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## **Producing the local: Javanese performance on Indonesian television**

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## 9 Local broadcasting in the twenty-first century

The founding of local television stations broadened the spectrum of the Indonesian televisionscape: representing the (sub-national) local, to the local audiences these stations functioned as a window to the place they called home (*kampung halaman*) (Djadjoeri 2005). National television and nation-wide broadcasting private television did not provide any or enough space to allow this (sub-national) local identifying. Presenting familiar colours and flavours in the form of local phenomena and faces, with local entertainment and vernaculars as its mainstay, local television built an emotional relationship with its audiences. Hence it became a new stage on which local artistic genres could present themselves (Djadjoeri 2005).

As these new developments began to occur, the print press emphasized the potentials of local broadcasting; it might fill in the lacunae not covered by commercial stations broadcasting from Jakarta. Above all, the presentation of (aspects of) *kearifan lokal* (local genius) would strengthen the local people's self-confidence and pride in the culture of the community to which they belonged (Sayoga 2004). It was also a wonderful opportunity to correct stereotypical and caricatural representations of people from the regions broadcast by 'Jakartan' television programmes (Gunawan 2004). From an aesthetic point of view, the new stations were expected to package their messages in alternative ways, that could open the way for different nuances to flourish. This would be a counterweight to the westernization of culture and the capitalization of the media (Sayoga 2004). What had not yet been clearly visible at the beginning was the platform that the local television industry would offer local elites and institutions. The power of these elites and institutions increased significantly in the wake of the decentralization processes that took place in post-Soeharto Indonesia (see Robison and Hadiz 2004:19; Ida 2011:21). Examples in Chapter 10 will clarify this.

### 1 A new local broadcasting industry

Television may be an industry of cut-throat competition, but local businesspeople aren't afraid to invest in new stations. Two privately run TV stations – RB TV and Jogja TV – were established this month, with Tugu TV to follow next month. The three stations are confident that they can capture the hearts of Yogyakartaans, with down-to-earth programs and news on Yogyakarta and its vicinity.

These sentences formed the opening of an article published in *The Jakarta Post* on 11 September 2004, entitled 'TV stations explore local traditions' (Susanto 2004). The article informed its readers of new developments in the Yogyakarta mediascape, also touching on a series of interesting topics that demonstrated the complexity of the local television world.

The new Jogja TV station was established by GBPH Prabukusumo, the brother of the Yogyakarta Governor, Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, creating an important and influential connection to the *kraton*, the sultan's palace, to capital from those in the environs of the court and to the *kraton's* prestige, not to mention the prince's personal business networks.

The article did not acknowledge the active role the director of Bali TV, Satria Naradha, and the Bali Post network played in the founding of Jogja TV,<sup>232</sup> but it did mention that Bali TV, ‘which also focuses on local traditions and culture in its shows’ was going to ‘train employees and produce joint programs’. It also did not refer to Jogja TV’s board member Oka Kusumayudha’s Balinese origin and his position as editor-in-chief of another local medium, the newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat*. The main investor in RB TV (Retjo Buntung TV) was the Retjo Buntung Group, a business network experienced in financing private radio stations in the province, of which Radio Retjo Buntung, on air since March 1967, was the most popular.

According to *The Jakarta Post*, the two television stations would try to establish close contacts with local enterprises and production houses, as well as with local audiences. Both Jogja TV and RB TV were going to focus on traditional subjects and local news, to counter the content of programmes broadcast by Jakarta-based stations, ‘which mostly focus on city living rather than local culture’. These ‘have proved unpopular here, as they aren’t relevant to locals. They are also expensive to air.’ At the same time, RB TV had invited the Voice of America and the German television station Deutsche Welle to supply programmes.

Tugu TV, then on the point of being launched, ‘targets youth as its main audience’, thereby tapping into different segments of the audience and advertising markets (Susanto 2004). However, it failed to realize its potential and never got off the ground. In March 2012, RB TV began operating under the aegis of Kompas TV. In 2011 another local private TV station was launched, the religiously oriented ADI TV, affiliated with the Muhammadiyah, the major Indonesian Muslim organization.

The article in the *Jakarta Post* highlighted the main challenges and problems with which the newly developing television industries had to cope at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The largest challenge to local TV stations like Jogja TV and RB TV were the attempts made by other TV stations to tap the local market. On the defensive, Jogja TV and RB TV, each vying with the other to be the first private local television station in Yogyakarta, had to carve out a niche in an already existing infrastructure of broadcasting institutions in the region. Besides the national (TVRI Pusat) and local (TVRI stasiun Yogyakarta) TVRI stations, up to that time the public had only had access to a growing number of big private Indonesian TV stations then still broadcasting nation-wide – as the Broadcasting Law, requiring all stations except for TVRI to broadcast locally and co-operate with local networks, at that point had not yet been fully implemented – and to several global TV stations. Broadcasting institutions located elsewhere explicitly targeting the ethnic Javanese inhabitants of Yogyakarta were another source of competition for the television stations in Yogyakarta. One example is the Surakarta-based Terang Abadi Televisi (TATV) that positioned itself as a contemporary institution that continued to be involved in culture.

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<sup>232</sup> Personal communication Oka Kusumayudha, *komisaris* Jogja TV, on 13 March 2009.

## 2 Trendsetters

The establishment of two local television stations in Yogyakarta was a direct result of the new Regional Autonomy Law and the subsequent new Broadcasting Law. One of the first initiatives to establish a local television station in Java was taken in Surabaya, where Jawa Pos Media Televisi (JTV) set the trend. JTV went on air on 8 November 2001. On its website it claims to have been the first local television station in Indonesia (*JTV merupakan* [n.d.]).<sup>233</sup> Actually, the first local private broadcaster in Indonesia was Pekanbaru Televisi (PTV), established in Riau in 2000. Due to financial losses and a lack of personnel, it had suspended broadcasting the following year (Suryadi 2005:135). Riau TV (RTV), '[t]he most prominent private local television channel', was established on 20 May 2001. As a commercially oriented station, it was financed by PT Riau Media Television (RMT) under the umbrella of the Jawa Post Syndicate' (Suryadi 2005:136).

JTV was designed to be a local television station with a hint of the metropolitan (*televisi lokal bernuansa metropolis*) (Dewanto et al. 2001), that would not yield in any way to the nation-wide commercial broadcasting institutions. Its slogan on the website of the association of the local private television stations in Indonesia, the Asosiasi Televisi Lokal Indonesia (ATVLI), 'Creating a true regional autonomy via local broadcasting media in East Java',<sup>234</sup> reminded visitors to the site of the new developments in Indonesia at the time. With its tagline 'Satus Persen Jatim' (A hundred percent East Java), JTV from its start focused on broadcasts with a local content, giving preference to live and interactive formats. It relied heavily on off-air activities to build up strong ties with local society, especially members of middle and lower social classes. JTV broadcast in Indonesian and in the Javanese dialects of the cities of Surabaya and Malang and the area of East Java in general (*bahasa Suroboyoan, Malang and Jawa Timuran*). The use of the Surabayan dialect in specific programmes contributed to its popularity,<sup>235</sup> at the same time leading to severe criticism. Its slogan 'Local, naughty and massive' (*Lokal, nakal dan massal*)<sup>236</sup> showed the determination of a broadcasting institution that wanted to remain faithful to its principles: being independent, objective and honest, and capable of participating in business.

It was, however, Bali TV, launched in May 2002, that became exemplary for other local private TV stations, like Jogja TV ((08) 2009). As Picard (2005:123) states,

[w]ith the backing of the provincial authorities, religious institutions and community leaders, this private channel, owned by the proprietors of the Bali Post media group, has been given the permission to foster Balinese culture and religious identity, with a view to promoting the development of tourism.

Bali TV's broadcasts target potential audiences of Balinese, non-Balinese and non-Indonesian origin: Hinduism, the representation of Balinese traditional culture – as constructed by Bali

<sup>233</sup> 'JTV merupakan televisi lokal pertama di Indonesia' (<http://jtv.co.id/about-us/> [Last accessed September 2015]).

<sup>234</sup> 'Terciptanya Otonomi Daerah yang Sesungguhnya melalui Media Penyiaran Lokal di Jawa Timur' (<http://www.atvli.com/link.asp> [Last accessed 2009]).

<sup>235</sup> See Arps and Van Heeren (2006:289-325) on the use of this dialect in *Pojok Kampung*.

<sup>236</sup> <http://www.jtv.co.id/> [Last accessed September 2015].

TV – in contemporary Bali, and the Balinese language are given a prominent role. Besides, the station addresses Indonesian identity by wielding symbols representative of this national identity, and by broadcasting some programmes in Indonesian. Several programmes and commercials in foreign languages are directed towards the expat community and at tourists and visitors of Bali.<sup>237</sup>

As are JTV and Bali TV, Jogja TV is a member of larger media networks: JTV belongs to the Jawa Pos network, Bali TV and Jogja TV to the Bali Post Media Group (Kelompok Media Bali Post).<sup>238</sup> They determine their branding by addressing and representing local identity, an identity that has been (re-)constructed by the television stations themselves. They claim to preserve traditional local cultures, and provide a link to contemporary trends. However, they also address Indonesian national identity in various ways, and broadcast programmes of foreign origin and with foreign content.

### 3 Countering monopolies

Whereas ‘the local’ had not been an issue before – during the New Order period the unremitting focus was on the use of the national language and the constructing of a national identity and national culture to which regional cultures contributed – the new era called for a change in attention. This phenomenon is not typically Indonesian. In a wider context, research has pointed out the relationship between the emergence of a global capitalism and the growth of concern about the local as a site of resistance and liberation (Dirlik 1996:22).

The establishment of local private television stations all over the country fitted into the tendency in post-Soeharto Indonesia towards democratization, deconcentration and decentralization. For more than twenty-five years, government-controlled Televisi Republik Indonesia had been the sole television station broadcasting in Indonesia until, from the late 1980s, the first private television stations, owned by family members and cronies of President Soeharto, were established. Since then, the Indonesian television industry had been dominated by these Jakarta-based private media. Even in 1999 when five new broadcasting permits were issued by President Habibie, ‘as such diversifying both the television landscape and patterns of ownership’ (Loven 2008:329), and cable television had been established (Sen and Hill 2000:132), this did not reduce the ‘Jakartan’ hegemony. Because they monopolized both media ownership and media content, using a restricted number of (cheap) media formats, often based on imported formats, and disseminating fairly uniform information, the television stations and their products were accused of not representing Indonesia’s multicultural diversity. Sen and Hill (2000:16) argue that, ‘with the exception of radio, all regional cultures (even that of the pre-eminent ethnic group) effectively had only minority status in the national culture industries’.

To break this monopoly and to enforce diversity of content and ownership, a reorganization of the infrastructure of the television industry was called for. This would also

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<sup>237</sup> [www.balitiv.tv](http://www.balitiv.tv) [Last accessed May 2014].

<sup>238</sup> On these media networks, see Ida 2011.

solve the problem of the congestion of the broadcasting frequencies caused by the Jakarta-based commercial television stations, whose allocation would have to be revised. The movement that instigated this call for change consisted of enthusiastic and idealistic intellectuals, artists, media practitioners and specialists, and representatives of media organizations. The latter included 'leading figures from the Indonesian Newspaper Publishers Association' who 'established the Indonesian Press and Broadcasters Forum (MPPI) to lobby for changes in legislation governing the media' (Kitley 2003:108-9). They had been inspired by the *spirit reformasi* and the feeling of euphoria that flooded the country after Soeharto's resignation.<sup>239</sup> If these aims were to be achieved, serious competition between television stations was felt to be essential. Besides, the audiences needed to be offered alternatives, enabling them to choose between more diversified kinds of news, information and entertainment, and to participate actively in the production and consumption of media products.

A new Broadcasting Law would form the legal basis for the democratization of the Indonesian televisionscape, in which local broadcasting was given priority.

#### 4 Regulating local broadcasting

The 32/2002 Broadcasting Law was ratified on 28 December 2002 by President Megawati Sukarnoputri and was later amended in 2007.<sup>240</sup> It differentiates between public, private, and community broadcasting services and pay television.<sup>241</sup> It defines the tasks, functions and responsibilities, form of organization, ownership, and resources of each category. In the following I focus on public and private broadcasting services.

Public broadcasting services are established by the state and are the only broadcasting services licensed to broadcast nationwide. They should be independent, neutral and non-commercial in character, and provide services in the public interest. In the Special Region of Yogyakarta, public broadcasting is taken care of by the centrally broadcasting Jakarta-based Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI) and the regional TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta, later called TVRI Jogja.

The local character of the private broadcasting services is defined in terms of capital, management and broadcasting area. The main part of the starting-up capital as well as the administration and management of a local television station should be in the hands of the local community of the region in which the TV station is located.<sup>242</sup> Furthermore, private broadcasting services are only licensed to broadcast to a restricted area, namely: the area

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<sup>239</sup> Personal communication, among others in March 2009, by Oka Kusumayudha (Jogja TV), Sunardian Wirodono (independent media practitioner and specialist), Tri Suparyanto (Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia Daerah Yogyakarta), and Jimmy Silalahi (Asosiasi Televisi Lokal Indonesia, Jakarta).

<sup>240</sup> *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia nomor 32 tentang penyiaran*, 2002, <http://ibau.bappenas.go.id/data/peraturan/Undang-Undang/UU%20No.%2032%20Tahun%202002%20Penyiaran.pdf> [Last accessed May 2014] (hereafter *UUP 32/2002*).

<sup>241</sup> On community broadcasting services, see Jurriëns 2009, and Nazaruddin dan Hermanto (2009).

<sup>242</sup> *UUP 32/2002*, Pasal 31 (6).

surrounding the location of the broadcasting service or the area of a regency or city.<sup>243</sup> Hence, the act of broadcasting itself should become local, ‘local’ here to be defined by the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, in co-operation with the government.<sup>244</sup> The new legislation proposed these changes in the set-up of the private broadcasting services for two purposes: ‘to prevent the monopolizing of ownership and to support healthy competition in the field of broadcasting’ (UUP 32 Pasal 5 g), and to achieve the actual decentralization of the private media. Therefore, concentration of ownership and control ending up in the hands of one person or one corporate body (*badan hukum*), either in one or in several broadcasting areas, should be restricted. Cross-ownership between private broadcasting services, both radio, television and other services, and/or print media, should also be kept within bounds.

Use of the national language – good and correct Indonesian – , both oral and written, is compulsory, except if broadcasting in regional or foreign languages. Regional vernaculars (*bahasa daerah*) can be used whenever the broadcast has local content and, if necessary, to support certain programmes. Foreign languages can only be used as the language of communication in accordance with the requirements of the programme. These programmes should be subtitled in Indonesian or can be dubbed (the latter to a maximum of 30%).<sup>245</sup>

At least sixty percent of the daily broadcasts of the private television stations should consist of Indonesian productions.<sup>246</sup> The 2005 government regulation added the stipulation that the broadcasts should be local, meaning they should consist of local content (*muatan lokal*),<sup>247</sup> that is however not specified in more detail.

The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia, KPI) was established upon requirement of the new Broadcasting Law,<sup>248</sup> and was meant to bridge the interests of the people, the broadcasting institutions and the government.<sup>249</sup> In its regulations it set local programmes apart as a separate media category. Nowhere, however, does KPI identify the meaning of local content, except that broadcasting institutions should respect the norms and values of the religions and cultures of the multicultural peoples of Indonesia.<sup>250</sup> Only in the December 2009 revised KPI regulations they were defined as broadcasts with local content comprising events, issues, story backgrounds, and human resources, to be used to develop the culture and potential of the specific regions.<sup>251</sup> This addition did not really clarify the matter.

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<sup>243</sup> *Peraturan Pemerintah 50/2005* (hereafter *PP 50/2005*), Penjelasan atas Pasal 13.

<sup>244</sup> *UUP 32/2002*, Pasal 18; *PP 50/2005*, Pasal 1 (4-5).

<sup>245</sup> See *UUP 32/2002*, Pasal 38 (1-2), and Pasal 39 (1, 2 and 3); *PP 50/2005*, Pasal 16 (1-6). For certain programmes sign language was allowed to be used.

<sup>246</sup> *UUP 32/2002*, Pasal 36; *PP 50/2005*, Pasal 14 (2).

<sup>247</sup> *PP 50/2005*, Pasal 34 (5); Penjelasan atas Pasal 34 (5).

<sup>248</sup> *UUP 32/2002*, Bab I Pasal 1 (13).

<sup>249</sup> *Peraturan Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia nomor 02 tahun 2007 dan nomor 03 tahun 2007 tentang pedoman perilaku penyiaran dan standar program siaran* (hereafter *Peraturan KPI 02/2007*) (Yogyakarta: KPID Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2008), p. ii.

<sup>250</sup> *Peraturan KPI 02/2007*, Bab II Pasal 4 c, p. 8.

<sup>251</sup> *Peraturan Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia nomor 02/P/KPI/12/2009 tentang pedoman perilaku penyiaran (P3) dan standar program siaran (SPS)*, Bab I Pasal 1 (12), [http://www.kpi.go.id/download/regulasi/P3-SPS\\_2009.pdf](http://www.kpi.go.id/download/regulasi/P3-SPS_2009.pdf) [Last accessed May 2014].



### *Local content?*

Whereas legislation and regulations remained vague about the meaning of local content, it was one of the main topics of public discourse about local television in Indonesia in the first decade of the twenty-first century. All parties with an interest in the establishment of local TV stations were involved in these discussions, from local television managers to academics specialized in communication, journalists, *budayawan* (art practitioners and philosophers), producers and artists. Nevertheless, also in these discussions the topic was rarely defined in detail, while only a few persons went into the matter seriously, grasping explicitly what exactly was meant or should be meant by the local.

The discussions often tended to be based on the conviction that local culture is homogeneous. The discussants seemed to take it for granted that television stations broadcasting in the Special Region of Yogyakarta would represent the ethnic Javanese who are the majority in the area and use the Javanese language. But no attempt was made to differentiate between the various Javanese sub-cultures. Furthermore, Yogyakarta was a magnet for migration and consequently its population had become mixed, in the ethnic, social and religious sense. How would it be possible to define regional identity in order to determine what the *muatan lokal* of the local broadcasts should be? In practice, the defining of 'local identity' proved complicated. These factors, and the need for uniqueness in order to differentiate themselves from local media in other regions led to a redefining of local cultures. In the next chapter, I shall look at how the television institutions in the Special Region of Yogyakarta themselves provided meaning to the concept of 'local content' in the developments since 2002, the year the new Broadcasting Law saw the light of day.

Among the few specialists who added depth to the discussions, Veven Wardhana and Indra Tranggono deserve a special mention. They both pointed out various weaknesses and omissions in the law and the regulations, and their effects on the representation of local cultures. The arguments of both authors also emphasized the importance of cultural and emotional proximity in programmes featuring local content.

The absence of a definition of *muatan lokal* caused media-watcher Veven Wardhana to wonder how both the KPI and the Ministry of Communication and Informatics would interpret the concept, if at least they were willing to contribute to the discussion. Rethinking several media models in which the concept had been given significance in the past, he concluded that the meaning of *muatan lokal* remained limited to localities that were local, with old or ancient values, not in need of any discussion or dialogue, but continuing to be museumified (Wardhana 2010). Often, he concluded, local locales in the past had functioned only as a setting that had not been linked to the contents of the programmes. Wardhana does not understand why the designers of the new broadcast law had come up with the idea of making local broadcasting compulsory, apart from intending to allocate local producers part of the productions.

Author and culture practitioner Indra Tranggono was one of the few critics who actually tried to define *muatan lokal* (abbreviated to *mulok*). Indra Tranggono thought that TV stations whose orientation was affiliated with local content should be adamant about the meaning of

*mulok*. Local content, he writes, was connected to eight matters: Views of life or values of traditional cultures like the great narratives that constitute the frame of reference for the public, which the author categorizes as *kearifan lokal* (local genius); the history of the development of the people's cultures; regional languages; physical public works, like architecture, handicraft, cooking; aesthetic and non-aesthetic public behaviour and expressions; social environment; natural environment; local belief systems. As broadcast content, *mulok* should reflect the culture's identity, and the character and creativity of the people who supported that culture (Tranggono 2010).

As its meaning had not been specified in the new Broadcasting Law, both authors aired their concern about the position of the local within the new broadcasting industry. Their fears also expressed their mistrust in the capacities of local television stations to value the local as a dynamic cultural capital, rather than simply sticking to ossified forms of traditional culture. Wardhana was afraid that the local would be interpreted as a static and outdated concept. Tranggono feared that the power of the market would pluck the soul out of local culture. On the other hand, It could be argued that this hiatus in the legislation offered the local television industries opportunities and gave them the freedom to present alternative views on the local.

In the following chapter, I shall demonstrate how two television institutions in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Jogja TV and TVRI Jogja, provided meaning to local content.