems that these school buildings are only loved by the government”*⁵⁰ (Pendidikan di tempat ibadah, 2006). Combining TBs and mosques is also a natural fit, as Sudibyo states that mosques have been centers of culture and places of education throughout history (ibid.). The program starts slowly, with fourteen places of religious worship, including mosques, churches, Buddhist and Hindu temples, receiving 25 million rupiah each to

⁴⁹ Di mana-mana tempat ibadah itu kondisinya baik karena begitu dicintai keberadaannya oleh masyarakat. Karena itu, memperluas pendidikan formal dan taman bacaan di tempat-tempat tersebut diharapkan efektif.

⁵⁰ Rupanya gedung-gedung sekolah itu hanya dicintai oleh pemerintah

set up TBs. The department is planning to expand this budget aggressively next year (Rumah ibadah, 2007).

5.4 Overview of the current situation for non-government TBs

We might separate the Taman Bacaans into three groups. The first consists of the ones set up by government. This group is not mentioned much in the literature, and seems to consist of a combination of TBMs that were started in the 1990's and "survived" the decentralization movement, as well as current TBMs set up by local and regional government. From my documents, I have not found evidence that the national government has any current program for setting up TBMs itself, and it seems to rather works through block grants. However, when comparing the statistical profile of the TBMs that received funding from the government, with the TBs in 1001 Buku's network, they appear very different, and it a possible explanation could be that most of the government funding goes to TBMs that are run by local or regional government, or organizations closely connected to the government.

Another group, frequently mentioned in the media, is the TBs set up by donors, Indonesian and foreign companies, and Indonesian state enterprises. These often set up a large amount of TBs at the same time. Here are some examples of the variety of sponsors. The Dutch Government has funded 11 TBs in elementary schools in Yogyakarta, after the earth-quake (Wahyuni, 2008). McDonald's has even started a McDonald reading corner in several McDonald's restaurants, which anyone can use for educational activities, like story telling and drawing. They work with *Forum Indonesia Membaca* (Forum Indonesia Reads) and they actively collect books from their customers for Taman Bacaans (Shaleh, 2006).

The Women's section, DPD Justice and Welfare Party, PKS Pekalongan⁵¹ has opened a Taman Bacaan in their women's justice station⁵², and the ex-artist Rima Melati has opened a Taman Bacaan in Dusun Tembi, supported by Yayasan Adinda and the bank HSBC (Anhar, 2006). On the island Riau, Riau Pulp has set up community libraries with book packages consisting of five copies each of 200 titles in 110 villages. They believed that the 200 titles would last for a year,

⁵¹ Bidang Kewanitan DPD Partai Keadilan Sejahtera PKS Pekalongan

⁵² pos wanita keadilan

but already after three months, they were told that the children had completed all the books, and are now collecting books to add to the libraries (Kelana, 2007).

The involvement of state owned enterprises (SOEs) is puzzling, since one would think that this was the task of the Ministry of Education. But in September 2003, the wife of the Minister for *State Owned Enterprises*⁵³ (SOEs) Laksamana invited the heads of the largest SOEs to a hotel, where she asked them to contribute to her plan to build 400 TBMs in Indonesia. Within two hours, the organization that she had created - Yayasan Taman Bacaan Indonesia - had collected 22 Billion rupiah from the telecom company, the social security insurance company, and other big SOEs (Dua jam himpun 22 m, 2003). Yayasan Taman Bacaan Indonesia, organized by the *Association for wives and female workers in SOEs*⁵⁴, was set up by Laksamana, and when her husband lost the minister post, this organization also closed.

The final category, and the one that interests us the most in this research, is the independent TBs that are started by small NGOs or citizen groups. These might receive some support from 1001 Buku, government block-grants, or other sources, but they have a strong identity and are grounded in a community - not just "one of 40 TBs set up by a company". Incidentally, when asked about the government policy of giving only one block-grant to any TBM, and whether this created problems with sustainability among TBMs, head of the sub-section for Reading Culture Ridwan Arshad answered "for the TBM that exist only to receive support, yes, but for the TBMs that exist because of the committment of the community, no"⁵⁵ (personal communication, 2008).

As for the numbers, Ace Suryadi, Director General of Non-Formal and Informal Education has stated that there are now 5,400 TBs in Indonesia (Ace Suryadi, cited in Bella, 2007) however it is unclear how this number was derived, since the Direktori TBM Tahun 2007 (2007) produced by his department states that they have very little data. In either case, a simple number is not very informative since many of these might be constituted of two bookshelves in a school that are usually kept locked, or even TBMs that only exist on paper for block grants. On the other hand,

⁵³ BUMN - Badan Usaha Milik Negara

⁵⁴ Ikatan Istri Karyawan BUMN

⁵⁵ Bagi TBM yang hadir karena adanya bantuan ya tetapi bagi TBM yang hadir karena kepedulian masyarakat tidak.

there are probably a good number of TBs that have not been recorded by any formal statistics. An added problem is the volatility of the numbers - since most TBs are run by inexperienced volunteers with no stable funding (even the government funding is a one-time affair) many do not last very long. In Tarlen Handayani's Peta Komunitas Literer Bandung from 2005 there were 40 literary communities (TBs, alternative bookstores, etc) listed in Bandung, but a few years later, only 8 were left (Handayani, 2007). Despite these individual set-backs, most of my informants have confirmed a feeling that the number of Taman Bacaan is continuously growing.

5.5 Taman Bacaan activities

A common theme for most of the TBs discussed here, and most others I have encountered in my research, is their strong focus on becoming more than a *gudang buku* (place to store books). We find Tarlen Handayani put emphasis on real life literacy, and relating it to real life through numerous discussion clubs (Wulandari, 2003). At the *Rumah Dunia*, there are activities scheduled throughout the entire week, emphasizing reading, writing, drawing, acting, and journalism (Children's library abuzz with activity, 2006).

A wonderful example of making the TB responsive to local needs, and readers' own interests, was given at a discussion on building TBs that 1001 Buku arranged during the *Pameran Buku Jakarta* (Jakarta Book Exhibition) June 23, 2004, where Lutfi Kurnia from a TB in Bogor described his experiences. Working in the village Tegal Gundil, Lutfi discovered that the youth only "*hang out, get drunk, and flirt with passing girls*"⁵⁶, and to get their interest he invited them to make a village newspaper with him about the topics that interested them. This excited them, and after a while they asked for access to books.

Books were not enough in themselves though, because they are just "*benda mati*" (dead matter). When the boys were reading about pollution in rivers, they could not understand, so Lutfi invited them to the river, and had his parents describe how the river had been 20 years ago, when it was five meters deep. Now, it was only two meters deep because of all the garbage clogging up the channel, and in this way the youth really understood not just about rivers, but also about pollution and the idea of creating a healthy environment. Another time he invited

⁵⁶ nongkrong, mabuk, dan menggoda perempuan yang lewat

them to lay in the field and observe the sky, and imagine what the clouds could look like. He asked them where the clouds come from, and *“when the children also got curious about where the clouds came from, that’s when I opened to about clouds. After that, they started getting interested in books.”*⁵⁷ (reported in Membuat taman bacaan yang mengasyikkan, 2004).

From our survey of Taman Bacaans that are part of the 1001 Buku network in the greater Jakarta area, 74% of the respondents reported that they conducted activities, such as writing workshop, competitions, story telling etc. A further 12% reported that they functioned mainly as a learning center, providing homework help for kids, and only incidentally as a lending library. A trend was that TBs that had been operating for longer often reported a decrease in the number of volunteers, and subsequently the amount of activities that they were able to conduct- reflecting the "boom-and-bust" cycle in community libraries that are started with much enthusiasm, but do not receive enough support. However, all the TBs asked stated that they would continue to provide services, since they had already built up a book collection, and continued to receive donations.

5.6 Just a fancy name for “library”?

The well known Indonesian library researcher Putu Laxman Pendit is highly sceptical to the idea of Taman Bacaans as a new and positive development, and one of the things he criticizes is their choice of name - or rather, that they seek to distinguish themselves from libraries.

So why is it then, that the NGOs and defenders of ordinary people that now appear like mushrooms during rainy season also so commonly use the word “Taman Bacaan” in their proposals, as long as there is already word that fits, isn’t difficult, has only one meaning, and is based on clear principles: Library.⁵⁸ (Pendit, 2008).

To understand how Taman Bacaans relate to libraries, and the differences between libraries and TBs, I will provide three perspectives. I will first discuss the social function of Taman Bacaans,

⁵⁷ Ketika anak-anak juga penasaran dari mana asalnya awan, barulah saya buka buku tentang terjadinya awan. Di sana mereka mulai tertarik pada buku.

⁵⁸ Lalu mengapa LSM dan para pembela rakyat kecil yang sekarang bermunculan seperti jamur di musim hujan itu juga gemar menggunakan kata 'taman bacaan' di dalam proposal-proposal mereka, pada saat sudah ada kata yang pas, tidak njelimet, bermakna-tunggal, dan berdasarkan prinsip-prinsip yang jelas: P E R P U S T A K A A N.

including the idea of reading interest. I will then look at the naming of TBs, using survey data from Jakarta. Finally, I will discuss the relationship between TBs and libraries today.

5.6.1 Social function of Taman Bacaans

Public libraries in Indonesia today are still underdeveloped. In 2003, there were 26 provincial libraries, 452 public libraries in cities, subdistricts and villages, and 346 libraries in places of worship. There were 12,618 school libraries, but there is reason to believe that many of these consist of a shelf in a mostly locked room (Perpustakaan Nasional, 2003). These are extremely low numbers for a large country with a population of almost 240 million people. Apart from the numbers themselves, the quality and services offered are not sufficient. Finally, the public library is not seen as an attractive or available resource by large groups in the population. The main branch of the public library in Jakarta⁵⁹ is located on the 7th floor of a government building. Getting a library card requires identification, a fee, sometimes a letter from your work unit or neighborhood unit (RT/RW), and takes two weeks.

Given this, will TBs ever be a good alternative or a replacement for public libraries? Are they a radical alternative to empower Indonesia's poor? The first TBMs started by the government in the 1990's were focused on new literates in villages, and was almost an extension of the literacy programs run by the government. However, from the TBs that I have presented, as well as 1001 Buku, we see that the focus is overwhelmingly on children. In both cases, the focus is on stimulating a love of reading, and in the latter case, also of creativity and expression. As mentioned earlier, the focus is on *mencerdaskan bangsa* (making the nation smart) and developing a *budaya baca* (reading culture) or *gemar membaca* (reading interest). This is reflect both in the naming of government programs, as well as in the writings of TB activists, and was frequently mentioned in interviews with me.

There are several aspects to this. Pendit (2006) questions the pressure to convert Indonesia from an "oral" to a "written" society, stating that we need both. I also question whether there really is a lack of reading interest in Indonesia, or whether it is simply a question of lack of access to affordable and interesting reading material. A normal pocket novel in Indonesia currently costs

⁵⁹ Perpumda - Perpustakaan Umum Daerah Jakarta

between 15,000 and 30,000 rupiah. 30,000 rupiah is 12 times the price of a bus ticket in Jakarta, or 6 times the price of a dinner at a streetside cafe, and a significant part of the income of someone who makes 500,000 rupiah per month. At the international NGO office in Jakarta where I worked, I had a box with Indonesian novels next to my desk for several days, while collecting contributions from co-workers. Some of the office guards who passed by asked if they could borrow some of them, and ended up reading them avidly. The same guards had every day been watching television during their night shifts, and could have been taken as an example of “lack of reading interest” or “oral society”, yet when presented with easy access to interesting material, the interest was not lacking.

Interestingly, despite the fact that some of the TBs were started by political activists and people in the punk movement in Bandung, politics and education for democracy very seldom came up in the interviews or written sources. In many Western countries, libraries and equitable access to information is seen as a prerequisite for democracy and citizenship (see for example Laaksovirta, 2003). In Indonesia, this aspect is curiously absent or very poorly represented. At Rumah Dunia, the children do learn about critical journalism, but this again seems to be part of an agenda to *mencerdaskan Bandung* (make Bandung smarter).

The TBs that were surveyed as part of the 1001 Buku network in Jakarta were asked who the target group for their services were, without a list of categories pre-defined. 45% of the TBs stated that they target all users, 23% target children, 13% target children and women, 18% target children and youth up to high school, and 12% target children and youth to university.

By couching their missions in terms of children, imagination, love of learning, knowledge society and reading, the significantly different actors - political activists, mosques and government agencies, to choose three - are able to concentrate on a common goal. In that sense, these people’s libraries seem very different from libraries set up by labor unions in other countries, or the Freirean ideal of teaching literacy through topics that are directly related to people’s own oppression (Freire, 1970). Putu Laxman Pendit criticizes the idea that the intellectual and privileged class knows what the poor want to read, and that for example telling fairy tales to poor people is hide the truth from them. “TBs directly join in biasing the oppressed people through telling stories that hide the truth about the inequity in information, and the

domination by elite groups of the systems of communication.”⁶⁰ (Pendit, 2008).

Tarlen Handayani, one of the pioneers in the *komunitas literer* movement is also aware of the middle-class bias: “In Bandung, for example, book stores and literary communities are initiated by groups with higher education which makes it part of realizing themselves.”⁶¹ (Handayani, 2007). She calls for the TBs to not stop at just giving access to books: “So that the literacy movements don’t just keep inviting people to read, but move to become a movement for social consciousness-raising, increasing the quality of life in society”⁶² (*Ibid.*).

5.6.2 Naming of TBMs

Since the question about naming TBs as being something distinct from libraries has come up, I wanted to get an overview over the names chosen by independent TBs. It is common for TBs to avoid using the word *library*, because they are seen as boring and intimidating. Many simply call themselves *Taman Bacaan* so-and-so - KKS Melati, an organization with several TBs, explained that they wanted to avoid the idea of a place just to read books, and that *Taman Bacaan* sounds like a more dynamic place to play and have learning activities for children (VGR, cited in Septiana, 2007, p. 67). However, there are also a number of other variants - for example Wijaya (2005) noted that they had called their TB “*planet baca*” (reading planet) to make it seem more exciting to children. To get an overview, I combined the database of TBs in the greater Jakarta area, which I received from 1001 Buku, with the list of TBs in Indonesia (probably not up-to-date) from their website.

After removing duplicates, I was left with 153 names. 25 were called *Taman Bacaan* or *Taman Bacaan*, four were *Taman Bacaan Anak* (Reading Garden for Children), 11 *Rumah Baca* (Reading House), 4 *Rumah Belajar* (Learning House), 12 more that started with *Rumah* (including *Rumah Singgah* for street children, *Rumah Pelangi* invoking the rainbow and *Rumah*

⁶⁰ TB secara langsung ikut membius rakyat jelata melalui dongeng yang menyembunyikan kenyataan tentang ketimpangan informasi dan dominasi kaum elit pada sistem komunikasi.

⁶¹ Di Bandung, misalnya, toko buku dan komunitas literasi ini diinisiasi oleh kelompok pendidikan tinggi yang menjadikan itu sebagai bagian dari aktualisasi diri.

⁶² Sehingga gerakan literasi tidak berhenti melulu pada sebuah ajakan membaca, namun bergerak menjadi semacam gerakan penyadaran sosial untuk, katakanlah, meningkatkan kualitas hidup masyarakatnya.

Ekspresi focusing on creative expression). Perhaps surprisingly, 38 were called Perpustakaan (library), but from the names it would appear that most of these are in mosques, churches or Hindu or Buddhist temples, for example *“The Public Islamic Library of Mosque Baiturrahman”*⁶³ or *“The Library of the Tempel of Wonomulyo”*⁶⁴. Perpustakaan Umum *“Rumah Baca Milik Kita”* (The Public Library - *“The Reading House Belonging to Us”*) is an interesting example of combining the common title of tax-funded public libraries, with the idea of a TB that belongs to, and is run by, the local community.

5.6.3 The working relationships between TBs and libraries

Asked about how the Department of Education sees the difference between libraries and TBMs, given that they fund both categories, the head of the sub-section for Reading Culture Ridwan Arshad answered that the difference was not very important, since they fulfill the same function. He noted that TBMs are more common in rural areas, and poor urban areas, and that the process to become a member was not too formal (personal communication, 2008). Some librarians are very supportive of TBs, such as Ida Fajar Priyanto, head of the university library the Universitas Gajah Mada, who has conducted research on TBs in Yogyakarta (Priyanto, 2006). An interesting part is the relationship between librarians in public libraries and in TBs. Priyanto has noted that part of the reason for the growth of TBs in Yogyakarta is the number of graduates from library studies, who cannot find a job in a public library (Personal communication, 2006). However, as Merdikaningtyas (2008) has pointed out, these librarians then feel isolated from professional development since they are not able to join the union of Indonesian librarians. Finally, professional librarians in Indonesia are already suffering from *“low self-esteem”*, and from mailing lists it appears that some feel that TBs exaggerate this feeling, by making it seem that anyone can do the job of a librarian (see Sudarsono, 1998).

5.7 Renting libraries today/new incarnations

I have traced the current movement of Taman Bacaans that provide free access to reading material back to a tradition of renting libraries. However, renting libraries still exist, although

⁶³ Perpustakaan Islam Umum Masjid Baiturrahman

⁶⁴ Perpustakaan Vihara Wonomulyo

probably a lot fewer in number than in their heydays. There are very few written sources mentioning them, but the newspaper *Republika* provides instructive profiles of two renting libraries in Jakarta, Elman's *Taman Bacaan* and Aneka D. Elman serves the market Pasar Minggu in Jakarta with his yellow VW Combi Wagon six days a week, from 1PM to 8PM. He has a collection of 2,500 books, but only 1,000 can fit in the car at one time. His car is owned by three entrepreneurs, who have already been running two kiosks and three library cars in Medan for four years. In Jakarta, the entrepreneurs just started a year ago, and borrowers who pay 20,000 rupiah as deposit, and 5,000 rupiah for administration receive member cards. Readers can then borrow up to five books for two days (comics) or three days (novels) (Diyakini akan berkembang, 2004).

Aneka D is the name of Koesnander's renting library, which he inherited from his father who founded it in Bandung in 1963.⁶⁵ He now has two locations in South Jakarta, which serve groups ranging from elementary school students to housewives and office workers. Over 2,000 members have paid 2,500 rupiah for a member's card with photo, and can choose between the 30,000 books available, spanning comics, novels especially martial arts novels,- and non-fiction. The profit from the two stores is around 16 million rupiah per month, which mostly goes to pay for the location rent (10 million rupiah) and salaries for his three employees, and leaves him with about 10% profit. However, he buys new books almost every week, and sometimes even takes over the collections of TBs that have gone bankrupt. He believes that renting libraries will continue to develop, since old books that are not available in bookstores become even more interesting to lenders, whereas if you are in the PlayStation business, you have to buy new games and machines every year. Both of the two owners charge around 10% of the coverprice in rent (ibid.).

Furthermore, Sianturi (2005), in an article about the copyright issues surrounding renting libraries, described the abundance of renting libraries in Bandung. He conjures an image of renting libraries on almost every street corner, especially popular with school children, which lend out novels and comics. He also notes that the normal renting price is 5% of coverprice to read it within the reading garden, and 10% of the price to borrow it.

⁶⁵ See Ikang Fauzi dan Buku, 2005, about a *Taman Bacaan* in Bandung run by what is probably his brother.

An off-shoot of the traditional renting library is the book café. An article in Panyingkul! (2006) lists seven different book cafés in Makassar, which all provide both books and extra services, like food and drinks. Kafebuku has the tagline “A new, cozy place to read and eat”, while Buku Baca Lontar with the tagline “Books, Library and Handycraft” sells cheap books, rents them out, and provides batik workshops. And Kafe Baca Biblioholic has a library of over 6000 books. There are also book cafés in Jakarta, and other locations (see for example Mardena, 2004).

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Findings

I began by tracing the genesis of the term Taman Bacaan, which was first used about lending libraries run by peranakan Chinese in late 19th Century Batavia. By discussing the early beginnings of a national Indonesian literature from what was to become the national language, which is inseparable from the establishment of Balai Pustaka and the first public libraries, I relayed that Indonesian gained a strong position as a national language. I traced the concept of public access libraries and Taman Bacaan through the 20th Century, until public access libraries reemerged in the post-independence period with Sukarno's attempt to start thousands of village libraries.

There are three distinct modern-day incarnations that can be traced back to the Taman Bacaan renting libraries, which began in Batavia toward the end of the 19th century. One part continues relatively unchanged, and exists still today - small kiosks that rent out books and comics. The second has taken the renting of books and combined it with a café atmosphere, to appeal to the growing middle class in Indonesia. The third incarnation, which I have focused on here, was the creation of large scale public libraries based on volunteers, became the short-lived attempt by Suharto's New Order to start village TBMs in the 1990's, and finally turned into what we know as TBs today.

To explain the final transformation that produced the current model of TBs, I have examined the period right after the fall of Suharto's *Orde Baru* government, and the fertile mix of punk DIY culture, students and activists in Bandung that together launched the *komunitas literer* movement. I then used the development in Yogyakarta, and case studies of Farook Dauzan/Mabulir and Gola Gong/Rumah Dunia and 1001 Buku to extract some important factors in the spreading and growth of TB. Farook Dauzan and Gola Gong are examples of incredible courage and conviction that have been widely publicized, and probably served as inspirational example.

Rumah Dunia is an example of a best case TB, which has provided inspiration and ideas for

people starting new TBs. Through the networks that exist - both virtual, through mailing lists and blogs, and physical, whether long term forums, or large meetings - TBs have been able to share experience and information, as well as physical resources (through 1001 Buku). And in terms of underlying ideologies, both external sources and my informants make frequent references to Islam - which has a history of promoting literacy and community engagement - and nationalism, through the idea of *mencerdaskan bangsa*.

The currently existing free TBs can be further separated into three groups. TBMs established by the government, mostly relics from the program in the 1990's, and some program set up by local and regional government. TBMs established by large-scale donors, such as the State Owned Enterprises, certain Indonesian and foreign companies, and some Indonesian foundations that have started tens, or hundreds of TBMs. Finally, TBMs that have been started by a small-scale NGO, community organization or neighbourhood group. We have very little data on these three groups, but combining the statistics from the government grant program with the survey data from Jakarta, we see that TBMs funded by the government (probably mainly from the first category above) are seldom open more than a few days a week, and hold no activities. On the other hand, TBMs that are members of the 1001 Buku network are almost all open seven days a week, and they also have some activities. They are still far less active than the "best case" libraries I have presented though.

This research has been exploratory, covering a field that was virtually absent in the scholarly literature. I have mapped out the heritage of the current TB movement, and also collected data on the current situation in Indonesia. Through historical research, I found the origins of the word *Taman Bacaan*, and traced both public libraries and renting libraries throughout the last century. I also identified the particularly strong position of the national language in Indonesia, compared to other ex-colonies. Finally I attempted to describe the historical processes, especially in Bandung and Yogyakarta, that produced the current TB movement. Although the data is still lacking, I have personally gained a much deeper understanding of the phenomenon, the typologies of different libraries, and the different players. I see this as my paper's major contribution.

In addition, I have attempted to identify factors that could contribute to this phenomenon

occurring at a certain time and a certain place. Possible enabling factors that appeared from my data - which included interviews with informants active in many aspects of the TB and TBM movements (but not users), as well as analyses of blogs, government and organization reports and newspaper articles - were much publicized role-models that could inspire people to imitate them, best-case libraries that could teach and spread ideas about how to run a library - since there was not much training material existent, networks that enabled the exchange of experiences as well as of resources, and finally the impact of the ideologies of Islam and nationalism. More research needs to be done to determine the exact role these have played, and other factors that can only appear from longer interviews, and perhaps a field study.

6.2 Consequences

When I began this research, one of my ideas was the question of whether the TB model was exportable to other countries, or not. However, I believe that my research shows that the Taman Bacaan movement is the result of a unique national and cultural context, which would not easily be exportable: the meeting of the highly literate Chinese with a local culture that managed to integrate them and channel their energies toward improving on what would become the national language - very different from what happened in Malaysia, is one factor. This also underlines the importance of a strong national language, partly the result of a Dutch people with only one large colony being happy to promote the use of Malay much more than in comparative cases with other colonies. Thus, most of Africa is still using the colonial languages for administration and education, for example. The culture of Islam, which although today many Islamic countries have abysmal literacy rates, carries within it the potential to promote literacy movements that are based on personal sacrifice and community service, was also an important factor.

While the model is perhaps not wholly exportable, it might serve as an inspiration to peoples around the world who are struggling with lack of access to education and low literacy rates, with a government that cannot or will not supply sufficient public resources and infrastructure. One of the most important lessons from the independent TBs is perhaps the way that they adapt themselves to the local communities, and understand that literacy is much more than mechanical recognition of letters, but must be made relevant to people's lives and struggles -

what Tarlen Handayani understands as *lqra*.

6.3 Recommendations

Many of my informants have expressed doubts about the government's program of supporting TB's, stating that many only exist on paper - a point that seems partially supported by the government's own statistics, and the fact that the grant is only given once, which does not promote sustainable programming. It also seems that the TB's supported by the government are markedly different from the independent ones that I have documented. What is most striking is that 100% of the government TBMs have no other activities than lending out books, whereas one of the strong messages from this research is that the successful TBs are more like holistic activity centres than simply *gudang buku* (storage for books).

Much more research is needed, but initially I would suggest at least three areas where government policy can make a real impact. The first is to not forget libraries in the excitement over TBs. Public libraries exist in the larger cities in Java, but they are woefully underfunded, often located far away on the seventh floor of a government building, with few books, and too many bureaucratic procedures. Although TBs should be strengthened, and can do much to complement libraries, they can never replace their role as centers of learning and knowledge. Especially, libraries have the opportunity to offer much larger collection of books, more advanced research services, access to the internet and multimedia content, etc. Public library funding should radically expand, they should be visible and accessible at street level, with an inviting atmosphere, and good service. Ideally, they would be centers of learning for pupils and students, the first place to go for anyone needing information about starting a business, applying for government services, or wanting to learn about their rights as citizens. The experiments with the Library @ Senayan⁶⁶ as a pilot project are promising in this respect.

Secondly, the government should support research on TBs, both a general exercise in trying to

⁶⁶ The library of the British Council in Jakarta was handed over the Department of Education in 2004, and moved into their offices on Sudn Road. The library has advanced computer systems, highly trained staff, and looks like any small library in North America or Europe. In addition to being open to the public, the library also functions as a laboratory, for testing new practices. There are many activities, such as training librarians, and lectures. Some of the library staff is also involved in developing open source software for library automatization. (See for example Junaedy, 2004).

record existing TBs, map out how many there are, and note their characteristics, but also much more pointed investigations, for example to highlight best practices and measure community impact. This data is key if the government is to rethink their current policy on supporting TBs. Ideally, the policy would promote and support independent TBs that have a real basis in the needs of the individual communities, and are run by committed individuals. Support should be long term, with proper reporting required, but without the typical government bureaucracy that would be perceived as stifling local innovation. This support would do much to stabilize the situation, and avoid the current binge-cycles, where the government gives one-time funding to thousands of libraries, and then sees them gradually atrophy.

Thirdly, the government should support the NGOs that facilitate and promote TBs. 1001 Buku is a prime example of an organization with capability to benefit a large number of TBs, both in terms of the specific books they deliver, and in the network they provide. Regional mapping exercises and collaboration fora, like the ones attempted in Yogyakarta and Bandung, are other examples. The government can also directly arrange literacy festivals and meetings, and perhaps provide funding for TB managers from different areas to meet and exchange experiences. The World Book Days and other literacy events seem to have been very successful in this regard.

Finally, anything the government can do to promote the publishing industry, and reduce book prices, would benefit not only TBs, but also the general reading public. Measures like eliminating the paper tax, and bringing printing costs down would be helpful, and much could possibly be learnt from the publishing industry in India in this regard. Suggestions two and three above are also applicable to Indonesian and international donors who would like to get involved - this is a field with much potential, but I would suggest extreme caution to avoid waltzing in and harming the community networks and structures that already exist. This especially applies to the many Indonesian companies that like to promote themselves by setting up scores of reading gardens as a one-off project. Companies can certainly make a big contribution, but it needs to be thought through, in collaboration with both the general TB movement and the local community, and done in a sustainable fashion.

6.4 Further research

Because of the scarcity of sources, this can only be an initial sketch, and further research is needed. It is hoped that by presenting a large number of issues that affect the Taman Bacaan in one thesis, other researchers will find many opportunities to conduct more in-depth studies. Historically, thanks to Claudine Salmon we have a decent picture of the lending libraries among the peranakan Chinese, and there are a number of sources describing the Balai Pustaka libraries, although very few have focused on them specifically, and there might be much more relevant archival material, if one was to do historical research in this area.

The history of renting libraries throughout the 20th Century has not yet been written, and I base my account on extremely few sources that merely mention the situation at certain points in history. This would be a very fascinating story to describe, especially the development and changes that it has undergone, and how that might mirror changes in the general society. In a similar vein, there is incredibly sparse literature on the *perpustakaan rakyat* movement started by Sukarno in the 1950's, the TB movement in the 1980's, and the government programs in the 1990's. More knowledge about especially the last one, would be extremely beneficial to understanding the emergence of the TB movement in 2000, and perhaps a study of government archives would reveal much.

I have tried to describe factors that enabled the entire TB movement in Indonesia, however another study would be looking at the individual motivations of roganizations and individuals. Both Ida Fajar Priyanto and Sulistyio Basuki suggest that unemployment among young educated people is an important factor, with Sulistyio adding that many TBs cease existing when their initiators find jobs. Basuki also suggests that there was an unwillingness among activists to work together with public libraries, because the libraries had been dictated by the *Orde Baru* government for so long (Sulistyio Basuki, personal communication, 2008; Ida Fajar Priyanto, personal communication, 2008). Finally, Basuki suggests that there is an egoism inherent in each organization (although he might be referring more to the State Owned Enterprises and other big donors) that want their own libraries, and Septiana found in her case studies that "the library becomes a symbol of the vision and mission of a specific community"⁶⁷ (*ibid.*; Septiana, 2008).

⁶⁷ perpustakaan dijadikan sebagai wadah untuk menjalankan visi dan misi sebuah komunitas tertentu

More in-depth studies of organizations and individuals that start libraries would be needed, especially ones that follow them over time, to analyze which TBs are more likely to be sustainable.

There are some studies of the anthropology of punk in Indonesia, but the larger field of youth culture in urban centers leaves much to be explored, especially the rapid growth of cultural organizations and citizens initiatives after the fall of Suharto would be a fertile field of study, and this is the time to do it: many of the main participants at that time are still active, and can be interviewed, much of the written material is still available. It would also be interesting to do a proper analysis of for example mailing lists, blogs, and newspaper archives, to see how the “meme” of Taman Bacaan spread, and how its significance changed from the year 2000 and forwards.

Much more ought to be known about the current government’s policies and programs, and it is hoped that more reports and information will be released. When it comes to the Taman Bacaan as they exist today, we only have anecdotal information. It would both be useful to do both macro studies to learn more about the size of the movement, its growth, the attributes of different TBs, in which areas they prosper and why, as well as micro studies, comparing different TBs, or areas with and without a TB, impact on literacy rate, school achievement, community involvement etc.

Finally, international and comparative research on community and rural libraries in developing countries is sorely needed. Not only research, but also advocacy: I believe libraries and development should be a field of study, just like education and development, or health and development. Not only in terms of investment, but also in terms of structuring the development of libraries, and education of librarians. In many ways, the field is still waiting for a Paulo Freire of libraries.

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ILLUSTRATIONS



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TAMAN BATJAAN
„SINAR HARAPAN”

DJALAN TJTRAJUDA 5 — BANDUNG

Djam buka:

Tiap hari kerdja: pagi 9—12
sore 5—7

Hari Minggu dan Raya 3—7

Anggauta No. 515

Nama:

Alamat:

Dj. BUNGUR 4 BANDUNG

Pekerdjaan:

23 AUG 1971

Tertanda

Pengurus.

Harap dibawa bila hendak memin-
djam dan mengembalikan buku².

„WARINGIN”

PERHATIAN.

1. Kartu anggauta ini hanja dapat dipakai oleh orang jang namanja tertera pada kartu ini.
2. Bila tidak memindjam selama 3 bulan sedjak tgl pindjaman terachir, hak anggautanja hilang.
3. Tiap anggauta harus bertanggung-djawab bila buku² jg dipindjam rusak, hilang, kotor, dsb. dan harus mengganti kerugian menurut jg sudah ditetapkan.
4. Kembalikanlah buku² jang telah dibatja setjepat mungkin agar uang sewa tidak terialu banjak.

TAMAN BATJAAN
„SINAR HARAPAN”

memindiamkan:

buku² Komik (Tjeritera bergambar dlm bah. Indonesia, Inggris dan Tionghoa). Batjaan untuk anak², pemuda-pemudi dan orang dewasa.

Roman detectip, Madjalah², Madjalah kanak², buku² Balai Pustaka (dari pengarang jg terkenal d. l. l.).

Batjaan² Sunda, buku² silat, (Tjeritera Tionghoa berbahasa Indonesia), Sedjarah².

Buku² Pengetahuan, Njanjian², d. l. l.



Motto :

BATJAAN SUMBER PENGETAHUAN
BATJAAN SENDI KEMADJUAN,
BATJAAN HIBURAN BERMANFAAT
UNTUK TUA, MUDA DAN ANAK².

SOERAT MINTA MASOEK DJADI LID

Saja nama.....oemoer.....
 brikoet..... nama.....oemoer.....
 tinggal di Kampoeng

Roemah No. di

Minta masoek djadi Lid pada Toean poenja Bibliothek
 „SOEKA HATI” di Molenvliet W. 200 Batavia.

Wang Entrée & Contributie banjaknja f 3.— saja bayar contant
saja minta bayar 5
 minggoe den 19
 boelan (1)

Tanda tangan.

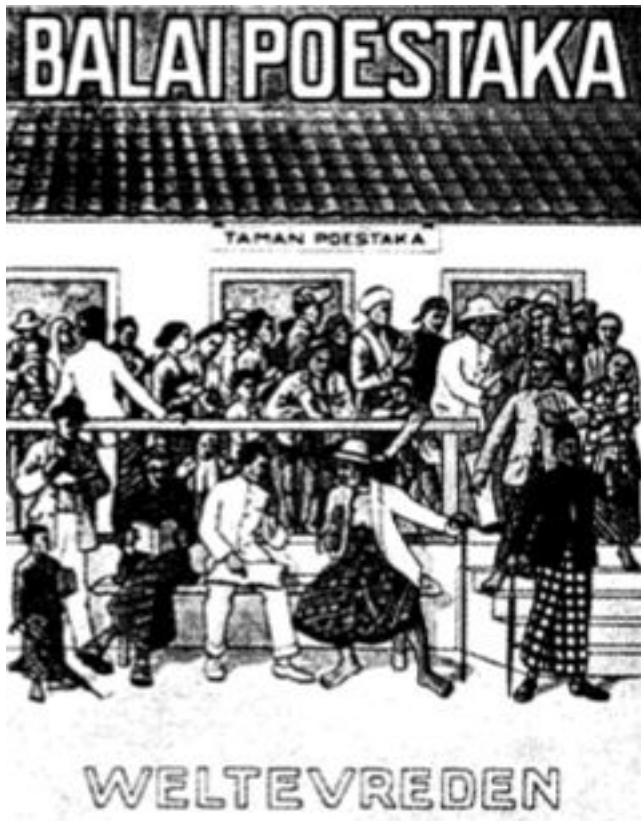
N. B. Rekening bole tagi di Toko.....
Roemah.....
 bole kirim sekalian boekoe.....
 dan brikoetken djoega Catalogue boekoe-boekoe.

(1) Orang jang dapet gadji boelanan sadja f 30.— atawa koerang, baroe ditrima bayar menjitji boelanan.
 Orang dati laen tempat, moesti tamba lagi Voorschot ongkost kirim boekoenja f 1.—

Three lending documents from early renting libraries, Salmon (1985).



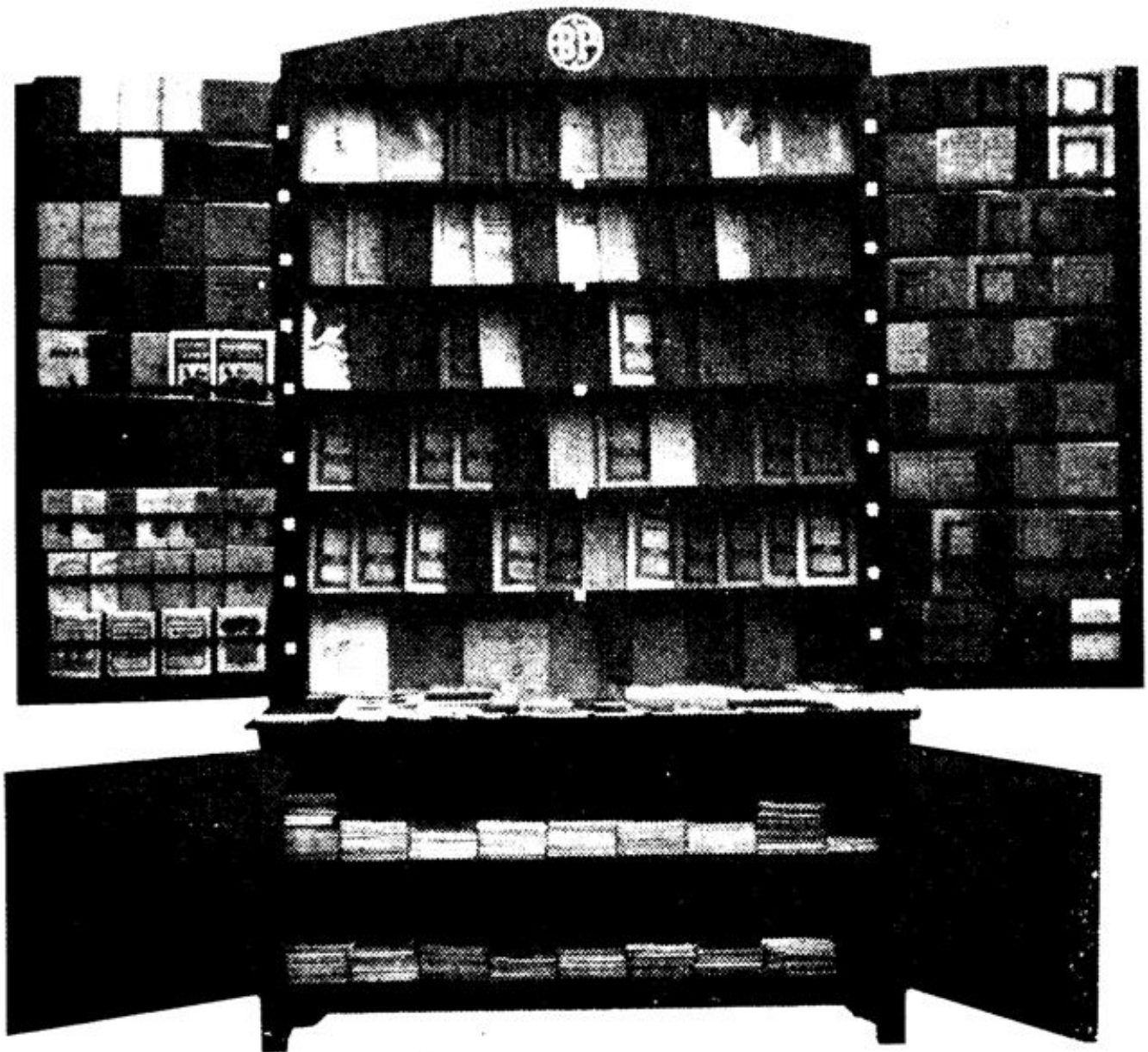
Early colonial library, McGlynn (1998, p. 86)



Balai Pustaka poster, McGlynn (1998, p. 87)



Balai Pustaka mobile library, McGlynn (1998, p. 86)



Balai Pustaka library box, McGlynn (1998, p. 86)