NEGOTIATING PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY MEDIA IN POST-SUHARTO INDONESIA

EFFENDI GAZALI

Abstract

Indonesia and its media are going through a rapid stage of transition. While the goal of this reform movement is the transition to a civil society and creation of a more democratic media system, the main result so far has been the liberalisation of the media market, in line with global media trends, which as such does not necessarily guarantee a more democratic communication system. One way to counter this development is though the decentralisation of radio and television, and the establishment of public and community media, which was under discussion in the Indonesian Parliament. This article presents the results of a qualitative research project carried out in several regions throughout Indonesia, which gave local people a platform to voice their ideas on the media portrayal of their "multiple identities" (e.g., cultural, political, economic, or ethnic), and their perception of the "viability" (problems, prospects, and promises) of alternative broadcasting in relation to the state and commercial broadcasters.

Effendi Gazali is a Lecturer at the University of Indonesia, Jakarta, email: eg53@indo.net.id.

Background: Indonesian Media in Transition

There is little doubt that the media system during the New Order regime in Indonesia (1966-1998) was authoritarian in nature. The Suharto administration employed a systematic and comprehensive strategy to ensure that the mass media function as a control instrument of power: by preventively and correctively issuing licenses, controlling news texts, and controlling the career track of the practitioners (journalists). The government television station, TVRI (Television of the Republic of Indonesia), remained the only television channel until 1987. The first five commercial television stations were in the hands of Suharto's family members and cronies. The government-run RRI (Radio of the Republic of Indonesia) was without competition until 1970. Then, entrepreneurs whose loyalties to the regime were without question could start private radio stations.

What could challenge such a situation? Some analysts state that without a revolution in the commercial television newsrooms, there would have been no reformation in Indonesia. This is supported by the fact that local radio and print media personnel generally referred to television news programming, particularly the commercial stations' news during the Reform movement, as a benchmark for evaluating both the subjects and the depth of the news coverage (Gazali 2002a, 138). Other analyses suggest that, seen from a wider perspective, the demise of Suharto's regime had been caused by Asia's economic crisis. The principal cause of the latter was the market itself that continued to be driven by global capital markets and global liberalisation pressures (see Beeson 1998; Hidayat 2002). It is not easy, however, to decide exactly whether media (agencies) or (structural) economic pressures started the Reform movement. Golding and Murdock (1979, 210) consider both analyses as complementary. They state that the efforts to understand the production of ideology by the media cannot *de facto* be separated from the efforts to comprehend the dynamic processes in the society within which the media industries operate.

Following this political-economic analysis, the Reform movement would be marked further by freer and interrelated market, media, and civil society. This type of analysis is usually presented in a triangular model of those elements (for the Indonesian case, see Hidayat 2002). According to Charles Taylor (1990, 95-118), there are three different levels of civil society. Firstly, the civil society exists in a minimal sense where there are free associations not operating under the tutelage of the State. Secondly, a stronger sense of civil society ensues "where society can structure and co-ordinate its actions through such associations." Thirdly, a public dimension of civil society is strongest "where the ensemble of associations can significantly determine or inflect the course of state policy."

In Indonesia, the Reform movement has led to a liberated civil society together with the rise of hundreds of new non-Government organisations (NGO's), advocacy groups, voluntary social and cultural organisations and independent labour unions, including 24 new journalist associations. Observers tend to agree that many of such organisations in this new era improve their quality of activities (see Tajoeddin 2002, 23). Accordingly, these developments can meet two of three Taylor's levels of civil society; for the third one, a recent research reveals that Indonesia's index only achieves a 2.4 score out of a maximum of 4, according to the Civil Society Index

developed by CIVICUS (Yappika 2002). The fact that the third dimension can only be achieved if a democratic communication system is in place explains that still low index.

Checking Indonesia's current communication system, we can see that the liberalisation has taken place hand in hand with deregulation in the media and their related market sector. More important is the liquidation of the Ministry of Information, the executor of the former oppressing system. One year after Suharto's resignation, the House of Representatives passed a new Press Law (No. 49/1999) stipulating that a publishing license was no longer required. As a result, the number of newspapers soared from 300 to around 1,000 (Mangahas quoted in Johannen and Gomez 2001, 125; Hidayat 2002, 3). In addition to that Press Law, the 1999 Broadcasting Bill proposed by the Parliament allows foreigners to own up to 49% of shares in media agencies. These reforms undoubtedly conform the spirit of global neo-liberalism.

This liberalisation has resulted in a libertarian interpretation of media making. Jonathan Turner, Reuters bureau chief in Jakarta, states that "Indonesia has become one of the world's most open communities inasmuch as you can pretty well write what you want without fear of official sanction" (Turner quoted in Goodman 2000, 1). As to broadcasting programming, two president directors of commercial television stations openly describe the commodification process taking place. They acknowledge that what commercial stations have really done is nothing else than "competing in order to fool the people" (see Gazali 2002b, 4). A few commercial radio stations, however, still try to serve their audiences with a great deal of news and talkshows on most recent public affairs. In short, the liberalisation of media and market brought about by the Reform movement has only resulted in what Bagdikian (1997, 248) calls "the fallacy of the two-model choice," as if people can only choose between an authoritarian system and a libertarian system; both, in fact, do not meet the conditions required by civil society.

Hidayat (2002) argues that there are at least three reasons why commercial market-driven media – implying "the logic of accumulation and exclusion" (Kellner 1990, 6-7) and preferring large-scale communication forms – cannot guarantee a platform for equal access and democratic discussion. Firstly, issues addressed in these media will be determined by the extent to which they do not interfere with the interest of capital expansion. Secondly, without audience maximisation and without access to financial resources, it would be difficult for minority segments in society to acquire broadcasting time to conduct a peaceful, rational discussion on issues of interest to them, such as unemployment and health of the poor. Thirdly, those two previous conditions potentially cause the homogenisation of media content. In the end it would just resemble the former State repression which – in the Indonesian case – once led to the so-called "national culture" or to the definition of social reality from the perspective of the Government, which was regarded as the only valid and logical one.

In reality, Indonesia is a very heterogeneous country in terms of local areas, ethnic groups, cultures, and ways of life. Therefore, a centralised television policy could never have answered the needs for media suitable for that plurality. Things were even worse in 2000 with the existence of 10 commercial television stations; all obtained a national license and their bases are all in Jakarta (for a full account of

the original set of television stations in Indonesia, see d'Haenens, Gazali and Verelst 1999, 127-152 and d'Haenens, Verelst and Gazali 2000, 197-232). Although the local commercial radio stations had been blooming since 1970, the latter only operate in cities having significant amounts of advertising expenditures. Their programming was also influenced much by the Jakarta-based radios.

Against this background, it is clear that what Indonesia needs to address in its Broadcasting Law is the democratic reordering of the media and their public accountability. Splichal (1993, 8) suggests some necessary preconditions to do so: that is providing genuine access to the media and a more equitable distribution of media ownership, media time, and space. These preconditions are based on the abolition of all limitations of rights of citizens. These are also the presuppositions of "public sphere." A comprehensive interpretation of public sphere can be found in public communication that includes not only mass communication, but also other forms of communication (Hollander, Stappers and Jankowski 2002, 22-23). One is community communication whose emphasis is on the communicative exchange and social action within the context of geographical localities and/or communities of interest. Through that communicative exchange and social action, community communication is expected to bridge the gap between the policy coming from outside or being imposed on more than one community (such as State policy) on the one hand and the collective (social) authentic experiences and needs, and multiple (i.e., cultural, ethnic, religious) identities that are relevant to a specific group or category of individuals on the other.

When it comes to institutional aspects, community media are generally seen as relatively small-scale institutions, concerned with locally oriented and produced programming, essentially publicly financed, and whose ownership and control are often shared by members in the community. All these ingredients together might help to become relatively more independent from the dictatorship of both the State and the market. These characteristics are similar to those of public broadcasting institutions, except for, at least in some smaller countries, the coverage area of public broadcasting being larger than that of community broadcasting. Public service broadcasting might start from the idea of a national network like in most Western European countries, similar to TVRI and RRI in Indonesia, serving more than one community, positioned as a national integrating tool, or as a symbol of national unity. Also, the public stations are generally run in a more bureaucratic, politicised, and professional fashion than community media (for an overview of the general characteristics found in community media, see Jankowski and Prehn 2002, 7-8; Fraser and Estrada 2001; for an overview of indicators of public broadcasting performance, see Barnett and Docherty 1991, 23-27 or the Political Declaration of the Council of Europe in d'Haenens and Saeys 2001).

Community communication, in fact, also implies decentralisation: this is effected in Indonesia through the implementation of the 1999 Regional Autonomy Law No. 22. If one considers decentralisation or community communication to be significant in the Indonesian media transition, it should be placed in the model used to comprehend the transition process. Offe's model (1998, 4-6) is potentially relevant because he includes the "community" as a key element of analysis in an effort to understand where one is on the trajectory of social transition. This understanding, according to him, is a prelude to the construction of a valid social policy.

Besides the community, other actors are: the State and the market. Offe believes that whereas the State is driven by reasons, and the market by interest, the community's engine runs on passion (e.g., love, loyalty, cohesion, honour, and pride). Whereas the market allows for acquisition, the community provides for identity; it provides for collective (social) authentic experiences, needs, and identities. With these senses, "community" is presumptively better substituting the position of "civil society" used in Hidayat's model (2002, 1-3) or to be addressed first, since the stagnancy of community empowerment might contribute to the current failures to achieve the strongest dimension of civil society as well as failures of decentralisation in Indonesia. Yet, our proposed model still leaves the State out (similar to Hidayat's), as Indonesia is now in a specific juncture: just being freed from the State suppression on media and civil society initiatives. In other words, in current Indonesia, the struggle to get the State to fairly guaranteeing and enforcing equal rights of citizens, as suggested by Offe, has just started. Thus, communities should first keep a close watch on the State's performance in dealing with media and market sectors. Also Jakubowicz (1993, 46) states that in a changing context of communication democratisation, a potential enemy is "the State" (about the three models see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Interactions of Elements in Social Transition
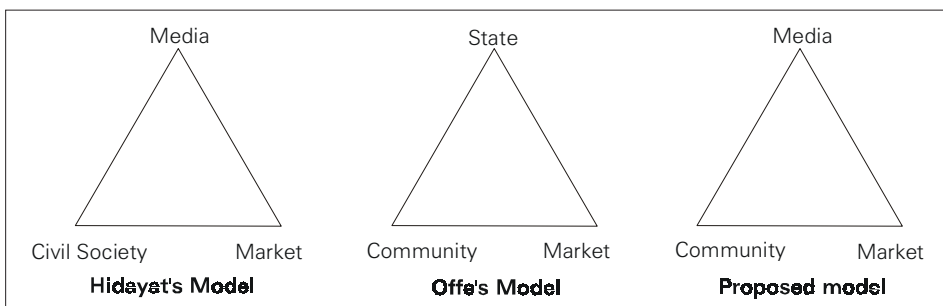
The new triangle still stands in a complex relationship to the negotiation of the new broadcasting policy. Among others, due to the recent history, it is much easier to educate the population about the evil of a suppressive government than about the potential of a manipulative capitalistic structure in the media system. In any case, the proposed model suggests that the essence of the Indonesia's reform should be the creation of opportunities for community members in various provinces to be actively involved in directing the development in Indonesia's broadcasting industry as well as the State media policy.

This article presents the results of a qualitative research project carried out in several regions throughout Indonesia in an effort to investigate the "viability" (e.g., problems, prospects and promises) of the decentralisation of radio and television, in relation to the former State and new commercial broadcasting agencies. The general research question is: What are the perceptions of potential local stakeholders about the broadcasting situations, the problems with those situations, and the solutions to those problems? Implicitly addressed is the question of the perceived abilities of the community members to assess and interact with other elements of

our proposed triangular model. In order to observe the relevant developments of each element of the new triangular model and its surroundings in the field, this research proposes to place the study results in a Media Performance Model (adapted from McQuail 1992, 87) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Media Performance Model (adapted from McQuail 1992)
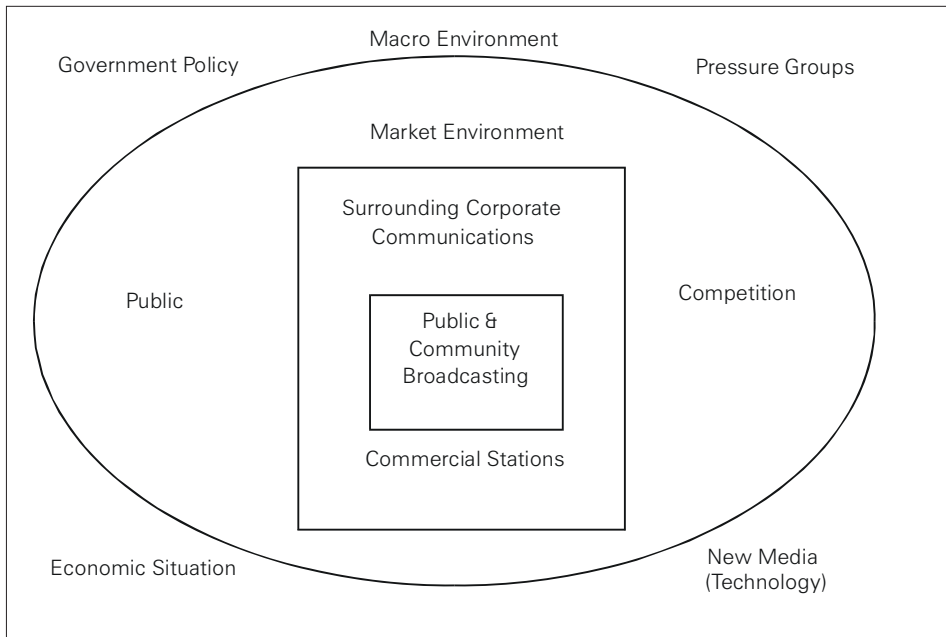
Research Questions

Referring to the general research question above, the data collection and analysis aim at answering four specific research questions:

1. What are the taken-for-granted assumptions about the recent developments of the broadcasting industry in Indonesia in general, and the positioning of TVRI and RRI in particular among the key local representatives in ten provinces throughout the country?

2. What are the perceptions of the stakeholders and their needs relating to public and community types of broadcasting? Answers to this question were "triggered" by introducing concrete community and public broadcasting experiences in other societies (e.g., the United States of America, Canada, Germany, and Japan).

3. Do local audiences perceive the need to maintain multiple layers of regional, local, community identities and cultures, using alternative broadcasting sources and how do they position the maintenance of those identities in the context of both national and global programming?

4. What conditions should be fulfilled, including through legislation, in order to guarantee public access to ownership, control of, and participation in community and public broadcasting?

Methodology: Stages and Procedures

The present research adopts the qualitative, grounded research approach that relies mostly on observation and records of statements made in private and public meetings as well as in personal interviews. The paradigm used as point of departure is "working with the people," as opposed to "working for the people." In other words, this research is based upon so-called comprehensive people participation. By people participation is meant participation in assessing, decision-making, implementing, sharing the benefits, and in evaluating. Therefore, every session began with exploring public assessment of all relevant issues (i.e., starting on the access to and use of existing broadcast stations), in other words, starting with their closest environment. This procedure is very much in line with the spirit of the grounded research approach. This approach allows the researchers to reconstruct the interviewees' perspective. In general, the results from the first stage will determine the subsequent stages.

First Stage: Pre-assessment Sessions

A research team of communication scholars of the University of Indonesia started out with a set of preliminary activities, called "pre-assessment" sessions in ten cities in Indonesia. The selection of the ten cities was carried out purposively with the plan of using each city as a hub where relevant parties from the surrounding areas would gather. Almost covering the whole span of Indonesia, the cities are, from West to East in Indonesia: Medan, Padang, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Denpasar, Samarinda, Makassar, Manado, and Jayapura. The pre-assessment sessions were conducted between July 2000 and January 2001, during which the researchers met key representatives of the local communities. Taking into account the principle of democratic representation of local community members, our sources included: NGO activists, academics, TVRI and RRI staff, commercial radio personnel, local media staff, local Government representatives, local legislative members, social leaders, artists and cultural observers, religious leaders, business leaders, and advertisers.

During this stage, after inquiring the stakeholder representatives about their assessment of the existing broadcasting, the researchers briefed the participants on issues regarding community and public broadcasting (Barnett and Docherty 1991). Relevant laws, specifically the 2000 Government Regulations 36 and 37, were discussed to stress the fact that legally TVRI and RRI were already transformed into public broadcasting stations. At the same time, drawing from experience in other countries (for instance, in the United States of America), it was argued that community and public broadcasting should not be limited to stations established by the State, and that universities, NGOs, and other institutions should equally be allowed to establish public and community broadcasting stations.

Second Stage: Assessment Sessions or Seminars

During the pre-assessment round, most informants suggested to widen the assessment by including many more relevant parties within the local public. As a response to this demand, a set of large public forums – by means of focus group discussions were organised in the above-mentioned ten cities. These seminars were

run between April 26 and August 3, 2001, and in total attended by 1,345 participants originating from the host cities and 64 surrounding cities and villages. The composition of the participants was as follows (figures in parentheses show the range of percentages of each category in each city): NGO people (16-25%), TVRI & RRI staff (14-18%), cultural observers (10-15%), artists (10-12%), scholars (10-12%), students (8-10%), local Government staff (5-10 %), local Parliament members (5-10 %), religious leaders (5–9%), media people (5-6%), business people (5-6%), others (4-5%).

As recommended in the pre-assessment rounds, four international speakers with extensive experience in the public broadcasting sector of their home country were invited: David Brugger and Bob Ottenhoff (United States), Jim Byrd (Canada), and Eric Voght (Germany). In each city, only two international speakers were present, accompanied by on average six national and local speakers. The domestic speakers included academics, NGO activists, media people, local Government officials, local Parliament members, and representatives of the central Government (Ministry of Telecommunications). In addition to the speaker presentations, the seminars also featured program samples brought by the international speakers, the producers of local TVRI and RRI, and some NGOs working on information flow analysis and media production advocacy.

Near the end of the two-day seminars, a session took place where the participants were assigned into two groups. The first one was the broadcasters group composed of producers from TVRI and RRI and other staff as well as some producers from commercial stations. The second group was the users group comprised of the rest of the participants. The results of each group discussion were brought afterwards into a final plenary session. The outcomes of the discussions will be presented in the following sections.

Findings and Thematisation of the Data

We found six major themes revealing essential similarities and differences with regard to the ways in which stakeholders in the ten cities under scrutiny dealt with the research questions. Each theme, not listed in order of priority or significance, will be presented, followed by a brief discussion. The themes include the stakeholders' perception (1) on community access to the existing broadcast stations; (2) on community identities and cultures; (3) on the positioning of TVRI and RRI; (4) on suggestions for future market strategies of public or community broadcasting; (5) on the making of broadcasting law; and (6) on transnational capital and public sphere.

Theme 1: Community Access to the Existing Broadcast Stations

The first emerging theme is that of community access to the existing broadcast stations. The informants expressed expectations for what could be seen as citizens' "power to communicate" (Andrén 1993, 61). Regarding access to media exposure, our informants state that people living in remote areas can only watch TVRI or listen to RRI, or in some areas, people do not have access to any media; for example, recently in the Sentani area in Papua, the transmitter tower of RRI was broken.

With regard to media ownership, most informants thought that the television stations were still controlled by Suharto's family members, their cronies, or by Ja-

karta-based conglomerates. They strongly criticised the fact that people in local communities never get a chance to build their own television station.

Our informants' concerns on freedom of expression were clearly revealed in comments such as: "Television and radio programming are determined by the elite. It is not in their interest to channel the voices of minority groups or people living far from Jakarta." The NGO activists also believed not to have access to the media to evaluate the performance of executive and legislative staff. It was interesting to note that the local Government officials and Parliament members felt that they did not have access to the media either.

Theme 2: Community Identities and Cultures

A second theme regularly brought up in the discussions was community identities and cultures. This theme became much more prominent when the dominance of Javanese traditional performances was reflected upon (about Java-centrism, see Keuning, van der Mark, and Palte 1987, 9, 27-29). Not surprisingly, these comments were mostly voiced by informants living outside Java, especially in Bali, West Sumatra, Papua, and East Kalimantan. They believed that "the Java-based programs are causing alienation to local people from their own culture." When asked about their appreciation of cultural plurality, they replied: "It is not about resisting other cultures but it is more about demanding to see our local programs in the right proportion," and "we would like to be the host in our own home."

About cultural and social standards, cultural observers and community leaders, academics and NGO activists found that commercial television programs aired and supported anti-social messages. They stated: "Look at sex and violence that are always part of television movies!" They referred to the extravagant life style and consumerism achieved without hard work, which were blatantly exposed in both imported and local soap operas. Some also accused commercial television and radio programs of airing and supporting anti-traditional norms and values such as living together before marriage and discussing sex matters in public. They were also critical about the sensual outfits worn by famous actors and actresses in commercial television programs: "Attires like the one worn by Britney Spear is dangerous for our traditional norms on clothing etiquette;" and "We can't stand much more Britney Spearism!" All religious leaders taking part in the discussions voiced their concerns about the decreasing amount of religious teaching programs on television.

In contrast to all criticisms, there were always some informants (although very few) who showed their appreciation towards commercial television and radio stations as well as towards TVRI and RRI, since both had succeeded in offering informative and entertaining programs helping Indonesian people overcome their alienation from global advancement and international trends.

Theme 3: Positioning of TVRI and RRI

Around 60% of informants think that TVRI and RRI still – to a certain extent – function as Government propaganda tools. The rest acknowledged that TVRI and RRI have improved significantly compared to the days under the Suharto regime. For example, some saw that, "They have aired some interactive public debates."

On the use of the existing TVRI and RRI programming, the community leaders

together with NGO activists and academics from areas outside Java found that TVRI and RRI air less and less programs that give practical assistance to people living in villages and small towns. For instance, instructional programs on agriculture, animal raising or home economics.

In reaction to these criticisms, the TVRI and RRI staff in general underlined the obstacles they had to face everyday in the production, given the very limited production budget available. In spite of those obstacles, most of them still try to defend that most of their programs already meet public needs and wishes. They also objected to being criticised by the public simply due to the fact that they are the front liners. They stated: "Everybody knows that we really depend on the central policy and its budget allocation!" Finally, it was very important to note that almost all of the TVRI and RRI staff agreed to support any social action that would be carried out by the local community members to improve TVRI and RRI performances.

Theme 4: Suggestions for Future Market Strategies of Public or Community Broadcasting

A fifth theme that emerged from the discussions was the suggestions for future market strategies of public or community broadcasting. Most informants stated: "I think we already agree that the commercial stations define their audience as consumers while the public and community broadcasting see their audience as citizens." Representatives of the local Government, particularly those from the local offices of information (former local branches of the Ministry of Information), could not hide their ambition to ensure that the local Government should regain their unlimited access to local TVRI and RRI. They argued: "If local TVRI and RRI stations are to be supported by the local Government budget, they have to serve the functions needed by the local Government!" The NGO people, students, and academics rejected this idea categorically, arguing that the funding from the local Government budget is in fact public money.

Surprisingly, it were the representatives of the community business in Surabaya, Bandung, and Yogyakarta (all big cities in Java) who came forward to suggest the importance of the stakeholders' support. For local legislators, the justification from the stakeholders is of paramount importance. For instance, they said: "There should be some public agencies to plan and evaluate the program together with TVRI and RRI."

Most informants supported the establishment of those public forums. They suggested: "These forums should act like the pioneers who keep marketing the basic ideas of public and community broadcasting so that the numbers of stakeholders who are concerned with those alternative broadcastings grow bigger and bigger"; "These forums should be active in obtaining the recognition of both central and local management of TVRI and RRI as well as from local Government staff and legislators. Then, they should propose a program planning together with fund-raising activities"; and "It is very urgent that these forums soon jointly produce programs which catch the attention of the wider stakeholders, for instance in the form of town hall meetings discussing issues of interest to the local public. This will prove to be the most effective marketing strategy!" Some suggestions were made on how to name such a stakeholders' forum. One widely preferred term was Local Consultative Forum (LCF).

Theme 5: Broadcasting Law in the Making

A sixth theme that emerged was the making of Broadcasting Law. The NGO activists, students, and academics in all cities strongly advised all participants to pay close attention to the legislation process, as this had been a "mystery" to local people from the beginning.

The proposed ban on nation-wide coverage leading to the obligation for the national license holders to develop a joint co-operation with the potential local counterparts, became one of the hot issues. Around 70% of our informants, especially from cities outside Java, like West and North Sumatra, North and South Sulawesi, Papua, and Bali, felt it should be hailed as an important breakthrough. They believed: "Only by forcing the national stations to comply with that kind of regulation can we expect a significant decentralisation to take place in Indonesia's broadcasting scene."

The difference between discussants from Java and outside Java, however, did not seem significant when referring to public and community broadcasting in the Broadcasting Bill. This was displayed in comments such as: "We should reject the Broadcasting Law if it does not include those two broadcasting institutions." In order to ensure that public and community broadcasting, including TVRI and RRI, significantly recognise supervision and evaluation by the public, some academics and NGO activists in Java demanded that this condition be stipulated in detail in the Broadcasting Law.

Theme 6: Transnational Capital and the Public Sphere

Given the significant amounts of time spent discussing the local versus national political economy and public sphere, one might expect that the transnational flows of capital and transnational public sphere would also receive much attention in the seminar series. In fact, there were only relatively few comments from the informants on how those issues should be addressed in the Broadcasting Bill. Among them were those from three business people from telecommunications companies in Bandung and Padang and two economic observers in Surabaya and Yogyakarta, who commented on the article allowing foreigners to own up to 49% of any broadcasting company in Indonesia. One of their arguments was: "Globalisation is a reality we have to face. If a lot of international investors would like to invest their money here in broadcasting companies, it would be great for our provinces."

One student in South Sulawesi and another in West Java brought about the issue of relayed foreign broadcasting programs. "We have to set a limit on their amount," said the Makassar's student. His colleague in Bandung simply gave comments like: "If we don't try to set a limit on the amount of relayed foreign broadcasting programs, it is exactly the same as allowing foreign broadcasting companies to build their station here!" In contrast, a cultural observer in Surabaya asked the participants not to spend a lot of time discussing transnational flows of capital or transnational public sphere. He said: "If we can develop some healthy public and community broadcasting in this province, I am sure we can survive any kind of potentially bad influence of international capital or international issues." He then yelled out a proverb in a local language meaning that each area has its own unique traditions and cultures that are not easy to conquer.

Conclusions

The themes found in this research highlight the following important elements, as raised in the research questions: (1) local people argued that the shifting media system in Indonesia (due to Reform), including the new positioning of TVRI and RRI as public broadcasting, still did not solve the problems of scarcity of community access to the existing broadcasting stations; (2) local people were concerned with the needs to maintain their identities and cultures through the broadcasting programming and at the same time they worried about the impact of the libertarian interpretation of media-making; (3) Indonesia is a heterogeneous country, therefore the local people felt an urgent need to explore other forms of public communication, among others, community communication to be complementary with large-scale mass communication; (4) community and public broadcasting were considered by the local people as more appropriate media to fulfil their specific needs, and to position the maintenance of their cultures and identities vis-ŕ-vis other local, national and global cultures and identities; (5) the decentralisation process, especially to guarantee community access to ownership, needed to be addressed in the making of the Broadcasting Law; (6) the Broadcasting Law should explicitly stipulate that public and community broadcasting must allow supervision and evaluation by the public and community.

As the main aim of this study was to let people have a voice, the researcher did not try to persuade the informants to formulate their assessments according to any analysis model; yet, the prominence of the new triangular model, that community should be advanced as an active element (not just waiting for the State's initiatives) to directly deal with, and continuously assess the developments taking place in, media and market, appeared strikingly in the research findings. It is partly parallel with Splichal's (1993, 12) suggestions on socialisation and the way in which communication should be organised as a public good, and managed and controlled neither by private (market) nor State interests, but rather by society as a whole. If communities can run those functions, such a public communication system could be seen as an alternative or a middle ground between the authoritarian and libertarian choices.

To enhance these organising, managing, and controlling functions, after the seminar series ended, the research team continued work with the local people. Up to December 2002, there have been 54 group discussions with the stakeholders of public and community broadcasting in the 10 cities. One of the predominant issues in these meetings was the dynamics of efforts to form Local Consultative Forums (LCF) as stakeholders forum on public and community broadcasting. All conversations in those meetings were also recorded as research data. Besides the meetings, the team also facilitated the production of television and radio programs involving local constituents, as recommended in the workshops. Of the 400 programs aired on TVRI and RRI since November 2001 to December 2002, 30% was produced in "town hall meeting" program format. The topics of these joint local programs of LCFs and local TVRI and RRI stations varied greatly to suit the unique needs of each area. For example, human rights issues in the Aceh conflict, the public health service system in Bandung, violence against children in Banjarmasin, the narcotics problem in Bali, an anthropological view of the HIV/AIDS problem in Papua, prejudice and discrimination on Chinese by the press in North Sumatra.

Along with the joint production activities, some LCFs became more solid. Six of

them became already official, namely, the Yogyakarta Society for Public Broadcasting (Yogyakarta), the East Java Forum for Public Broadcasting (Surabaya), the Media Forum for Brotherhood (Manado), the Makassar Local Consultative Forum (Makassar), the Bali Television Society (Denpasar), and "Balarea" in Bandung ("Balarea" also means brotherhood or togetherness). Outside of the ten original cities, there were cities that attempted to establish their own LCFs including Pontianak, Mataram, Banten, Palembang, and Banda Aceh. All these developments have gradually shown that the paradigm "work with the people" used in this research works well and can encourage people to consider the implications of development of people's capacity, equity, empowerment, and interdependence (Byrant and White 1982, 15). This awareness also brought changes to the attitude of RRI and TVRI staff. In particular, RRI staff – from the central board of directors to local branches staff – have become more co-operative. They frequently stated that only through working together with LCF's, they can be free from the former trap of the "paternalistic" vision (d'Haenens and Saeys 2001, 120; Williams 1976, 133).

In order to have a sustainable, strategic, and comprehensive flow of endeavours, the research team together with the LCF members have also continuously discussed various developments in reference to McQuail's Performance Model (1992). For example, in the macro environment (see Figure 3), the still gloomy economy in Indonesia (which is now even worsened by the Bali blast) seemed to reduce the enthusiasm of foreign donors. They usually referred to the failure of public and community broadcasting in Eastern Europe because of similar problems leading to the unavailability of sufficient amounts of public funding. On the other hand, there had been some pressures from foreign ambassadors to Indonesia who even paid a visit to the Ministry of Information's office to demand for further clarifications of an article in the Broadcasting Bill that limits relayed programs from foreign broadcasts.

Figure 3: McQuail's Performance Model Adapted to the Indonesian Case and Applied to Public and Community Broadcasting
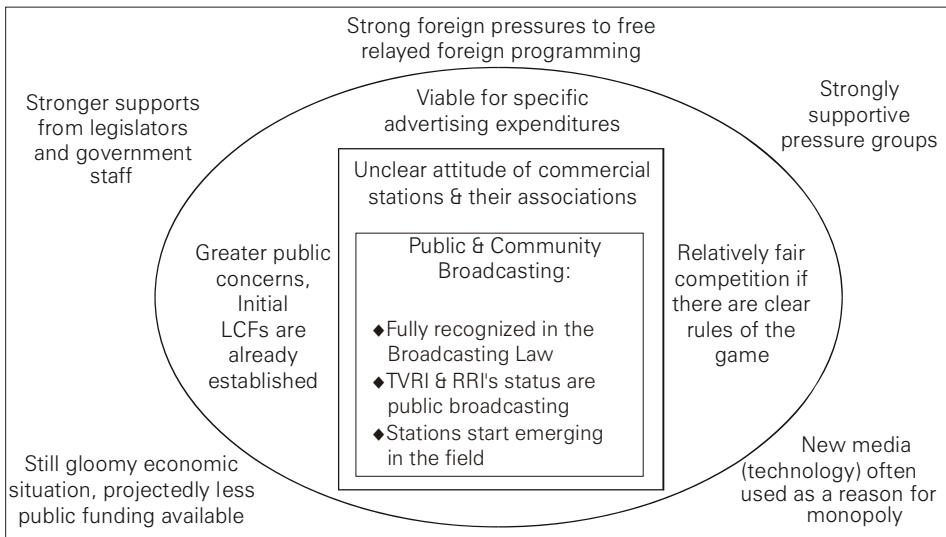
In the market environment, most of our sources in the Indonesian Advertising Agencies Association supported the existence of public and community broadcasting since in their opinion there will be enough potential market and advertising shares for them due to their specific characteristics. On the other hand, the position of commercial stations and surrounding corporate organisations was not clear yet. In some formal meetings they stated that they felt the need for alternative broadcasting too, as long as the broadcasting law provides crystal clear rules of the game. Yet, in other occasions, such as the one in East Java, the local branch of Indonesian Commercial Radio Stations Association (PRSSNI) whole-heartedly supported the raids launched by the so-called telecommunications police forces on the newly built local radio stations. These operations were based on ambiguous regulations in which it was uncertain whether the authority to allocate the license laid with the central government (directorate general of post and telecommunications, according to the Telecommunications Law No. 36/1999) or with the local government (as stipulated in the Regional Autonomy Law No. 22/1999). Moreover, new media technologies and media convergence were always brought up as arguments for them to reject the article in the Broadcasting Bill proposing limits on vertical integration in the media industry. ATVSI (Indonesian Association for Television; its members are commercial stations only) allegedly masterminded a huge protest at the Parliament building to prevent the legislators from passing the Broadcasting Bill into Law on the scheduled plenary session. The first protest on November 25, 2002 was successful. But, in the following session on November 28, the parliament passed the Bill into Act, even though there was a rumour that the commercial television stations would boycott legislators' activities should they approve the Bill. It is important to note here that the research team has always kept contacts with the members of the House Special Committee on the Broadcasting Law and the relevant Government officials as well. Reports on developments of this action-research were always submitted to them too. The team even developed a guidance book on the public and community broadcasting, submitted the draft to as many activists, legislators, Government officials, academics, and other relevant parties as possible, and launched and acknowledged it as a collaborative work of all parties (see Acknowledgements).

Although the new Broadcasting Law No. 32/2002 with full recognition of public and community broadcasting never signed by the President, it went into effect on December 28, as endorsed by articles about legislation procedures in the Indonesian Constitution. The details of this new Law will be developed into lower-level regulations and they certainly need to be analysed again by the advocacy groups together with LCFs and local people. In the field, there have been at least 15 local television stations joining two associations: Indonesian Public and Community Television Association launched in Balikpapan, April 28, 2002, and Indonesian Local Television Association formed in Bali, July 26, 2002. In the meantime, more than 400 community radios have been recorded and most joined the Indonesian Community Radio Network that was established on May 15, 2002.

Finally, while working with the local people, the research team has kept sharing with them the fact that they themselves will determine whether their LCF can make further progress or not. Some key issues contributing to that progress are: (1) the creativity of the LCF members in that area; (2) the cooperativeness and creativ-

ity of the managers and staff of TVRI and RRI; (3) strength of support from local Parliament members and local Government officials; (4) the support from external funding agencies to cover the joint production costs still necessary at this initial stage; (5) the initiatives to develop their own broadcasting stations outside TVRI and RRI. Shortly after the new Broadcasting Law was made effective, the research team and other activists also kicked off the follow-up sessions across the country to discuss those key issues in the new contexts provided by the (new) Broadcasting Law No. 32/2002.

Acknowledgements

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