Creating content, shaping society: Do Indonesian media uphold the principle of citizenship?

Report Series
Engaging Media, Empowering Society: Assessing Media Policy and Governance in Indonesia through the Lens of Citizens’ Rights

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List of abbreviations

AJI  Aliansi Jurnalis Independen / Alliance of Independent Journalists
BPP-P3I Badan Pengawas Persatuan Perusahaan Periklanan Indonesia
BPOM Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan / Food and Drug Monitoring Agency
BPS Badan Pusat Statistik / Central Bureau for Statistic
CSO Civil Society Organisation
CSR Corporate Social Responsibility
Depkes Departemen Kesehatan / Ministry of Health
DKI Daerah Khusus Ibukota / Special Capital Region
FPI Front Pembela Islam / Islam Defender Front
GMDSS Global Maritime Distress and Safety System
Golkar Golongan Karya / Golongan Karya Party
Hanura Hati Nurani Rakyat / Hati Nurani Rakyat Party
HTI HizbutTahrir Indonesia
Kemensos Kementrian Sosial / Ministry of Social Affairs
KPI Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia / Indonesian Broadcasting Commission
KPU Komisi Pemilihan Umum / General Elections Commissions
LGBT Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LSPP Lembaga Studi Pers dan Pembangunan / Institute for Press and Development
MUI Majelis Ulama Indonesia / Indonesian Ulama Council
MAVI Misionaris Awam Vincentian Indonesia / Indonesian Vincentian Lay Missionaries
MNC Media Nusantara Citra
Nasdem Nasional Demokrat / National Democrat Party
NGO Non-governmental Organisation
Pilkada Pemilihan Kepala Daerah / Regional Elections
PON Pekan Olahraga Nasional / National Sports Week
P3SPS Pedoman Perilaku Penyiaran dan Standar Program Siaran / Conduct and standards guide for broadcast programme
PP Peraturan Pemerintah / Government regulation
PWI Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia / Association of Indonesian Journalist
RCTI Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia
RRI Radio Republik Indonesia / Radio of the Republic of Indonesia
SCTV Surya Citra Televisi Indonesia
TPI Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia
TVRI Televisi Republik Indonesia / Television of the Republic of Indonesia
UDHR Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UU Undang-Undang / Law
Executive Summary

The purpose of this research is to empirically examine Indonesian media content, their workings and the factors influencing their work. It will explore the Indonesian television content, its influencing factors and its impact upon citizens.

1. The rapid growth of Indonesian media industry since the 1998 Reform, although considered as a catalyst for transparency, signalled the emergence of new media conglomerates. Today, twelve groups of media have control over nearly all of Indonesia’s media channels. The practice of current media oligopoly has put the media industry purely as a profit-led entity and hence represents a profitable business that can easily be shaped by the owner’s interests and is thus highly beneficial for those seeking power. This strong nexus between power system and media industry is forcefully manifested in form of media content.

2. There is no open diversity in content. Content analysis of television shows that the coverage of majority and minority groups is unequal. We find that content is heavily Jakarta-centric in terms of geographical context, Islam-centric in terms of religious orientations and Java-centric in terms of ethnic identities. Content with geographical identities is ruled 34.1% by Jakarta (69.6% by Java), content with religious qualities is dominated 96.7% by Islamic identities and content with any ethnic reference is led by Javanese identities by 42.8%. This does not only imply that there is a lack of open diversity, but more dangerously that there may be evidence of hyper-impositions of content favouring the majority over the minority.

3. Our research concludes that the profit-led media industry has left citizens on the edge of the media sector. Homogenous content is a simple proof that the media regard citizens merely as consumers rather than a group of people with rights. This means content suffers from an element of ‘sameness’ as suggested in the Hotelling’s Law (Hotelling, 1929) and low heterogeneity. Since the business-driven media seek profit, the production of content is always within the context of profiting from programme. This powerplay through content is a danger in so many ways; it is an evidence of repression of opinions in a democratic setting, it is endangering the rich local culture and it gives an inaccurate depiction of minority groups – as content is controlled by those with superior access to media. Overall, the evidence of concentration in content may not be by nature but by design, more accurately termed as a ‘centralisation of content’.

4. There are other factors that directly shape the content of media such as owners’ interest, the structure inside the media and the journalists themselves. Therefore, the discussions on content could not be detached from these factors. We are aware of the notion that no media is free from intervention. However, what we aim to see from this research is to what extent this influence is applied, in what situations these interventions happen and how this affects media content. Owners’ power over the media is unquestionably strong, but this is also because the editorial room allow the interventions to happen. The lack of professionalism in journalists also shapes the content production.
5. In an industry where many politicians own media channels, reportage on the owners’ political activities remain important as the media have their own team to report and broadcast the activities. This violates journalistic ethics since the media only cover the owners’ parties without covering the other parties. Aside from the political influence, the editorial room also has the tendency to consider its advertisers. As the main source of income for the media, advertisements influence media content. There might be no direct request from the advertisers to shape certain news/reports related to them. However, in several media, the editorial rooms tend to loosen the reports related to their advertisers in order to maintain a good relationship with them. In some cases, journalists also opted not to report on the news related to its advertisers despite the importance of the news, since the news would most likely not be published. We also find that not all media are easily distracted by their owners or advertisers. This kind of media usually has a solid and strong team of editors and journalists so that they do not fully depend on their owners/organisation.

6. The lack of professionalism in journalists might have a correlation with the growing media industry that needs more and more journalists and reporters. Unfortunately, this high demand from the industry is not in parallel with the growth in quality of the journalists. Journalists often seem to have dual personalities: as professionals and as a source of labour, creating a tension between being a journalist as a vocation and it purely providing a source of employment. This tension is reflected in the quality of their work; in which they might neglect the journalistic code of ethics. Some of them are not even aware of the ethics. The abandonment of these ethics, paired with the low-wages of the journalists has then given rise to envelope journalism practice in which journalists take bribes or ‘gifts’ from newsmakers for favourable coverage. Many journalists still hold their commitment, and more often than not, the commitment relates to the decent wages they receive from the company.

7. Citizens and civil society organisations could play a role in the improvement of media, by continuously being a watchdog for the most accessible media channels. Citizens need channels to articulate their concerns about media, and civil society organisations could help in providing those channels. Organising movements and continuously developing citizens’ media literacy are two of the many ways in which civil society organisations could play a role. Criticisms of media should be part of mainstream discourse, and citizens and civil society organisations should aim for this in the near future.

Media, as the ‘Fourth Estate’, are given mandate to facilitate every citizen taking full participation in democratic processes. Unfortunately, the development of the media industry, heavily driven by market logic, has to some extent contributed to the impediment of citizens’ rights in determining policies and discourses related to their lives. Yet, as long as there is a growing concern over the nature of media, no matter how slight it is; the dream of ‘shared-life’ is still worth believing in.
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1. Content determinism: An introduction
1. Content determinism: An introduction

Such shows [soap operas] are building dreams in children’s minds; a dream to go to Java Island. And when they attend Javanese school ... they tend to choose to live in Java, because they can enjoy a lifestyle in Java that is comfortable, glittery and modern. ... The ease in accessing media, including cellular phones and other communication technologies, make them dream [about living] in Java. And such dreams are continuously fanned by the soap operas. ... Java is a model for everything. What is shown in the soap opera is the ideal model. Being a boy and girl should follow what is provided by television. In truth, the actual danger is in there [manipulating desire; providing pseudo-desire].

(Kristien Yuliarti, MAVI, Interview, 11/12/2011)

In February 1999, about 150 years after Morse invented the standardized system of short and long signals called ‘dots and dashes’, Morse code was finally discontinued as an international standard of maritime communication. A system using satellite technology called GMDSS (Global Maritime Distress and Safety System), whereby any ship in distress can be spotted immediately, came to replace it. While the Morse code is no longer in service in the marines; in our daily routines, the images of international athletes are perhaps more familiar to us than the faces of our next-door neighbours. These examples show how far things have changed in the nature of our everyday experiences and indicate how instantaneous electronic communication has come to alter the very character of our lives.

In terms of media, the same technological advancement not only enables news or information to be conveyed more quickly, but also brings new challenges in how the media provide a proper place for citizens’ engagements and hence alters the media to exercise its public function more passionately – in order to mediate and explore any possibilities of our shared lives. However, with the current advancement of the global media industry, the media are not in the position to provide citizens with the space that they need in order to engage with each other. Running media merely as business, commodifying news and information and capitalising content, to some extent, has made citizens powerless. The mainstream media generally operate in ways that promote quiescence, voyeurism and cynicism, rather than citizenship and participation. The overwhelming conclusion is that the trend seems to be in an unhealthy direction – towards more and more messages, but sourcing from fewer and bigger producers who are saying less and less (Gamson, Croteau et al., 1992). What remains here is audience/reader/listener as customers (who can only choose from whatever programmes are presented) rather than as citizens (with their rights). This condition hampers the dream of the ‘public sphere’ (Habermas, 1989, Habermas, 2006) to support public engagement in the context of democracy.

In regard to minority groups, the implication is even bigger. In general, the minority groups can merely access the media but are left far behind in terms of content – in some cases, being stereotyped and/or victimised (Nugroho, Nugraha et al., 2012). Bearing in mind that the original meaning of citizenship made reference to a balance of citizens’ rights and citizens obligations (Janowitz, 1980); in the case of the vulnerable groups, there is an imbalance and the market-driven media have participated in divert-

In this report we focus on **content determinism**, using the perspective of citizens’ right to media. Content determinism is concerned with how specific media content is designed and produced for a certain purpose and how it impacts upon society. Media content and the ways in which it is being designed and produced in a media system driven by the power within the media has played a role in (re)shaping and (re)constructing the dynamics of the society.

### 1.1. Background and rationale

In Indonesia, the rapid growth of the media industry since the 1998 Reform, although deemed as positive in terms of transparency and democratisation, also marked the emergence of new media conglomerates. **Kompas-Gramedia Group**, **Mahaka Media Group**, **Grafiti Pers Group** – the holding company of **Jawa Pos** – and **Global Mediacomm (MNC) Group** are among the twelve groups that have control over nearly all of Indonesia’s media channels (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012). The current practise of media oligopoly in Indonesia has placed the Indonesian media industry purely as a profit-led one and hence represents a profitable business that can be shaped by the owner’s interests and is thus highly beneficial for those seeking power.

This situation gets worse because the current practice of media as such, especially the broadcasting media, is supported by toothless policies. Though the Indonesian **Broadcasting Law** (2002) has the values of diversity of content, the implementation is totally different (Nugroho, Siregar et al., 2012). A similar condition applies to the **Press Law No 40/1999 (UU Pers 40/1999)** that is incapable of mitigating the excessively profit-motivated logic of the media industry. Policymakers and state officials have also failed to make a clear distinction between monopoly and oligopoly. The current practice of (media) policy making has actually made it more difficult for the citizens to exercise their rights to media. The duty to protect and enable citizens to exercise their rights by retaining their public character and providing space for civic engagement as suggested by some scholars (Joseph, 2005) is not possible.

As the ‘Fourth Estate’ (Carlyle, 1840, Schultz, 1998), the media are supposed to play a pivotal role in an infant democracy context such as in Indonesia. However, a closer look at the works of the media sector today reveal that the very essence of media is threatened by both economic and political interests from various groups. At the same time, it has transformed the media sector into tools to ‘manufacture consent’ (after Herman and Chomsky, 1988) as economic and political interests of the media are seemingly ahead of their social and public functions. As a result, instead of providing a public space to discuss public concerns, the media have positioned the citizens as mere consumers due to its market logic and business interests.

In this light, we argue that the mainstream media appear to operate within the line of neoliberal concepts in which profit logic supersedes and characterises others. As neoliberal business aims to maximise profit – the financialisation of everything (Harvey, 2005, p. 33), one of the intended consequences is the uniformity of content due to the rating system as a tool of market mechanism. A blatant example is the phenomenon of **sinetron** (Indonesian equivalent of soap operas), which are broadcast across Indonesia and yet, focus purely on urban lifestyles and problems. This kind of phenomenon is detached from the day-to-day realities of much of the Indonesian audience – especially those living in remote areas. The loss of content diversity has apparently created ‘media disembeddedness’: media practices and content that are no longer attached to the societal context in which they exist (as derived from Polanyi, 1957 (1944))². In addition to content uniformity, another way to attract more audiences is by

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2. The notion of disembeddedness here is used in the sense employed by Karl Polanyi in describing how the self-regulating market has uprooted the economy from social relations (Polanyi, 1944, 1957), in the same way that the profit-driven logic of media contents have diverted the working of the media from its civic mission.
producing more hyperbolic-sensationalist reportage and/or news. By continuously providing non-educative content, the media are actually banalising the public life of the citizens.

The decrease in the quality of media content which fails to provide adequate space for any interest groups in the society, especially the marginalised (Nugroho, Nugraha et al., 2012), is potentially ruining any credibility of the media as the Fourth Estate (Carlyle, 1840, Schultz, 1998). This is because media fail to serve its public function to assist the representative democracy. In regard to the four minority groups, i.e. the Ahmadiyya, the diffables, the LGBT and women-children (as featured in Nugroho, Nugraha et al., 2012), the decrease has a strong correlation with the tendency to chase sensationalist stories instead of providing a balanced report on certain topics. Undoubtedly, such circumstances support the continuation of derogatory and misrepresentations of the groups, as the media have “a tongue which others will listen to” and this can endanger the rights of groups as citizens.

While at present the media seemingly fail to provide educative programmes, this will turn into a more serious challenge in the future when it comes to the idea of media convergence. With the logic of convergence, which dictates that all media channels provide the same content, the media are potentially banalising the audience more and more by means of clusters of non-educative programmes. Therefore, the media need to be guarded through the enforcement of the media policies so that it can retain its public character (Nugroho, Siregar et al., 2012). However, the latest development of online media seems to provide a hope for an alternative room for citizens to engage, should the mainstream media fail to answer the plea. Thus, we propose that the creation and protection of such alternative channels, including the growing community broadcasting, should be maintained in order to ensure the citizens’ right to media.

In this final report, we could not but touch upon the content and content production. Concentration on media ownership which tends to turn into media conglomeration is no doubt a huge problem (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012). But, in the end, the real problem we face is the content of the media that we consume every single day. What disturbs us when we talk about media policy is the absence of attention to the policy that concerns the production, type and diversity of media content that the audience watch/listen to/read every single day: i.e. the determination of the content.

While we can see how technological progress has transformed the media and in turn contributed to societal changes (McLuhan, 1964); the linear content also contributes to the construction of the society. Like it or not, media have shaped the way we consume, the way we interact with each other, and even the way we develop our tastes. Technological advancements in media – such as printing and book publishing – obviously have caused huge social changes through ‘literacy’ – the representation of sound or words by letters: not only can people think linearly and be individualistic, but it also enables the control of ideas and will. This also creates the problem of disembeddedness in the context of media and society (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012, p. 109). The progress of the media is a ‘function’ of technology: technological progress has been transforming the media (including how messages are conveyed), which in turn transforms the society – for better or worse. For McLuhan, the structure of the media is more influential in shaping human awareness than the message delivered through the media channels. McLuhan once wrote,

The content or uses of such media are as diverse as they are ineffectual in shaping the form of human association. Indeed, it is only too typical that the “content” of any medium blinds us to the character of the medium (McLuhan, 1964:9).

However, in our globalized runaway world, highly influenced by the idea of neoliberalism, McLuhan might have been deceived. Take a number of TV series, advertisements, or soap opera (sinetron in Indonesian) as examples. McLuhan was right that most movie series on TV do not encourage linear
thinking – through a diverse storyline, for example. But most of it offers the repeated similar storyline: – romance, good against evil, ordinary people becoming famous figures. The repetition of episodes not only happens within sinetron; it also takes place within the news. While the medium is not linear, the content is still linear. For media, as long as the programmes bring profit and are watchable, able to tempt more and more ads to come and invite people to integrate with (and purchase) the global products, e.g. wearing Levi’s jeans, smoking Marlboro, using Master Card and driving Cadillacs – it will never be a problem.

By scrutinising content in the media, our research also finds that through content as media output, power concentration in the oligopolistic media industry is well translated. Through content, too, in which the strong nexus between the media industry and the power system is manifested; media industry torments the citizens’ cohesion. By inducing the logic of business through various contents, the idea of citizenship is being eroded without any significant resistance from the government (which turns to take side with business) or they who are governed (passive and illiterate citizens). In an industry with an oligopolistic nature (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012), those who have superior access to content production are relatively free to control the public consumption. However, our research finds that power in media does not merely lie in the hands of the media tycoons (the owners), but also in the system as well. In this regard, if we scrutinise the power relation in the media, we will find that there is also the agendas of the advertisers, other businesses and even those of high dignitaries as well. Detailed explanations on this issue of power relation will be presented in Chapter 5.

The search for power is also reflected in the fierce level of competition between media outlets. Since it is dangerous for producers to behave differently from their rivals (Cuilenburg, 1999), the type of oligopolistic-market-led content being broadcast to audiences are inclined to be homogenous as media outlets will try to compete between themselves with products that are perfect substitutes of each other.

In this light, we need to be critical of the power relations in the media while at the same time ensure that the human rights perspective is being taken into account in media production, be it printed, broadcast or online. Indonesia has its own so-called definition of human rights, which is accommodated in the constitution. The citizens’ right, which of course includes the rights of the minority, is explicitly noted in this constitution. The constitution was developed based on human rights and the ideals of a nation, not on the wants of the majority. As such, we recommend that the products of journalists and other media industry personnel should adhere to the constitution.

1.2. Objectives

This research draws upon three previous research reports on media and citizens’ rights to media. The purpose of this research is to provide an overview of content (production) in which power is robustly manifested. Completing the media report series, we could not but touch upon the content since talking about citizens’ rights to media requires a deeper examination of content production. By providing this, we aim to give insights on the broader implication of power manifestation within media system on the citizens’ right to media and on the democratisation processes.

In investigating the problem, we had chosen to use a perspective of citizens’ right to media, which is a form of response that refers to the ‘Article 19’ of the UDHR. Such studies mostly defend media rights in terms of freedom of press institutions, but we believe that what is more often needed is the protection of citizens who own a much limited area of freedom in media. Such study on the importance of citizens’ right to media in relation to the political economy of media in Indonesia is rare. In discerning citizens’

3. The Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”
right to media, we underline three dimensions: (1) the right to access trustworthy information and to generate information – which requires (2) access to media infrastructure – so that the citizens are able to exercise the third dimension, i.e. (3) take an active participation in the decision-making processes in matters related to their citizenship.

1.3 Questions and research undertaken

This study aims to find the answers to the following questions:

To what extent does the Indonesian media content reflect diversity in the society? What are the ways in which media content is created and distributed and why? What impact does media content have upon the citizens’ rights to media and on the principle of citizenship upheld in society? What are the responses of the citizens and how do they strategise it? What are the implications of this?

In answering these questions, the study mobilised primary data and secondary data. The primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with senior and junior media workers, experts and CSO’s media activists from January to March 2013. Meanwhile, the secondary data was collected through a desk study. The secondary data aims to scrutinise the political economy of media and the idea of citizens’ rights.

Chapter Three will elaborate on the methodology and data collection in more detail.

1.4. Content determinism: A preview

The current practice of Indonesian media oligopoly has put the media industry purely as a profit-led one. Such a situation represents a media system that is prone to be controlled by the owner's interests and is highly beneficial for those seeking power (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012). The failure of existing policies in mitigating the excessive profit-driven logic of the industry has also worsened the problem. The implementation of the ‘umbrella law’ of media – the UU Pers 40/1999 and the UU Penyiaran 32/2002 – have failed to regulate the media as an industry (Nugroho, Siregar et al., 2012). On the other hand, policymakers and state officials have also failed to put a clear distinction between monopoly and oligopoly.

In terms of content, due to the logic of rating, the media tend to be homogenous in content. In order to attract more audiences, the media also produce more hyperbolic-sensationalist reportage and/or news. In regard to the vulnerable groups, the media deliver a poor quality of representation which in turn contributes to the violation of their basic rights (Nugroho, Nugraha et al., 2012). The bigger implication is that the vulnerable groups suffer from “lack of access to the basic institutions of civil society, a lack of citizenship” – which, to some extent, perpetuates social exclusion (Macionis and Plummer, 2008:255). Moreover, by continuously providing non-educative content, the media are actually banalising the citizens.

Scrutinising the political economy of the media, we finally find that the strong bond between the power system and the media industry is content. Through content distribution, the reproduction of meaning in society is controlled by those who have certain access and power in the media. The unintended consequence of the quality of content relates to the people as citizens. Due to the rating-driven logic, the audience is merely seen as potential consumers for the industry, rather than citizens with rights. The premise of media as one of democracy’s pillars does not work as it should in this situation. To some
extent, the limitations in access to media have hampered the exercise of citizens’ rights. There is a limitation placed upon their opportunities to engage with decision-making processes related to economic-social-political sectors and in community participation too.

In order to provide an overview of content determination, we analysed selected programmes from ten TV stations for thirty days. Television, as a modern media channel, fits perfectly as a tool of reflection on the dynamics of culture in society. The statistic from the Central Bureau for Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik – BPS) in 2012 also indicates that television is the media with the most penetrative number and is therefore crucial to citizen’s construction of cultural lives. At least 91.7% of all Indonesians over the age of 10 watched television. By providing content analysis on television, we argue that despite the many opinions that our media are ‘diverse’ and ‘representative’; the opposite is in fact the case. By presenting seven categories of citizenship as proxies of diversity using a quantitative measurement, we can imply that the determination of content is largely based on a dominant value system - whether by religion, ethnicity, or geographical context.

What is being observed through content analysis is actually a reflection of what is happening in the editorial processes and the way content is being produced. Since the practice of today’s media has shifted more into a privately-driven business institution, rather than a socially-driven public institution; the output of media will most likely determine how much profit they get. With these complexities, power does speak. In today’s development, the growth of the media business perfectly reflects the law of the ‘survival of the fittest'; leaving a very small space for newcomers. Media have become a promising but tough business at the same time. Therefore it is not surprising that there are mergers and acquisitions. In order to survive, smaller media companies joined the larger groups. This process again shows us how big companies are controlling not only the content and ownership, but also the distribution and circulation line of the media.

The bigger picture shows how larger media companies hold power in their hands. However, there is also a power relation in the media system as a whole. Our research finds that interventions in media are highly influential in shaping the content: not only in fabricating/manufacturing the facts but also through publishing (or not publishing) stories based on request. There are two types of intervention: external and internal. While external interventions come from related owner’s business and political moves, the internal one comes from the censorship and framed editorial process conducted by the system. But another kind of intervention comes in a very subtle way. In a system that tended to serve the desire of the owner, the journalists have to be sensitive in ‘pleasing’ their employer. Through careful examination, we find that the independence of journalists and editors only happens when there is enough space for them to express their thoughts. In certain media, where owners are related to politics, there is no such space. However, a few good practices are still left in some media where the journalists still have the bargaining power to reject certain requests to shape their stories. Often, this situation raises other concerns about the integrity of the journalists.

The lack of options in channels – apparently there are options in our channels, but content-wise, the options are limited – combined with personal/group interests could distort the information we received. Through the lens of citizens’ rights, this ‘marriage’ has threatened the right to trustworthy information; in particular in a situation where media literacy is still to be addressed.

While the media as a system needs to improve, the same action has to be taken by journalists as one of the main components in the media system. Although there has been the blessing of a more democratic press post-1998 Reform, there is a growing concern about a decline of professionalism in Indonesian journalism. Although Indonesian journalists are deeply critical of political affairs in general in order to continue the evolution of the country’s political landscape, there are some serious challenges that must be addressed: poor journalistic ethics, lack of professionalism, and corruption among journalists.

This has something to do with the crisis of job ethics. Ideally, as a profession which has a public mission, journalists have to remember that they are creating and conveying messages in the service of public goods, not for certain interest. Choosing to be journalist means to be responsible for serving the public.

When citizens can no longer rely on policymakers, state officials, market-driven media system, then the last hope actually falls onto the shoulders of the public. There are still some actions they can take: coalition and networking among CSOs, guiding the law enforcement process of media-related regulation, acting as watchdogs since the media owners are very sensitive to citizens’ protests, or improving the media literacy of the wider public.

We are now facing the fact that media companies have dual identities. On the one hand they bear a huge responsibility to run their social, cultural, and political function. On the other hand, they are driven by economic interests. However, since the media are closely related to public life, media should start to develop a trust-based business which does need commitment to run it.

1.5. Structure of the report

Following this introduction, Chapter Two features the theoretical perspectives and summary of the previous reports used to explain why understanding citizens’ right to media is essential in scrutinizing the power relation in the political economy of media. The framework is then used throughout the study to stress the importance of how the media should address the citizens’ rights in terms of content production within the system. Chapter Three then provides the methods used to gather data in this study and the limitations of these. The findings of the study are then presented in the next three chapters. Chapter Four seeks to reveal the debate on diversity by providing content analysis on selected TV programmes. This chapter provides a quantitative analysis on TV programmes to reveal the powerplay through content, and an answer to how diverse and representative our media are. Chapter Five scrutinises the dynamics of the political economy of Indonesian media: how the power is manifested through media system. This chapter also reveals the complexities of content production in our media. Chapter Six provides a discourse on the quality of the journalists as one of the key actors in content production while discussing strategies of media betterment in Indonesia. Chapter Seven summarises the findings by identifying the implications of content determinism in the media. In conclusion, the chapter proposes future agendas to be addressed.
2. Citizens’ right to media: A Conceptual Genealogy
The content of the media, including their news, is definitely moving towards commercialization and sensationalism to the extent that it abandons other issues more relevant and important for the public, only because they are less interesting. It is all about ratings that subsequently degrade the public interest. ... Two things that define the mass media are the market and the public. For the media owner, the media are no more than a market in which they offer their products. But we would like to state that the media are not solely a market. This is the public; a conscious public that has the right to choose the rights for its basic interests to be served, the right to information. These two perceptions are not always connected. They [media owners] look at the media as a mere market whilst they also have consciousness and rights. This is where [the media] is being contested. (Ignatius Haryanto, LSPP, Interview, 26/10/2011)

The advancement of media technology and industry gives hope that the media will be in the right position to provide citizens with the spaces they need to engage amongst themselves – and hence create a more democratic society. However, the plea seems to be unanswered since the trend seems to be in the wrong direction – toward more and more messages, from fewer and bigger producers, saying less and less (Gamson, Croteau et al., 1992). What results from such circumstances is that citizens become merely ‘customers’ who must accept whatever programmes are provided, rather than citizens with rights. Citizens have been put in the confinement of consumers’ seats, merely enjoying what is available in the media channel with almost no influence to shape the content. The same situations apply to the vulnerable groups since their access to media is being compromised.

This situation has hampered the dream of the ‘public sphere’ (Habermas, 1989, Habermas, 2006) which supports public engagement in context of democracy.

As the progress of the media industry everywhere is closely attached to the political economy system (Mansell, 2004), such is the case in Indonesia. Any change in the political and economic situation in the country will affect the media industry. Therefore it is understandable that the ‘marriage’ between politics and business in the media has transformed the citizens merely into voters in terms of the dynamics of politics and as consumers in regard to business interest. The media no longer provide the citizens with a ‘public sphere’ (Habermas, 1989) where each citizen can engage in and exchange discourses.

In investigating the problem, we use a perspective of citizens’ rights. In this study, ‘rights’ refers to the values written in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Most media activists have often used the ‘Article 19’ of the UDHR to defend media rights – in this case, press institutions and or journalists – but often what is needed more is to protect the citizens who have a much narrower and limited area of freedom in media. We therefore argue on this basis that it is not just the media rights per se that should

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6. The Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”
be improved but also access – something that defines citizenship (in contrast to consumership) in the media landscape.

On the concept of citizens’ right to media, we borrow what UNESCO has conceptualised (Joseph, 2005)\(^7\) and use it to examine how the citizens exercise their rights through three aspects: (a) citizens’ access to information; without which they will be excluded from the development and transformation of their own lives; (b) citizens’ access to media infrastructure; without which access to information and other media content is impossible; and (c) citizens’ access to the means of influencing the regulatory framework, without which citizens will be left out of the decision-making process which affects their lives.

We also extend the understanding of citizens’ right to include the perspectives on media ethics, media watch, access to information and information infrastructure, and discourse of the role of the media in society.

2.1. Media: Between the medium and the message

Media plays a central role in our society today. Through media, information, views, ideas, and discourses are exchanged – with which the society continues to progress. In modern society, media are deeply embedded in societal life: there are no social affairs that do not involve media. The term ‘media’ comes from a Latin word (singular: medium-ii) which means something ‘in between’. As such, it also means something that ‘appears publicly’, ‘belongs to the public’ or ‘mediation’; and hence refers to a space that is public -- a *locus publicus*. The essence of the media cannot therefore be separated from the connection between the private and the public spheres, which is often problematic. The media mediate the two in order to seek out possibilities (or impossibilities) of a shared life\(^8\). In this sense, what constitutes the media ranges quite widely from physical spaces such as courts, plazas, theatres and meeting venues, to non-physical ones like newspapers, radio, television, Internet, and any space for social interaction. It is the latter constructs that we will mostly refer to in this report\(^9\).

With such *raison d’être*, the purpose of the media is to provide a room in which the public can freely interact and engage over matters of public concern. In short, the purpose of media is to serve the idea of ‘civic’ life. This idea traces back to the view of Habermas on the public sphere (Habermas, 1984, Habermas, 1987). He defines the public sphere as a *gathering of private individuals discussing matters of common concern* – and with the power of media, private ideas can quickly become public opinion. This thought is central not only in understanding how public rationality could be ‘developed’, and that there should be more careful attention paid to the boundary between the private and public spheres; but also hints that what is ‘public’ is always closely connected with politics (Habermas, 1989)\(^10\). In addition to this idea, ensuring access for minorities and vulnerable voices is also essential in guaranteeing a well-functioning public sphere (Ferree, Gamson et al., 2002).

Referring back to Habermas (1989), an ideal concept of the public sphere is that it must be accessible to everyone, and has an autonomy which cannot be intruded, or claimed by the state or the market. It is important since such claims tend to threaten the equilibrium and push the interest of society, particularly the minority, to the edge of the public sphere. Furthermore, public space is not unitary in nature: there is no single public sphere, but several (Habermas, 1984). Since the public space characterizes the plurality of the society itself, then in its nature, the same public space also should accommodate the

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8. This paragraph is largely based on a summary presentation delivered by Dr. B. Herry-Priyono, SJ., in Yogyakarta, during the Critical Research Methodology (CREAME) training, as part of the project to which this report belongs, on 5/10/11.

9. We also refer to this understanding in our previous reports (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012:20-21, Nugroho, Siregar et al., 2012:19)

10. We refer to this central idea, too, in our previous report (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012:21)
variety of opinions in the society.

In conjunction with Habermas’ viewpoint, in ‘Understanding Media: The extensions of man’ Marshall McLuhan (1964) proposes a design to ‘provide’ an indirect representative government – through emerging media technology – to broaden a new participative model in which everyone can be involved. McLuhan considers the importance of the representation because the affairs of state and society are altogether too numerous, too complicated, and too obscure in their effects to be comprehended by private citizens (Lippmann, 1927 as cited in, Levinson, 1999). Hence for McLuhan, the emerging media technology not only make the whole world accessible locally, but also create a new form of participation in which anyone can be involved in any global issue.

While it is fair to say that the ability of media in enabling a new participative model is supporting the spreading of democracy to the farthest corners of the world (Mansell, 2004, Castells, 2010), it is not without its problems. Lippmann (1922) argued that the basic problems of the media in a democracy are the accuracy of news and the protection of sources that will intensify the defective organisation of public opinion. Furthermore, Lippmann (1922) stipulates the role of media in democracy has still not achieved what is expected of it and that the ‘creation of consent’ does still exist:

The creation of consent is not a new art. It is a very old one; which was supposed to have died out with the appearance of democracy. But it has not died out. It has, in fact, improved enormously in technic, because it is now based on analysis rather than on rule of thumb. And so, as a result of psychological research, coupled with the modern means of communication, the practice of democracy has turned a corner. A revolution is taking place, infinitely more significant than any shifting of economic power (p.87).

Herman and Chomsky (1988) further take on this issue by giving warning that the media are able to be a powerful means for propaganda due to their ability to manage public opinion.

The “societal purpose” of the media is to inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state. The media serves this purpose in many ways: through selection of topics, distribution of concerns, framing of issues, filtering of information, emphasis and tone, and by keeping debate within the bounds of acceptable premises (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:xi).

It seems that to Herman and Chomsky, the media are always at risk of being manipulated and used by the ‘privileged groups’, which are more powerful than others in society (as also stated in Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012, p.22). Such manipulation blatantly endangers the equilibrium of the public sphere. While the more powerful sides earn a lot of advantages, the weaker sides lose their privilege as active actors in the public sphere. In response to this, Levinson (1999, who extends the argument of McLuhan, 1964) suggests the necessity of public’s role in controlling the media by redefining ‘the medium as the message’. Using this concept, Levinson resonates with the warning of McLuhan that the social implications of the ‘medium’ should be identified, rather than solely interpreting the messages they bear (McLuhan, 1964). The redefinition is important for our search in exploring the links between media and the society since audiences tend to focus on the content (e.g. soap operas) but largely fail to notice the structural elements (e.g. illusive obsession of urban-centric lifestyles) which has huge implications on the realms

11 The statement is from Walter Lippmann’s The Phantom Public; (Lippmann, 1927), cited in Levinson (1999:72)
12 For Lippmann, this problem arises from the expectation that the media (press) can make up for or correct deficiencies in the theory of democracy. Here, the media (newspapers) are regarded by democrats as a panacea for their own defects, whereas analysis of the nature of news and of the economic basis of journalism seems to show that the newspapers necessarily and inevitably reflect, and therefore, in greater or lesser measure, intensify, the defective organisation of public opinion.
13 We also refer to this important idea in our earlier report (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012, p. 22).
of social, political, economic and cultural life.

In today’s capitalist world, what McLuhan suggests resonates well when we think of the current practices of the media as an industry and as a sector of society. As the progress of the media has tremendously transformed our society into an ‘information-thirsty’ society (Castells, 2010), the accumulation of profit has always been the aim of today’s media; rather than serving the ‘civilising content’. What is referred to as ‘civilising content’ is a cluster of materials to help the public to mature and reflect in depth upon public concerns and discourses; for instance that content should reflect the diversity of society and that every single group in the society – in particular those who are vulnerable – deserve a fair coverage and accurate depiction in the media. Since the accumulation of profit has changed the media into a channel of mass production, they are also being controlled by actors involved in that production. Evidently, the media continually shape and reshape the way in which individuals, societies, and cultures learn, perceive, and understand the world. With the help of technologies, the media are able to amplify information at a single point in time to a mass audience. The media are so powerful that they can even impose ‘assumptions, bias, and values’ (McLuhan, 1964). As such, the media play a central role in the development of our society, and consequently become contested. Controlling the media has become more and more synonymous with controlling the public in terms of discourse, interest, and even taste (Curran, 1991). They who have power over media will gain advantages, while the weak(ened) ones will remain voiceless because they have no power to push in. The basic tenets of the media, both physical and non-physical, have shifted from being a medium and mediator of the public sphere that enables the critical engagement of citizens (Habermas, 1984, Habermas, 1987, Habermas, 1989), to being tools for power to ‘manufacture consent’ (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). This notion is important in understanding the dynamics of the media today – particularly mass media in any form.

Having outlined some basic ideas on the roles of the media in society, one aspect is clear: that the workings of the media rely heavily not only on its economic interest, but also its political influence. Hence, the understanding of the political economy of the media is important in order to reveal how power relations in media work and how economic motives drive them. This will help prevent the media from losing their social function and so, their very raison d’être.

### 2.2. Citizens’ right to media: Signifying a status of citizenship

Access to information, one of the main channels of which is the media, is essential for self-determination, for social and political participation, and for development (Samassékou, 2006). That is why a new awareness that citizens do have a stake in the media has arisen; for the media, to a certain extent, is a prerequisite of democracy. The power of mass media can enable participation of the governed in their government – hence, it becomes a cornerstone of democracy (Arnstein, 1969). In addition, the huge power of mass media is very significant not only in disseminating information and knowledge, but also in shaping values and norms, moulding attitudes and behaviour, and influencing the very process of living. In particular, the same access and power will enable the vulnerable to exercise their rights and to take part in civic engagement for they have channels, which could amplify their weak voices.

In addition, citizens’ participation in governance, for a long time, has been considered as the cornerstone of democracy (Arnstein, 1969). Moreover, a real democratic society lies in an informed society making political choices. Therefore, access to information is not only a basic right of citizens, but also a prerequisite of democracy itself (Joseph, 2005). In this regard, the media play a very important duty in protecting and enabling citizens to exercise their rights by retaining their public character and providing space for civic engagement. But nowadays, citizens’ rights to information – and freedom of expression as well – are being threatened precisely because, at present, it is almost impossible to acquire independent media that are detached from any interest group or economic or political interest. In
addition, it is even harder for the minority and vulnerable groups to channel their voices in the public sphere since they possess limited power in the media. This situation means that the interests of these ‘voices from below’ (Habermas, 1989) are not represented; and as a result, these citizens are unable to participate fully in crucial decision-making processes.

Democracy starts with citizens. A real democratic society depends upon an informed populace making political choices. Therefore, information and communication are integral to democracy. By the same token, the democratisation of communication is a prerequisite of democracy. The issues of citizens’ right to media, in particular citizen participation in policy-making or in news-making itself, have long been discussed both locally and globally. It is because citizens across the globe are slowly but surely waking up to the notion that they have a stake in the media, even if they are not always recognised as stakeholders by the powers that be in governments and media organisations. The new awareness is based on the understanding that, in today’s world, the mass media are increasingly playing the role once played by family, community, religion and formal education. A growing number of people everywhere are coming to the conclusion that it is important for the public to be critically aware of the media – not only in terms of programming, but also with regard to various determinants of policy, such as institutional structure, funding and regulation (Joseph, 2005). Jensen (2006) even emphasizes the importance of audiences taking a more active role in media structures, not only as users and consumers but also as (co-) producers of content – hence, valuing citizenship itself.

While people around the world are coming to the understanding that they need to be critical in terms of media, including the policy and institutional structure around it, the democratisation of communication still needs input from the state to guarantee the access. ‘Rights’ are considered as ‘rights’ if and only if there is someone who guarantees it. Therefore, in regard to this, citizens’ rights to media need a guarantor, i.e. the state. The state is needed to enable these rights, which will warrant the exercise of any other basic rights.

2.3. Citizens’ right to media: the role of state

The concept of ‘citizen’ implies a ‘nation’ whose public exists in a relationship of legal rights and status and whose appropriate activities are defined in terms of his relationship with the state. On the contrary, ‘consumer(ship)’ is a stateless, rootless subject whose activities consist of acts of selection and purchase in a market where products of all nations jostle for shelf space (Hilmes, 2004).

A true democracy requires a system of constant interaction with all citizens without exception. By this ideal, all citizens are equal: a unified decree that makes no distinctions between multitude of persons, where there is a shared common identity, and everyone is “equal before the law”. This idea of democracy actually resonates with the notion of nationality. Aristotle in Politics (section 1261a16-25) clearly emphasises the importance of acknowledging the diversity and the equality of each member of polis, since the emphasis on individual (homogeneity) will only produce tyranny.

Yet it is clear that if the process of unification advances beyond a certain point, the city will not be a city at all for a state essentially consists of a multitude of persons ... And not only does a city consist of a multitude of human beings, it consists of human beings differing in kind. A collection of persons all alike does not constitute a state. (Aristotle, Politics, section 1261a16-25).

Aristotle implies that diversity of individuals in the political process is being incorporated in the concept of citizenship. This concept assumes that individuals, who are different in their uniqueness, are none-
theless equal before the law. Only by giving each citizen equal right and participation, a public decision-making process can be implemented. In addition to this, the concept of citizens’ participation is the foundation of democracy. Alexis Tocqueville in *De la democratie en Amerique* (1835 (2010)) describes this: “equality of social conditions” as a spirit/basis of democracy.

Since by nature, the human being is not self-sufficient, they differ from one another and therefore need one to another; humans need communication for the process of self-revealing and need-fulfilment (Aristotle, 1944, section 1261a16-25). Communication is a process of self-revealing from different individuals. Hence, communication presupposes diversity. Through this perspective, communication becomes a primary aspect of diversity. Related to this view, Habermas also proposes the urgency of political communication in the contemporary modern state, both in the political system or in public spaces. Public space as a room for public discourse to produce public opinions and aspirations is meant to be a form of indirect control of the governance. In the same way, those opinions and aspirations are forms of public participation through the representatives. Here is precisely where the media take a significant role in channelling public aspirations.

In light of Aristotle and Habermas, it is very important that every citizen has appropriate access to media. Without every citizen being able to exercise their rights or take full participation in democratic process, the ideology of nationality has no meaning. Citizens’ rights to media are the ‘enabling rights’ as the rights have the capability to ensure the other basic rights are well provided and protected. By guaranteeing the citizens appropriate access to media, the citizens have the opportunity to shape knowledge and culture, and hence will enrich the culture, communication, and democracy as a whole. Therefore, the protection of citizens’ rights to media which could enable all these pleas is of the utmost importance.

The challenge here is that the entrenched interests of the media industry treat the idea of ‘participative’ (bottom-up) content generation and the provision of equal access to infrastructure as threats, rather than complementary pieces of a modern democracy and culture. The neoliberal approach openly highlights that the media are a part of the market. In this view, the output of the media is a commodity. The dynamic of the media is succumbed to in the laws of the market. There is always an exception, but the main symptom is there. Further, by precepts of market logic, audiences – as consumers – are objects of individualisation by which the market could capitalize on distinctions of class, gender, age, taste, etc. in an address that thrives on differentiation and segmentation. In consumerism audiences have a very limited space of expression. While citizens can address every aspect of cultural, social, political, and economic life, consumers find their expression merely in the marketplace. Therefore, running the media merely on the basis of business logic, making information merely a commodity and capitalising content, will have a detrimental impact on public participation. Such condition has disempowered the audiences as citizens since their very cultural, political, legal, social, and economic rights are neglected.

The protection of citizens’ rights to media assumes and requires two things. One, at the individual and community levels, the citizen needs to embrace these media abilities and the fact that it enables these cultural changes. In other words, they need to become capacitated and empowered not only in using, but also in creating the content of the media. Two, at the policy and governance levels, the appropriate access to media – both in terms of infrastructure and of content – needs to be provided and guarded. Therefore, the protection of citizens’ rights to media also requires the role of state.

Discussing citizens’ rights to media is also interesting if we include the discourse over ‘freedom’. By the maxim of the market system, ‘freedom’ is the freedom to choose according to personal taste, or ‘preferences’ in economic terminology: *eligo ergo sum*– I choose, therefore I am (Wolfson, 1994). If we stop here, it sounds wonderful. However, the neoliberal approach tends to degrade the preferences

14. Aristotle emphasises the importance of communication (speech, in his context) not only as a tool of survival (as Plato insisted) but also as a tool to understand each other and to have healthy discourses to achieve/shape shared life (Aristotle, section 1253)
into merely purchasing power. People could not have the freedom of preference if they do not have purchasing power. And how can we have purchasing power if we do not possess coffers?

Rights assume freedom. Freedom as autonomy, i.e. the power of self-government, is the foundation of right (Beiser, 2005, p. 197). If someone has the rights it means that he has a certain freedom over it. However in regard to citizens' rights to media, is it really genuine that the citizens are free to choose and access information? Or on the contrary, are the citizens left with very limited options and helplessly choose what is presented? When citizens are presented with apparent variety of free choices, what emerges is that these are actually made up of vacuities of similar kinds, then the so-called 'right to choose' is a formal term, without substance.

2.4. The notion of citizens’ right to media: Three areas

The idea of citizens’ right is always agreeable to all related stakeholders in the media field. It is similar to the idea of citizen participation. Participation of the governed in their government is, in theory, the cornerstone of democracy – a revered idea that is vigorously applauded by virtually everyone (Arnstein, 1969). Citizens’ right to information, on the other hand, is just one aspect of the whole issue of citizens’ right to media that should be fulfilled (Joseph, 2005). The media have a duty to protect and enable citizens to exercise their rights by retaining their public character and providing space for civic engagement.

‘Rights’ here refer to the UDHR15 – consistent with activists using ‘Article 19’ of the UDHR16 to defend media rights especially press institutions and journalists. We argue that today what matters the most is the ways in which the citizens who have a much-limited territory of freedom in media can be protected. Our argument is that citizens’ access in the media landscape could become a way to improve media rights. By proposing ‘access’, we highlight the very element that defines citizenship – in contrast to consumership – in the media study. As such, we focus our attention to the notion of ‘citizens’ right’ in the following three areas17:

First: Citizens’ access to information. Access to information allows the most vulnerable groups to be involved in human development with the potential to transform their lives. There are two aspects of rights here: (1) access to trustworthy information, and (2) the ability to generate information. Without specific information on, for example, rights to health, housing and work, citizens are not able to exercise these rights. It can also be considered as a way to empower citizens –not necessarily just those who are vulnerable —for trustworthy information can help citizens to make a right decision about their own lives or to get involved in the decision-making processes in the matters that relate to their citizenship. Likewise, the rights of citizens to generate information should be protected as this enables them to create content that can be shared among citizens to empower themselves. Often, bottom-up user-generated content leads to the creation of bottom-up trustworthy information. However, this requires another access, i.e. the access to infrastructure that enables content creation.

Second: Citizens’ access to media infrastructure. Access to media for citizens assumes and requires equal availability and access to the infrastructure. In the Indonesian case, most of the media and telecommunication infrastructure is unequally distributed. While radio has reached most of the country, followed by television (mainly state-run), quality media infrastructure, particularly and including high-speed cable that enables Internet-based media, is concentrated in Java-Bali and the western part of

16 The Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”
17 The three dimensions are largely based on the frame of the project, as being stated in the proposal and the Terms of Reference.
the country. With the advancement of user-generated content in Internet-based media, this situation hampers citizens’ capacity to produce and distribute content of their own (Nugroho, 2011).

Third: Citizens’ access to influence the regulatory framework. Public policy, and in general regulatory framework, must be made in consultation with citizens. However, uninformed and unempowered citizens cannot participate in such an important process—which is very much the case in Indonesia. It is imperative therefore to empower citizens in order to ensure their participation in decision making processes, specifically which relate to their rights—in this case the rights related to media.

The fulfilment of the above rights is central in a modern society whose life is predominantly characterised by the use of various media. The fulfilment of these rights is pivotal in empowering certain individuals and communities so they can play a bigger part in society. Through creating, disseminating and sharing information and knowledge, each individual, community, or society may develop and empower themselves. Seizing this opportunity requires openness and the ability to embrace and reflect on a number of different perspectives and realities, but at the same time also provides an enormous learning opportunity for all of us (Samassékou, 2006).

The fulfilment of citizens’ right to media also strengthens the very core of human rights itself, in which the dignity, integrity and vulnerability of each individual are considered. Therefore, as we are fulfilling the right to media, celebrations of the existence of people and their rights are also in the making: the right to a decent standard of living and to a life lived in freedom, without hunger, violence or suffering as well as the right to participate in society, to voice opinions and to be free from arbitrary intrusions or restrictions by the state and/or certain parties. In the Indonesian context, where there is sometimes a certain degree of ignorance about human rights issues, the promotion of citizen’s right to media is a gateway to improve the enforcement of many other economic and political rights. However, the exercising of media rights of the vulnerable groups is still very low. Our previous research finds that the vulnerable groups—in this case the Ahmadiyya, diffables, LGBTs and women-children—are continuously being misrepresented in the media and have a very limited access to co-create the content (Nugroho, Nugraha et al., 2012). Therefore, if we acknowledge access to media as an important condition for democratic participation and development—and for exercising freedom of expression—it is reasonable to argue for a positive state obligation to secure citizens’ access to information in the media (Jørgensen, 2006). The abandonment of citizen’s right to media would have severe impacts, not only on the process of democratisation, but also on the lives of every citizen.

2.5. Enabling the right to media, protecting the shared life

The media are present in order to create or to find possibilities for moving towards a shared life. As a central element in the development of society, the media are supposed to provide room in which the public can freely interact and engage over matters of public concern in the public sphere (Habermas, 1987, Habermas, 1984). In the context of an infant democracy like Indonesia, the media evidently have a pivotal role, i.e. as the ‘Fourth Estate’ (Carlyle, 1840:392, Schultz, 1998:49).

Media have been mandated to ensure their practices follow these ideals. Yet, the development of the media industry, heavily driven by market logic, has to some extent contributed to the changing character of the public sphere. The absence of media policy that is presumed to regulate the media industry makes the circumstance grow bleaker. Although the issue is raised, we find that the media have become less civilising in their programmes and can create serious consequences for citizens’ right to media infrastructure, content and participation in policymaking.

Since it is almost impossible to acquire independent media that are detached from any interest group
or economic and political stimulus, the minority and vulnerable groups—which are unfortunately considered less significant than the larger majority—will face serious obstacles in trying to channel their voices in the public sphere. Such a condition means that the interests of the minorities or the ‘voices from below’ (Habermas, 1989) are not properly represented and it does not provide a channel for these citizens to participate fully in crucial decision-making processes.

These circumstances ultimately endanger not only the democratisation processes, but also the exercise of citizens’ rights – in both political and daily lives. Since the media tend to prioritise certain interests over public concerns, the discussion of public matters is often ‘bottom of the list’. These conditions hamper the exercise of citizens’ right since they lose spaces in which they can participate in determining policies and discourses related to their lives. As conglomerates and concentration of ownership grow rapidly, there seems no urgent action from the government to protect the function of media to provide a public space for discourse. Instead, the government barely takes a role in setting up an appropriate mechanism to ensure the citizens’ right are fulfilled. An interesting definition on citizenship comes from sociologist T.H Marshall:

> A status, which is enjoyed by a person who is a full member of a community. Citizenship has three components: civil, political, and social. Civil rights are necessary for individual freedoms and are institutionalized in the law courts. Political citizenship guarantees the right to participate in the exercise of political power in the community, either by voting, or by holding political office. Social citizenship is the right to participate in an appropriate standard of living; this right is embodied in the welfare and educational systems of modern societies (Marshall, 1994:54)

Marshall’s definition suggests that an individual bears the status of a citizen only if s/he is given the chance to participate in the democratic process of their community/society. Based on that idea, removing media rights from an individual or group could therefore be categorised as an act of removal and rejection of an element of one’s citizenship. In a civilised society, the fulfilment of media rights is necessary to protect civility itself, as access to information (of which one of the main channels is the media) is essential for self-determination, for social and political participation and for development (Samassékou, 2006). That is why we can say that human rights, democracy and development are intertwined, and conversely the renunciation of such rights leads to the banality and denigration of citizens. Following the idea that civil society’s right to media is an important asset in democracy and civilisation (Joseph, 2005), the protection/guarantee of citizens’ right to media is a way to protect the civility itself. However, the whole idea is threatened since the media industry tends to put audiences as merely consumers, rather than citizens with rights.

Since a genuine democracy demands a system of constant interaction with all citizens without exception, accessibility at all levels, a public ethos which allows conflicting ideas to contend, and which provides for full participation on all aspects; the protection of the media rights which could enable all those dreams, is of paramount importance. Therefore, alarm bells should ring if the reflection of full civic participation is not present in the media. In the context of Indonesia, when uniform faces – especially which are built upon shallow rating mechanism – have replaced the diverse ones, whether in the printed media, on the television screen or any other media; actually the motto of “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” is about to die out. And, without every citizen being able to exercise their rights or take full participation in the democratic process, the ideology of nationality has no meaning.
3. Unpacking content determinism and the working of the media: Methods and data
3. Unpacking content determinism and the working of the media: Methods and data

“There are [some] media trying to be on the right track, but [the number of these] is small, very small. The rest [of the media], especially television, is rating driven. For example, when news-based channels are reporting on Century case, other channels treated the news only as a supplement. Even though the news [in the case of Century] is important public news and discussing trillions of public money, the issue is not ‘sexy’ and is uninteresting... it is only interesting for certain market, while most of the market [people] do not understand the issue. They [viewers] [prefer] more sensational issues, riots, things like that... because it is all rating-driven, and the truth is, the rating for those [sensational] issues are very high.”

(S. Syarief, Executive Producer Kompas TV, Interview, 08/01/2013)

This report studies the Indonesian media content as well as the working inside media companies and what factors influence the work of the media. This research aims to portray the Indonesian television content, and factors influencing the production of content inside the media and how this affects the citizens.

We have designed a rigorous yet practical methodology that would help us in sourcing valid data to provide a thorough portrayal of the content in media, what factors influence the production process in media, and to build a conceptual explanation for it. The use of multiple instruments for data collection was inevitable in order to construct a research approach suitable for addressing the complexities of the working of the media. We detail our research strategy briefly below.

3.1. Approach and methods

The data for this research was collected through a mixed method approach in order to uncover the depth and breadth of media content in the context of the workings of the media. The quantitative method through content analysis is used to address the notion of content diversity and as such demonstrates the breadth of this research. Meanwhile, the qualitative method is employed to examine the workings behind the production of media content as well as the factors influencing the production of such content. At the same time, the qualitative method demonstrates the depth of this research.

3.1.1. Quantitative approach through Content Analysis

Content analysis methodology is employed in this research to investigate a group of contexts that fulfils the concept of diversity and representativeness of citizens in media, taking the sample of television. Content analysis is a research method that uses reliable examination of content – in this case: television programmes – as data. (Weber, 1990, Krippendorff, 2012). Content analysis has been used in both
Taking a sample of TV programmes across 10 private TV channels in Indonesia, we record all-hour broadcast for 30 days from 11 September 2012 until 10 October 2012. The ten channels we look at are ANTV, Global TV, Indosiar, Metro TV, MNC TV, RCTI, SCTV, Trans 7, Trans TV and TV One. These channels are carefully chosen due to the fact that they are the largest group of stations that make up the majority share of Indonesian television (Nielsen (2010) as cited in Ensemble Consulting, 2010) and hence are in control of public discourse. We decide to exclude the state-owned station, TVRI, as its distant nature and lack in influencing public opinions do not provide a contextually sufficient ground to represent Indonesian media.

Calculating the errors and technical glitches during the recording period, the total observed hour of sample amounts to 4,080 hours and 47 minutes. We break down the content on the basis of programme unitising where one unit constitutes a cycle of story comprised of the common practice of 5W1H – who, what, when, where, why and how. We then analyse messages portrayed through these separate units, resulting to a total observed unit of sample of 12,694 units. With the help of coders from Remotivi, we provide descriptions of each unit to which we later base our coding classifications on. This is the operating ground through which we produce our analyses on media content.

Using it as a tool, we would like to see the diversity of Indonesian media content through the lens of citizenship, in which, diversity refers to the level of heterogeneity of content in terms of one or more specified characteristics. Variety in news media supply, for instance, may be measured in terms of distribution of attention across news categories, political stances, new genres, cultural foci and so on (Cuilenburg, 1999). Departing from this, our measure of citizenship is brought through seven variables, which are: geographical area, religious orientations, ethnic grouping, roles taken in society, level of access to infrastructure, disability grouping and sexual orientations.

The seven aforementioned variables of citizenship are constructed through strict derivation of the notion of identity. This rigorous classification is important in understanding the essence of diversity and representativeness, in which the construction of a person’s identity is symbolised by its innate qualities and how they work together in society. Given the multicultural nature of citizens, a wide range of spectrum of identities is ideally to be portrayed under the media that are supportive of an equal, open diversity. As stated by Kymlicka and Norman (2000):

"The health and stability of a modern democracy depends, not only on the justice of its institutions, but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens: e.g. their sense of identity, and how they view potentially competing forms of national, regional, ethnic, or religious identities; their ability to tolerate and work together with others who are different from themselves; their desire to participate in the political process in order to promote the public good and hold political authorities accountable; their willingness to show self-restraint and exercise personal responsibility in their economic demands, and in personal choices that affect their health and the environment; and their sense of justice and commitment to a fair distribution of resources."
In addition to the citizenship measure, we also take a secondary framework that measures consumer-ship, observed through six categories namely corruption, celebrities and lifestyle, terrorism, violence and crime, superstition and accidents and natural disasters. The consumership measure will not illustrate the notion of identity but explains the pervasiveness of the impulse-capitalising characteristics of television when reporting content. The importance of categorising content by its consumership values is relevant when we look at Indonesian media content where the industry abides very submissively to the rating system. The categorisations of citizenship (and later consumership) variables are briefly described below.

**Geographical context**

As one of the most important parts of identity, we include the proxy of geographical context in our analysis. This will help gauge how socio-economic progress is represented in the media by the coverage of a particular province. We divide this into the current 34 provinces in Indonesia: Aceh, North Sumatera, West Sumatera, Riau, Jambi, South Sumatera, Bengkulu, Lampung, Bangka Belitung Island, Riau Islands, DKI Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, DI Yogyakarta, East Java, Banten, Bali, West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, North Kalimantan, North Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, South Sulawesi, Southeast Sulawesi, Gorontalo, West Sulawesi, Maluku, North Maluku, West Papua and Papua. We also group the provinces according to their respective islands – Sumatera Island, Java Island, Bali and Nusa Tenggara Islands, Kalimantan Island, Sulawesi Island, Maluku Islands and Papua Island. To give better perspective on how the content of TV programmes is concentrated in the capital city and its area, we also group main cities around Jakarta and give them their own proxy – Jabodetabek, consisting of Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi. Contents that are representing national issues are also classified. (See Appendix 3.1.)

**Religious orientations**

We divide the religious orientations variable into 13 sub-variables. These sub-variables contain the 6 officially recognised religions in Indonesia (Islam, Protestant, Catholic, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism), plus the additional inclusion of atheism and agnosticism. To further recognise the notion of majority and the minority, we also allow for specific religious groups to be coded – done through the particular distinctions of Islam Sunni, Islam Syiah, Islam Ahmadiyya and the Adventism from their parent religions. (See Appendix 3.1.)

**Ethnic grouping**

Out of more than a thousand ethnic/sub-ethnic groups in Indonesia (Suryadinata, Arifin et al., 2003), we take the liberty to include only 21 ethnic groups, in which the top 11 refers to the classification of Suryadinata (the Javanese, the Sundanese, the Malay, the Madurese, the Batak, the Minangkabau, the Betawi, the Buginese, the Banteneese, the Banjarese, the Balinese). The remaining 10 groups were developed and added as the coding process was underway, indicating groups that are frequently covered on the television and appeared in more than one programme (the Chinese, the Acehnese, the Amungme, the Sasak, the Ambonese, the Talang Mamak, the Dayak, the Monesogo, the Anak Dalam and the Dani).

19. The inclusion of North Kalimantan is based on the UU.No. 20/2012 on a North Kalimantan Provincial Establishment [http://www.bbc.co.uk/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2012/10/121025_kalimantanutara.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2012/10/121025_kalimantanutara.shtml)
There are other ethnic groups observed, but due to their appearance only exclusively in one programme during the sample period, we classify them as outliers. These include the Toraja, the Togutil, the Bajo, the Abui, the Lom, the Bena, the Samawa, the Hoaulu, the Saiboklo, the Bercu, the Rimba, the Matabesi, the Deri, the Manggarai, the Sabu, the Sawang, the Banibani and the Sambori. (See Appendix 3.1.)

**Social Role**

We pay close attention to citizens’ identity and their roles in society. We attempt to denote this by classifying content based on the depiction of roles taken by the women, the underage, and students and youth. We classify content as fitting the underage when it directly mentions underage or is associated with characteristics of those aged 16 or below. Otherwise, when the content specifically states that the focus is students or those aged 16 to 30 years old, then this is coded as students and youth\(^{20}\). This group’s participation in public life is indispensable; hence our effort to assess their identities as portrayed in media. (See Appendix 3.1.)

**Access to infrastructure**

As we define citizenship through one’s identity, we would also like to address the issue of poverty as defining people in society. Taking from agreement of the 1995 United Nations World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) in Copenhagen, Denmark:

Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by a lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life (UNWSSD, 1995).

With the notion of low level of access to infrastructure, we measure the magnitude of poverty through three sub-categories. Firstly, there has to be a low level of access to economic infrastructure that is denoted by low purchasing power. Secondly, there exists a low level of access to political infrastructure, taking the form of low participation levels in collective decision-making such as influencing public policies. Thirdly, poverty is where there is a low level of access to social/cultural infrastructure, which is translated as a lack of ability in influencing/shaping social/cultural content.

When these deficiencies are addressed in content analysis, we can then answer the question of poverty in conjunction with citizens’ identity. (See Appendix 3.1.)

**Disability grouping**

We divide the disability grouping into three sub-variables, classifying those identified with only mental disability, only physical disability, and those with both mental and physical disabilities. (See Appendix 3.1.)

Sexual orientations

We focus on content outside of heterosexuality, resulting to classification of five sub-variables, including homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgender. We also provide separate inclusion for content with lesbian and gay homosexuality alike. The intention to include this variable is to assess how diverse and representative our media are when it comes to covering the wide-ranging sexual orientations of citizens. (See Appendix 3.1.)

We also observe content through several consumership measures. This will interweave the relationship between our own framework of citizenship and Nielsen’s rating. We would like to see how the following variables are incorporated in content, such that it contains more selling values to the audience. Our consumership proxies are content with either corruption or terrorism cases; and also those associated with the characteristics of celebrities and lifestyle (the fulfilment of tertiary needs), violence and crime, accidents and natural disasters and superstitious content. This will provide a sufficient gauge to draw correlation on the overall distribution of content (See Appendix 3.1.).

3.1.2. Qualitative approach

In accordance with our aim to understand factors influencing the working of media in Indonesia and to reveal how the production process in media unfolds, we found an interpretivist, qualitative approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) to be the most suitable. Following Cassell and Symon (2004), using this approach allowed us to focus on the processes, mechanisms, and details of the working inside the media in order to come up with some insights. Furthermore, we were aiming to offer some explanations and meanings for our findings. Here, we were concerned with the contemporary settings of the media and factors that affect its content production process. As such, using an interpretivist-qualitative approach allowed us the necessary flexibility in data collection. Ultimately, and perhaps most importantly, a qualitative approach such as this supports the use of the ‘insider’s view’ (Bryman and Bell, 2007), i.e. a phenomenon as perceived by the resource person, to be included in the analysis. This is important particularly to understand the inside mechanisms of how the media industry works.

We found that a qualitative approach was very useful when researching a complex subject – such as, in our case, the working of media and its dynamics — as it involves in-depth exploratory explanation. Some methodological literatures support this. A qualitative approach is useful when dealing with a research topic which needs to be approached using certain conceptual frameworks which are still developing (Creswell, 2003), or requires the combination of different theories (Cassell and Symon, 2004). In our case, we combined different theoretical perspectives on the political economy of the media (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, Mansell, 2001, Mansell, 2004), and on media studies particularly to understand the workings of private media (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, McChesney, 1999, Bagdikian, 2004) and how they address future challenges such as media convergence (Lawson-Borders, 2006). The understanding of citizens’ rights is built upon previous scholarly works (e.g. Benhabib, 2004, Janowitz, 1980, Joseph, 2005), particularly in the context of civil society in Indonesia and Southeast Asia (Bunnell, 1996, Eldridge, 1995, Ganie-Rochman, 2000, Hadiwinata, 2003, Warren, 2005). In other words, the qualitative approach employed here is a tool made up of some techniques intended to show the underlying processes that make the phenomena the way they are now; in this case, the pattern of media contents.

Here we need to assert that context is of central importance in qualitative research: it is both unique and dynamic. On the one hand, it is powerful in building an explanation as well as giving meaning to findings. But on the other hand, it makes qualitative study difficult to replicate. Approaching the media industry research from a qualitative perspective, therefore, requires a thorough and detailed contextualization, the reason for which is less quantifiable. As the qualitative approach dictates, we do not assume the existence of a single ‘truth’ somewhere ‘out there’ in reality waiting to be revealed. Instead, truth – in our case the content of the media – is interpretable, depending on the understanding, meaning, and context embodied within it (Cassell and Symon, 2004). Our approach as sketched above is not at all meant to be excessive, but to ensure rigour, as we are very well aware that a different epistemology would certainly result in a different interpretation of the ‘truth’ of the same single reality (Cassell...
In turn, we now put the approach into action by detailing the choice of methods, data collection strategy and instruments.

**Methods**

The qualitative approach provides a rich array of methods for collecting data, from interview, focus groups, workshops, ethnography, observation, to documents/texts, among others (Cassell and Symon, 2004, Creswell, 2003). For the purpose of this research, we gathered the secondary data from desk research, and primary data from in-depth semi-structured interviews. Our secondary data collection through desk study was intended to capture the process underlying the production process in media; hence to answer the first research question concerning the power flows in the media industry in Indonesia. This included the process of content production, the working inside the editorial room, the working of the journalists, and the mapping of the plausible actions for citizens and CSO in response to the current media industry setting. We also sourced statistics and quantitative data, whenever possible, to enrich these qualitative accounts.

We ask the questions: how are citizens’ rights to media strategised? What factors influenced this situation? How do they inter-relate the attainment of citizens’ rights to media? What are the implications of this?

Aside from the content analysis, our primary data source was the qualitative interviews that we conducted. This data was collected to answer the second and third research questions on the factors contributing to the shaping of the current structure of media industry, and the extent to which the development of the industry inter-relates to the attainment of citizens’ rights to media. We conducted expert interviews with media practitioners, media experts, and CSO activists in order to gain a more detailed and nuanced understanding – and some insider stories – on the ways in which the media industry in Indonesia has developed. What we consider central here is not the notion of representativeness, but rather whether the subjects have significant information or experience in their role (be they media practitioners, business owners, or journalists), or relevant expertise; considerations which are natural in qualitative research.

We devised our strategy and prepared the instruments to collect the data as outlined below.

**Data collection strategy and instruments**

We held a number of interviews with actors involved in running media businesses (e.g. media practitioners, media business owners or executives). With these people, our interviews focused on finding answers to the following key issues/questions: (i) how content is being produced in the media; (ii) how the media industry deals with interventions both from internal and external actors; (iii) the extent to which the media construct public news – including by means of censorship; and lastly, (iv) how the media retain its journalistic mission in the company.

Naturally, we follow the common practice in rigorous qualitative research of processing the data generated from the collection phase (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, Cassell and Symon, 2004, Creswell, 2003). In view of this, with the consent of our respondents we recorded all the interviews and transcribed them for content analysis as a standardised practice. (Please see Appendix 1 for the interview protocols).
3.2. Limitations

Although we have strived to ensure the validity of our research methods, we acknowledge some limitations. Firstly, some of the secondary data gathered from the official sources are not as up-to-date as we would have liked. For example, the data sourced from the Central Bureau for Statistic was last updated in 2010. Recording research data has probably not been standard practice in Indonesia, but nonetheless the lack of current data was an issue for our research. In response to this limitation, we therefore used whatever official data was available to us, and where possible we have updated them using other sources.

Secondly, the limited scope of the available data leads to the problem of representativeness or integration. Even when the data is available—including through purchasing—it is limited in many senses, the most crucial of which is that the data is scattered. The Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) does not have integrated data on information technology and communication; such information is currently scattered amongst different survey databases such as Survey Potensi Desa (Village Potentials Survey) and Survey Sosial Ekonomi Nasional/SUSENAS (National Social Economy Survey). Our solution to this was, again, to use all data available and work out for ourselves how to integrate them into our analysis.

Lastly, since we are trying to cover all types of media within the industry, the coverage itself is already thorough. It includes broadcasting media, print media and community media. As such, on the content analysis, we focus on the striking developments in television and the effects it has on citizens. Therefore the depth of our analysis for television is greater than that of the others. Despite the inevitable variation, we have tried our best to put each sector into perspective in our attempt to capture the workings of the media industry in Indonesia.

As a final note here, what we have aimed for is not a generalisation of results and findings. Rather, we aspire to present an in-depth, detailed, and thorough study at a national level; which, hopefully, can inform a wider audience on the topic.

3.3. Data profile

As elaborated above, the primary data was gathered through quantitative and qualitative approaches. With the quantitative data, we would like to show the extent to which the media accommodate the diverse identities of audience and to what extent they are widely represented. This was achieved by analysing the content of ten nation-wide television channels, which are ANTV, Global TV, Indosiar, Metro TV, MNC TV, RCTI, SCTV, Trans 7, Trans TV and TV One. The decision to exclude TVRI from our sample is due to the fact that these private media companies are the ones with complete control of nearly all Indonesia’s media channels and audience share. As such, a better sample for diversity and representativeness will be attained.

As for the qualitative approach, we interviewed twenty individual respondents and carried out one group interview. Of this number, fifteen were media practitioners and/or academics and five were media activists. After careful recording, each interview lasted on average for about 60 minutes, with the shortest lasting 43 minutes to the longest 180 minutes. There was some trouble in two of the recordings; where the memory card was corrupted. We managed this problem by summarising the interview by our notes, and sent the summary to the interviewee for further review. In total we recorded 21 hours and 37 minutes of interviews, which were then transcribed: as a result we have 122,605 words of text for our analysis.
Subsequently, our secondary data was gathered from various sources, i.e. the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, the Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology (BPPT), Nielsen, civil society organisations such as Aliansi Jurnalis Independent/Alliance of Independent Journalists, and the Press Council. We also sourced data directly from the media, i.e. Kompas, Tempo, and CT Corp. This data ranges from the year 1970 to 2011. All of the data, both the primary and secondary, are safely and securely stored in our database and some is available upon request, subject to the copyright conditions that are attached to some particular data.

We now turn to our case: *Creating content, shaping society: Do Indonesian media uphold the principle of citizenship?*
4. Debating diversity of media content: A look at data
4. Debating diversity of media content: A look at data

“It really depends on what you mean by the diversity of content, because if we look at the genre, everything is the same. What’s the format like, everything is the same, all sinetrons, all news, the same. The main concern is perspective. Is there a diversity in perspective? The second concern is workmanship. Currently it is very elitist, because we don’t see any media that is oriented to public’s interests – siding with the ordinary people, defending the labours, farmers – we see none.”

(Ade Armando, Academic, interview, 27/10/2011)

Through television, a central modern media device, viewers were provided with many great discussions on the dynamics of culture, of lifestyle, of how civilisation works and how people behave in consuming entertainment. But at the same time it is the very device that also affects and changes the viewers’ psyche on the same matters. The close psychological proximity of television with viewers’ idea of reality is vital when determining the content it chooses to broadcast. Viewers are presented with the visualisation of programmes, of what is inevitably seen as a model of ‘everyday life’. People watch and read in good part on the basis of what is readily available and intensively promoted (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). In this light, television is a visual prototype of life in a tube. Undeniably it is the crème de la crème of households, acting as a collective barometer of accomplishment where those who have made it into it are deemed a success. According to the Central Bureau for Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2012) at least 91.7% of all Indonesians over the age of 10 watch television. Furthermore, only 18.6% of the population listen to radio and 17.7% regularly read a newspaper or magazine. As the media with the highest audience penetration, television is crucial to citizens’ construction of opinions. It wins its way through the motion pictures that radio or newspapers lack. Through its visual portrayals, television has become the staple electronic device from Sabang to Merauke; from some remote hut roofed with leaves to a grand presidential palace. Television transcends economic, political and social status. It has become a parameter to the gateway of the ‘real world’: prisoners are confined to their solitude when a television is absent in the prison cell and television can bring life to patients in hospital wards.

The importance of television is therefore undeniable. However, a great debate occurs when media content is increasingly becoming a tool for those with access to capital to channel their individual aspirations, and for the media owners to wring out profit from ratings. In consequence, despite the public nature of the frequency being used by broadcasting media, instead of serving the viewers with diverse content, often those with power deliberately provide content that only works in their own favour. That is to say that the economic and political interests are ahead of those of social and public function (Herman and Chomsky, 1988).

It is true that within its economic nature, the media industry is a business requiring high investment. This entails a high pre-production cost (including pre-set-up research), production cost (field expenses, programme purchases) and post-production cost (distributions, copyrights) (Doyle, 2002). Not to mention the extremely high investment risk, as the industry is naturally selective of investors with a significant amount of capital. It is only natural that those who have a sufficient amount of capital to invest in media are of higher wealth than the majority, vindictive of many power abuses in media.
However, what we see on the screen are the priorities of the public that are being dominated by the private sectors or capital owners. Despite the claims that our media are already diverse, we are compelled to present the opposite. Media content is more than just meets the eye. It goes further beyond the pixels, as the messages lie in the implicitness of characters and the subconsciousness of viewers. Programmes are framed to express content that satisfies a basic human impulse, where people hunger for their intrinsic need – an instinct – to know what is occurring beyond their direct experience (Rosenstiel and Kovach, 2007). Through this, viewers are mostly stripped of their judgments, relocating their own consent to the sole authority of television, allowing a chance of indoctrination to step in.

The communications media of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with telegraphy and photography at their center, called the peek-a-boo world into existence, but we did not come to live there until television. Television gave the epistemological biases of the telegraph and the photograph their most potent expression, raising the interplay of image and instancy to an exquisite and dangerous perfection...To put it plainly, television is the command center of the new epistemology. There is no audience so young that it is barred from television. There is no poverty so abject that it must forgo television. There is no education so exalted that it is not modified by television. And most important of all, there is no subject of public interest—politics, news, education, religion, science, sports—that does not find its way to television. Which means that all public understanding of these subjects is shaped by the biases of television. (Postman, 1985, p. 77-78)

Therefore, although omnipresent, television should be treated with certain questioning, sharp filtering and critical reasoning; capabilities that go hand in hand with the increased level of education, which is interdependent with wealth (Filmer and Prichett, 2001). Coincidentally, as sampled by the paper, the measurement of wealth itself is done through several proxies. Wealth is indicated by a household’s valuable asset ownership, in which television is one of the tools to be used. Along with the possessions of clocks and sewing machines in households, televisions have become the gauging measure of global civilisation. It is an irony that this applies in the developing world where access to infrastructure is lower than average (Briceno-Garmendia, Estache et al., 2004). It clearly suggests the worth of television not only culturally, but also in terms of economic and rather consequentially, the political empowerment of citizens. People’s societal development is measured by whether they own a television set.

4.1. Media content: An arena for powerplay?

The strong nexus between power system and media industry is robustly manifested in the form of media content. In an industry with an oligopolistic nature (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012), the roles of those with superior access to media capitals drive the variety (or a lack thereof) of consumption enjoyed by the masses. Two conditions abound: at one end there is high infrastructural access possessed by certain number of media conglomerates; at the other there exists a deprivation of the basic informational access by the rest of the citizens. This indicates an unequal distribution of power in the media market.

This concentration of ownership is well translated into a concentration of production output. According to Cuilenburg (1999), this is due to the fierce level of competition between the few media outlets where it is dangerous for media producers to behave differently from their rivals. Media producers are inclined to generate contents that are perfect substitutes towards each other, resulting in a high homogeneity in the market of contents. Under economic assumptions, this is the type of market often evident in an oligopolistic competition. This tendency to produce similar products is the ground in which TV channels appear to offer identical content while the amount of producers are in fact numerous.

From that account, what Hotelling’s Law (1929) posits is largely true, whereby the attainment of maximum level of imaginable content diversity might be far-fetched. The Law argued that in practice, the
highest level of heterogeneity in content is unattainable because to survive in a competitive market, producers have the business instinct to drive competition towards conservatism and behave in a risk-avoiding manner. They will produce content that is as similar as possible to other existing content, and will stray away from offering something totally distinct. This validates the notion of excessive sameness, where there is a low degree of deviations in the characteristics of content.

However, all the circumstances above assume an industry in which individual interests are the vessels of market and financial gain is every producer’s prioritised concern. Whereas in the context of democracy, citizens hold the paramount position in the society and the granting of their rights is an essential measure in guarding pluralism (Rehg and Habermas, 1996). Hence, in a normative model, the role of journalism and media industry as a means to represent the diversity of citizens is the sine qua non of a healthy democratic society.

In the rich demographic landscape of Indonesia that is laden with geographical, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity, the aforementioned unevenness of media content signifies a violation towards citizens’ rights to media – which includes the access to information, access to infrastructure and access to participation in content production. Where the components forming media content are inclined towards certain qualities that are strongly associated with the powerful, for example a concentration of coverage towards a certain majority group of ethnicity or religion, then a revitalisation in power system is inevitable.

As we will further examine, there will not only be an imbalance in media content but more threateningly an emergence of a centralisation at best. Content is made to accommodate the largest target audience possible, using the account of ratings. As financial reward (market profit) is the interest of individual owners and this is maximised through advertising, which funds 90% of TV operations (Ernunsari, interview, 2013), practically all TV programme makers are competing with each other to produce content that will be most attractive to advertising buyers. Nielsen, as the sole rating agency in Indonesia, holds the uppermost position in determining the total audience for each programmes, and is therefore powerful enough to influence TV channels in the decision-making about which top-rated programmes should be capitalised on. With such measures, Nielsen not only functions as a stimulus or a barometer of success but also becomes the supreme mechanism that drives the whole media content production.

 Nielsen is a service to advertisers, not programme makers. Hence why programme makers dislike advertisers, because they end up being driven by advertising, as it is the main source of funding for our TV channels (Ria Ernunsari, Interview, 17/02/2013).

From that account, the centralisation of content is not aligned with the aim of equal coverage on diversity mentioned above. A healthy journalism and media industry will remove its sacralisation of the rating system and instead accommodate the diversity of citizens.

4.2. Measure of diversity and representativeness

In the context of the media industry, there are two notable identifiers on the healthiness of a democracy, one through the measurement of diversity and another through the measurement of representativeness. We lay out how we define the standards of diversity and representativeness before we arrive to the in-depth analysis of media content.

Media diversity refers to the degree to which media content is heterogeneous. It manifests itself in two
different forms, as reflective diversity and open diversity (Cuilenburg, 1999). The distinction between the two measures of diversity is as follows:

Do the media relate to society in such a way as to reflect, pro rata, the distribution of preference, opinion, allegiance or other characteristic as it appears in the population? Or is the content distribution within the media such that perfectly equal attention is given to all identifiable preferences, streams, or groups, or positions in society? If the first scenario is the case, the media adhere to reflection as the norm for media diversity: media content proportionally reflects differences in politics, religion, culture and social conditions in society in a more or less proportional way. If the second scenario holds, then media performance satisfies the norm of openness, that is, media uniformly, in arithmetically absolute terms, provide perfectly equal access to their channels for all people and all ideas in society (McQuail and Cuilenburg, 1983).

To further explain, when used as a measure of content heterogeneity, a reflective diversity will be an identical depiction of what happens in the society as it is, allowing the majority to be quantified more than the minority. On the other hand, an open diversity will be an illustration of the society, with each of their own differences being weighted equally, regardless of the majority or minority portions they hold in reality. As our observations will aim to pin down on how fair our media content have been towards the issue of not only the majority but also the minority, and whether those depictions of certain citizenship proxies are representative enough to be part of national consumption, an open diversity is surely the most favourable measure.

To simplify, we can take an example case of diversity in religious context. In Indonesia where 87% of population is made up of Muslims (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010), we assume that the remaining 13% are consequently divided between the other four of the admitted religions (merging the Protestants and the Catholics together): Christianity, Buddha, Hindu and Confucianism (note that local/traditional religions are not officially recognised and hence are not part of our analysis). To translate this in the context of media content, the notion of reflective diversity will offer a condition where media coverage on religion covers around 87% of its frequency containing Islamic characters, and distribute the remaining 13% towards the other religions. This concept of reflective diversity is illustrated below:

**Figure 4.1 Reflective diversity**

**Source:** Cuilenburg (1999)
We can see that the media coverage accommodates the majority and the minority in proportion identical to their share in a real-life situation. It serves as a perfect mirror to measure diversity. To explain in numbers, a reflective diversity will mean that for every 100 hours of coverage containing religion, a good 87 hours will be devoted to content on Islamic context and the remaining 13 hours will be allocated to the other four religions, with frequency depending on their respective share of the population.

With the same example, open diversity will offer a condition where, regardless of the majority of the religions held in Indonesia, the media will give coverage to all religions in numerically absolute equality. In other words, the total 100% of religious issues covered in media will equally be divided among 5 religions, giving each religion exactly the same amount of frequency, which in this case is 20%. This notion of open diversity can be demonstrated below:

![Figure 4.2 Open diversity](image)

**Source: Cuilenburg (1999)**

The figure above shows a straight line in which the media supply is quantified. This line implies an equal access to all religions regardless of them being the majority or minority. This straight line also indicates the maximum level of media diversity, in which heterogeneity is deemed to be at its best. Explaining in numbers, for every 100 hours of coverage related to religious issues, all religions and faith/belief systems (Islam, Christianity, Buddha, Hindu, Confucianism, also including atheism and agnosticism) would be covered in absolutely equal frequency, which in this example case translates to around 14.3 hours for each belief system (100 hours divided equally into seven aforementioned belief systems).

In our pursuit of the healthiest democracy imaginable, this notion of open diversity – where divergent preferences, perspectives, opinions, and ideas in society are in absolute terms equal (i.e. statistically uniform) (Cuilenburg, 1999) – is closely knitted with the concept of the public sphere put forward by Habermas (1984) in reference to *On Liberty* (Mill, 1859), whereby:

> Truth, in the great practical concerns of life, is so much a question of the reconciling and combining of opposites, that very few have minds sufficiently capacious and impartial to make the adjustment with an approach to correctness, and it has to be made by the
rough process of a struggle between combatants fighting under hostile banners. (Mill, 1859, p. 86).

...that only through diversity of opinion is there, in the existing state of human intellect, a chance of fair play to all sides of the truth. When there are persons to be found who for an exception to the apparent unanimity of the world on any subject, even if the world is in the right, it is always probable that dissentients have something worth hearing to say for themselves, and that truth would lose something by their silence. (Mill, 1859, p. 87).

The tendency for media is to report on one side of the ‘truth’. An important connection between media and the strengthening of society is displayed in how the citizenship is portrayed. If media allow citizens to participate and regards viewers, readers and listeners as active consumers rather than passive consumers, then the society is better off (Joseph, 2005).

The notion of media representativeness is assessed through qualitative measures. Taking an outlier sample, where cases are anecdotal but significant in quantity, we measure not only the frequency of any variable or sub-variable but also the variety of reportage that is received. This amalgamation between the diversity and representativeness measures is a key instrument in answering the question of how television content serves the public interests. We propose the extensive analyses below.

4.3. Diversity of content: A quantitative measure

In answering the question of whether our media qualify as ‘diverse’ or ‘representative’, we conducted a quantitative measure of examination by way of content analysis. Several proxies of diversity are incorporated in this analysis, using the main lens of citizens’ rights to media, which implies paying more attention to the content being conveyed to the audience, rather than the genre or format of the programmes.

We observe seven measures of citizenship including geographical context, religious orientation, ethnic grouping, sexual orientation, disability grouping, access to infrastructure and social roles. These categories indicate the main groups of rights we call media to fulfil through its coverage, within the basis of open diversity, which will provide us with a good understanding about how we, as citizens, are evidently portrayed. There are also six measures of consumership, which include topics on corruption, celebrities and lifestyle, terrorism, violence and crime, superstition and accidents and disasters.

We will cast a higher exposure on three main findings namely the categories of geographical context, religious orientation and ethnic grouping, as we later find out that they are strongly embedded within three main identities of citizenship – one’s living proximity, religion and ethnicity.

4.3.1. Geographical context

We find that when we classify content through its geographical identities, a stark pattern emerges. As we group the areas based on islands, we observe that 69.6% of content is concentrated in Java (refer to Figure 4.3.). The next biggest coverage is Sumatra with 14.7%, Sulawesi with 5.8% and the remaining 9.9% is distributed across Bali & Nusa Tenggara, Kalimantan, Maluku and Papua. Within the 69.6% of content based in Java, 49% is from Jakarta alone. West Java and East Java followed with 18.4% and 16.9%

21. Content analysis is a research method that uses reliable examination of content – in this case: television programmes – as data (Weber, 1990), (Krippendorff, 2012)
respectively. Immediately we can observe that there is a reflective diversity applied in content when classified by its geographical context.

**Figure 4.3 Distribution of content based on geographical context. Classified by islands.**

These figures correlate with the composition of population in Indonesia, where 57.48% are concentrated in Java, followed by Sumatra with 21% and Sulawesi 7.3% (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2012). Though when we classify content based on its provinces, we found that in general view, 58.7% of overall content with geographical context are concentrated in just three provinces: Jakarta (34.1%), West Java (12.8%) and East Java (11.8%). This Jakarta-centric focus is multidimensional: through geographical source of content, by reference and by visual measures, all of which will be elaborated upon later.

The domination of content by three provinces is a confirmation that media centre their audience not on the basis of their diversity but on the grounds of siding with the majority. Undeniably, Jakarta as the capital city and one with the highest density across the nation, with 14,469 people/km² (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010), is pivotal to the country’s political and economic progression. The 70% of domestic money circulating in Jakarta also reflects how the hustle and bustle of this province overrides the citizens’ rights in 32 other provinces. West and East Java, however, are a similar case to Jakarta in that the two provinces are among the most populated areas in the country and with that comes a robust economic activity. Infrastructures are more established in these three provinces compared to areas outside of Java, which may be the rationale behind the concentration of Nielsen’s rating sample. Reflectively, Nielsen’s allocation of rating decoders is also concentrated in the three provinces mentioned above, with their share of *people meter* in Jakarta as much as 59%, East Java 16% and West Java 14% (unpublished internal document of a private TV station). As this device records the number of people watching certain television programmes, it then becomes the sole rating system used in Indonesia.


23. For research purpose, source can be disclosed upon request.
During the sample period from 11 September 2012 to 10 October 2012, the second round of Pilkada (gubernatorial election) in Jakarta was underway. This once-in-five-year event visibly dominated the content across all channels. Airtime was high with news about the then incumbent Fauzi Bowo (Foke) and his opponent Joko Widodo (Jokowi) campaigning for victory, leading up to the election day in 20 September 2012. Both candidates received a high proportion of screen time, with one in every eleven units of all the content being broadcast on the television during the month reporting on Pilkada. The coverage varied from their prime-time live debate (Metro TV, September 16 2012), to each candidate’s visits to rural areas across Jakarta, to the quick counts that flooded across all TV channels in September 21 2012, and the reactions of people in Solo, even to private and trivial information of how Foke spent his Subuh (morning) prayer with santris prior to election hours (Trans 7, September 20 2012).

These very powerful messages were being thrown to the audience, who consist not only of Jakartans, but are spread all over Indonesia, being force-fed every detail of Jakartan life repeatedly for weeks. While on the exact same day as Pilkada in Jakarta there was also a gubernatorial election in Singkawang, West Kalimantan. Compared to 1,135 units of content on Jakarta’s Pilkada, Singkawang’s only received 9 units, broadcast by only Metro TV, TV One and RCTI. This indicates how the notion of open content diversity is not fulfilled. Those with power (access to infrastructure) drive the spectrum of programmes according to the biggest possible market gain instead of representing the true essence of journalism. As content producers follow the sacralisation of ratings, the option to generate news outside of Jakarta or Java seems bleak.

...so as I mentioned, there is a lack of experience and sense that those in more remote areas also need news but not about Jakarta. But this is also a problem, where what people in Pekanbaru deem interesting, might not be for people in Batu Mas. This is not an easy feat. (Fenty Effendi, TV One Producer, Interview, 07/01/2013)

It is evident that news is controlled. Driven by the measures of consumerism, content is skewed to areas with closest proximity not only to the psyche of the journalists but also in terms of geographical distance. This centralisation of content is a direct mirror of centralisation of power in media. It suggests that those with influence can channel their political interests through the public frequency that is the television. When the rights of the audience to information are of little consequence to media owners, expecting a participatory construction of identity seems a far-fetched idea.

The figure below shows the distribution of content based on geographical context. We can immediately observe several peaks outside of Java, namely North Sumatera, Riau and South Sulawesi.
The 10 dots drawn on the figure above indicate the provinces attached with Nielsen's people meter. The cities are Medan (North Sumatra), Palembang (South Sumatra), Jakarta (DKI Jakarta), Bandung (West Java), Semarang (Central Java), Yogyakarta (DI Yogyakarta), Surabaya (East Java), Denpasar (Bali), Banjarmasin (South Kalimantan) and Makassar (South Sulawesi). We can observe that most of the cities above are predominantly represented in the frequency of content. This is analogous to the rating concept, where those areas without Nielsen's people meter are dismissed of their consumption behaviour completely. As a result, unless there is a big event happening in those areas, coverage is minimal.

This is the reasoning behind the high frequency of content associated with Riau, a province with no Nielsen's people meter. During the sample period, a major multi-sport event National Sports Week (Pekan Olahraga Nasional PON) Riau was taking place (from 9-12 September 2012). This is the only event apart from Jakarta's Pilkada that received coverage from all the 10 television channels. The coverage ranged from the preparations of athletes, to the announcement of medal winners, to how the boxing match turned violent (Metro TV, 18 September 2012) and also about athletes who were dismissed of voting opportunities in Jakarta as they were away. Had Riau not had a big event like this one, they would be left represented by content about accidents, natural disasters (in Riau’s case, smog) or violent local protests.

This pattern occurs nationwide. Content outside of Jakarta, and especially Java, is laden with coverage on crime, violence, accidents, natural disasters, corruption and terrorism cases. The counts for crime and violence cases are the highest of all content, recorded as much as 1,736 units. Accidents and natural disasters cases follow with 1,062 units, corruption 752 units and terrorism 443 units.
The most notable violence and crime cases come from North Sumatra and South Sulawesi, where North Sumatra is associated with 92 units of violence and crime reports and South Sulawesi with 115 units. In North Sumatra, content is heavier on narcotics and marijuana smuggling while content in South Sulawesi is focused more on social unrests either between students or police. Accidents and natural disaster cases are also concentrated and repeated, mainly on the Bandang flood in West Sumatra, volcanic eruption in Mount Lokon in North Sulawesi, fire accident in Pasar Turi in East Java and smog in Riau and Central Kalimantan.

From this under-representation of areas outside of Java we can see the evidence that sensational characteristics are paramount for producers when generating content. The negative portrayal of provinces outside of Java does not serve the notion of representativeness. There is less regard in citizenship than consumership, in where the audience are subject to poor depiction because media sell what conflicts audience. Overall, there is homogeneity in content, shown by the low level of open diversity evident by cases above.

4.3.2. Religious orientations

In a country where 87% are Muslim (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010), it is easy to establish that the influence of religion in national culture is immense. The 207 million Muslims are a much bigger target audience for television owners compared to the 30 million people with different religious orientations.

What we have found through our observation is that there is a significant concentration of religious content in the media. Out of 769 units of content containing any religious identities, 744 relate to Islam, 16 to Christianity, 4 to Buddhism, 4 to Hinduism and only 1 to Confucianism. This translates as 96.75% of content being Islamic, 2% of Christianity, 0.5% each of Buddhism and Hinduism, and 0.13% of Confucianism.
Figure 4.5 Distribution of content based on religious orientations

Source: authors

The figure above not only indicates a reflective diversity but also illustrates that content with religious identities is hyper-imposed with Islamic values. According to BPS where 9.6% of populations are Christians, 1.69% are Hindus, 0.72% are Buddhists and 0.05% are Confucians (2010), the 96.75% of content associated with Islamic characteristics is evidence that television heavily favours the majority.

Through the observation period, there are several notable events that occurred which may be the origins of the high counts of Islamic content. In 11 September 2012 the video of *Innocence of Muslims* went viral through YouTube. This anti-Islamic content caused many protests from Muslims all over the world including Indonesia. The reports were intensified with many local demonstrations that escalated into violent attacks involving protesters, the police and local communities alike. A kick-off to this chain of reportage started on 12 September 2012 by Metro TV in its segment *Suara Anda*, which was broadcast between 19.14-20.05. Then a two-week long intensive report started on the evening of 14 September 2012 simultaneously by both Metro TV and TV One, reporting on a demonstration by the *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI) organisation in front of the Jakarta US Embassy. Both stations broadcast the protest in their Headline News slot. This was then followed by Indosiar at midnight on 15 September 2012, which had a snowball effect on the rest of the TV stations.

As the protests escalated to many other cities such as Cirebon, Bogor, Surabaya, Medan, Makassar, Kendari and Bima, the coverage multiplied. It only helped that the demonstrations turned very aggressive and resulted in many violent scenes being portrayed in the coverage, capitalising on every impulse of the audience that this act of destruction was taking place around their neighbourhood. We can observe how content is being duplicated through this case; evident by the widening genre of coverage. Not only did the *Innocence of Muslims* fit in the genre of news, but it slowly disseminated itself into

repeated talkshows (TV One, 15, 19, 21, 24 September 2012). The topics covered related to *Innocence of Muslims* also increased in variation, from the statement of *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (Indonesian Ulama Council - MUI) to ban the film (Metro TV, 19 September 2012), to the condemnation of the film by *Front Pembela Islam* (Islam Defender Front - FPI) (SCTV, 23 September 2013), to the attack of fast-food chain (a Western symbol) by college students in Kendari (Metro TV, 28 September 2012). This cycle of news was repeated until 28 September 2012. This case very well illustrates the mechanism of content duplication and how violence functions as an instant rating boost to television channels.

Another source of the massive Islamic identities being broadcast was the coverage of the annual pilgrimage (*haji*). Leading up to the Islamic festival Eid Al-Adha in 26 October 2012, all TV channels unanimously reported significantly on the journey process of the pilgrims. Deemed as one of the biggest religious holidays in Islam, Eid Al-Adha serves as the yearly festival much awaited by the Muslims. The figure below depicts the spectrum of religious-based issues being broadcast.

![Distribution of content based on religious orientation](image)

**Figure 4.6 Distribution of content based on religious orientation**

*Source: authors*

Although the massive exposure of Islamic identities is made up largely from two hot seasonal events during the sample period (*Innocence of Muslims* and the pilgrimage coverage share 46% of content with religious identities), using the normalisation theory we can still claim that Islam indeed dominates the religious content. Taking the instance of the regular preaching/religious teaching programmes, Islamic content still stands out with 125 units of frequency while Christianity was only covered 9 times, Hinduism three times and Buddhism twice. So, from the 18% of preaching/teaching shown on the figure above, 90% is largely associated with Islamic values.

A different pattern emerges in the coverage of other religious orientations. Content identified with
Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism are all dominated by preaching/religious teaching programmes. Our data shows that at least 60% of the coverage associated with the aforementioned religions consists of non-prime time (early morning) preaching/religious teaching programmes. The remaining 40% is made up of news and infotainment. This indicates that most TV channels only make a token effort to broadcast content about the minority religious groups, as a requirement, not as a participatory approach.

This is a contrast to a much richer variety in Islamic content, which ranges from preaching programmes, to sinetrons, to coverage of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) general assembly, to coverage of the ex-president Abdurrahman Wahid's 1000-day death commemoration, to the business of qurban leading up to Eid Al-Adha. There are numerous Islamic sinetrons being broadcast during prime time slots, for example Jalan ke Surga on Indosiar, shown from Sunday to Friday from 19.00-20.00. SCTV has Ustad Fotocopy, shown daily from 19.00-20.30 and an FTV series of Pacar In Ustadz shown from 09.30-12.00. MNC TV has Aku Naikkan Haji Emak broadcast from 12.00-14.30 and Hikmah Ilahi Tafakur from 22.30-23.30. RCTI also has its own share of prime time Islamic sinetrons such as Dalam Mihrab Cinta and Kemilau Cinta Kamila 2 (Berkah Ramadhan).

However, the most notable success is Tukang Bubur Naik Haji by RCTI, shown daily from 20.30-22.30 during the recording period. During the time of writing, the sinetron has extended its broadcast time from 19.00-22.30 and has run for 511 episodes, becoming the fourth longest running Indonesian sinetron of all time and is likely to continue rising. While there is a full-blown trend in Islamic entertainment, the case for other religions is not as starry. There is only one non-Islamic sinetron, Lembaran Kasih, a Christian monthly programme shown for only 30 minutes from 12.55-13.22 (RCTI, September 16 2012). Hence we can see the stark disparity of coverage between religions. Content bearing Islamic identities are not only given space during peak hours but are also allowed significantly longer airtime and higher frequency, while non-Islamic content is much less frequent.

In addition, some of the minimal coverage of Buddhist identity on television was framed in conjunction with the appearance of Fauzi Bowo, who was the Governor of Jakarta, when he visited the community in Jakarta during his gubernatorial election campaign (RCTI, 18 and 19 September 2012). The Confucianists appeared once when they donated staple foods (sembako) to the poor in Purwokerto, but this was only broadcast at the rather obscure hour of 01.32-01.58 (Trans 7, 12 September 2012). The cases above suggest that the media - in this instance television- do not provide a ‘popular’ stage for the minority religious groups.

Furthermore, the notion of content diversity can be explored using two measures: the quantity of the content frequency and the amount of different religious orientations covered. Using these, we can conclude from our data that out of the 10 TV channels, Trans TV offers the least diverse content while Indosiar the most. Trans TV only reported on one religion, Islam, with the frequency of 53 units, while Indosiar covered four different religious groups (Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism) with significantly even more frequencies. This is shown in figure 4.7.

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It can be concluded that religious insularity is highly evident in television. This is based on the uneven distribution of content between the religious components in Indonesia. The commodification of Islamic values is highly apparent as it dominates the screen time and broadcasting is strategically placed during prime time slots. The under-representation of other religious groups is a concern that should be addressed, as the exercise of tolerance is minimally depicted in media. This is theoretically suggestive that content is diffused in to society, acting as both institutions and an arena of moral and cultural production, which plays a role in reproducing and maintaining hegemony (Pratt, 2005). This is in close reference to the idea of ‘public sphere’ (Habermas, 1989), (Habermas, 2006) where the constructions of opinions are formulated in the open and in which the media provide the platform where a dominance of certain identity is portrayed. In the Indonesian context that is contained with richness in religious diversity, it is vitally important to grant these rights to the ‘minority’ in support of democracy; however, a high degree of religious tolerance is not evident in television.

4.3.3. Ethnic grouping

Silverstone (1994) said that the audience is ‘a potentially crucial pivot for the understanding of a whole range of social and cultural processes that bear on the central questions of public communication... [which are] essentially questions of culture’. Ethnic groups as focal points of cultural diversity then function as an identification of citizens, deserving of its own rights being fulfilled. Indonesia, with more than 1,000 ethnic/sub-ethnic groups (Suryadinata, Arifin et al., 2003) is a goldmine of rich cultural diversity.

However, when classifying media content based on its ethnic grouping, a concentration is found. The
lack of diversity is similar to that found when categorising content by geographical context or religious orientation. The data shows that 42.8% of the media content identifies with the Javanese culture. This implies that for every 10 items of content containing any ethnic qualities, 4 of them will be about the Javanese culture. The second largest ethnic group to appear in media is the Betawi with 8.5%, and the third largest group is shared equally between the Sundanese and the Minangkabau, each sharing 8% of content. The Balinese culture then follows with 7.5% of share. In other words, a good 74.63% of media contents with cultural identities is dominated by five major ethnic groups; the Javanese, the Sundanese, the Minangkabau, the Betawi and the Balinese. Figure 4.8 illustrates this point.

![Distribution of content based on ethnic grouping](image)

**Figure 4.8 Distribution of content based on ethnic grouping**

**Source:** authors

This mirrors the demographic landscape where the majority ethnic groups in the Indonesian population are the Javanese (40.2%) and the Sundanese (15.5%) (Statistik, 2010). However, on the contrary, the Batak, the Sulawesi and the Madura do not receive the next biggest media shares as they place third, fourth and fifth on the population chart (3.58%, 3.22% and 3.03% respectively according to BPS). Instead, the Betawi and the Minangkabau are more significantly represented in media, sharing 8.5%
and 8% respectively.

This domination of the Javanese, the Sundanese and the Betawi culture is unanimous across all TV channels except for Metro TV. This 24-hour news channel presents more coverage of the Chinese than the Sundanese and the Betawi compared to any other TV station. This is contributed to by its daily Xin Wen programme which covers Chinese identity, through using Mandarin as its medium and its coverage of Chinese festivals in Jakarta, communities in West Kalimantan and Chinese food. No other TV channel reports on the Chinese as comprehensively as Metro TV.

However, the notable domination of the Javanese and the Sundanese, which when combined amounts to more than half of the cultural references shown on television (50.8%), is evidence that our media still favour the majority. One of the sources of this concentration is given weight by the appearance of many Javanese identifiers, most pronouncedly the wayang comedy of Opera van Java shown on Trans 7. Broadcast daily for two hours in a prime time slot (20.00-22.00), it is the epitome of the centralisation of content. Given its exclusive broadcast hour, Opera van Java serves to be the entertainment for the masses, but falls to only draw humour from the perspectives of the Javanese, with visualisation packed with Javanese traditional costumes (batik) and musical instruments (gamelan), and presenting celebrities who are mostly popular in Java. Through this daily 120-minute show that is inevitably available to all audiences across Indonesia, there is a promotion of singularity in culture. Audiences are force-fed cultural elements that are heavy with references favouring the majority. It offers symbols of Javanese as not only a central culture but also a superior one, where an attempt to educate the understanding of modernity is done through the lens of a Javanese setting.

In a multi-ethnic environment such as Indonesia, the chance of depicting a high degree of diversity is abundant. Unfortunately, what transpires in our media is its singular identity which hopes to relate to the rest of the population. This is not only shown in entertainment or travel shows, but also in news programmes.

The interview above resonates with our observation. The dominance of certain cultures also results from the concentration of the identities of content producers. Taken from the 2011 data samples of Aliansi Jurnalis Indonesia (Alliance of Independent Journalists - AJI)27 whose 47% of members reside in Java, little content diversity is a parallel consequence of poor cultural references by content producers. This narrow proximity is symbolised best in Opera van Java.

Out of all 10 TV channels, Trans TV offers one of the most diverse contents, with its Monday-to-Friday programme, Ethnic Runaway, reporting especially on different ethnic groups each episode. Shown during a prime time slot (18.00-19.00), it is a semi-documentary on various cultural references such as the Hoaulu, Dayak, Monesogo, Sakuddei, Dawan, Dani, Toraja, Bajo, Togutil, Abui, Lom, Bena, Bercu and Saiboklo among others. The programme offers informative content about the respective ethnic groups, showing their unique ceremonial traditions, religious rituals, variations of culinary feast, ranges of textiles and at times obscure mythical references. By the aforementioned account, Ethnic Runaway serves the diverse representation of citizens very well. However, the show is also charged with its own rating-booster capacity, introducing two different celebrities to host the show each episode.

The programme being imprinted with celebrities, who often possess the cultural perspectives of those living in capital cities (modern, technologically advanced and unaware of the norms outside their own), is a validation of consumership being an indispensable factor in content. Honest, educative content cannot stand alone without the uplift of rating-driven measures, for example, the inclusion of celebrities.

ties in programmes. Often this means that the audience is forced to keep up with the cultural insularity of the hosts rather than enjoying the essence of the educative content itself.

Other notable rating-driven measures include the portrayal of violence when reporting the lesser-known ethnic groups. The Amungme in Papua for example, suffered from negative representation by the media, through the repeated reports of their violent protest on Freeport debacle on 22 September 2012 (TV One) and their aggressive behaviour caused by a murder case on 13 September 2012 (Trans 7). There was no other coverage of the group. This again reiterates the inability of a good-quality content to be independent of market-driven objectives.

If we indicate diversity quantitatively by the number of ethnic groups covered on television channels, our data shows that the five TV stations (Trans TV, Trans 7, TV One, Metro TV and ANTV) are amongst those with the most diverse content. Trans TV presented 14 different ethnic groups, Trans 7, 11 different ethnic groups, TV One, 9 groups, and Metro TV and ANTV, 8 groups. Trans 7 is especially diverse as a result of its many travel programmes containing cultural references such as the daily Ragam Indonesia and the weekly Wisata Malam. There is also a children’s programme, Si Bolang Bocah Petualang, a daily show in which the lead character, Bolang, goes on an adventure to a different province each episode. It is also noticeable that there is an identical pattern in content between Trans TV and Trans 7, which are owned by the same parent company CT Corp.

Although Trans TV and Trans 7 are laden with diverse content, other stations such as RCTI, Indosiar, Global TV, SCTV and MNC TV have little reference to ethnic diversity. Our data shows that RCTI, Indosiar and Global TV only presented three different ethnic groups and both SCTV and MNC TV only five groups. The two spectrums of diversity are shown in figure 4.9. Trans TV offers the most diversity among all TV channels while RCTI presents the least.
Figure 4.9 Level of diversity based on ethnic groups – RCTI and Trans TV

Source: authors

Using both measures of frequency and variety of content, we can observe that RCTI has the least diversity. RCTI only presented three different ethnic groups (the Balinese, the Betawi and the Javanese) with total frequency of 4, which is in contrast to Trans TV who covered at least a dozen other ethnic groups. This is largely due to the different methods of content production by the two TV channels, where RCTI tends to purchase content from outside of their own productions and Trans TV undertakes the approach of in-house productions. This allows Trans TV (and Trans 7, being under the same ownership) to determine their own topics and programmes to cover, resulting in more liberation in terms of governing content. As a consequence of this higher degree of freedom, both the number of ethnic groups presented is increased as well as the variety of topics and issues.

This is evident through the mapping issues, where RCTI only touched upon the topic of traditions and ceremonies while Trans TV is richer, covering many other topics such as historical documentary, wayang and references to the textile industry and culinary diversity.

Figure 4.10 illustrates the types of issues presented when reporting on ethnic groups. We observe that 31% of content covers traditions and ceremonies, 14% on historical background (*cerita rakyat*), 13% on textile references (with batik in domination, followed by ulos and tenun) and ranges of culinary products with 10% of the share.
With the dominance of the Javanese and the Sundanese in media content, we can conclude that when classifying content based on ethnic groups, both the citizenship and consumership measures still favour the majority. There is a significant lack of diversity of content, shown by not only the quantity of Javanese or Sundanese identities being broadcast (highest frequencies) but also the quality of it (long durations during prime time slots). This tendency of media to predispose of majority-siding cultural values is not conducive to the very notion of citizens’ rights, as it does not take the whole audience, with all their diversity, into account.

This predominance also endangers the survival of longstanding local cultures. Although, for example, Trans TV with its programme *Ethnic Runaway* presents numerous ethnic group diversities, those belonging to minor communities are still portrayed as outsiders and not involved in the production of content. The framing and the cultural lenses being used are still those of Jakartans or Javanese. This raises concerns about how the construction of the identity of the minority is addressed, because as argued by Ward, the majority sees the views of the minority as the sort of politics of narrow self-interest that they seek to overcome (1991). In other words, although the majority is active in their so-called participation in embracing the minority, what translates on the television screen may not indicate the true representation of the minority groups.
As a social practice, culture is not something that individuals possess, rather it is a social process in which individuals participate, in the context of changing historical conditions (Pratt, 2005). Therefore, a more citizen-driven content production is compulsory in granting the preservation of the highest diversity imaginable. The currently strong consumerness values attached to the coverage of cultural references is also evidence that educative content is deemed powerless standing alone, hence the need to frame the content with more consumer-friendly attributes. Again, this assumes that the audience are merely passive actors. If better ethnic diversity is to be presented on our television, both measures in quantitative and qualitative content reforms are needed.

4.4. The pendulum between citizenship & consumership: A conclusion

From the analyses above we can observe that our media are Jakarta-centric in terms of geographical context, Islam-centric in terms of religious orientations and Java-centric in terms of ethnic identities. These characteristics rule simultaneously while media function as the overseers of the all-inclusive system. As it institutes the ‘Fourth Estate’ (Carlyle, 1840, Schultz, 1998), its edifying contribution to the public sphere should be a prerequisite to a democratic polity.

The concept of “citizen” implies a “nation” whose public exists in a relationship of legal rights and status and whose appropriate activities are defined in terms of his relationship with the state. The “consumer”, on the other hand, is a stateless, rootless subject whose activities consist of acts of selection and purchase in a market where products of all nations jostle for shelf space. Further, by precepts of liberal democratic thinking, all citizens are equal; citizenship is a homogeneous, unified status that ideally makes no distinctions between citizens, who remain undifferentiated and “equal under the law.” Consumption, on the other hand, is usually conceptualized as a highly individualizing activity, by which markets identify and capitalize on – even create, if they can – distinctions of class, gender, age, region, taste, etc. in an address that thrives on differentiation and segmentation. (Hilmes, 2004)

Hitherto we have discovered the substantive tensions between citizenship and consumership portrayed in television content. In the framework of citizenship, we have observed there is a recurring concentration of identity characterisation – mainly through one's living proximity, religion and ethnicity. This has several implications. Firstly, it shows that the media not only favour the majority but to some extent hyper-impose their interests. Secondly, the media do not provide sufficient room for the themes of the marginalised, shown from the underdeveloped issues covered when representing the vulnerable groups. Thirdly, the involvement of citizens' participation in influencing content is one-sided and lacks an equitable representation, shown by programmes covering the minority portrayed mostly through the lens of the majority.

In the framework of consumership, we have also arrived at several conclusions. Firstly, media evidently do not operate accordingly to their main function as a service for the citizens; rather, they incorporate more consumership values in their output, winning the industry more income through advertising. Nielsen as the sole rating system plays a huge role in this manifestation. Secondly, there is an immense dependence of ‘pure’ content representation with consumership (market-driven) values, where the embedding of violence, crime, accidents, disasters and celebrity characters is indispensable. Lastly, and arguably most importantly, all these constructions of opinions and identities based on consumership are submerged in the audience's psyche overtime. It imposes a model of lifestyle that is laden with the superficial things in life, resulting in viewers that are trapped in consumerism, being isolated from one another and dangerously atomised (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, Chomsky, 2002).

Hence, the effort to bridge the importance of citizenship and the interest of consumership is refutably needed. Both internal and external reforms play a critical role. Internally, this can be done through the quality improvement of content productions through the actions of journalists, editors, and owners alike, also through a better rating system that does not focus solely on the capitalisation of viewers
merely as consumers. Externally, better government support to produce good journalism is also an alternative, which can be done through significantly more contributions in subsidy, grants and control systems alike (Bell, Anderson et al., 2012). Also equally important is the participation of citizens in influencing the content, which can be done through a more active contribution using the range of alternatives offered by new media. All in all, a media ecology that does not heavily depend on advertising is a more favoured system.

Such aspirational diversity and representativeness can only be materialised in media if we shift from a consumption-driven content towards a more citizen-driven one. Innovation in media, not only as an industry, but also as a public entity is pivotal. Through the next chapters, we will address the issues of the internal workings of the media industry, and what plausible alternatives we can undertake in order to strive for a better media system.
5. How media content is being produced: The logic of media works
5. How media content is being produced: The logic of media works

Alluring power to intervention, the owner cum politician, and fragile professionals [media worker]. Those three are the deadly combination [for our media]. And it is happening today.

(DD Laksono, Ex-Journalist & Documentary Filmmaker, Interview, 15/01/2013)

The rapid development of media industry has made the information industry become more and more contested. Combined with the development of technology that provides various means of communication, media are a powerful tool in the distribution of both information and entertainment – two things that are increasingly crucial to citizens. With various available options to access information e.g. broadcast, print or online, media are pressured to produce content in order to catch citizens’ attention.

In this chapter we try to examine how content is being produced and what factors influence the production of content before it is presented to the citizens. We found that there are three major aspects that influence content production in the media. The first is how the journalist gathered information and provided citizens with the information needed. As the first person to receive information, the journalist is expected to maintain the facts, accuracy, and objectivity of the information before it is presented to the citizens. The second aspect which influences content production in the media is the editorial room mechanism, where the information passes layers of authority prior to publication. Generally, in the editorial process, there are values of the companies that need to be incorporated in every publication. The values vary in each media company or outlet and to some extent act as a self-censorship that shapes the content of the information delivered by the media. The third aspect is the inevitable intervention, both from inside and outside the media. Inside, intervention could come from the aforementioned editorial process and also owner’ interest; while from outside this could come from the interests of the advertiser, the government or the elite.

Those three aspects above are co-shaping the content of the media and creating a system which influences how media produce their content. In the sub-chapters below we investigate how the media works and how the relation between intervention, editorial mechanism, and the work of the journalist drives the media.

5.1. History and background

The year 2011 saw the greatest number of mergers and acquisitions among media groups in the Indonesian media industry’s history. Indosiar Visual Mandiri (Indosiar) was bought by Elang Mahkota Teknologi, the holding company of Surya Citra Televisi (SCTV). The Chairul Tanjung Group (CT Group), the holding company of Trans TV and Trans 7, recently bought detik.com – one of the largest online media companies in Indonesia. In addition, several smaller groups such as beritasatu.com were acquired by the Lippo Group. Certainly, this is not the end of the story. More acquisitions and mergers seem to be imminent
From being under state's control, to becoming one of the main tools in measuring freedom of expression, media in Indonesia has become a highly competitive arena. In the New Order era, media – especially broadcasting media such as radio and television – were being closely watched by the government. Strict regulations were put in place to prevent the media from opposing the state's views. Media companies were owned by either government officials or those who had close relations with Soeharto. The political ideology imposed by the state very much dominated the media. Simply put, the media, then, became the medium through which the government disseminated their views. For example, the press industry had to face a series of bans for their dissenting news about the government – such as the case of Kompas, Tempo, and Sinar Harapan (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012) The one and only television station at the time, TVRI, was also entirely controlled by the government. Furthermore, the development of private television stations in Indonesia were also linked with Soeharto and his relatives. The government continued to keep a close watch on media, particularly the press.

When looking back at the history of television, the establishment of television stations in Indonesia seemed never intended for the public. TVRI served the government, and the other private stations belonged to Soeharto's close relatives. The television business started to flourish in the late 1980s. At first, RCTI was established in 1989 as pay-TV where citizens were charged with monthly payments. The station was also operated using a decoder and was a network television i.e. every region had their own version of RCTI. The changing nature of television in Indonesia (from networking to free-to-air) was caused by the establishment of TPI, a national network station belonged to Siti Hardijanti Rukmana – daughter of the then President Suharto – which aired using the state-owned TVRI's transmissions network and subsequently triggered protests from the other two stations at the time, RCTI and SCTV. Subsequently, the government allowed them to become free-to-air TV stations – a move that has changed the nature of the television broadcast model in Indonesia to this day.

In today's development, the growth of the media business perfectly reflects the law of the 'survival of the fittest': not all media companies have survived the competition. For example in 1999 there were 1,381 print media, while in 2010 only 1,076 of them survived (Lim, 2011) Today, the twelve biggest media groups control the cycle of information in Indonesian media (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012). Media have become a promising but tough business. It is promising as it carries benefits in terms of controlling any information that comes along with it, but it is also a tough business since not everyone understands how to run a media business. Since they are closely related to public life, media are also a business about trust and integrity, and it requires commitment in their running. Nevertheless, in the development of media industry, if businessmen own a medium, they often overlook its commitment to the public.

5.2. Power and media

According to Curran and Couldry (2003) the notion that “media are powerful” is a cliché, yet it opens a question. Power, in media, not only lies with the owner, but also within the system as a whole. Power in media is generally symbolic and persuasive, in the sense that the media primarily have the potential to control to some extent the minds of the readers or viewers, but not directly their actions (Dijk, 1995). Furthermore, McCombs and Shaw (1972), extending the idea of Bernard Cohen, argue that the press might not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but are stunningly successful in telling readers what to think about. As such, the power working in and surrounding the media is often seen as agenda-setting. Media could become an important tool for those seeking power, or media could also become a ‘power generator’ in which it processes information and converts it into something different – and perhaps more powerful. However, there are factors surrounding and inside the media that are influencing its work. These factors, to some extent, have the ability to shape the content of the media.
For example, based on our earlier analysis, content of television (news, entertainment, and lifestyle) are concentrated in Java, particularly Jakarta, West Java and East Java. All television (and other media channels) headquarters are located in Jakarta, and the biggest markets for advertising are also located in Java, particularly Jakarta, West Java and East Java. Therefore, this market leads the advertiser; who then advertise their product based on their target market, to make it also Java-centric. Citizens across Indonesia have to be exposed to content and advertisement from Jakarta and Java.

Intervention is also inevitable, whether it comes from inside or outside the media, and whether it is invisible intervention or outright intervention. This intervention correlates closely with the work of the journalists and editorial room in which they collate all the information before delivering it to the public.

More detailed explanations of the power and the media will be explained in following sub-chapters.

### 5.2.1. Censorship and intervention in media

Having the power to be involved in the work of the media is a privilege. Not only in terms of knowing the information, but also in manufacturing it prior to publication. When this happens, interventions in the workings of the media and in its construction of the news may occur. The process of constructing the news has always happened, it is only the techniques that have slightly changed. For instance, a former journalist turned filmmaker Dandhy Laksono had experienced interventions in his news both directly and indirectly, as such, he had to fight a tough battle to defend his independence. Although he ended up resigning from the company, Dandhy as one of the member of Aliansi Jurnalis Independen (Alliance of Independent Journalists – AJI) is still involved in the organisations’ work for the betterment of journalists.

It has been widely suspected that interventions from media owners or media executives happen in media and influence the content. But these interventions have become worse when they occur in broadcasting media, particularly television, which uses the public domain. At least 91.7% of all Indonesians over the age of 10 watched television in 2012. As the most consumed media, television has a bigger responsibility to the public, but at the same time, it is also the most profitable media. A conflict lies here: media should operate responsibly but it also acts as an economic institution that prioritises profit.

Often, an intervention may not come directly from the owner. However, there is a system that frames the work of the media and at the same time, it expresses owners’ interests in a subtle way. Furthermore, interventions often take place at management level, which then spillover to the editors. The means of intervention may manifest in the deconstruction of a story and publication (or lack of) a story based on request. Most of the time, this kind of request may be followed by a payment from the requester to the media. In this case, the editorial board may be paid to publish a story based on the requester's need. Editors then communicate this request to journalists/reporters and all desks in the media, to be executed. In some media, journalists have the power to turn down certain request to reconstruct a story. Journalists could communicate their objection not to execute such a task in a regular editorial meeting held by the media. However, this kind of ‘open discussion editorial’ is not common in today’s media. One respondent from a national television informed us that in his company, the request to insert certain (mostly not public) information is never written in black and white, but to some extent, they had to follow the request. They received commands or tasks from the editor and had to tackle the request. The request never came straight to the journalist in the field since they have less authority to decide which news should be published or not.

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28 See Chapter Four of this report
29 Dandhy’s case against two media owner was brought to Constitutional Court in 2012. Dandhy’s full testimony on his case could be read here: http://www.mahkamahkonstitusi.go.id/putusan/putusan_sidang_78%20PUU%202011-telah%20baca%203%20Okt%202012.pdf
Had it [the request] come straight to us, we still have the power to reject the request. But if that is an order [from the editor] that we get [to make the story], we cannot do anything. Although we asked ourselves what is the benefit of the story? [The editor said] Just make a story on it. So the one who is exploiting the power is not only the owner, but also those who sit in managerial level. We could understand if the order came from the owner, for the sake of his business or political organisation, but we [the journalists] cannot forgive those editors that use their power to manufacture the news, and gain profit out from it. (Undisclosed, ex-producer in national broadcasting company owned by a politician, Interview, 2013)

Based on the respondent’s information above, it seems that to a large extent, some media may operate under the circumstance that if one has power (in this case, money), one can buy a favour in news production. This news-buying scheme has happened in many channels of media. Usually, the request came from politicians, a government institution or even businessmen for their own personal benefit. The request came to editors who have the authority to publish news. Apparently, this is another way for those at managerial level to get more income. In this light, the whole process is institutionalised.

If we reject all the commands [from the editor], the system would not work. But we have to follow [the command], although we know this is stink [ordered-story], this story stinks. We are working on the story but our hearts are not in it... From [a] morality side, I feel like I've been spit on. (Undisclosed, ex-journalists in national broadcasting company, Interview, 19/03/2013)

From our interviews, it seems there are two kinds of mechanism operating in media companies. The first one is a closed-editorial mechanism where often, editorial meetings are one-way discussions. Therefore, journalists may not have any opportunity to express their views on some issues or are able to suggest what topics should be covered by the media. As such, the working relationship between editors and journalists may produce a situation that puts the journalist in a dilemmatic position: to follow the editors' request and keep his/her job or to turn down the request and get fired. This mechanism does not provide an opportunity for journalists and other media workers to voice their concerns, and also implies hegemonic relationships in the editorial room.

The second mechanism is an open-editorial process in which journalists and editors have the right to express their opinions and their objections to issues with no public value.

Sometimes we got [a] request or invitation on one [business-related] event. Usually, the commissioner put it on our desk or the editor's desk with a memo that it is an important event and has to be reported... It was not a public story, only something like promotion event from his [the commissioner] relative's company. We still reported the story, but only a short cover, and only mentioned it [the name of the company] in one or two sentences in an article... Is the commissioner happy? Of course not, he protested through the editor. But we have a principle, we already said that this is not public news, and that's it. (Undisclosed, journalists in national newspaper, Interview, 04/03/2013)

In 2007, we have to report a story on one company that causes flood in Jakarta. The company belongs to Ciputra, which was one of our commissioners at the time. Was there any intervention to not publish the story? No, not at all. So we wrote all of our investigations, including verification from Ciputra himself. He was very upset at the time, he didn't want to meet us and we can only talk to him at door stop interview only. I wrote the report, including Ciputra's denial on the case. When I gave the story to my editor, the sentence was changed into: “on confirmation, Ciputra, Commissioner of Tempo Inti Media denied...".
It means the editor reaffirmed that Ciputra is the owner of Tempo, but we still wrote his case. Of course he [Ciputra] was upset, he sent letters to us, and he did not attend our [Tempo] anniversary parties for years, but he knew very well that he could not treat us like that, he could not intervene [in] the editorial room. (A. Zulkifli, Senior Editor at TEMPO Magazine, Interview, 21/03/2013)

The second quote came from TEMPO who tries to maintain the openness in their editorial room by writing the facts whenever possible. Even if the request came from its commissioner, they still maintain the right to refuse, or to publish the news from different/public angle – not the commissioner’s angle. This open-editorial process largely depends on the professionalism of journalists and editors and the way in which they are able to maintain the accuracy of the information, and integrity to their profession.

**Political intervention in media**

Out of the biggest 12 media groups in Indonesia\(^{31}\), we noticed that 3 of the owners were affiliated with politics i.e. Surya Paloh owns Media Group, Aburizal Bakrie owns Visi Media Asia, and Hary Tanoesoedibjo who owns MNC Group. Mr Paloh is the head/chief of *Partai Nasional Demokrat* (National Democrat Party), while, Mr Bakrie is the Chairman of *Golongan Karya* party and Mr Tanoesoedibjo had recently moved from *Partai Nasional Demokrat* (National Democrat Party) to *Hanura (Hati Nurani Rakyat)* Party led by ex-General Wiranto. These three control almost all media platforms in Indonesia: broadcasting, print-media, and online media. The extent of this ownership structure is alarming, especially, if the trio exercised their power in media to serve their personal interests, particularly in television, where this practice has become apparent. For example: coverage on the declaration of Surya Paloh’s new party *Nasional Demokrat* in Metro TV, or a special report on the declaration of Aburizal Bakrie’ presidential candidacy in TV One. Besides the long duration of the coverage, both channels did not apply the same practice for the other political party’s declarations or events. By using the public domain, instead of serving public needs for information, those media delivered their own kind of information. They treated frequency as if it was their own private property, for their own personal interest. Intervention from the owner, and from external parties was blatantly exercised.

In one channel owned by a politician, we notice two types of reports in relation to the owner’s political activities. Those are: (1) Mandatory to be covered, (2) Mandatory to be broadcast. The first one means it is an obligation for journalists to report the event. Usually, a special team is assigned to cover the event. The second means the event has to be broadcast, whether through a live report or recording. Either way, these reports on their political activities have to be a priority. If it is mandatory to be broadcast, it means the programme, the time, and the duration have been specified from the beginning. They even have their own team specifically to handle all publications about the owner’s political activities.

...We even have our own team to handle this matter [the owner’s political coverage], and since the duration, even the script is fixed, we are not allowed to change anything, even punctuation marks. We only copy [the content] and paste it. Case closed. We have to put a blind eye on what's right or what's wrong [in the content]. But at the same time, we have to be responsible with the content. (Undisclosed, ex-worker in national broadcasting television owned by politician, Interview, 2013)

With this mechanism, the information delivered to the public is loaded with the owner’s interests. This has become problematic since they are also using frequency for broadcasting; which is a public good.

Besides the owner’s political intervention, there is also a censorship scheme within the media that creates boundaries around news stories and reports. There is never an official written censorship or

\(^{31}\) See Nugroho, et, al. (2012b)
rules on how you should work on a story, yet journalists and media workers are aware of what should be published what should not – especially on stories related to the owner. This situation confirms Bourdieu’s critics: the attention of the media to spectacle, disasters, and human interest stories over more substantive examinations of political and social issues; the media’s cynical attention to the “game” of politics as it is played by politicians and lobbyists, as opposed to an exploration of the concrete, material effects of these games; the “invisible censorship” exercised on the news both directly and indirectly by the market—in short, all of the various ways in which journalism imposes limits on the public’s vision of what constitutes reality and what correspondingly constitutes politics in this reality (Szeman, 2000).

Most of the time, journalists do not get specific orders or commands to tone-down their news—especially news related to their owner and/or owner’s relatives, but since it has become embedded in the working system, anyone involved in the system will feel the need to tone-down their content/news in order to be safe and to protect themselves and the newspaper from conflicts that might arise from it. This censorship applies at all levels, from managerial, editorial, to journalists and reporters.

A journalist who worked for one national newspaper confided to us that journalists recognise this invisible censorship and for that reason, they consciously avoid reporting on certain issues that might offend the owner, since, despite the hard work in collecting the facts, the story would not be published.

I do not report issues related to my newspaper’ owner, especially negative news on his political party or on his relative’s business. Not because the news is not important, but it is useless since my report will not be published by the editor... So why should I put a sweat into it? (Undisclosed, journalist in national newspaper owned by politician, Interview, 2013)

Another form of invisible censorship could also be seen in media that are not affiliated with any political party. In a media whose owner is not related to politics, we do not find any censorship mechanism. However, there are editorial standards on how to publish the news.

...There is no censorship mechanism, but editor has the authority to decide which story could be published and which is not. And the editor has no obligation to explain why [one story is being published while the other is not]. Of course this authority has considerations such as security [of the company], sufficiency of information, accuracy, and others. The point is, the editor has the authority to do so [decide publication]. Is there any editor who explains the reason why [they don’t publish a story]? Yes, and most of the time, the reason why one story is not being published is: it is not covering both sides, or it is reported in the same angle as the previous story. (A. Wisanggeni, journalist at Kompas, Interview, 09/01/2013)

The editorial standard is performed to make sure the story is worth publishing based on the media’s journalistic values. Although, we also found that some of unaffiliated media still take careful measures in reporting particular issues, and at the same time, indirectly, those media are creating boundaries for the story. Sometimes, this is more of a prudent approach with regards to the publication/reportage of ‘sensitive’ issues. Two examples are presented here to explain the notion. The first one is on the case of reportages on Ahmadiyya. When reporting the Ahmadiyya case, Kompas seldom discusses the reasoning of the case or the roots of the incident. Instead, Kompas only focuses on the incident, how many people died, the chronology of the incident, but never discuss the core problem. This editorial

32. To their followers, Ahmadiyya is considered to be a revival movement within Islam (Al Islam, 2012). The movement has now spread across the world, including to Indonesia. In 1980, MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia - the Indonesian Ulama Council) issued a fatwa against Ahmadiyya. The dictum of the fatwa of the MUI 5/1980 listed that MUI, based on data found in nine books of Ahmadiyya, declared that Jemaah Ahmadiyya was a non-Islam group, heretical and deviant. Some Ahmadis believed that the fatwa opened the gate for the next phase of national anti-Ahmadiyya movements and led to a series of attacks on Ahmadis’ bases (Nugroho, Nugraha, 2012: pg. 44-46).
standard/invisible-censorship happens because on the one hand, the newspaper feels the burden, related to their institution’s history. On the other hand, the pressure is still there – as a newspaper established with Catholic background – and has made them highly cautious in delivering news or publication related to another belief or religion, particularly Islam – which forms the majority in Indonesia. Kompas is a highly respectable national newspaper, with readers from citizens of all levels. But once it criticises, for example, Islamic radicals, there are concerns that the newspaper will receive protests from the public. Kompas, which is still rather conservative, may not want this to happen. As such, the editorial standard/invisible-censorship is being used to guarantee the safety of the company, and it has made the newspaper a safe player in journalism. In this light, the newspaper, on one hand, may report the phenomenon, the incident, and the event; on the other hand, it does not provide the readers with a deeper understanding of the issue.

The second case is the editorial standard in KBR68H. This radio station does not have any censorship mechanism on certain issues, they rather call it ‘carefulness’ in broadcasting or writing content, since for every item they have to consider the impact, both for them and for public, as they often aired discussions on human rights issues and several other sensitive issues. Therefore, they need to be extra careful in delivering the news without losing the importance of that news.

[On censorship] For certain issue, I guess we have to have it [censorship]. Especially on horizontal conflict. I don't consider it as censor, but more to carefulness. Also for sexual assault victims. We have to hide the identity. The point is, we have to obey journalistic principles and ethics. Therefore, in principle, we don't have censorship. But we applied carefulness. (H. Hendratmoko, Director of KBR68H, Interview, 10/01/2013)

We argue that whilst invisible censorship in the presence of safety issues may be accepted, however, such censorship for the purpose of personal interests should be avoided or rejected. Hence, journalists and editors as those who process the information play a great role in maintaining the accuracy of any news in the media. Journalists, editors, and everyone involved in creating the content are those who have to retain the standpoint of the media. This may be achieved by instilling journalistic ethics and principles and by performing regular discussions with journalists and editors in newsrooms. Selected media still hold their standpoint, as a social institution and are devoted to the public. These media understand that being in the media business means being in a credible and trustworthy business.

We interviewed several media where invisible censorship was applied. This invisible censorship that controls the whole system of the media is implanted from the first day the journalist joins the system. Even though it is not spoken or written, everyone working on the system knows very well on what they should or should not report. This censorship could also include codes of conduct and newsworthiness criteria of the media. However, in a media company in which its owner is affiliated with a political party, this censorship could hinder the truth. From the perspective of citizens’ rights, this system has threatened the right to obtain valid information, especially in a condition where media literacy is still to be developed. However, even though training for journalists occasionally takes place, the instilment of journalistic principles and ethics needs to become a daily discussion in editorial rooms to create a synergy between the journalist and the editor. These synergies could become a counter for the robust interventions in the newsroom.

We could argue that the problems of censorship and intervention are not only about politicising or commodification, but related to the work ethics of the journalist as an individual and also to the culture of the companies.
5.2.2. How advertisement works in media

There is a dual nature in the content being produced by media: a commodity and a public good. It is a commodity as media industries are using their products for the accumulation of profit. At the same time the content is a public good as it to some degree constitutes the public sphere. In other words, media institutions have a social, cultural, and political function; on the other hand they are driven by economic interest.33

Media are news providers; which also have to gain profit from their publications. To keep the media alive they require a reliable stream of income. One reliable source of income is advertising. Advertising is the lifeblood of virtually all mainstream media, which at the same time precludes serious critique of advertising businesses (Dijk, 1995). As the main source of income for media, advertising is also a highly competitive business, and media are trying hard to get the biggest share of it. Therefore there will always be a place in media for advertisement. From 2011 to 2012, advertising expenditure in media increased 20% to IDR 87 trillion.34 Advertising expenses in television leads with a 64% share of the total advertising expenses. It is not surprising that media companies are competing for a share in this advertising income. In this chapter we examine how the advertiser works in the media, and whether advertisers have the power to control editorial content.

Advertising in today’s media comes from various sources. The supervision of advertising is performed by various institutions such as the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, The National Agency of Drug and Food Control for advertisement on drugs, food, and cosmetics, The Ministry of Health for advertisement on medical equipment (only in electronic media), The Indonesian News Publishers Association for advertisement in print media, Badan Pengawas Periklanan – Persatuan Perusahaan Periklanan Indonesia (BPP-P3I) for its member’s advertising agency, The Ministry of Social Affairs for advertisement on lottery and The Film Censorship Board for off-screen advertisement. Those various institutions may have made the supervision of advertisement partial and limited – both in terms of the media platform and the products. Even now, there are still no specific rules or guidelines that clearly and comprehensively supervise advertisement. This situation might be one of the reasons why the number of violations in advertising – especially in media – is still high.

We can see more and more ‘jacket cover’ advertisements on our newspapers. Some of them are presented below:

Picture 5.1 Jacket cover advertising

Source: Kompas newspaper Sunday 20 January, 2013
The first one is an example of jacket cover advertisement that wrapped the newspaper and occupied the front and back page. Our sources told us that this kind of ad is the most expensive in a newspaper. Newspapers are also being used to make wedding announcements. The example above announces the wedding of the daughter of Hary Tanoesoedibjo, owner of the newspaper Koran Sindo. There is no regulation that prohibits this kind of advertisement. However, based on the ethics of journalism, such an announcement is surely not a public matter. Moreover, it shows us how media provide a wide space for (almost) any kind of advertisement, even though the advertisement took their headline/front-page space.

Several media have their own restrictions on who could advertise via them. For example, KBR68H has a very strict rule on advertising as they reject advertisement from cigarette companies on the grounds of public health consideration. On the other hand, Tempo; which claimed to be one of the most trusted media still accept cigarette advertisements in their magazine, even though they also report news on the dangers of smoking. The same case happens in newspapers; which reported on the traffic problems in Jakarta, but still accept advertisement from automotive companies, even making it a special feature.

Media are the most opportunistic institution in the world... They criticise problems, but also try to get profit [from] it through advertising. For example, Kompas continuously reports traffic problems in Jakarta, but at the same time also received automotive advertisements. It somehow became contradictory. Where is the firewall?... What is your [Kompas] position? (Kristiawan, Program Officer TIFA Foundation Indonesia, Interview, 16/11/2011)

The media are a very opportunistic business: it provides news and advocacy on one thing but also takes advantage of advertisements of products. According to a Nielsen survey on advertisement, in 2012, the
biggest advertiser in all kinds of media is still telecommunications, followed by government/political institutions in second place, and hair products in third place.\textsuperscript{35}

In some cases, media companies go to great lengths to consider the interest of the advertiser in the news creation. As such, a problematic situation arises: how far should the media take into account advertiser’s interests and sacrifice its public role in order to promote these interests? Often, some media even re-construct the news only to satisfy their advertiser and to keep a good relationship with them.

Once I was reporting on the profit loss of a Bank, when I gave the report to my editor, the news was changed into another news from the Bank, but not indicating their profit loss, the news is more [about] the development of the Bank, which [was] not on my earlier report. When I asked why, my editor told me that the Bank is one of our biggest advertisers, so it is better for us not to publish their profit-loss story (Undisclosed, journalist in national newspaper, Interview, 2013).

These examples show that whilst there may be no specific request from the advertiser to only publish good news about them, the need to please the advertiser and maintain good relationships often means that the editorial room manipulates their reporting to facilitate this. Although, this activity happens quite often in some media, there are others that do not care much about advertisers and still report any news about them, be it positive or negative. Journalists and editors play an important role here: in managing their reporting whilst resisting being ‘co-opted’ by the advertiser. As long as the journalist and editor stick to their journalistic codes, any newsworthy items about their advertiser should always be reported.

... I got a call from the biggest airfreight in Indonesia because I reported their delayed flights. It is not headline news, only short news. However, they seemed to be disturbed with the reporting and they called me. I told them that I was only doing my job, and it is [right] for the public to know the facts. I am sorry if you feel offended, but the report was based on the fact. Only later I figured out that the airfreight was one of our advertisers. But that is not a problem [in my media]. It is never a burden for us (Undisclosed, journalist at national newspaper, Interview, 14/03/2013).

In addition to the attempts to intervene in journalistic reports, advertisers that are concerned by some reports express their protests through the marketing desk. A marketing manager of one television company informed us that they often get protest calls from their advertiser. Most of the time, the protest concerns negative news about a brand.

Actually, it’s also a bit confusing for us [in Marketing]. We know that news desk is responsible for conveying the facts from the fields, from what happened in the society. For example: there’s news about a woman who died of food poisoning, after consuming an expired food brand. After the news is aired, we received complaints from the brand, since they advertised in our company but we still broadcast the news. The complaint is more to lack of verification from the news, it could have been the restaurant who kept the food for too long, but it does not always mean that their brand is causing the death. They do not want the news to create a misperception to their consumer. We [The Marketing] often reminded the news desk to be more careful and to do a verification on the news related to our advertiser. Maybe also providing a slot where the advertiser could state their side of facts... It does not mean that we covered the truth for the sake of the advertiser. No, we just want it to be balanced. Isn’t that also how journalistic process is supposed to be? (Undisclosed, Marketing Department of Television Company, Interview, 2013)

\textsuperscript{35} See \url{http://www.bisnis.com/belanja-iklan-2012-tumbuh-20-lebih-dari-rp87-triliun}

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Creating content, shaping society: Do Indonesian media uphold the principle of citizenship?
In dealing with the advertiser, media use agencies to help them determine which advertiser fits into what segments. Media marketing comes to an agency with their programme and explains the concept of the programme and its performance. Most of the time, media work closely with the agency, and not directly with the advertiser. From these agencies, media can connect with several advertisers in one go. Moreover, when media urgently need some advertisements, they can easily contact the agency to fill the gap for them.

Moreover, most advertisers are only concerned about the rating and performance of a programme as the basis for their advertisement placement. With numerous media channels today, marketers in media have to maintain a good relationship with their advertiser and their agency. This is a scheme that could backfire for the media, as sometimes they have to be careful in delivering news related to their advertiser. The dependence of media companies on advertising may seem to indirectly give the advertiser a degree of control over the content of the media. If the advertiser does not like the way their brand is being reported, the media can risk losing their ammunition to stay alive. Such control can only be exerted if the media allow it to happen.

I was reporting on an early campaign performed by Foke [Fauzi Bowo] when he was first running for Governor. Actually it [Foke and the party] did not state that it was an early campaign, but we all knew it was a campaign. So I reported it as his black campaign. The problem is, [it] turns out he [Foke] was about to place a huge ad in the newspaper, and after my story was published, I was rebuked by our marketing person as the marketing received protests from Foke’s campaign team, and they cancelled their advertisement with us (Undisclosed, journalist at national newspaper, Interview, 2013).

In the above case, the media were not concerned about losing one advertisement as long as they provided news based on the facts, however, we also found other media who manipulate the news they report according to their advertiser. They prefer to only report on the positive news, and turn a blind eye to the news that might offend the advertiser.

Another form of advertisement is called **blocking segment** or **built-in advertisement**[^1]. This is of hidden advertisement that is embedded into a programme or article. An example of this kind of advertisement is on infotainment[^2] in television. There are times where the celebrities are promoting products in their coverage while telling stories on their daily life. And even though this **blocking segment** advertisement is very expensive, some companies do not mind to paying the expense. **Built-in** advertisement is much more expensive than regular commercial advertising because they are embedded in content; which requires creative work. The advantage of this built-in commercial is, viewers may find it difficult to just skip it, since they are embedded in the story or the show. The built-in advertisement is found often in infotainment, entertainment and lifestyle shows.

In order to maintain the quality and accuracy of media content and to avoid being co-opted by the advertiser, media need to apply a standard in their advertorial desk, not only in their newsrooms. This standard needs to be performed in advertorial screening. Whatever commercial appears in the media should also become the company's responsibility since it is using their platform. One company cannot put aside their responsibility over any advertisement in their media outlet.

Last year, in 2012, through **Pedoman Perilaku Penyiaran dan Standar Program Penyiaran** (Conduct and standards guide for broadcast programmes - P3SPS), the **Komisi Penyiarian Indonesia** (Indonesian Broadcasting Commissioner - KPI) enacted a limit for television advertisings to a maximum of 20% of the total broadcasting hours[^3]. This decision received protests from the companies; arguing that the regulation

[^1]: **Built-in advertisement** and **blocking segment** is a type of advertisement; which give exclusive exposure of a product. This type of advertisement usually appears in a non-drama programme, particularly in television.

[^2]: Infotainment is the news on public figures and celebrities on television; which focuses on what is most diverting rather than on discipline of verification. (Kovach, B. & Rosenstiel, T.)

[^3]: See **Pedoman & Standar Siaran Batasi Iklan**, TV Swasta Menjerit (Broadcasting Guidelines Limit Adver-
had not been discussed with the broadcasting industry, and that 20% was too small a proportion for television companies since advertisements are their main source of income. The debate on advertising is still ongoing since there are no specific law on advertisement in Indonesia. Towards the national election in 2014, KPI together with Komisi Pemilihan Umum (General Elections Commissions – KPU) has started to design regulations for political advertisement and campaigns in media. Since political advertisement is the second biggest advertiser, its execution needs to be closely monitored.

5.3. Independence in the media/autonomy in the media

The dual nature of media makes the assumption that media are an independent force, naturally safeguarding democracy and the public interest rather questionable. Media are struggling to gain public attention. Those with stronger financial capacity could use their media outlet for their own personal interests. Although there are options in channels, content-wise, the options are more limited; and it is this lack of option combined with private interests that could distort the information received by viewers/readers. The work of the media inside the newsroom has showed us the extent of the independence of journalists and editorial processes.

Independence in the media is ‘luxurious’. A newsroom in which the journalists can express their concerns and still have discussions with editors is not easy to find. This research finds that the independence of the journalist and editor only happens when there are spaces inside the media system. This space enables journalists and editors to express their thoughts and therefore opens up room for discussion. In most media, particularly in media where its owners are related to politics, those spaces are rather difficult to find. On the contrary, the system is made in such a way that newsroom is trapped within boundaries that are set to keep the content in-line with private interests.

The discussion of interventions and how media are surrounded by internal and external power then poses a question about independency in media. From advertisement to owner interest, intervention is inevitable, both in the editorial room and also amongst journalists. Most of the media are still struggling to shield their newsrooms from blatant internal and external interventions. Moreover, the corporate culture of a media also has influence over the works of the journalist and editorial room. Here, journalists and editors play important roles in retaining the independency of their newsrooms and maintaining the accuracy of their reports. A stronger and qualified journalist and editorial room will likely produce more high quality information. Vice versa, a weaker journalist with less integrity to his profession will be more likely to produce low quality information and open up spaces for intervention.

Independent state bureaus such as KPI and the Press Council had the responsibility to monitor the workings of the media, including the journalists. Unfortunately, they only have limited authority in giving sanctions to the media who violated journalistic codes of ethics.

Journalist organisation such as Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Journalist-PWI) and Aliansi Jurnalis Independen (Alliance of Independent Journalists – AJI) maintain the professionalism of its members through trainings and seminars, whilst many other organizations also provide training for journalists. Continuing the discussion of journalists and watchdogs, the next chapter will focus on journalists and the role of civil society in the betterment of the media.

6. Deliberating and strategising involvement: Revisiting the role of journalists and communities
6. Deliberating and strategising involvement: Revisiting the role of journalists and communities

...Being a journalist is not merely an employment... But there is also dedication and calling [to become a journalist]. Dedication, and love [of what you do]. Like what you do is the freedom... This is more than just an employment...It is to serve. To serve the public... We nurtured these values, even though not all of them are successful. (H. Hendratmoko, KBR68H, interview, 10/01/2013)

The question on diversity and the quality of media content has become central; not only because media industries in Indonesia are found to be controlled by 12 big groups, but also because it is directly related to citizens’ rights to media and the dynamic culture of the citizens. The structure of media industry is seen through growth and mergers of media companies that affected the production of content as explained in Chapter Four. Outside the structure, the diversity and quality of media could not be separated from the aspect of the content creator, the newsroom and particularly the journalist.

With the structure of today’s media industry, journalists have two big challenges in doing their job, i.e.: (1) interventions, and (2) speed. Journalists have to deliver the news in as short a timeframe as possible and at the same time maintain the quality of their work based on the ethics of journalism – a standard that is often unfulfilled. This challenge is affecting their work in constructing and delivering the content. This chapter will elaborate on how the changing structure of the media industry affects the quality of the journalists, and whether, and to what extent, this situation relates to their professional commitment.

6.1. Quality of journalism

The Reformasi 1998 marked the new beginning of an ‘enchanting’ period in Indonesia’s media history. Journalist organisations were established to maintain the freedom of press and the professionalism of journalists. Aliansi Jurnalis Independen (Alliance of Independent Journalist – AJI) was established in 1994 and has 1813 members today40. The pioneer of journalist organisation, Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Journalists -PWI) had reached 14000 members41. Today, Indonesian journalists feel challenged by the grace of the freedom of press after decades of being under the repressive New Order era. Although there is the blessing of a more democratic press; there is a growing concern about a decline of professionalism in Indonesian journalism.

40 See http://ajiindonesia.or.id/read/page/halaman/42/anggota.html
41 See http://pwinews.blogspot.com/2012/06/normal-0-false-false-false-en-us-x-none.html
A recent survey conducted by the Washington State University and *Pantau* (Pintak and Setiyono, 2010) finds that although Indonesian journalists are deeply critical in order to continue the evolution of the country's political landscape, the journalists themselves see the lack of professionalism, poor journalistic ethics and corruption among journalists as the greatest challenges to their profession. The complete result of the greatest challenges faced by contemporary Indonesian journalism based on the survey is shown in the following figure.

![Greatest challenges to Indonesian journalism](image)

**Figure 6.1. Challenges to Indonesian journalism, from journalist perspective (in percent)**

**Source:** Pintak and Setiyono (2010)

The lack of professionalism in journalism might have a correlation with the growing media industry that needs more and more journalists and reporters. This high demand, unfortunately, is not matched by the quality of the journalist. A significant number of them seem to have not received adequate training before jumping into the field. This lack of training often makes journalists and reporters become ‘interrogators’, by asking accusative questions, in a manner no different to that of a police officer. In this case, journalists sometimes are not aware of the journalistic code of ethics, or, they neglect the ethics for the sake of sensationalism.

Our journalist is not that well educated. [They] only [work] for the programme. Consequently, it [the work] is not good enough. I saw on television, a reporter interviewing a victim of car accidents, with blood all over the victim’s face. The reporter asked: “how do you feel?” If I were the victim, I will throw anything I could throw at the reporter. It is obvious that he is the victim [of an accident], but still the report asked the feeling. That case happened because they [the reporters] do not receive enough training in their media. All of it [their work] is moved by the speed *per se*. (H. Hendratmoko, News Director, KBR68H, 10/01/2013)

Inadequate training has also affected the journalist’s role as a watchdog. Within the industry, there seem to be little scope for nurturing journalists to take on this function. From the journalists’ side, they
seem to be unwilling to perform the role due to the inadequate protection from the industry and from the government.

Another factor affecting the quality of journalists is the speed of information they need to cope with. The progress of journalism as a profession cannot be detached from the development of technology through which people can now get more information in a shorter period of time. This instant information has impacted upon the way in which we digest information. Citizens are exposed to information concerned more with life-style rather than civic/public life. The need to provide information in a short period of time (especially in daily media and online media) has affected the way in which the journalist processes information. The explosion of dotcom technologies also contributes to the low quality of journalism where some steps on verification and accuracy might be neglected to maintain the speed of information. In certain cases, the incomplete/inadequate (technical) skill leads also to the violation of the journalistic code of ethics.

One of our sources illustrates the lack of technical skills of journalists, especially the junior journalist who has less of experiences in a journalistic world. Due to the increasing pressure of time and cost, the journalists often have no sufficient occasion/space to generate rich news stories by doing further checking including data verification.

> Sometimes I see a journalist with ‘dotcom’ style who works in television. S/he broadcasts a story even though it is still not covering both sides. They were thinking it is tolerable to broadcast the story [without covering both sides], and they could update it later. For the sake of speed, they don't bother waiting for both sides of the story (Maman Suherman, Journalist, Presenter and Writer, Interview, 23/01/2013).

Reflecting the wider context, such a situation is worsened by the chaotic ‘marriage’ of concentration of ownership. This may be exacerbated by an unprofessional editorial desk and unreliable media workers that enable interventions to happen.

> What is happening now is, a centralistic ownership structure, dependent editorial room, and professionals who often worked in grey area. Those are a dangerous combination for [the] public. And it is happening now (DD Laksono, member of AJI, Interview, 15/01/2013).

In examining the quality of journalists, we cannot put aside the structure of the industry itself. The structure here refers, but is not limited, to the working system in the media and wages of journalists and editor. A survey conducted by Aliansi Jurnalis Independen (Alliance of Independent Journalist – AJI) in 2011 found that most of the journalists in mainstream media received a salary above the minimum wage, but other journalists in small media companies still receive salaries even under the minimum wage. Furthermore, the survey found that journalists in big cities have more chance of receiving a higher salary, although a high salary does not necessarily mean that it is decent for daily needs. Welfare is another issue for today’s journalist that also influences the way they work.

Aside from the professionalism of journalist, this low wage contributes to what we call envelope journalism, whereby journalists take bribes from newsmakers for favourable coverage. The practice happened because journalists were not trained well in terms of journalistic ethics, and they did not receive decent payment from the company. Often, their low wages hindered journalists in delivering reports on hard news such as corruption and other political issues and they ended up practicing unethical solutions; receiving envelopes from the officials.

42 The full report of the survey is also available for download at http://journalis.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/buku-upah-layak-aji-2011.pdf
[On wages]... It is not enough. Sometimes we [journalist] use our own motorcycle [to cover a story], so journalists accept it [the envelope containing bribery money] easily... If [the journalist] were from online [media], they will get around 150,000-300,000 Rupiahs. Broadcast journalist could get around 500,000-1,000,000 Rupiahs. And they [the journalist] are not alone. They usually come with a cameraman, or with a driver. They share [the bribe] among them... Sometimes, the owner [of the media] turned a blind eye on this practice since they could only give [the journalist] low wages... they could not provide the money (Undisclosed, Senior journalist, Interview, 2013).

This practice has impacted upon the quality of reporting. To make it worse, the owner and editorial board does not have much concern about it. What matters to the owner is that the journalist gets the news and information to be published in the media. They do not really care about the process.

... Based on my own experience, a producer told me: “I don't want to know [the process], what matter is you [the journalist] have to get the news. If it [the news] get protested or being sued, I will dismiss you [from the job].” ... So what matters to them is the news, the report. Whether we received any envelope [bribe] or not, it is our [the journalist] own business. In case something bad happened [with the report], they [the owner] do not want to be involved... They will put their hands off it (Undisclosed, Senior journalist, Interview, 2013).

The company may be aware of the needs of their journalist, but they may be unable to pay a higher salary. Instead, they turn a blind eye to envelope journalism and let the journalist make their own extra income. What matters is that they have news and reports to be published every day, whatever the process by which they are acquired. The problem is not easy to solve, as it is also associated with the structure of the industry itself, especially the print media industry. Print-media do not use frequency to operate, and since there is no SIUPP needed to establish a print-media, anyone could establish one as long as they have enough capital. Moreover, there are also people who were so desperate for a job that they turned to envelope journalism as a means to meet their daily needs.

However, the blame lies not only with the journalists. They are the victims of the arrogance of their bosses and media groups. Welfare is one important issue if we want to ensure commitment to quality journalism, rather than just provide people with employment as a journalist.

6.2. Between commitment and employment

Journalism is a profession that has a social function. Journalists have a responsibility to generate and convey messages to the citizens. Journalists therefore, whether directly or indirectly, have a huge influence on what people think, perceive and even believe about certain matters. But, journalism also has a moral obligation: in creating and conveying messages, journalists have to remember that they are doing it to serve the public, not for any other interest. Etymologically the word ‘profession’ means ‘I publicly declare myself (as...), I confess openly’ – which came from Latin word profiteor, combining form of pro and fateor which means ‘to acknowledge’. Therefore taking a job as journalist means making a promise to serve the public as a journalist.

Taking public mandate is always a noble duty, however, there are those who do not fulfil the role in this way. In certain cases, they have to serve the interest of their media corporate over public matters. We argue therefore that there is some kind of tension between journalism as a vocation and as a source of employment. The tension is inevitable, but since the profession of journalism first and foremost is for the public, therefore to question the independence and commitment of the journalist before the
company interest is highly plausible.

Many people still aspire to become journalists. In one recruitment process of Koran Tempo, over 300 people applied for the roles. This could mean that people have an interest in becoming a journalist, but it could also mean that there are less job opportunities, and people apply for whatever jobs are available, including that of journalist.

Until today, I refuse to call myself a journalist since there is a moral burden in journalist [as a profession]. I’d rather be called reporter. For me, reporter is a euphemism for journalist. The label journalist contains huge moral responsibility, and sometimes I don’t want to take that responsibility. I am not a journalist, I am only a reporter. I am just a writer. I am only a person who reports a story, and writes it based on request [from the editor] (Undisclosed, Journalist in Indonesia National Newspaper, Interview, 2013).

The culture of the company also affects the level of commitment amongst journalists. Almost all media companies provide training for junior journalists. This training includes how to interview, how to always maintain accuracy, and how to select newsworthy stories. Junior journalists are also nurtured with the values of journalism, and also the values of the companies. The nurturing of values and skills could also develop commitment in young journalists. However, in the development of the industry, not all the companies are able to maintain the values and skills of their journalists and fail to offer good remuneration. Hence, along the way, they are losing the commitment of their employees. The gap between what has been trained and what happened in news field may also degrade the commitment of journalists. The training might teach them about how to maintain accuracy, how to produce a high-quality report, but in reality, the practice is easier said than done.

As democratic as a medium is, in the editorial process, there are also limitations on how much room journalists/reporters have in order to express their voices, and this room could still be maintained as long as they uphold their noble roles. Whilst journalists generally do not have any authority to question editorial decision, debates and discourses could still occur in some circumstances.

**Box 1. What Happens in the Newsroom**

A journalist could actually express their thoughts freely on a report before the editorial process. However, the editors have the authority to change the wording and to rewrite the content prior to publication. Hence, the journalist has less power to contravene editorial policy.

A journalist in one national newspaper told us one example of editorial mechanism. An editor once told him that it had become an editorial policy to change the wording of Lapindo mudflow into Sidoarjo mudflow.

The journalist, who had his own point of view on the disaster refused to change the word, and would continue to write any report related to the mudflow with the name Lapindo. The editorial could change the word of the journalist’ report for the sake of corporate safety (in case Lapindo filed a lawsuit against the newspaper), but he, as a journalist, would not change it. It is the editor’s responsibility to change wordings, and keeping the story in context. But as a journalist, he also has his own responsibility to report the news based on the facts.

*Source: Undisclosed Interview with journalist in national newspaper, 2013*
Unfortunately, as we explained in Chapter 5, the debates and discourses can only take place in a media that enables such things. In other media, editorial structures may not allow the journalist to have their own stance. Hence they have to follow the editorial standards. One example of a journalist who maintained commitment in a system that enabled open discourse is presented in the box above.

A different story comes from a journalist who is committed but has to work in an environment that does not have much concern about journalistic ethics. Instead, they wanted the news to be more to a means for commercial ratings or sensationalism.

... When I was reporting [for the television] the flood disaster in Jakarta a couple of months ago, I reported the situation, the height [of the flood], the time of reporting and every aspect that I knew had to be reported based on what I learned in journalistic school. When I sent the tape to my producer, he [the producer] refused to use my reporting. When I asked why [the report is not broadcasted], they said it was too serious. The television needs something more entertaining to attract viewers (Undisclosed, journalist for infotainment show in one national television in Indonesia, Interview, 2013).

There is also the question of commitment for some journalists. A junior journalist told us in an interview that becoming a journalist was only a stepping-stone for her to reach her other dreams. It does not necessarily mean that she is not committed to her current role as a journalist, but she has set the limit of her commitment:

[On being a journalist] ... This is only a stepping-stone for me. I have another dream job, and this is a stepping-stone to get there. But I am committed to this job, I don't want to receive envelopes, and my salary is decent enough for me... But I don't want to do this forever. I know I will stop [being a journalist], probably when I'm getting married, or when I already get my dream job (Undisclosed, Junior Journalist, Interview, 2013).

Another problematic system of work in the media industry is that they still outsource contributors and other positions that need technical skills such as cameramen, reporter, and presenter. Presenting and reporting are two of the core skills of journalism, and both play an important role in collecting and delivering news to citizens. When these positions are outsourced, the worker does not feel fully attached to the job and may view it as mere employment.

6.3. Strengthening journalism as a profession

Although Indonesian journalists mainly understand that journalism must embrace the values of impartiality, neutrality and objectivity (Pintak and Setiyono, 2010); most of the time the dynamics of contemporary Indonesian media industry makes the journalists unable to perform as neutral and objective disseminators. Instead of getting information neutrally and accurately and/or ‘depicting reality as it is’, the journalists tend to convey unverified content for the sake of getting the jobs done. Since the journalists also tend to participate in interpreting the reality, the news that gets conveyed turns out to be less objective.

[Speaking of the media/journalist on their understanding of diffable issues] But there are also journalists who are unprofessional. When we were diving [conducting flag ceremonies in the water for independence remembrance], Metro TV were reporting us live from the sea. But, there was another journalist who refused to dive; he just sat there on the
beach. He just took pictures from above. [As the result] the story became different. Then I asked him: “Why does the story turn like this?” [and the journalist replied]: “I am sorry. I cannot swim”. So, he made stories from a picture he took [from above]. After that he constructed a story on his own. (Nyoman Rudiawan, Senang Hati Gianyar-Bali, Interview, 27/02/2012)

The above account shows an example how the quality of journalists contributes to the message conveyed to the broader audience. Certain skills are complementary to create stories that are closest to a subject’s point of view, and the more a journalist can relate to their surroundings, the more enriching their stories will be. One’s inability – to swim, in this context – that leads to a fabrication of the news is definitely not a good indication of professionalism. It is almost impossible to have an impartial, quality news on the media if the message creators/conveyors themselves deliver their own partial, insensitive interpretation of ‘truth’. As journalist has their own interpretation of the reality, it is of paramount importance to educate, or re-educate journalists through trainings and the instilling of journalistic ethics. Although it is not the only channel, by understanding the journalistic code of ethics is one of the ways of re-educating journalists on the ‘taste’ of conveying the message to the audience. ‘Taste’ here would refer to the quality of the content as well as the implication it may have. Such efforts would help the journalists to build a more sensitive, impartial “interpretation-frame”. We argue that if we are to have any hope for a healthy and civilizing transformation in the quality of media content, we should concede that such transformation is not the product of mechanistic fiat (as in the law of nature) but that of human efforts. Any transformation agenda involving humans assumes the educability of human agents. Therefore, human tastes, choices, competence and habits are not something naturally given but rather attributes that are learned and acquired by human agents through education processes taken in general sense. This, as we learned, is the meaning of educability of human agents - in this case, those involved in the profession of journalism.

Following the idea of Ritzer's McDonaldization (1983), whose success has fostered the homogenisation of people’s culture and life, the media system – and the journalists as one of the key elements in it – without doubt, possesses a very central role in the process of moulding culture and taste and the creation of self-identity. If, in everyday practices, our children are indoctrinated by “how deviant the LGBT is”, “how abnormal they who are different from us are”, or by a dream of luxurious celebrity life; then this will foster the seeds of banality of culture and life, streamlined along a set of shallow lifestyles and intolerance principles. Therefore, by re-educating the journalists as paramount importance, the taste of the public might also being re-constructed. The so-called ‘re-educating the taste’ of course will take an extended period of time, but with such a situation where the quality of media content becomes worse and worse day by day, sooner or later this crucial step must be taken if we are to have any hope at all for a more civilised media.

Another aspect that may have played a role is the quality of graduates in journalism. Editors are complaining that graduates that are not ready for the real challenge of the journalistic world and are neglecting the value of journalism. It is not merely related to curriculum, but more to passion, and calling to become a journalist. There are media who prefer to recruit fresh graduates who have a passion for journalism and can be developed.

[On recruiting journalists] We rarely recruit senior reporters, only few of them. [we prefer to recruit] one who is still fresh, uncontaminated. Since here [in the media] we have values to be internalised [to the journalist]. For example, [values] on tolerance, the meaning of democracy, things like that. Media are not only a news courier, but media could provide democracy tracks after reformation (H. Hendratmoko, News Director, KBR68H, Interview, 10/01/2013).

Journalists who are ignorant of ethical codes are not aware of the regulations related to their work/reports. For example, in interviewing rape victims or the victim's family, a journalist might disclose the
identity, which is not allowed according to journalistic ethics.

The more the industry grows, the harder it becomes for journalists to have discussion and discourse between them. Many lessons on integrity and values often derived from discussion and internal meetings involving journalists, editors and persons at all levels involved in the industry. Interaction between senior and junior journalists could help nurture commitment and therefore strengthen the value of journalism.

[On discussion between journalists]... We involved the young journalist. Now it is more organised: we have trainings for both junior and senior journalists. We have regular classes that run smoothly and in order. They [the journalism values] were built through these kinds of activities [trainings]... Yes, we have editorial meetings involving all the editors down to the most junior journalists (A. Zulkifli, Senior Editor, Tempo Magazine, Interview, 21/02/2013).

Besides internal attempts, many organisations are also providing training in order to strengthen the values of journalism, therefore increasing its quality. Organisations like Aliansi Jurnalis Independen (Aliance of Independent Journalists – AJI), Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Journalist – PWI), TIFA Foundation, and LSPP (Insitute for Press and Development Studies – Lembaga Studi Pers dan Pembangunan) often provide trainings for journalists. The type of training varies but mainly focuses on developing journalist's knowledge on certain issues such as corruption and state budget, etc. Journalists involved in the training are expected to have a higher bargaining position in their work.

Besides strengthening the journalist by undertaking ‘re-education’ on the journalistic code of ethics, there are a few other things that could be done to improve the Indonesian media landscape. We map them in the next sub chapter.

6.4. Widening the space for civic involvement

The emergence of new media conglomerates, although alongside sometimes toothless policies, have provided citizens with a complicated situation in terms of exercising their rights to media (consult Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012). The situation is worsened by the weakening of independency in media rooms. This sort of situation seems to worry Indonesian media. A question is raised then about whether or not there are any spaces for improvement. While changes are rarely expected from regulators and market systems, civil society as one of the pillars of society often has to take initiatives to initiate change.

We are trying to map the involvement of several possible CSO’s in the strive towards the betterment of the media. We believe that citizens are smart enough to choose which information suits their need. The problem is, whether or not the information they need is provided by the media. In relation to the existing media, citizens are often aware of the low quality of media products, but they do not know how to articulate their comments or critics to the media.

_First action_ could come from civil society organisations. By creating citizens’ movement, civil society organisations could ask the citizens to participate in the betterment of media. TIFA Foundation has a programme of creating channels for housewives in Central Java to convey their concerns on television programmes. This group of housewives then communicate their concern to local KPI to further convey their concerns to KPI in Jakarta.
An interesting action came from Remotivi – an organisation that acts as a television watchdog. Instead of switching off the television, Remotivi asks the citizens – particularly the youth – to switch on the television, and criticise it. Citizens were expected to become a watchdog of the media. Critique could come via social media; through local KPI or through a coalition with civil society organisations.

Second, citizens have to stay critical about the media: they need to not only be literate and have knowledge on how the media content is being produced, but they also need to take a stance on what is right and what is wrong in the media, or acknowledge what information is suitable for the citizens. Protests could be sent via social or any other media. Together with civil society organisations, individual citizens could critique media as a mainstream discourse.

I always ask the citizens not to be apathetic. You can be sceptic but we have to stay critical [to the media]. Don’t let the media walk alone, for if we abandoned [the media], the media will act at their own will. So just be a sceptic. If it [the content] is awful, send your protest. We have to be brave in telling [the media] our voices. It is time for us to speak. Don’t be silent. If you don’t like [the content], protest. And today, more people are critical to the media (R. Thaniago, Media activist, Interview, 13/01/2013).

Avoiding media is not an option for improving it. Instead, people should continue acting as watchdogs, criticising media and its content. Today’s media depend on their viewer, therefore they need to be sensitive to their needs. The criticism of the viewer is therefore a powerful tool in encouraging the betterment of media. Several cases have worked, such as the *Primitive Runway* case43, a television programme aired on Trans TV.

People talk about Metro TV on twitter, sending their anger on Surya Paloh [on twitter], those kind of things are some actions that need to be improved. Spread the words so we have more and more watchdogs. People rarely send reader’s letters. People rarely send faxes or call the editors [to protest] (DD. Laksono, Filmmaker & member of AJI, Interview, 15/01/2013).

Even though it is not the only way, protests in social media have proven to be effective in some cases. Such protests have put pressure on the people in media; in turn this put pressure on independent state bodies such as the KPI and the Press Council, which triggered these bodies to be more and more sensitive in their role as watchdogs. They consider instant and viral reactions on twitter as inputs. Moreover, these actions in social media could help KPI to strengthen its radar on media content.

Another means to strengthen our media is to focus on campus press, where seeds of journalism could be nurtured from an early stage.

In history, campus press always take roles of the media... After reformation, they become communities for those who have [an] interest in media. Campus press is eternal. As long as there are students, the role [of campus press] will always be there... They don’t have to cover [the media] in national scope; they just have to be a watchdog for local media which is not better than national media (DD. Laksono, Filmmaker & member of AJI, Interview, 15/01/2013).

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43 *Primitive Runway* is a programme aired on Trans TV which involves celebrities being sent to various indigenous communities. The programme represents the indigenous people as ‘backward’ or ‘primitive’ as if they are living in an ancient world. The programme received protests from The Alliance of Indigenous People (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nasional*) and Remotivi – an organisation that acts as a television watchdog – for its misleading representation of indigenous people. Later after the protest, Trans TV apologised for the misleading content, and changed the programme title into *Ethnic Runaway*.
Most of the journalists we interviewed were active in campus press. In today's development, campus press could also play a role in multimedia; encouraging campus press to produce reports and short-movies to counter what we see in television.

With a number of actions outlined above, there are many ways in which citizens could influence media content. Unfortunately, sometimes the easiest solution to speak out in protest at the media is not to watch, read, or hear it. Actually, by abandoning the media, we give the media a chance to do whatever they want to do.

The main action that citizens and civil society could take to promote the betterment of media is to watch, read, and hear the media. The media always need citizens, and the least we can do is to become a watchdog, and voice our concerns through any means.
7. Ensuring content betterment, civilising ourselves: Synthesis and challenge
7. Ensuring content betterment, civilising ourselves: Synthesis and challenge

Diversity of channels and programmes does not necessarily mean diversity of content. In the United States..., studies have shown that a typical household only watches 15 channels per week (Mandese, 2007). Much content is reiterative. The capacity to consume sexual and violent movies with similar plots is rather limited. So, the promised viewers’ paradise of 100 or 500 channels becomes a downsized reality when confronted with unimaginative content and constrained money and time budget. (Manuel Castells, Communication Power, 2009: 129)

What Castells observed in the United States is happening in Indonesia. One might argue that Indonesia has rather diverse media channels (ten national television stations and more than forty local television stations), but limitation in terms of the type of entertainment and news are evident. Examples given – whether in previous chapters or those that will be summarised in this chapter – show how our media are not diverse in terms of content and less representative in terms of citizens’ participation/portrayal. In regard to the citizens, this situation has endangered the citizens to the level that they just become consumers instead of active citizens exercising their rights to media.

This chapter synthesises the study of content determinism within the media system with conceptualisation and deeper understanding, particularly in relation to the advancement of the media industry today – with the poor handling of media policy – and how such circumstances have endangered the citizens’ right to media. In examining the condition, we also present the decline of journalism, the powerplay in media systems, and how the external factors and players have a huge role in determining media content. In brief, this chapter covers the political economy of media matters and the reasons behind the development (or lack of) of citizens’ right to media in Indonesia.

7.1. Rising nexus: Between content and political economy in media

No doubt, since the 1998 Reform, the media industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in Indonesia. However, despite the remarkable growth there are few who can survive the fierce competition. What remains in the world of media industry today is a league of twelve big media companies whose survival was made possible by mergers and acquisitions (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012). This condition is driven ultimately by the business interest rather than the objective of providing a proper place for citizens’ engagements or of mediating any possibilities of shared lives. The policies which are intended to mitigate the excessively profit-motivated logic of the media industry - especially the broadcasting media - have unfortunately failed (Nugroho, Siregar et al., 2012). Such a condition has actually made the situation more difficult for citizens to exercise their rights to media. The noble duty of the media to protect and enable citizens to exercise their rights by providing room for civic engagement as suggested by some scholars (Joseph, 2005) is less promising.
The media, as the ‘Fourth Estate’ (Carlyle, 1840, Schultz, 1998) are supposed to take a pivotal role in an infant democracy context such as in Indonesia. However, a closer look at the works of the media sector today reveal that the very essence of media is threatened not only by economic interests but also by political interests from certain parties. These interests finally have transformed the media sector into tools of ‘consent manufacturing’ (Herman and Chomsky, 1988) where economic and political interests are ahead of those of social and public functions. In terms of content, the ways in which media operate also stimulate quiescence, voyeurism and cynicism, rather than citizenship and participation.

The presence of the rating system as a tool of market mechanism appears to complicate this condition. In this light, we argue that the mainstream media appear to operate within the line of profit maximisation. As such, one of the intended consequences is the content uniformity due to the rating system. The phenomenon of sinetron is one of the prominent examples. Along with the loss of content diversity, ‘media disembeddedness’ appears as a direct consequence. The media output and practices are no longer bound to the societal context in which they are present. This picture endangers the vision of the ‘public sphere’ (Habermas, 1989, Habermas, 2006) to enable public engagement in the context of democracy.

In this report we focus on content determinism – how media content plays a huge role in shaping and constructing society and how the content production is being controlled by the power within the media – using the perspective of citizens’ right to media. While in today’s runaway world, we have a lot of media channels; the content is actually still linear. The repetition of ideas is happening not only in sinetron, but also in TV series or even advertisements. For media giants, as long as the programmes are able to tempt more and more ads to come and invite people to integrate with (and purchase) global products, it will never be a problem.

Through a deeper examination of media, our research also finds that the practice of power in the oligopolistic media industry is well translated through content as media output. In such an industry with an oligopolistic nature (Nugroho, Putri et al., 2012), they who have superior access to content production are relatively free to control public consumption. However, our research finds that power, in media, does not merely lie in the interventions of the media owners and businesses, but also in the system as well through self-censorship. The decline in journalists’ integrity also contributes to the complexity of this problem.

Our content analysis on selected programmes from Indonesian TV stations indicates that despite the many opinions that our media are already ‘diverse’ and ‘representative’, the determination of content is largely based on a dominant value system. The majority – in terms of religious system, ethnicity, or geographical context – tends to lead the representation in the media output. This finding highlights the media dependence on ratings. As media seek ratings, the media aim to please the majority by provide ‘what people want’. In addition to this, what is being observed through content analysis actually reflects what is really happening beyond the process of content production. Here, a problem over power relation exists. Our research finds that the intervention, whether internal or external, which happens in media is highly influential in shaping the content. The lack of options in channels combined with personal/group interests and also the decrease in journalists’ integrity together have threatened citizens’ rights to media.

The systematic weakening of the work of the journalist – where the media structure as a whole does not pay much attention to the embodiment of the commitment of journalists – in turn, makes the noble duty of journalism start to fade. If the ‘education’ of the journalists – along with the industrial structure – as the enabling condition of good journalism remains the same, this would risk the commitment to the public. To be honest, such a problem of professional ethics is also observed in other kinds of profession.
All these implications lead us to conclude that the remarkable growth of the media industry has uprooted the media from the society. This detachment will become more evident in the near future due to both the gap in access to infrastructure and in access to content. Such conditions will have implications for the citizens, in particular those who are limited in terms of infrastructure and access to content.

7.2. Content determinism and citizens’ rights: Some implications

As the media have enormous potential to determine value-making processes in society, the media possess the power to decide what should be embraced as value(able) (Castells, 2009). However, with growing industrial interest in the citizens’ space and their interests in the media are accommodated in only a small space, if at all. Although perhaps it is understandable that the media, as a commercial institution, is paying more attention to content that is more profitable for the company, leaving out what is important to the public harms the very essence of media. As a consequence, the media will also alienate the citizens from their society; from their societal context.

While there is a growing concern regarding the lack of options in our media channels, the (systematic) weakening of the work of the journalist shows that the media industry as a whole system does not care about the embodiment of commitment in their journalists. The journalists themselves are no less problematic. As the lousy system treats them merely as employees rather than valuing the noble duty of journalism, the journalists’ interest of serving the public, in turn begins to fade. However, in reality, there are a number of journalists who are still struggling to fulfil their duties as mandated and even dare to ‘fight’ the interest of the media companies to which they are attached.

The lack of options in channels combined with personal/group interests and also the decrease in journalists’ integrity together have threatened citizens’ rights to media. With regard to the journalists as the key elements in the media, there are serious challenges that endanger the integrity of journalism. Poor journalistic ethics, lack of professionalism, and corruption and bribery are some of them (Pintak and Setiyono, 2010). As the journalists are being forced to be news factories – and hence become shallower day by day – the quality of the media is called into question. By forcing the journalists to be news factories for the sake of maximising profit, the media are actually betraying the public mandate. Such conditions, in the long run will make people lose trust in them. Without trust, the media will be abandoned. Therefore, some senior journalists have reminded others of the importance of providing citizens with the information they need to carry out civic engagement. Heru Hendratmoko’s quote is representative of the suggestions of some senior journalists.

[The reason why we are insisting to defend our public-serving value] This is what I said before. Media [business] is a business of trust. Once it is betrayed, then it would vanish. (Heru Hendratmoko, KBR68H, Interview, 10/01/2013)

‘Article 19’ of the UDHR44, from the perspective of citizens, implies that protecting citizens who own a much limited area of freedom in media is needed in order to support a more democratic society. However, due to the complexities of the contemporary political economy of Indonesian media, the promise of equal citizens’ right to media – both in terms of access to infrastructure and access to content – has not yet been met. Business-driven media tend to prioritise the majority rather than promoting equal civic engagement. In regard to the vulnerable groups, they are prone to discriminatory and improper representation due to their ‘unique’ characteristics – be it in terms of belief, gender, physical ability, ethnicity, geographical context, social class, or sexual orientation. In certain cases, even media portray them as ‘abnormal’, ‘ill’, or even ‘deviant’ (Nugroho, Nugraha et al., 2012). This condition jeopardises the

44 The Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”
possibility of ‘shared life’.

An important note can be highlighted here. If this nation is still willing to protect all citizens regardless of their unique identities, it is important to provide diverse narratives in the media, and have the ability to acknowledge and accept the diversity. The diverse narratives with a human right perspective should be reflected well in current media practice. Both the media as a system and the journalists have to make improvements in this area. This intricacy should also become an alarm for the policymakers and state officials to start doing something in guaranteeing the public function of the media.

However, if citizens can no longer rely on policymakers, state officials, or market-driven media systems; then the citizens have to do something themselves as an alternative. Forming coalitions and networking among CSOs, guiding the law enforcement process of media-related regulation, acting as watchdogs since the media owners are very sensitive to citizens’ protest, or mainstreaming the media literacy in any form are some of the actions that citizens can take to keep the vision of the ‘public sphere’ alive.

7.3. Some conclusions

In a nutshell, our research concludes that the profit-led media industry has left citizens as mere consumers in the media sector. The citizens are already neglected in terms of access to media infrastructure and especially in access to content. Homogenous content is a simple proof that the media rate the audience merely as consumers rather than as rightful citizens. Since the business-driven media seek profit, the production of content is always in the service of profiting from programmes. The powerplay through content, combined with the certain interest from specific groups has shown that the media are losing the character of that of a public institution.

Likewise, the technological innovation has supported the media business to chase after profit. However, the same technological innovation can be used by civil society to foster civic activism to criticise the mainstream media. The use of ICT has created opportunities for citizens to voice their critical aspirations.

7.4. Future agenda

Having delivered the findings, implication and conclusion, we envisage at least four action points

- First is the need to engage with the media industry to encourage collaboration with alternative content makers regarding content production.

- Second, the next point for action should be to revitalise the regulatory role of the sector’s public bodies, particularly the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI). KPI should have the authority to control the landscape of the media industry and the way in which media companies work. It is also very important to revive the state-owned public media, i.e. TVRI and RRI. Without having strong, high-quality public broadcasting, there is no way to ensure the creation of a healthy public sphere.

- Third is the urgency to regulate advertisement in the media.
Finally, as much as we are concerned about the content production, it is important to provide our young journalists with training – on journalistic skills, but most importantly by making every attempt to ensure that the system values the commitment of serving the public interest rather than merely employment. So, in turn the journalist can learn about such values.

Throughout this report we have presented the content determinism (and the realities beyond) in the Indonesian media. The dynamics of the content production have enormous impacts on our public lives. With this, we now call upon future initiatives to empower both the public at large and the journalists in particular to embark on a critical stance and collective actions to respond to the dynamics and the development of media content. What is at stake now is to ensure that media are civilising the public, not banalising it.
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Appendix 1
Interview: Protocols and instruments

Interviews were arranged with 21 respondents and community radio practitioners who were selected on the basis of their respective backgrounds and involvement in media-related activities, be it as a practitioner (senior and junior journalists), managerial practitioner in media company, experts, or activists. The methodology is outlined in Chapter Three. The interviews were designed primarily to provide more detailed information and insights about:

- The implication of the development of media industry and media policy towards media workers in terms of employee benefit, skills enhancement, and distribution of assignments;
- The importance and impacts of the content of the media on the citizens’ rights in the media;
- Content production processes in the mainstream media.

Protocol

The interview questions were tested through a pilot involving a respondent, following which they were revised and adjusted. By 14 March 2013, all twenty-one respondents and community radio practitioners had been interviewed, all of them by means of a face-to-face meeting in private.

The respondents were initially approached either via email or telephone call that explained the purpose of the research and how the interview would be used. Following a positive response to our request for an interview, interview questions were then sent by email for the respondent to further consider and to prepare for the interview session. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim (word by word) by third party assistants. The transcriptions were then sent to the interviewees for checking and to add further information if they felt necessary. Both recording files (.MP3) and transcription were then added to the CIPG-HIVOS database stored both in the Cloud and in the local drive for back-up. In cases where interviewees provided documents (a company profile, etc.) in addition to the interview itself, the documents were also included in the database.

Instrument

The interview questionnaire, in Bahasa Indonesia, comprised the following main questions:

45. Sejauh mana dampak perkembangan industri media saat ini – ditandai dengan merger dan akuisisi antar perusahaan media – terhadap pekerja media, terutama terkait kesejahteraan pekerja, peningkatan kemampuan jurnalis, dan pembagian kerja di antara jurnalis?

45. The complete set of interview questionnaires, including probing questions, both in English and Bahasa Indonesia, are available upon request to the authors/CIPG-HIVOS.
- Bagaimana Anda melihat perkembangan konvergensi dan digitalisasi media? Adakah strategi khusus yang dilakukan oleh media tempat Anda bekerja dalam menanggapi hal ini?

- Bagaimana proses penerimaan jurnalis/reporter di perusahaan media tempat Anda bekerja?

- Menurut Anda, sejauh mana pemberitaan atau konten media berpengaruh pada pembentukan opini publik? Adakah isu-isu tertentu yang memberi pengaruh paling signifikan pada publik?

- Sejauh mana hak-hak masyarakat terhadap informasi yang benar telah dipenuhi oleh struktur media saat ini?


- Bagaimana proses pengumpulan berita dilakukan di tempat Anda bekerja? Dari mulai proses reportase, editing, hingga berita disajikan?

- Bagaimana media Anda menerapkan sensor dalam produksi konten? Adakah pertimbangan-pertimbangan tertentu dalam menayangkan pemberitaan yang terkait dengan pemilik media?

- Adakah pihak-pihak yang berhak memberikan intervensi pada proses produksi konten? Bagaimana intervensi ini berjalan?

The main questionnaire in English reads:

- To what extent does the advancement of existing media industry – marked by mergers and acquisitions across media companies – affect the lives of media workers, particularly regarding employee benefit, skills enhancement, and distribution of assignments among them?

- How do you see the development of media convergence and digitalisation? Is there any specific strategy in your company to address this?

- How is journalist recruitment/selection process in your company carried out?

- To what extent does content help to affect the shaping of public opinion? Is there any specific issue that contributes a significant impact on the public?

- To what extent does media structure provide the fulfilment of citizens’ rights to trustworthy information?

- Is there any cooperation between your media company with a government institution? Please
elaborate.

- What is the pre-production process like? Starting form topic selection, editing until the content is ready to be delivered/made public?

- In your company/corporation/organisation, what is the role of censorship in content production? What kinds of considerations are given in terms of content related to the owners?

- Are there any parties allowed to intervene in the process of content production? How do these interventions work?
### Appendix 2

**Interview respondents**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of Respondent</th>
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<th>Mode of Interview</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<td>Tempo (Magazine)</td>
<td>21-02-13</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>1:50:52</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Kompas</td>
<td>09-01-13</td>
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<td>1:10:13</td>
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<td>1:10:13</td>
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Determining the categorisation of TV contents through the lense of citizens’ rights. Observed by 7 determinants.

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From the perspective of **consumership**

Determining the categorisation of TV contents through the lense of consumership measure. Observed by 6 determinants.

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Total 7896
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<td>1.14%</td>
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<tr>
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A.3.3. Distribution of content based on geographical context

**ANTV** – Contents are significantly concentrated in Java compared to other islands. Geographically, 72.5% of contents are of Java, 16.5% of Sumatra, 2.8% of Kalimantan, 3.7% of Bali and Nusa Tenggara, 2.5% of Sulawesi, 1.6% of Maluku and 0.36% of Papua. Provinces receiving highest frequencies are DKI Jakarta, East Java, West Java, Central Java and Riau.

**Global TV** – Contents are significantly concentrated in Java compared to other islands. Geographically, 71% of contents are of Java, 13.2% of Sumatra, 6.1% of Kalimantan, 4.7% of Sulawesi, 3.8% of Bali and Nusa Tenggara, 1.2% of Maluku and 0% of Papua. Provinces receiving highest frequencies are DKI Jakarta, West Java, East Java, Riau and Central Java.
Indosiar – Contents are significantly concentrated in Java compared to other islands. Geographically, 74.3% contents are of Java, 15.7% of Sumatra, 4% of Kalimantan, 3.6% of Sulawesi, 1.6% of Maluku, 0.8% of Bali and Nusa Tenggara and 0% of Papua. Provinces receiving highest frequencies are DKI Jakarta, East Java, West Java, Central Java and North Sumatra.
Metro TV – Contents are significantly concentrated in Java compared to other islands. Geographically, 67.1% contents are of Java, 15.6% of Sumatra, 7% of Sulawesi, 3.5% of Bali and Nusa Tenggara, 2.9% of Kalimantan, 2% of Maluku and 1.8% of Papua. Provinces receiving highest frequencies are DKI Jakarta, West Java, East Java, Central Java and North Sumatra.
Contents are significantly concentrated in Java compared to other islands. Geographically, 68.6% of contents are of Java, 15% of Sumatra, 5% of Sulawesi, 4.6% of Bali and Nusa Tenggara, 3.4% of Kalimantan, 2.7% of Papua and 0.7% of Maluku. Provinces receiving highest frequencies are DKI Jakarta, West Java, East Java, Riau and Central Java.
RCTI – Contents are significantly concentrated in Java compared to other islands. Geographically, 72.4% contents are of Java, 10.8% of Sumatra, 6.7% of Kalimantan, 5.1% of Sulawesi, 2.6% of Bali and Nusa Tenggara, 1.6% of Maluku and 0.7% of Papua. Provinces receiving highest frequencies are DKI Jakarta, Central Java, East Java, West Java and Riau.
SCTV – Contents are significantly concentrated in Java compared to other islands. Geographically, 75% contents are of Java, 12.5% of Sumatra, 2.5% of Sulawesi, 3.7% of Bali and Nusa Tenggara, 1.9% of Maluku, 1.6% of Kalimantan and 0.7% of Papua. Provinces receiving highest frequencies are DKI Jakarta, East Java, West Java, Central Java and Riau.
Trans 7 - Contents are significantly concentrated in Java compared to other islands. Geographically, 67.7% contents are of Java, 15% of Sumatra, 6.9% of Bali and Nusa Tenggara, 4.1% of Kalimantan, 4% of Sulawesi, 1.2% of Papua and 1% of Maluku. Provinces receiving highest frequencies are DKI Jakarta, West Java, East Java, Riau and Central Java.
**Trans TV** – Contents are significantly concentrated in Java compared to other islands. Geographically, 70.7% contents are of Java, 13.5% of Sumatra, 4.7% of Bali and Nusa Tenggara, 4.7% of Sulawesi, 4% of Kalimantan, 2% of Maluku and 0.4% of Papua. Provinces receiving highest frequencies are DKI Jakarta, East Java, West Java, Central Java and Riau.
TV One – Contents are significantly concentrated in Java compared to other islands. Geographically, 68.4% contents are of Java, 15% of Sumatra, 8% of Sulawesi, 3% of Bali and Nusa Tenggara, 2.3% of Kalimantan, 2% of Maluku and 1.3 % of Papua. Provinces receiving highest frequencies are DKI Jakarta, West Java, East Java, Central Java and South Sulawesi.
All TV Channels – In aggregate, contents are significantly concentrated in Java compared to other islands. Statistically, 69.6% of contents are of Java, 14.7% are of Sumatra, 5.8% of Sulawesi, 3.6% of Bali and Nusa Tenggara, 3.4% of Kalimantan, 1.8% of Maluku and 1.1% of Papua. Overall, provinces receiving highest frequencies are DKI Jakarta, West Java, East Java, Central Java and Riau.
A.3.4. Frequency of content based on religious orientations (in unit)
Creating content, shaping society: Do Indonesian media uphold the principle of citizenship?

### Religious Orientations

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<th>Religious orientations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Islam - Syah</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>Christianity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confucianism</td>
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<td>0.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

**Ranked based on religious orientations**

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<th>Rank</th>
<th>Religious orientations</th>
<th>Total (in unit)</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>744</td>
<td>96.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
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<td>2.08%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Confucianism</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Buddhism</td>
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<td>Agnosticism</td>
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<td>Atheism</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>100%</td>
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A.3.5. Distribution of content based on religious orientations

**ANTV** – Contents are significantly concentrated on Islam compared to other religious orientations. Distribution of content with religious identities is 87.2% of Islam, 6.4% of Christianity and 6.4% of Hinduism.
Global TV – Contents are significantly concentrated on Islam compared to other religious orientations. Distribution of content with religious identities is 96.5% of Islam and 3.5% of Christianity.
Indosiar – Contents are significantly concentrated on Islam compared to other religious orientations. Distribution of content with religious identities is 91% of Islam, 5.1% of Christianity, 2.6% of Buddhism and 1.3% of Hinduism.
Metro TV – Contents are significantly concentrated on Islam compared to other religious orientations. Distribution of content with religious identities is 99.4% of Islam and 0.6% of Christianity.
MNC TV - Contents are significantly concentrated on Islam compared to other religious orientations. Distribution of content with religious identities is 96.9% of Islam and 3.1% of Christianity.
RCTI – Contents are significantly concentrated on Islam compared to other religious orientations. Distribution of content with religious identities is 94.4% of Islam, 3.4% of Christianity and 2.2% of Buddhism.
SCTV – Contents are significantly concentrated on Islam compared to other religious orientations. Distribution of content with religious identities is 98.8% of Islam and 1.2% of Christianity.
Trans 7 - Contents are significantly concentrated on Islam compared to other religious orientations. Distribution of content with religious identities is 95.2% of Islam, 2.4% of Christianity and 2.4% of Confucianism.
Trans TV – Contents are significantly concentrated on Islam compared to other religious orientations. Distribution of content with religious identities is 100%
TV One – Contents are significantly concentrated on Islam compared to other religious orientations. Distribution of content with religious identities is 99.3% of Islam and 0.7% of Christianity.
All TV Channels – Contents are significantly concentrated on Islam compared to other religious orientations. Distribution of content with religious identities is 96.7% of Islam, 2.1% of Christianity, 0.5% of Buddhism, 0.5% of Hinduism, 0.13% of Confucianism, and none of Atheism and Agnosticism.
## A.3.6. Frequency of content based on ethnic grouping (in unit)

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Total 201
Ranked based on ethnic grouping

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<td></td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100%</td>
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A.3.7. Distribution of content based on ethnic grouping

**ANTV** - Contents with Javanese identities are dominant compared to other ethnic groups. Contents are comprised 43.7% of the Javanese, 18.7% of the Balinese, 6.25% of the Minangkabau, 6.25% of the Betawi, 6.25% of the Buginese, 6.25% of the Bantinese, 6.25% of the Chinese and 6.25% of the Dayak.
Global TV – Contents with Javanese identities are dominant compared to other ethnic groups. Contents are comprised 50% of the Javanese, 33.3% of the Betawi and 16.7% of the Chinese.
Indosiar – Contents with Javanese identities are dominant compared to other ethnic groups. Contents are comprised 57% of the Javanese, 28.6% of the Betawi and 14.3% of the Batak.
Metro TV – Contents with Javanese identities are dominant compared to other ethnic groups. Contents are comprised 54% of the Javanese, 24.3% of the Chinese, 5.4% of the Minangkabau, 5.4% of the Buginese, 2.7% of the Balinese, 2.7% of the Acehnese, 2.7% of the Ambonese and 2.7% of the Dayak.
MNC TV – Contents with Sundanese identities are dominant compared to other ethnic groups. Contents are comprised 54.5% of the Sundanese, 18.2% the Betawi, 9% of the Javanese, 9% of the Chinese and 9% of the Dani.
RCTI – Contents with Betawi identities are dominant compared to other ethnic groups. Contents are comprised 50% of the Betawi, 25% the Javanese and 25% of the Balinese.
SCTV – Contents with Javanese identities are dominant compared to other ethnic groups. Contents are comprised 42.9% of the Javanese, 21.4% of the Sundanese, 21.4% of the Betawi, 7.1% of the Minangkabau and 7.1% of the Buginese.
Trans 7 - Contents with Javanese identities are dominant compared to other ethnic groups. Contents are comprised 57.8% of the Javanese, 11.1% of the Minangkabau, 8.9% of the Balinese, 4.4% of the Sundanese, 4.4% of the Betawi, 2.2% of the Madurese, 2.2% of the Batak, 2.2% of the Amungme, 2.2% of the Sasak, 2.2% of the Ambonese and 2.2% of the Talang Mamak.
Trans TV – Contents with Javanese identities are dominant compared to other ethnic groups. Contents are comprised 19.1% of the Javanese, 8.8% of the Minangkabau, 7.3% of the Balinese, 5.8% of the Dayak, 4.4% of the Sundanese, 4.4% of the Hoaulu, 2.9% of the Batak, 2.9% of the Betawi, 2.9% of the Anak Dalam, 2.9% of the Dani, 2.9% of the Bena, 2.9% of the Saiboklo, 2.9% of the Matabesi, 2.9% of the Manggarai, 1.5% of the Malay, 1.5% of the Sasak, 1.5% of the Ambonese, 1.5% of the Talang Mamak, 1.5% of the Monesogo, 1.5% of the Toraja, 1.5% of the Togutil, 1.5% of the Bajo, 1.5% of the Abui, 1.5% of the Lom, 1.5% of the Samawa, 1.5% of the Bercu, 1.5% of the Rimba, 1.5% of the Deri, 1.5% of the Sabu, 1.5% of the Sawang, 1.5% of the Banibani and 1.5% of the Sambori.
TV One – Contents with Javanese identities are dominant compared to other ethnic groups. Contents are comprised 31.2% of the Javanese, 18.7% of the Batak, 12.5% of the Sundanese, 6.2% of the Malay, 6.2% of the Minangkabau, 6.2% of the Betawi, 6.2% of the Balinese, 6.2% of the Acehnese and 6.2% of the Amungme.
**All TV Channels** – Overall, indicated from aggregate data across 10 TV channels, when we group contents based on ethnic grouping, Javanese identities are statistically dominant compared to other ethnic groups. Among the ethnic groups receiving highest frequencies, 41% are of the Javanese, 8% of the Sundanese, 8% of the Minangkabau, 8% of the Betawi, 7% of the Balinese, 6% of the Chinese, 3% of the Batak, 3% of the Dayak, 2% of the Buginese, 1% of the Malay and 1% of the Acehnese.
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CIPG is a research-based advisory group that aspires to excel in the area of science, technology, innovation and governance. Evolving from a study group of Indonesian scholars abroad since 2007, CIPG was officially established in Jakarta, Indonesia in 2010. The Centre is considered to be among the first advisory groups in Indonesia with keen interest in building Indonesian research capacities in many sectors. CIPG's excellence rests on the rigorousness of our research process, and on the relevance of our activities to the stakeholders and society established through close engagements. CIPG has intensive activities in Research, Consultancy-Advisory, and Capacity Building in the area of Innovation Management and Policy, Sustainability, Knowledge Management, Technology and Social Change, Supply Chain Management, Corporate Governance, and Civil Society Empowerment.

Hivos is a Dutch development organisation guided by humanist values. Together with local civil society organisations in developing countries, Hivos wants to contribute to a free, fair and sustainable world. A world in which all citizens – both women and men – have equal access to opportunities and resources for development and can participate actively and equally in decision-making processes that determine their lives, their society and their future. Hivos trusts in the creativity and capacity of people. Quality, cooperation and innovation are core values in Hivos' business philosophy. Hivos has six regional offices and one of the offices is the Hivos Regional Office Southeast Asia (ROSEA). Hivos has been working in the region since mid 1980s in the areas of civil society building with human rights as its main perspective and sustainable economic development which includes renewable energy.

Ford Foundation works with visionary leaders and organisations worldwide to change social structures and institutions so that all people have the opportunity to reach their full potential, contribute to society, have a voice in decisions that affect them, and live and work in dignity. This commitment to social justice is carried out through programs that strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, and advance human knowledge, creativity and achievement.