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INDONESIAN TV EXISTANCE

The effects of the monetary crisis and political crisis on the television-broadcasting companies in private sector.

The existence of private owned television-broadcasting companies are shaken due to lengthy monetary crisis. The economic crisis that sweeping out Asia region deeply affect Indonesia compare to the neighboring countries. From all the discussion in the mass media it is very clear the priority of Indonesia government is to fix their political crisis. According to the Indonesian expertise, if the fundamental of the political system straightens and strong automatically the economic crisis should be end. The economic crisis started on August 1997. The political crisis exploded on May 1998. The victims are four students of the University of Trisakti shot dead mysteriously, follow by waves of university students demonstration to control the House of Representatives. In effect of this tragedy thirty-two years reigned President stepped down from the throne on May 21.

On May 14th and 15th, Jakarta became lake of fire, shopping malls, supermarkets, and estates looted and destroyed. Looting and raping were happened. According to NGO looting, raping, and destroying they all have similar patterns. In short there were organizers and was well organized. The same thing was happened with kidnapping of the political opposition activists. It was well organized. The incident on July 27, 1996, the raid on opposition party Democratic Party of Indonesia (PDI) lead by Megawati the daughter of first President of Indonesia, Sukarno. This invasion was organized by deutero-PDI by Suryadi. The deutero PDI is a political party, which separated from the main party and act as a counter attack against the main party. This drama was setup by
Suharto's government. In this case, Major-General Syarwan Hamid acts as a *Minister of Internal Affairs* in the cabinet of President B.J. Habibie. There are pros and cons in this political crisis in this reformation era post-Suharto. The pros are mass media have more freedom in their news content especially on political news. The people will defend this freedom and the right to speak freely. Government will release a new law regarding demonstration activity this month. The law stated that the demonstration activity will not be participate by more than fifty people. If the participants exceeds more than fifty they must have approval from the local government. The people were not too happy of this new policy.

The Indonesian Government run by B.J. Habibie tries to bring to justice the kidnappers, mysterious snipers who shot the four students, looters, and rapist. Although the government putting big efforts but still not big enough to make the people feel secure. At the end of the day the source of this chaos is the never-ending political crisis. This political crisis will never stop at least five to ten years so that the political system getting more mature and democratic. In this conditions Indonesia will fight to survive in the economic sector. The GNP that was US$ 1500 now diving to US$300. This condition effects the private broadcasting television deeply. The incomes source from advertising drop to seventy percent. TPI, Indosiar, SCTV already start laying off their employee. Reducing there on-air time and stop purchasing imported programs, because they have to purchase their imported programs with US dollar currency. In August 1997 US$ 1 equal to IDR RP 2200, presently the rupiah value around IDR RP 12000-13000. The mess in banking system, corrupt government, and nepotism practices causes the economic fall
down. All this things that happen not just effect the people but also effecting the cash flow of TV stations up to 70%. The TV stations can not survive in this condition.

The Suharto's regime designed the economic system without strong foundations. The foundations are the sense of loyalty to the people meaning no corruption, nepotism, and collusion. The industries will not depend on the imported materials which base on US dollar. The agriculture is not prioritize to support domestic supply and for export. The weird thing the priority is building airplane that does not have profit visibility.

Corruption, collusion, and nepotism happen in the public own company, private banks. All these mistake also done by local monetary institutions and international monetary institutions such as IMF, World Bank, and ABD. This international monetary institution always keeps flowing loans to Indonesia and always giving the statement that the Indonesian economic is growing and very stable. The very worse thing that also happen billions of dollars of funds are parking outside the country but the government is begging for fresh loans. This economic crunch causing companies going bankrupt and crashing the buying potential.

Of course it effects the advertising sector deeply and it is very bitter. Even like the product of cooking oil does not need advertising because these products vanished from the market. Exporting the crude oil much more profitable rather than they distribute it domestically. However, there are no mechanisms to guarantee all the US dollar generated from the profits will be reinvest it domestically. That is why now government banned the export.

With the fall of the advertising funds to seventy percent the question is will the five private own television broadcasting station will still exits? Will they merge, liquidate,
and bankrupt as the same fate like the private banks. If the stations still able to sustain the operation surely they are running under deficit.

The weaknesses of television broadcasting station and the promising future.

The establishment of television broadcasting in Jakarta 1989 not bases on professional human resources. The same path with the economic booming style of importing base materials, they also imported the equipment and the expertise. Until the age of seven years with the profit base on advertising there is no effort to produce local expertise with great of creative ideas by conducting training to achieve high quality in the productions works. The television-broadcasting station in Indonesia presently does not have the expertise with the broadcasting skill, they just see it as a gold mine of advertisement. Different from the newspapers in Indonesia, the fundamental reason of them were as a one of the tool to fought against colonialism and to depart the Dutch colony out of the land. The newspaper reporters in the year of 1940 until the Independence Day in August 17, 1945 even through out the years of 1965, 1970, 1980, 1990 they all are our freedom fighters. The newspaper industry already advance in establishment and the reason of the initialization not base on profit from the advertisement but base on national ideology to confront against Dutch colonialism. Because of the different purpose or different ideology the television broadcasting stations does not concern about the preparation of the human resources to become increasingly professional. The agenda behind the television broadcasting station are profits and
politics. Will the unprofessional human resources that the stations employed able to survive in this economic crisis and the political turmoil in Indonesia.

What are the weaknesses of the television broadcasting in Indonesia? Of course one of the main weakness is the human resource. The weakness in the human resource happened because of the political system and economic that was valid when they build it. They were thoughtless that the main purpose of the television programming not just entertainment but also as a channel to educate the people. The ownership of television station mainly control by the Cendana’s Family which is Suharto’s family, produce a program that does not have the essence of honesty regarding all the manipulative works of the government. The manifestations of the manipulation are the economic crisis and political turmoil.

The promising futures of the programming on broadcasting station are the diversities of the cultures, ethnic groups, environmental natures, history, and politic. All this differences are the sources of ideas to project on the stories in the television programming especially script for television movie.

For a story of television drama or for a wide screen format always involving professional actor and actress. They all master the ability to act in front of the camera. The professional screenplay writer before jot down their ideas on the blank sheet of paper they already know and familiar with their audience, the casting, cinematography, sound effect, lighting and so on and so on.

There are important elements of television script in order to satisfy the audience. One of them is suspense, never writes a television script without the element of suspense. The elements of drama and mysteries also play important role on the television script.
The pace of the story must be fast and may not let the audience get off from their couch.

Your story or program is competing with all the distraction in the house such as telephone ring, other program, all this that can make your audience switch of your TV sets or change the channel.

To be professional in the realm of work in broadcasting apply the principle of "no pain no gain". Everyone must fight to reach or to become more professional in his or her work. There are no shortcuts or quantum leap to reach professionalism. This one of the element of facts that the Indonesians who involve in broadcasting, film, and music business must realize.

The definition of Asianness.

In my present of childhood in Medan, a capital city of the province of North Sumatra my older brother loves to watch western cowboy's movie in the theater in the year 1955. At that time in Medan the movie trend besides cowboy's movie also Indian movie, Indian movie, Hong Kong movie and Japanese movie. My family did not watch Indonesian movie at that time.

At 1970 when I worked in TVRI in Medan the majority of the movie also imported movie. The Hollywood movie dominated the majority of the movie program followed by Indian movie. TVRI in Medan made an effort to go to Kuala Lumpur to purchased the Indian movie and played it on-air on Saturday night all night long.

In 1983 I was transferred to TVRI in Jakarta, still the Hollywood dominated the entertainment program in that time. Indian, Spanish, Hong Kong movie purchase
because of the cheap price. Even in the beginning two of the private TV stations would not play the Indian movie because of the connotation of the market segment from the lower class. Nevertheless, because of the TPI gain high profit from running Indian movie all the private TV station competing in this program.

The same thing happened with SCTV that started running Spanish soap opera because of the cheap price and gain good profit from it, automatically the rest of the private TV station followed SCTV by running Spanish soap opera.

Are the Indian, Hong Kong, and Japanese movies identical with Asianness which the definition of it is very unclear. Although we assume that the entertainment products of TV programming that is produced in Asia it does not mean the essence of Asianness reflected out from the program. The reason for me to say there is a bias in the definition of Asianness it self in the context of television industrial because the basis of entertainment TV industry is global. For example in one TV movie the story the fundamental question is who is the bad guy who is the good guy. How the main role either the bad guy or the good guy survive, success, repenting from all the evil doing using all their strength physically, morally, and strategy. In the way he act his or her role we can observe the value of the culture from the type society he or she is in the frame of the role. For example the main aspect of Chinese kung-fu movie is always never ending revenge. If I am watching Indian movie and Hong Kong movie I can not appreciate the way the capture the beauty of their outdoor setting. They are not allocating their big effort to capture the beauty of it. Different from Hollywood movie where they are daring to set their location anywhere from in the middle of rain forest in South America to the desserts in Africa.
The main important step we must take in this case we have to define what is the meaning of Asianess for industrial TV production. In AN-TEVE they are showing "Ricky Lake" show, pleasant to watch but very irrelevant to Indonesian audience because the Indonesians character are shy to public exposure, even though the subject that has been brought up in the show also happening in Indonesia.

The fact of Hollywood products especially TV Movie programs designed for global audience. All races and groups of people can except the programs. Mass culture is the terminology for this case. Hollywood with their mass cultures is one industry. This type industry demands an employees with creative idea and professional in their production operation and also demand stable political system, strong economic foundation, and also the economic that is liberal.

If Indonesia realize and comprehend this matter then Indonesian TV industry can be part of the global player in this world entertainment game. Now Indonesia is globally known because of the incident on bloody May 1998, of course thanks to our good friend CNN and all the international media. If one of the TV station would be able to produce such a movie base on the movement of the heroic acts of the university students and they will produce it professionally I believe the HBO or Cinemax will purchase it and roll it. The reason not because of the Asianness element but to watch the drama of the social and politic content.
CONCLUSION

In Indonesia it is important for the expertise on TV production or wide screen production to have high level of awareness of professionalism in producing programs for TV production and wide screen production to achieve a products that are marketable in the global market. The expertise must also have ability on aspects of creativity and broad knowledge of business that is related to this matter. The expertise must aware of the never satisfy audience and also critical audience that never stop demand of high quality of artwork in their products. The production house in Indonesia still only act as a copy cat producer producing copy cat products having the same western style and western color, absolutely no elements of Indonesia and Asianness. If we analyze from the point of view of casting, cinematography, directions and all aspects of producing the TV movie we still see more and more Westerness in their production. All the TV products that are produce in Asian region all are excellent as long as their produce with professional excellence. For Indonesia it self, the local products will never be appreciate it by local consumers if they never reform their production methods. I believe the main point is Asianness will not be exclusive if it is only as a forgiving instrument for defect product, at the end of the day, we all go back to our professionalism.
Session VI
TV Entertainment Programmes:
Opportunities & Limitations
Country Presentations from Malaysia & Philippines

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Nestor Torre