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# Television Industry Dynamics in New Order Era The Effect of Broadcasting Policy Towards News Report

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**Abstract.** Television Industry dynamics in New Order Era is influenced by the broadcasting policy established by the authority. The aim of this research is to explain the effect of the policy towards the television news report and its dynamics in New Order era. This research uses qualitative approach. Data analysis technique used is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The researcher selects RCTI, SCTV, and Indosiar as research objects. The result shows that the authoritative broadcasting policy makes television as a mere government political tool. Indonesia broadcasting system in the New Order era demonstrates centralized broadcasting system throughout Java which, in hierarchy, administratively obeys Jakarta central station. The result, in its development, is that the established policy affects the reportage policy which tends to oppose the ruling power, except for TVRI. Although all television stations are designed from the very beginning as New Order political tool and critical supporter, they often play a role as spoilers against President Soeharto's policy.

**Keywords:** *public policy, television reportage, critical discourse analysis*

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## INTRODUCTION

The discourse concerning relation between media, especially television, and power, tends to place television under the power of the regime. Wahyuni's study (2000) concerning television and state intervention during the New Order era is one example to legitimate the statement. If we trace the theoretical core, such a view is actually based on several analysis which put the media ideology function, especially television, as an instrument to engineer agreement for a certain socio-political order (Herman and Chomsky, 1989). In other word, television is a part of the Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser, 1971) and it functions to maintain power hegemony (Tuchman, 1974).

Government hegemony over media is visible in New Order era (David and Khrisna, 2005). Between 1987 and 1995, five television stations were established, three of which were related to Soeharto's family and two others to the President's crony. After gaining broadcasting legal permit through Palapa satellite in 1993, the private televisions divert viewers' attention from government television, *Televisi Republik Indonesia* (TVRI). This creates responds from the Information Department by the policy to limit the extent of private television, sometimes through president's intervention. The tension between the conglomerate's financial interest and government ideological concern is clearly visible in 1996-97 as the Legislative passed the first draft of Broadcasting Law in Indonesia. The Information Departement tried to control the content of private television. The aim was to promote

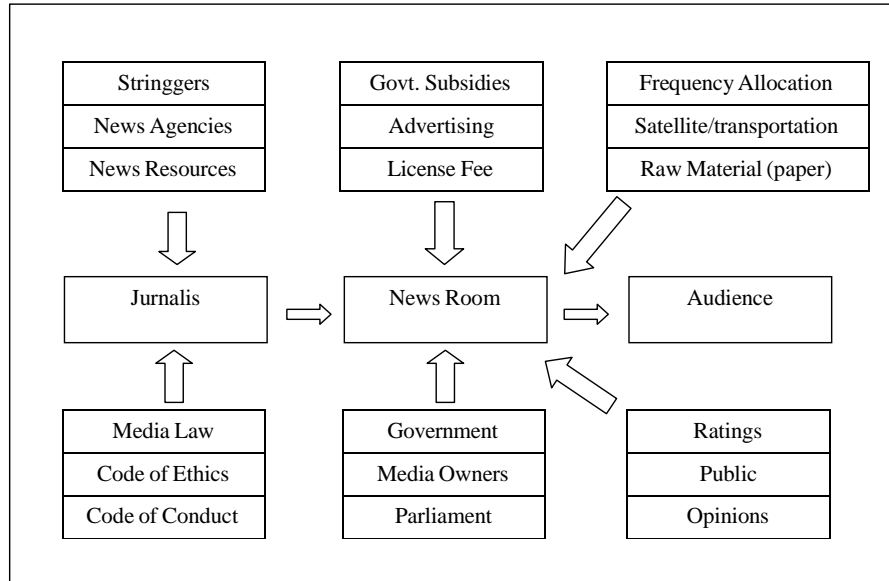
New Order ideological aspect. In 1990, the Ministry of Information regulated that television program should reinforce the State Constitution of 1945 and Pancasila (Indonesian Ideology) and avoid affairs potentially upsetting ethnical, religious, or constituential tension.

In monopolistical condition, there will definitely be resistance (Kitley, 2000). In term of policy, the development of broadcasting law is crucial to understand television political culture in Indonesia. On the other hand, production house industry develops after intensive deregulation was applied. It is probable that the industry disperses the tension between domestic values and the increase of television series and advertisement globalization, which has been a part of television culture development from the very beginning (Kitley, 2000).

Placing television as a mere power instrument means assuming television arena as a static arena (Fairclough, 1995). There actually is a complex interaction among agents, especially television journalists, capital owner, and even security and army as the state direct representation, indicating that the arena is not a static one. It is dynamically moved, especially by workers of the field.

In relation to the New Order era, there are three roles played by television which relate to power, that is television as political tool (Metzger, 2009), critical supporter (Merskin, 2010), and spoiler (Reilly, 2011) of the regime in power. The three roles are the core of news report policy prearranged for the existing television stations.

The imminence between private television stations and the ruler of the time is quite apparent and it has become



**Figure 1. Socio-Cultural Environment**

Source: Ishadi, 1997

public secret (Hill, 1993). The peak of the intimacy is clearly seen in the special six-hour reportage of Ibu Tien Soeharto's death, as the initiative was made by *Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia* (RCTI), which later organized TV-Pool to cover the funeral from Jakarta to Surakarta. The government-owned station, TVRI, relayed the event although it begins hours later, after its directors received a direct phone call from RCTI whereas TVRI usually, and as regulated with other private television stations, acted as the host for other formal national events and for all TV Pool coverage in Indonesia.

The intimacy between private television stations and the government, in this case, Soeharto, is apparent in form of many reports, especially news. News control is made in written and non-written guidelines, telephones or briefs (Fuente and Ruiz, 2011).

Figure 1 describes that a journalist's position in the production process in the news room is directly influenced by two major components. The first component is the news resources, helping him get news apart from the one he discovers by himself. The sources consist of news agencies and stringers. The second component is the norm and media law. Law, especially, is a policy established by the authority in dealing with public affairs (Pakpahan, 2010), including television. Meanwhile, in producing the text in the news room, the journalists are directly and indirectly influenced by other entities and agencies, including the media owners, who also contribute financially and to handle "operation and production cost".

With such a condition, nowadays journalists should work under two conflicting pressures. The first is their consciousness, as reflected in the spirit of idealism, and

the second is the industrious and business senses, which depends on the strong spirit of business. The spirit of idealism and the spirit of business are the two things under consideration, and a strong push and pull process arises from this. Through the instrument of media law, code of ethics, and the pressure of public opinion, business and idealism interaction reaches its balance.

In doing their job, journalists now have already thought about the spirit of idealism and business as one concept. In one hand, they think about the spirit of idealism as journalists to deliver facts honestly and objectively in the context of liberating the idealism spirit. On the other hand, they arrange agenda and construct reality in a way to attract market.

The influence of two major components faced by the journalists significantly affects the news production process in the news room. Journalists have weight over the media news content. Debates in the news room will be grounded by idealism and the orientation of different journalists. The debate in the news room domain is crucial as it decides the broadcast news content. The news room itself depends heavily on entities controlling the hardware in delivering news products, such as the transmission for radio and television, transportation for printing media and daily and magazine sales agents. The news room closely maintains the relation with customers through advertisement bureau, advertisement clients and public opinion institution.

The news room is the most important part of a television station (Bantz, 1985). This is where news is produced to become a television station image warrant. The viewers' need for actual, accurate, and comprehensive information from a television station is as high as the need for

entertainment. News becomes the most crucial commodity so that the battle occurs in news organization in order to gain highest number of viewers through highly competitive news product materials. This situation creates different organization culture for each news room.

One crucial factor determining certain television news report is the government (Sparks, 2010; Margalit, 2011). Indirectly, through journalists' pressure, the discussion of news content is influenced by broadcasting policy passed by the authority. The policy made to control media news report is usually the requirement for government's interest.

For news content, this government regulation factor has strong influence. The regulation made in New Order era has its own characteristic as the government is very firm in dealing with television news report. In fact, the stations which have the broadcast rights produced government propaganda without verifying the objectivity of the broadcast news. The condition exacerbated as the owners of private television stations in particular were government's colleagues, in the sense that they were closely related to President Soeharto. Therefore, it is important to find out the effect of the policy passed on by the government towards the news report policy and how the dynamics in RCTI, *Surya Citra Televisi* (SCTV), and Indosiar television stations in the era of President Soeharto is.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The research approach is qualitative. The data collection methods used are in-depth interview, content analysis and documentary study. In depth interview is conducted with media professionals, media management, media capital owner, community leaders, scholars, and social political observers. Content analysis is performed on the gathered private television news reports broadcast on May, 1998. Meanwhile, the secondary documentary study covers government regulation on media industry, media organization policy, rating data, advertisement data etc.

The data analysis method used in this research is one often used in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method developed by Norman Fairclough (1995), namely multi-level analysis, a form of analysis relating analysis on various levels, starting from micro, meso and macro levels. The core of CDA method tries to combine the analysis based on language aspects and the more philosophical ones. Therefore, this method is often used to explore and reveal the structure, rationality, interest and ideology attached to news texts.

The research objects chosen for this research are RCTI, SCTV, and Indosiar. The selection for the three private television stations is due to the fact that they represent research context. For the aspect of ownership, RCTI is

owned by Peter Sondakh and Bambang Trihatmodjo, the son of President Soeharto. Most of the shares of SCTV are owned by Soedwikatmono, and the rest owned by Henry Pribadi, Peter Gontha, Mrs. Halimah Bambang Trihatmodjo and Azis Mochdar from a business enterprise and family closely related to President Soeharto. Meanwhile, Indosiar is owned by Salim Group, a businessman also close to the President. Furthermore, the three stations have the widest broadcasting regions. RCTI has 45, while SCTV and Indosiar have 32 and 25 transmitting stations respectively throughout Indonesia.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As governmental television stations, the broadcasts were generally managed under governmental bureaucracy system where the staffs were recruited from various government institutions considered to have relevant expertise. For example, in the early period of TVRI establishment in 1962, Ir. Sutarto, the TVRI Development Project Head, was previously Director of PPFN (National Film Company). Many other staffs were recruited from PPFN or Radio Republik Indonesia (The Radio of Republic of Indonesia). The heads of TVRI Medan (1975) and Palembang (1980) Stations at the early operation were National Army Officers from Land Base Transportation Office

As a television station, the fund had government support, based on table 1, and the operational cost was subsidized by the government and the management was run by governmental apparatus so that governmental interest was clearly seen, especially for regulations concerning content, and entertainment and information programmes. Governmental control over the contents for the programme, both for news and entertainment was performed structurally by placing government television director directly under and as a subordinate of The Ministry of Information. Therefore the Ministry had the rights and authority to elect and to put the director to an end at any period of time. He could appoint individuals he considered capable and willing to run the given mission.

The Ministry directly and indirectly became chief commissionaire in government television stations. Similar cases were applied in appointing and placing redaction in the station's news room. The second method was by providing continuous guidance both in written and orally concerning what to broadcast as highlighted in the standard operating procedure or daily order. Third, for the case of TVRI, the Minister was periodically involved in broadcast plan meetings and provided final approval on national broadcast programme blueprints. Another way to control news report in TVRI was when the Department

**Table 1. Television System and the Responsibility**

	Governmental television	Private Television
Investment	Government	Private
Operational Cost	National or Regional Budget	Advertisement of Programme Sponsorships
Responsible to	Government (Information Departement as appointed by the government)	Stakeholders
Material/substance	Governmental Propaganda	market driven orientation
Management	Governmental Beaureaucracy	Professional/competitive

Source: Ishadi, 2002

of Information through RTF General Director made a list for 20 individuals not to ever appear in TVRI both for news report and talkshow.

The Minister of Information also gave instruction for exceedingly technical matters, such as the direct selection of news presenter from East Timor Timur and East Region of Indonesia Timur or direct order to have interviews in various events with Golkar (the regime's political party) individuals. Continuous guidance was given and beaureaucratic setting system was oriented to the process and not on the achievement/ result, and television news production culture which was not audience oriented but mission oriented tended to make government television stations anywhere in Indonesia tedious and incapable to compete with commercial television stations.

TVRI in that era was monotonous as the programmes had been burdened with the mission and had provided only little room for fresh entertainment loved by the audiences. Similarly it happened in news report. The 28-year monopolistic system made TVRI news neglect the quality so that strong impression arose in people's mind that the news were carelessly made with neglected accuracy. The most obvious is the overdue news report, so that TVRI was labeled as "recently" journalism since it often used "recently" as a phrase which actually indicate that the events took place some earlier days. The news was delayed as information covered from various places was still delivered by sending cassettes through airline service and not from satellite feeding. The position of TVRI as government instrument was deeply rooted as, in many occasion, it was openly stated by the Minister himself. In celebrating the 30 year anniversary of TVRI, Harmoko reminded that the control to be kept by TVRI was a commitment as mass media held by the government with clear aim and objectives, namely the ideology of Pancasila, UUD 1945 (the State Constitution) and National Guideline.

Since it was prohibited to broadcast critical arguments against government, most news items contained success story in the form of development coverage. It shared only the good news. The news programs were full with department's ceremonials and government's activities. The ceremonials were so overloaded that Arsewendo, a television observer who actively wrote criticisms towards TVRI,

called them "ceremonial news".

Communication expert and television observer, Eduard Depari, saw that the publication needs of government offi and departments forced TVRI to accommodate various parties' interests, sacrifici journalism values. All components felts that they had events so important for the society to know, whereas TVRI was the only audio visual media mostly suitable to reach all people, whether they liked it or not. TVRI felt obliged to expose news gained from written and non-written invitation, or events with so little news value. Such a news communication pattern, instead of reflecting audience-oriented information sharing, reflected communicator's interest-oriented one. Stories covering those ceremonial news could be traced as follows: TVRI had four news slots: *Berita Nusantara* or *Berita Daerah* on 17.00 to 17.30. *Berita Nasional* or *Berita Utama* on 19.00 to 19.30. *Dunia Dalam Berita* or *Berita Dunia* on 21.00 to 21.30 and the latest news or *Sari Berita* on 23.00 to 23.30.

*Berita Nusantara* covered news sent from local stations in Indonesia, while *Berita Nasional* was used to deliver national scale news. Nasional scale in this case referred to events or ceremonies attended by the President, Minister, Army leaders and Central Government Officials. *Dunia Dalam Berita* covered both local and international news with strong news value. International news was received from international television news agencies.

In the beginning TVRI used airline service to transport films and videos so that a one or two day delay occurred. Since 1984, news was transmitted from news agencies using Intelsat satellite to cover actualities. Therefore, TVRI should serve many components, starting from Departement, Army, government owned business organizations, and State Secretary, so that the 30 minute news segments should cover 15 up to 25 news items. What we saw was 40" up to 40" synopsis of news.

It is not surprising that the display was so superficial, lacking analysis or deep review. The appearance of officials in formal events, especially for huge projects became so important for TVRI since the news program was directly watched by President Soeharto from his residence in Cendana. The materials developed into non formal discussion in general or any private meeting



possible between those officials and the President. Basically, the news turned out to be an event report from the Officials for the Presiden. Such an approach provided Harmoko, as the Minister of Information, a direct access to TVRI news room, and the rights to receive more occasions to speak to the public through TVRI. Harmoko got even more rights as he was elected as the leader of Golongan Karya (Golkar) which required such access, not only for campaign propaganda, but also for direct reports to the President as Golkar's supervisory executive.

The difficulty faced by TVRI in integrating news for the society occurred when it balanced the two interests, namely the government's and society's interest where the society's interest should be prioritized. As Gunawan Subagio, the head of TVRI news room stated, "We move in areas full of conflicts so that balance is hard to find. We realize that any news should be exclusive and actual, but due to a lot of considerations, we cannot produce such news. TVRI actually works so hard to improve, but, what can we say. We are obliged as a government television to deliver government's mission as well as to satisfy people's curiosity."

After private televisions were allowed to share news in 1994, significant change in news report took place in TVRI news room, as professionals in TVRI at the time, challenged by their competitors, tried to improve and compete in their own mode.

One focus of private television management was program rating. Private televisions anywhere adopted television system pattern developed in United States where the production cost was funded and managed by private organizations. As a pure business institution, they operated based on the primacy of economics goals, which aimed at economics advantage—in simple term, they tried to get as high revenue as possible and to reduce the cost as low as possible to get the highest profit margin to return the investment and develop their business. Private television concept was to get their revenue by offering huge amount of audience as the commodity to sale to advertisers clients through rating calculation system (Foster, 2009; Petrica, 2011).

Each program rating score which also becomes quantitative measurement of number of viewers for the show in any television station of a certain hour of a day will influence CPRP-cost per rating point. They can therefore measure the price of an advertisement spot for a certain hour and program, based on the total number of viewers. Advertisement price can easily be calculated as the spot value can be compared with the number of audience. Rate card—the advertisement spot price per 30 second—will be determined by the total actual number of viewers when it is broadcast. The higher the rating, the higher the rate

card. Under this system, in United States for example, it can be determined that one rating point will create a \$100 advertisement price increase per year, a very significant amount. For commercial televisions in Indonesia the same law is applied. Every one point rating drop automatically decreases 50 trillion revenue per year. The audience is exploited in such a way by the advertisers in return of the satisfaction they get after watching the programs for free. As a result, the commercial controls over television network; meaning that the media-owner companies inserted their values in their programs; they developed conducive situation for the sake of advertisement interest (Kellner, 1990).

The orientation to increase the rating forces the program planner to conduct weekly evaluation based on the rating per program and average audience share per station. Based on the rating result evaluation, each program is analysed. A continuously dropping program will be observed to determine whether it is put at the right time slot, as determined by the competitor at the exact hour, whether production improvement is necessary, including a replacement for casts, theme selection per episode, stage background and setting, the acting, and storylines. If the slot position requires correction, a show should move within six weeks. The same is applied for news package.

The spirit to push the rating makes private television able to develop competitive market, which will finally force them to prepare fund source, human resource, and high qualified instruments. Professionalism and creativity develop rapidly in commercial television environment. They can recruit and provide higher salary for the best expert and develop dynamic organization structure and modern management. For human resource development, they can develop the human resources based on completion-based skills of productivity and creativity. The higher faculty to accumulate capital makes them able to prepare the latest and most sophisticated instruments.

The private television behavior to maximize profit and capital accumulation places them in such rationality: never ending circuit of capital accumulation—often described as M-C-M or Money-Commodities-More Money (Hidayat, 2000). In capitalistic business system, as money is the measurement, the calculation becomes so quantitative and clearly measured. The increase number of viewers is automatically portrayed by rating position and audience share, monitored each week. In Indonesia the rating position and audience share analysis are conducted every Wednesday. They automatically determine the program rate card. The rate card change mechanism is due to change in rating position and audience share, and is performed through discount, cash discount, and bonus.

As monitoring system is extremely tight, management and professionals in commercial television stations are accustomed to weekly target. Some advantages of the system, which in the end distinguish them from beaureaucratic system applied by government television, are for example: a) Television structure organization which focuses on function, where positions are concentrated on work load for specifically operational tasks. Such a system provides two advantages. First, it places personnels effi with the right man on the right place approach. Second, the personnel functioning based on competition by using matrix system allows appreciation given not only based on position in structural level, but also on individual competence; b) it is a simpler organization, easily modified as needed.. Organisation concept as an instrument to reach the goals is easily applied. In government television beaureaucratic system, TVRI organization structure modification requires changes in Presidential Regulation, as the umbrella for the whole Departments' organization structure. For TVRI—this means organizational structure of The Department of Information—since TVRI is a business body under RTF General Directorate; c) Higher personnel mobility. The movement of individuals from one sector to another can be conducted faster, both internally and by outsourcing method, even from the competitor's institution, through better facility and higher security. Recruitment system by taking over experts from different stations and institutions enriches the personnel expert map for the whole lines. The individuals with more to offer automatically have higher bargaining position as their expertise is required by several existing stations. In the end, each individual is motivated to continuously increase his performance as it is his main asset for his own bargaining power; d) High program mobility. The number of viewer monitoring system, in one hand, leads the program to create similar program. On the other hand, there is a tendency that the majority of audience prefers more popular program—mass culture; e) Fast capital mobilization. Capital mobilization can be done faster through strategic partners, initial performing options, IPO or public listing and it will certainly increase the station overall performance, both in anticipating instrument with new technology and the capacity increase of show production.

Such a condition allows private television to develop faster and to produce high-cost and better shows to satisfy more audiences. The spirit of competition against other existing media and institutions such as radio and printing media, in turn leads to increase in personnels' professionalism which directly increases material production capability. Similarly it takes place in commercial television news room. For the contexts of news room, all focus on quality

improvement of news report such as the speed, accuracy, discussion development and open debate, live show, and comprehensive reporting investigation.

There were some policies and regulations legalized by the government in New Orde Era in relation to broadcasting. Some of them were The Ministry of Information Decree No. 54/B/KEP/Menpen/1971 on television program management in Indonesia, The Ministry of Information Decree No.55/KEP/Men/1975 on News Materials granting TVRI its double status, both as a Foundation and Television Director, The Ministry of Information Decree No. 30/KEP/MENPEN/1981 on Omission of Program of Commerce/ Advertisement in TVRI programs, The Ministry of Information Decree No. 167/B/KEP/Menpen/1986 on Television program management in Indonesia (to replace the regulation No. 54/B/KEP/Menpen/1971). At the end of TVRI monopoly, The Ministry of Information Decree No. 190A/KEP/Menpen/1987 was released on *Saluran Siaran Umum* (General Channel) granting TVRI to run *Saluran Siaran Khusus* (Limited Channel Broadcast, the sole right for TVRI to produce News Program and other special Programs which had to be relayed by all television stations). In producing Limited Channel Braodcast, TVRI as a foundation can assign other parties as stated in stipulation No. 12/SP/DIR/TV/1988 on the agreement for limited channel broadcast liason. The Ministry of Information Decree No. 111/KEP/menpen/1990, The Ministry of Information Decree No. 84A/KEP/Menpen/1992, The Ministry of Information Decree No. 04A/KEP/Menpen/1993, UU No. 24/1997 were also released on Broadcasting.

Those decrees and stipulations gave broadcasting right and news monopoly for TVRI. The Ministry of Information Decree No. 30/KEP/MENPEN/1981 on Omission of Program of Commerce/ Advertisement in TVRI Program, stated, as consideration, that for the national development in New Orde Era, necessary steps were required to use television programs optimally to provide information, education, and training for all layers of society in order to accomplish development objectives even further. Based on that consideration, adjustment to replace business program and advertisement with events portraying development activities was required. In this relation, programs for development advertising remained. The consideration also stated that adjustments and improvement of TVRI programs were necessary, to focus on events exposing development activities and outcomes, both for projects already taking place and yet to occur as replacement for Program of Commerce/Advertisement.

Political dispute between Sudharmono and Ali Murtopo on the omission of business program/ advertisement in TVRI arose (Schwarz, 2004). Ali Murtopo

was President Soeharto private assistant who was liable for development projects in Indonesia. However, he was inclined to support Chinese entrepreneurs. This created local entrepreneurs strong resistance against him. Part of development funds allocated by Ali Murtopo was derived from Program of Commerce/ Advertisement in TVRI. However, only 1/3 of the income was allocated for the development while the rest entered his personal account.

For massive governmental projects, a new team was established to decide project allocation, namely Team 10. Team 10 was led by Sudharmono, a powerful state secretary who, since 1983, was also the Leader of Golkar. Team 10 had the authority to monitor more than US\$800.000 - later reduced to US\$300.000 - government spending. Sudharmono allotted substantial lenience for nationalist economists to develop local entrepreneurs. Therefore, they cherished Sudharmono. Some of them were Aburizal Bakrie, Fadel Muhammad, Iman Taufi Jusuf Kalla, Fahmi Idris, Siswono Yudohusodo, Suryo Sulistio, Rudy Pesik, Suryo Palo, Kamaludn Bachir, Kusumo Martoredjo, Bambang Rachmadi, Ponco Sutowo, Agus Kartasasmita, Abdul Latief, Adiwarsita Adinegoro, Hashim Djojohadikusumo, and Subagio Wiryoatmodjo.

Team 10 strongly intervened to support local entrepreneurs. In the decade of 1980, Team 10's control over government spending expanded to cover most departments and state-owned business enterprises. Therefore, critics from famous local entrepreneurs refused the thesis that Soeharto only facilitated Chinese entrepreneurs in the early period of the new Orde Era. Many advantages were gained by local entrepreneurs due to Sudharmono's Team 10 in the early 1980. Sudharmono tried to accelerate local entrepreneurs's (such as Bakrie and Fadel Muhammad) techniques and competence.

Sudharmono and local entrepreneurs proposed to omit Program of Commerce/ Advertisement in TVRI. The justification was that the society had become so consumptive due to the advertisement broadcast by TVRI. The hidden reason was their opposition against Ali Murtopo on the management of the revenue from commercials in TVRI. Such opposition arose since Ali Murtopo was predisposed to focus on Chinese entrepreneurs.

The proposal engineered by Sudharmono was finally legalized as a regulation. Ali Murtopo fell sick and was hospitalized in United States. After fully recovered and returning to Indonesia, Ali Murtopo stated that the reasoning that the society had become so consumptive due to the commercials broadcast on television should never be allowed as justification. Ali Murtopo stated that although commercials were not allowed on television, companies still promoted through other media.

Apart from the omission of business news and commer-

cial, the stipulation No. 12/SP/DIR/TV/1988 on agreement for limited channel broadcast liason, explicitly stated TVRI monopoly and news protection control through Siaran Saluran terbatas (Limited Channel Broadcast). On psalm 9, for example, it was stated that Jakarta limited channel broadcast was regulated in line with General Channel Broadcast under the requirement that: a) Jakarta was not allowed to have its [Warta Berita \(News Program\)](#), but to relay *Warta Berita* through General Channel Broadcast, b) Jakarta had to relay government official events broadcast in General Channel Broadcast, and c) SST- Jakarta live shows should have received approval from Broadcast Commission. Psalm 10 explained that the broadcast blueprint of Jakarta Limited Channel Broadcast was regulated as follows: a) Government/ news program, approximately 10%, b) Education, religion, and culture program, 20%, c) Entertainment and sport program, 55%, and d) business program, 15%.

Another indication of strong government control over private television was stated on psalm 11. Here was explained that news material should have been approved by Broadcast Commission prior its publication. Jakarta LCB was centralized in one station in Jakarta located just outside the complex of Pusat Penyiaran Televisi RI, Senayan, Jakarta.

Although mechanism was regulated, control over news content was not effectively performed. It was especially because the owners of private television stations were the son or the crony of the ruling and absolute President Suharto. Practically, in the New Orde Era, the Department of Information did not control television news content, except for TVRI which maintained tight regulation, including the decree to replace TVRI Director and news room leader who possessed strategic positions and could become spoiler against the authority.

The government regulations created pro and contra among journalists in particular. Government's action in the name of development often generated repressive action and periodical adjustment which raised journalist's arguments diametrically opposing the regime actions. A certain phenomenon arose where journalists, both from private and government-owned television stations spoiled against the authority. They, blatantly or covertly performed actions as spoiler by airing disfavored news.

Media is never value free. It is difficult to handle neutrality. Many media demonstrate neutrality from critical perspective. However, the scope of neutrality often leads to confusing, mostly ahistoric and relatively shallow news which do not enlight the whole problem contours (Quail and Larabie, 2010).

Three functions were played by television in relation with authority in the new orde Era, namely political tool, criti-



REFUTATIVE	Strong	“Spoiler”	“State/Government”
		TVRI RCTI	Presiden Soeharto (1966-1998) “Critical Supporter”
		Low High	Middle (Political and Economic Benefits)

**Figure 2. Functions of Television In New Orde Era**

Source: Lake, 1980

cal supporter and spoiler against the regime. As a spoiler, referring to table 2, the journalist’s relative economic and political advantage was low. Not only that they could not get political position, their economic source was also threatened. However, they had tremendous impact on the people. They were considered hero due to their bravery to spoil. In the latest era of Soeharto in 1998, destruction took place mainly due to political setting of the media and pressure for Soeharto to resign as urged by students and Soeharto circle, both in executive and legislative scopes.

Interview between SCTV presenter, Ira Koesno and Sarwono Kusumaatmaja on cabinet reshuffle was an example of television role as spoiler against authority. The interview content aired in Liputan 6 which was so disfavored by the government appalingly affect the personnels involved. Ira Koesno as the interviewer and Don Bosco as the man responsible for the program experienced the bearing. To refer to other cases, RCTI and Indosiar journalists placed themselves as spoilers when they explicitly broadcast blunders conducted by Ministers summoned by the Legislative Council. Hartono as the Minister of Information at the time was so outraged.

It was difficult to block democracy aspiration or journalist’s urge to deliver the truth to the public. Domestic and international economical and political dynamics influences not only at the television journalist’s cognitive level but also affective and even evaluative levels. However, since they still believed that Soeharto’s policies are on the right track, they positioned themselves as critical supporters whenever the government chose improper steps, especially when human right violation occurred.

However, there were also political economists who had concerns over the whole public broadcast and privatization regulation and this was a consequence of commercialism. It caused negative impact on news content. On the level of regulation, the economists believed that political involvement was crucial to allow changes and

As critical supporters, the main function of television was to screen socio-political and economic reality, different from the version allowed by the government. They performed this, in such a subtle manner as they hope that the method allowed the government to improve on fields under scrutiny. In this position, the journalists' relative economic and political advantage was similar to the advantage gained as government political instrument. However, their relative impact on the society considerably differed. As government critical supporters, their influence towards the society was quite significant. They were considered as belonging to the people since they were not mere political puppets. They still held the courage to express truth through the news they produced and broadcast. For the national car case, for example, private television acted as critical supporter. The news texts often expressed their criticisms towards the policy. In order to strengthen the texts, journalists often used comments and critical arguments from many components rejecting the policy. Another example was on the purchase of Germany ships. The transactions as advised by B.J. Habibie, as the Minister of Research and Technology, received critical responses from many components. Many news reports from RCTI and Liputan 6 SCTV broadcast news texts expressing critical judgment starting from the appropriateness, price, and potential collusion in the transaction process.

Meanwhile, Indosiar positioned itself as critical supporter during the riots and reformation, May, 1998. Although they were so cautious in airing the case, the news texts were extremely critical and harsh. Indosiar also screened the case from top to bottom. Principle of caution in broadcasting information related to the riot and demand was also performed by TVRI.

However, putting aside the challenge from the idealists, it is difficult to block the assumption that in the era of Soeharto

regime, both governmentally-owned (TVRI) and private television stations (RCTI, SCTV, and Indosiar) were actually mere governmental political tool. The prohibition for private television stations to produce their own news and the obligation to relay TVRI special report and news - TVRI was governmental propaganda instrument— are two crucial indicators to see television position in the context of “bureaucratic authoritarianism” government system in the Republic of Indonesia, which means that, similar to TVRI, those private television stations were generally under government control.

Since journalists, along with capital owner, and other direct governmental representation agencies positioned themselves as regime political tools, they automatically gained relatively huge economic and political advantage. At least, their routine income was relatively secured while, for political advantage, certain political positions, especially member of Legislative Council, House of Representatives, or any other bureaucratic position, were widely open. However, as regime political tool, their political influence towards public was low. This was due to the public’s tendency to yearn for journalists’ defence to voice their needs. Economic emphasis in media was usually on microeconomics issues rather than macroanalysis, and it focused mainly on producers and consumers in media market. The focus of attention, frequently, was on how media industry and business enterprises became successful, wealthy, and developed (Wasko, 2005).

Several cases functioning television as political tool could be seen on general TVRI programs. It is quite understandable as we realize that TVRI, owned by the government, was often used to deliver development messages and propaganda of success. The program “Dari Desa Ke Desa” fully loaded with village development messages, for example, represented television function as political tool. TVRI programs aired in the 1980 decade, incorporated quiz among “Kelompokcapir” members (members of listener, reader, and viewer), who competed on practical agricultural knowledge, which frequently inserted development success information.

There were also other programs for New Orde development success propaganda, ceremonial events for new industry and the completion of infrastructure projects, such as dams, railroads and generators. These frequently live programs were full of praises and pride over the national ability under the regime to establish certain industry and infrastructure. The news never revealed negative aspects of the established industry, such as the reallocation by the forcing apparatus towards the people on the lands used for that centre of industry or for the infrastructure, the potential pollution caused and other negative features.

Meanwhile, private television stations also functioned

as regime political tool, as they were obliged to directly relay TVRI programs for development information, news report, and national formal events. With the obligation to relay those programs, private television stations such as RCTI, SCTV and Indosiar also contributed to government propaganda. In other term, they became passive political tool.

## CONCLUSION

The tendenciously oppressive regulations formulated television media as not more than governmental political tool. Indonesia broadcasting system in the New Orde era demonstrated centralized broadcasting system throughout Java which, in hierarchy, administratively obeyed Jakarta central station. The result, in its development, was that the established policy affected the reportage policy which was inclined to oppose, except for TVRI. Although all television stations were designed from the very beginning as New Orde political tool and critical supporter, they often played a function as spoilers against President Soeharto’s policy. In news room, upheaval against existing rules and regulation surfaced in various manners and levels. In macro structure level, resistance and rebellion from political elites continued to develop and expand against Soeharto regime.

For journalists, it was crucial to increase their vision and knowledge, and to continuously sharpen their consciousness in reconstructing clearer social reality, and to be aware of injustice and oppression in any form. By this, journalists would have the chance to do more in creating a media as public sphere useful for the society.

Basically, this research has limitation. First, methodologically, the research focuses on events happened in the past. The weakness begins to occur as the researcher interviews sources forced to remember events taking place in a relatively long timeline. Some of the sources refuse to openly discuss procedures, working system, and journalist’s contestation with the owner since they still work in the same television station, with the same leaders and owner. Second, critical theoretical perspective used implicates the researcher in professional context as television practitioner and as a bureaucratic official to criticize for past actions.

In order to enrich the academic contribution for the similar theme, the sources’ objectivity should be put into account. However, the objectivity should not put aside the knowledge qualification. We should consider not only the sources’ objectivity but also the objectivity of the researcher who should focus on the research ignoring the person’s status, especially as the researcher is involved in television industry.

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