

The Political and Economic Influences on Television Content in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia

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Abstract: The downfall of the last authoritarian ruler in May 1998 marked the beginning of the transition to democracy in Indonesia. After being curbed and controlled by the government for decades, a question arises, who actually controls media content in the era of liberalization. This research investigates political economic factors that affect television workers and the content they produce during a period from 1998 to 2014, and one key questions raised: What is the most influential factor that affects television workers in shaping their content? This research used descriptive surveys and questionnaires were distributed to 400 television workers, from top to lower level employees at 10 largest television stations in Indonesia. This research found that, on a daily basis, the audience is the most influential factor on content affecting some 31 percent television workers followed by advertiser (19%), media owners (18.5 %) and regulators (18 %). Politicians showed the least influence affecting only 13.2 % television workers.

Keywords: television, content, politics, economics, Indonesia.

I. INTRODUCTION

The research topic on the political economy of Indonesian television media was chosen because new life has been given to the industry by major changes in the structure of the industry, especially by the process of democratization, globalization, ownership conglomeration, and organizational fragmentation. Especially after the issuance of 1999 Press Law, for the first time in the history of the Indonesian press, the regulation of the press transfers from the government to the media industry itself.

This research is conducted 16 years after the collapse of President Suharto's 32-year authoritarian rule in 1998, ending the era of government-controlled media content and the beginning of media liberalization. This research took a period from 1998 to 2014 because Indonesians saw the governments changed six times during the course, with four general elections took place in 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014. The dynamics of these political and economic changes during the period should influence media content.

The research grapples with a persistent question, which become a problem statement of this research: although broadcast regulator, the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI), plays a role in controlling content in the era of liberalization, has the KPI become the sole controller of television content?

When the authoritarian government had collapsed, and the old style of restriction on television content is no longer exist, who ultimately controls television content right now?; How political economic factors influence television workers in shaping content?; Which political economic factors that influence television workers and their content the most? All these issues have been problematic because nobody knows exactly the answers of these questions in the context of post-authoritarian Indonesia. No comprehensive study has been made about this particular topic so far.

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Pertaining to a question, who actually shapes media content in Indonesia today? In the final analysis, without day-to-day state control over what appears in the media, media workers literally 'make' the content and interpret them for the audience. However, the practice of producing media content is itself always determined by a number of influential factors that surround the media.

The central question in the study of the political economy of communication is how the public sphere be restrained or liberated by the changes in the structure of television media, the forces that exercise control over cultural production and distribution. This directs attention to the ownership pattern of such institutions and the consequences of this pattern toward control over their media content, and the nature of the relationship between the media and state regulation (Golding & Murdock, 2000).

This study is important to identify general patterns and/or relationships of political economic factors being studied and to make predictions about the influence of those factors on media content particularly in the Indonesian context. This research seeks to determine which political economic factors influence television workers and their content the most.

Since television content among stations vary in term of the genre, and since some stations focus on a certain type of program more than others due to business reasons so it is unlikely this research focus on specific programs. There were 11 national TV channels in Indonesia up to 2014, some 10 stations are commercial with only one public station. This research focus on the 10 Jakarta-based commercial free-to-air national television stations (RCTI, SCTV, Indosiar, Global TV, MNC TV, Trans TV, Trans 7, Metro TV, TV One, ANTV) whose content compositions are not exactly similar.

Based on the above illustration, the formulation with regard to the objectives of this research is to determine which political economic factors influence television workers and their content the most with a key research question: What are the most influential political economic factors that affect television workers in shaping the content?

2. THE POLITICAL ECONOMIC INFLUENCES ON MEDIA CONTENT

This part discusses theoretical framework with regard to the influence on media content in order to ground this study in the relevant previous work, and to give a clear sense of theoretical approach to the phenomena proposed in this study. The theoretical framework should shows how this research fits into what is already known (relationship to existing theory and research) and to show how research makes a contribution on the topic to the field (Maxwell, 2005). Theoretical framework should be used when research is guided either by one theory, or by concepts drawn from various theories and previous findings (Parahoo, 2006). So theoretical framework is used to guide this study.

According to McQuail (2000), the media organization, where media content is made, is an essential link in the process of mediation by which society addresses itself. In this regard, structural features of media organization such as size, forms of ownership and media, industrial function can be seen as having direct consequences for the conduct of the particular media organization. McQuail refers conduct to all the system activities that in turn affect performance, in the sense of the type and relative amount of media content produced and offered to audiences. According to this model, we need to look not only at internal features of media organizations, but also in their relations with other organizations and with the wider society.

This research will look at the forces at work within television organizations, the external influences upon their activity and the influence of particular organization features on what they produce and disseminate. McQuail said, the theories, which have been formulated based on research into media organizations, have been consistent. They support the view that organizational routines, practices and goals systematically and distinctively influence content.

The questions about the degree of freedom media organization posses in relation to the wider society, and how much freedom is possible within the organization and media-organizational routines and procedures for selecting and processing content lead to consideration of the tension. The following oppositions reflect the tension at the heart of media-making: 1) constraint versus autonomy; 2) routine production versus creativity; 3) commerce versus art and ; 4) profit versus social purpose (McQuail, 2000).

The broad range of issues, which arise, can be appreciated when one takes an overview of theoretical perspectives organized around the question of influence on media content, as posed by Shoemaker and Reese (1991) who suggest five main hypotheses: 1) Content reflects social reality (mass media as mirror of society); 2) Content is influenced by media

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workers' socialization and attitudes (a communicator-centered approach); 3) Content is influenced by media-organizational routines; 4) Content is influenced by social institution and forces; 5) Content is a function of ideological positions and maintains the status quo (the hegemonic approach).

McQuail (2000) identify five main kinds of relationship, which need to be examined in order to gain some understanding of the conditions affecting media organizational activity and the mass communicator role: 1) Relationship with society; 2) Relationship with owners, clients and suppliers; 3) Relationship with pressure groups; 4) Relationship with internal organization; 5) Relationship with audience.

Referring back to the base and superstructure model proposed by Marx and Engels (Marx and Engels, 1996), it could be said that media content influence and media power relations discussed above relate to mass media as a 'means of production' which in capitalist society are in the ownership of the ruling class. According to this idea, the mass media simply disseminate the ideas and world views of the ruling class, and deny or defuse alternative ideas. This is very much in accord with Marx's argument that mass media disseminate the dominant ideology: the values of the class, which owns and controls the media.

The mass media worked to create 'false awareness' in the average workers. This prompts a compelling position whereby media content are seen as undiversified expressions of decision class values, which disregards any differing qualities inside the decision class and inside the media, and the likelihood of oppositional readings by audiences of media (Marx and Engels, 1996). A number of different relationships within and across the boundaries of media organization must be taken into account in any theoretical account of media organizations and occupations. These relationships are often active negotiations and exchanges and sometimes conflicts, latent or actual.

Gerbner (1969) depicted communicators in mass media as working under pressure from different external 'power roles', including audience, competitors (other media in the main), clients (such as sponsors and advertisers), authorities (especially legal and political), experts, and other institutions.

According to Pringle and Starr (2005, p.102), all broadcast station content (programs) is determined by four influences: audience, broadcaster, advertiser and regulator.

The audience, which seeks out a station for its programs. Listeners or viewers may be exposed to other content, such as commercials and public service and promotional announcements, but their principal goals to hear or view program content that satisfies their need at a particular time. Programs that fail to attract listeners or viewers, or fail to satisfy their needs, are imperiled. So are the financial fortunes of the station.

The broadcaster, who is responsible for operating the station profitably for its owners. The greater the audience, the greater the likelihood that a profit can be realized. Accordingly, the broadcaster selects and schedules programs to attract as many people as possible among the targeted audience.

The advertiser, whose principal interest in using a radio or television is to bring a product or service to the attention of those most likely to use it. Programs that attract potential customers stand the best chance of attracting advertising revenues, especially if the number of people is large and the cost of delivering the commercial to them is competitive.

The regulator, or government and its agencies, whose goal is to ensure that the station is operated in a way that serves the public interest. The regulator take actions aimed at compelling or encouraging broadcasters to engage in certain programming practices to satisfy that goal.

This research will examine the political economy factors that affect content as mentioned earlier by the communication theorists. However, this research will focus on five factors frequently found by television workers in their day-to-day tasks in producing television content: media owners, advertisers, audience, government and politics. The five political and economy factors are widely discussed in the various media literature, and the following are reviews with regard to the factors.

3. THE INFLUENCE OF OWNERS

It is difficult not to conclude that most media companies work in the interests of owners – as opposed to the interests of audiences or the community at large. Owners occupy the top command posts of media organizations, and they or their appointed top executives eventually have the final say in what the organization does. If the employees don't like it they

can quit. Others will be found to take their place, and routines can always be changed. Questions remain about how media owners have lived up to this responsibility. In many developed countries, this responsibility has become greatly diffused. However, in Indonesia many independent owners run their own media organizations, some of them have become part of the larger corporate fabric.

The key issue with regard to the relation between media workers and owners is the extent to which the workers can claim to exercise autonomy in relation to their owners. According to Altschull (1984), the interests of those who finance the press were always reflected in the content of news media. The notion is fairly clear and also consistent with the principles of free 'market' press theory. However, there is usually some degree of autonomy on the part of media workers employed by media owners, especially freedom based on professionalism or the requirements for creating.

Owners in market-based media have ultimate power over content, and there is no doubt that they can ask for what they want to be included or left out in the production of content. Even so, there are quite strong conventions relating to journalism, which protect the decision-making autonomy of editors on particular news stories. It is not too surprising that journalists should claim more autonomy even though they are reluctant to admit being told what to do by the proprietors.

Nevertheless, there is an unavoidable tendency for those who own news media to set broad lines of policy, which are likely to be followed by the editorial staff they employ. There may also be informal and indirect pressure on particular issues that matter to owners. For instance, relating to their other business interest (Turow, 1994).

Change in ownership shows its influence most clearly. According to Shoemaker & Reese (1991), this may come in the form of a corporate takeover. The new media owners clearly imposed a new policy with far-reaching effects. The news was to be treated like their other business, expected to support itself, a departure from the traditional view that network news is a loss-leader public service supported by the entertainment side of the enterprise. These changes have direct implications for content.

4. THE INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISERS

The relationship between media and advertisers is best described as a symbiotic one. The central issue raised is about how far the media count on advertising revenue. This in turn leads to a question about the degree to which media content serves market ideology and advertisers' interests (Burton, 2005, p.18). According to Garnham (2000), we need to understand the nature of the advertising market in order to understand the media economy and what is and is not sustainable within it.

Most media institutions depend very much on the work of, or on revenues from, advertisers to finance their operation and reap profit. Those who work in newsrooms frequently see economic considerations as indirect influences on editorial decisions and as constraints to their work. Advertisers, who gain access to those audiences with information on their products and services, purchase advertising time sold to them by the media. The sales department is the principal generator of revenues for the media. However, its ability to sell time is determined to a large degree by the media creative workers' in drawing audiences, especially those that advertisers want to reach. Good programming attracts audiences, which in turn attract advertisers and revenues.

According to Shoemaker and Reese (1991), most media in free-market countries are finely tuned to jointly optimizing the needs of advertisers and sponsors as well as their own interests as a normal condition of operation. The 'normal' influence involves the matching of consumption patterns of targeted audience with media content to be produced. Media design, scheduling, planning, layout, often reflect advertiser interests.

According to Altschull (1984, p.254), the interests of those who finance the press have strong correlation with the content of the press. There is substantial evidence that both advertisers and audiences affect media content, both directly and indirectly. Baker (1994) said that 'advertisers, not government are the primary censors of media content in the United States today'. He cites evidence of advertisers using their market power to attempt to block particular communications that damage their interests and of advertiser pressure, which influences personnel as well as editorial decisions in the media. However, influence comes in diverse forms that are often hard to detect and not necessarily illegitimate (for instance providing information that has a promotional value, product placement, sponsoring, etc).

5. THE INFLUENCE OF AUDIENCES

Conceptualizing 'audience' must come in the first place before the discussion of a relationship between media and audiences. The audience can be understood based on the following conceptions: (1) a disparate collection of individuals who happen to be consuming one text at one time; (2) a coherent social group who have in common characteristics outside their consumption; (3) a mass group whose identity comes from the very fact of their consumption (Burton, 2005, p.16).

According to Burton (2005), in order to satisfy their advertisers media institutions need to objectify their audiences. Advertisers must be satisfied because in most cases, media depend on their commercial payments for survival and profit. In this case, advertisers are looking at quantitative research and at ways of measuring what the audiences do with the products. More specific descriptions of audiences emphasize this view. So although given media organizations may talk in general about their readers, listeners or viewers, in fact they are thinking about consumers. The most important reason for audience's existence is to provide cash for the media institutions to continue to operate.

The number of audience is crucial for media. Broadcasters refer to ratings. Newspapers refer to circulation figures and readership. These descriptions translate into numbers. The bottom line of every audience research, even the qualitative ones, is to obtain data about who are prepared to spend, given amounts of cash on the given media service, and how far do these translate into certain numbers of certain kinds of people who are spending, or the goods and services that it may be promoting? So the relationship at the level of the executive, of policy, of shareholders, is a material one (Burton, 2005, p.16).

When commercials began airing on radio stations, advertisers naturally wondered how many listeners were exposed to their messages and how effective the messages were. That's why traditional advertisers, not broadcasters, were the initiators of broadcast research (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). However, it became the responsibility of broadcasters to provide empirical evidence of the size and characteristics of their audience (Briandana & Dwityas, 2018)

For television personnel, the rating results from research companies on television programs quite often bothered some broadcasters. Creative television workers including performers, writers, directors, producers and others in programming became particularly sensitive to the rating reports. Often their careers, and sometimes their incomes, were dependent upon where they stood in program rankings. Nevertheless, the slavery to the decimal point decided the fate of many programs and it caused the renewal or termination of the advertising contracts of many sponsors. Casualties were common every season in the television schedules (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991).

Rating reports made based on audience research survey are the most common institutional device for making contact with the audience. Market and audience measurement research are important tools of the media sales department. Radio and television audiences are measured by diary, telephone, and personal interview. Television audiences are also measured by meter.

Today large commercial television stations can obtain rating reports almost on day-to-day basis and use them to improve television programs. Media organizations are, for the most part, in the venture of producing content as a way of inviting audiences to come and generating profit and employment. They need some firm basis on which to predict the interests and likely degree of attention of audience by utilizing rating reports as their parameter.

6. THE INFLUENCE OF REGULATORS

Regulators in many countries exert controls over the mass media. In democratic societies, the media are free to operate within the limits of laws and regulations. However, conflicts still occur in relations with regulators. In countries where the media are largely privately owned, regulators exert controls on mass media through laws, regulations, licenses, and taxes, whereas in countries where the media are primarily government owned, control is exerted through media financing (Janus, 1985). A media regulator is an independent body or a government agency responsible for exercising autonomous authority over media activities in a regulatory or supervisory capacity. An independent media regulator is a regulatory agency that is independent from other branches or arms of the government.

The relationship between media and regulators, though not entirely one of equals, is similarly one of mutual self-interest. When things really get difficult, regulators makes law and controls the flow of information. Regulators controls mechanism of regulation directly or indirectly. Given the access of media to the audience, regulators often use media to

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disseminate policy, to promote initiatives, and to release information into the public domain. Media are also used to test reactions to possible new law, and most of all to present in a public sphere a favorable view of regulators' works (Sulistyo, 2017).

Regulators are very conscious of the value of media coverage, of what they assume to be the power of the media to sway public opinion. The media are also conscious of their alleged influence, but are informed too of the power of regulators as an information prime source. Broadcast media personnels are especially aware of the financial consequences of regulators' power to allow or to stop things from happening (Burton, 2005).

7. THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICIANS

The emergence of mass media technologies is able to simultaneously communicate with millions of people creating the possibilities for politicians to communicate with the masses. Not surprisingly, politics became enmeshed with the mass media, which became key players in producing and circulating political symbolism. The relationship between media and politicians is based on a mutual need. The media need politicians to appear in the media so that they may attract an audience by having access to authority figures. Politicians need to appear in the media to have a platform for their positions.

The Fourth Estate and watchdog journalism are two interrelated notions central to the way in which the media/politics relationship has been conceptualized within liberal democracies. From this notion grew the idea that liberal journalists should be adversarial (towards politicians) to be effective watchdogs. Schultz (1998, p.29) notes that liberal journalists now adhere to the following self-definition of their role: 1) To be necessarily critical of politicians (adversarial); 2) To champion citizen rights against the abuse of state power; 3) To provide a platform for debate.

8. PREVIOUS STUDIES

The rise of the mass media paved the way for the study of the political economy of the media. The media industries provided all of the elements required for studying the political and economic process. Research began to emerge during the 1950s. Ray (1951) studied newspaper concentration and competition, whereas Reddaway (1963) examined newspapers' economic characteristics as firms. Steiner's (1952) classic work studied competition in the industry of radio. Early research of the television industry examined market structure (Levin, 1958), the influence on advertising revenues (Tijmstra, 1959–1960) and competition with other media (Berlson, 1961).

Studies with regard to the television owners were made among others by Altschull (1984) who found that the interests of media owners were always reflected in the television content. Owners in market-based media have ultimate power over content, and there is no doubt that they can ask for what they want to be included or left out in the production of content. In other study on owner, Turow (1994) indicated informal and indirect pressure on particular issues that matter to owners. For instance, relating to their other business interest. Shoemaker & Reese (1991) found that changes in television ownership often bring different content. The new owners imposed a new policy with far-reaching effects. They treated the news like their other business that brought direct implications for content.

Shoemaker and Reese (1991) also found that most media in free-market countries are finely tuned to jointly optimizing the needs of advertisers and sponsors as well as their own interests as a normal condition of operation. The 'normal' influence involves the matching of consumption patterns of targeted audience with media content to be produced. Media design, scheduling, planning, layout, often reflect advertiser interests.

According to Altschull (1984, p.254), there is substantial evidence that both advertisers and audiences affect media content, both directly and indirectly. Baker (1994) found that advertisers used their market power to attempt to block particular communications that damage their interests. They also influenced personnel as well as editorial decisions in the media in diverse forms that are often hard to detect.

The number of audience is crucial for media. Broadcasters refer to ratings. Newspapers refer to circulation figures and readership. These descriptions translate into numbers. According to Burton (2005, p.17) audiences appear to participate and influence media content through email, letters, phone-ins and other communication devices (Burton 2005, p.17).

9. METHODS

In this research, surveys are used to measure the most influential political economic factors that shape content. Questionnaires were distributed to television workers who were, or are employed, in producing or, managing content at 10 largest television stations in Indonesia. The measurement technique used in the questionnaires is Likert rating scale. Respondents are asked to rate on a number of statements in the questionnaires with the five-level of scale to reflect their level of attitude toward certain issues, or frequency of occurrences of certain events. This research employs descriptive survey that endeavors to depict or archive condition or states of mind since the objective is to illustrate and explain a situation of political economic pressures that befall television workers.

The respondent to be taken as sample members are especially those who have knowledge about the process of television content production, and other personnel at television station related to content. Considering the time constraint and research cost, this study produced some 400 respondents selected purposively with a criteria that they must be in charge of television content production, either in pre-production, production, and post-production of television programs, or any other positions in television stations related to content.

Jakarta is chosen as the location of research because most major television stations, especially those broadcast nationally, are based in the capital of Indonesia. This research is expected to survey television workers selected purposively from top level to lower level employees who have been working, or who had worked, at 10 largest television stations in Indonesia

10. RESULTS

The first part of these findings uncover the most influential political economic factors on television content in Indonesia based on survey with 400 respondents who work or had worked at 10 largest television station in Indonesia. The respondents worked in various positions involved in content productions. Questionnaire distributions apparently had been running well and generated sufficient data. The television workers who became respondents of this study consisted of various levels of positions, whether they were newcomers in television business or those who had been working for years; whether they were still working or no longer working at television stations. In essence, each respondent was asked to give his or her opinions based on their experiences with regard to the various political economic factors that affect their professional works and eventually influenced the content they produced.

Statements in the questionnaire were devised with reference to the various influencing factors that may affect the determination of media content consisting of five dimensions: media owners, advertisers, media regulators, audience, and politicians. The results of the data collection obtained from the questionnaires are presented in the following five tables.

The first political economic factor measured in this study is the influence of media owners toward television program content. A total of three statements have been listed in the questionnaire to indicate owners' influence on the chores of television workers that eventually affect program content. The following statements were listed in the questionnaire: 1) Media owners contribute their idea for programming content; 2) The media owners or your boss rejected content considered incompatible with your media policy; 3) You or your colleagues were told not to broadcast content since it may harm the owners' interests. Respondents' feedback on the statements were shown in Table 1.

Of 400 television workers who had responded to the statement 'media owners contribute their ideas to programming content' and filled the questionnaires as many as 172 respondents said they found their media owners frequently or very frequently influenced them and their television program content in the form of suggesting or giving ideas, while the remainder of respondents expressed neutral, rare or very rare.

Table 1: Owners influence on program content

Scale	Dimensions		
	Giving idea	Rejecting program content	Rejecting content emission
Very frequent	48	44	48
Frequent	124	104	100
Neutral	112	104	116
Rare	68	100	88
Very rare	48	48	48
Total	400	400	400

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With regard to the statement ‘the media owners or your boss rejected content considered incompatible with your media policy’ as many as 148 television workers said television owners were often or very often rejected program content considered inappropriate or contrary to the company’s policy. While statement ‘owners influence on television workers for not broadcast anything that may harm the owners’ interest’, as many as 148 workers said they were experiencing that situation frequently or very frequently, while the remainder of the respondents expressed neutral¹, rare or very rare. On average, owners affect frequently or very frequently 156 respondents or 39 percent.

Televisions depend very much on revenues from advertisers to finance their operation and reap profit. The influence of advertisers is measured by five indicative statements posed to the respondents in the questionnaire as the followings: 1) Advertisers/sponsors contribute their idea to content; 2) Media content policy accommodate advertisers’ or sponsors’ needs; 3) Station’s programming planning and scheduling accommodate advertisers’ or sponsors’ interests; 4) Advertisers or sponsors asked the station to report their activities; 5) Media did report advertisers’ activities if they asked; 6) Commercial or promotional messages were inserted in the program content. Replies from respondents on the statements were shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Advertisers influence on program content

Scale	Dimensions					
	Contributing idea	Accommodate advertisers’ needs	Programming accommodate advertisers	Advertisers Asked for reports	Reporting Advertisers activities	Commercial Messages in program
V. frequent	20	164	40	68	64	64
Frequent	100	100	124	112	108	144
Neutral	96	136	128	128	128	64
Rare	96	72	76	72	76	88
Very rare	88	48	72	20	24	40
Total	400	400	400	400	400	400

Table 2 indicates that as many as 120 respondents said advertiser/sponsor were very often or often participated and gave their views with regard to program content while as many as 264 television workers stated that their media were very often or often considered advertisers’ will in their programming; Some 164 television workers stated that their program planning and scheduling accommodated the interests of advertisers or sponsors frequently or very frequently; Some 180 respondents said the advertisers/sponsors were frequently or very frequently asked the station to broadcast news reports on their campaign program and; some 172 television workers said they reported frequently or very frequently advertisers’ promotional messages into content if advertisers asked for it; while some 208 said they inserted promotional messages into their program content frequently or very frequently. On average, advertisers affect frequently or very frequently 184.6 respondents or 46.2 percent.

Televisions used their audiences to attract advertisers to get revenues. Audience influence on program content is measured through the following five statements: 1) Media owner demanded a rating rise; 2) Media owners once said that program rating is important; 3) Decision on program continuity depends on its rating performance; 4) Program rating influenced your careers and incomes; 5) Program improvements were made based on the up-and-down of rating reports. Replies from respondents on the statements were shown in Table 3

Table 3: Audience influence on program content

Scale	Dimensions				
	Rating rise demanded	The rating is important	Continuity program	Rating and career	Program improvements
V. frequent	132	136	144	96	124
Frequent	144	108	122	136	172
Neutral	48	52	60	72	60
Rare	52	52	56	52	28
Very rare	24	24	28	44	16
Total	400	400	400	400	400

¹ Neutral means respondent didn’t know or hesitate.

Table 3 indicates that 276 television workers said owners or management of the television station in which they work were frequently or very frequently asked them to improve their program rating; as many as 244 television workers said owners or their superiors were frequently or very frequently said the program rating is important; some 266 respondents said the decision of the television program were frequently or very frequently determined by the program rating; some 232 television workers said program rating was frequently or very frequently affect their career and income and 296 respondents said program improvements were made based on the rise and fall of rating reports. On average, audiences affect frequently or very frequently some 262.8 respondents or 65.7 percent.

In this study the effect of the regulator on television program content is measured by two indicators: 1) The regulator [KPI] frequently reprimanded your program with regard to its content; 2) your program content was frequently being changed because of reprimand from the regulator. Feedbacks from respondent were shown in Table 4.

Based on the data from the questionnaires distributed to 400 television workers, some 52 respondents said the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission or KPI as the regulator was frequent or very frequent cast warnings to television workers regarding their content that violates broadcasting regulations and; as many as 100 workers said they frequently or very frequently changed their program contents in connection with warning letters the stations received from the KPI. On average, regulators affect frequently or very frequently some 76 respondents or 19 percent.

Table 4: Regulator influence on program content

Scale	Dimensions	
	Regulator reprimand television on content	Content changed after reprimanding
V. frequent	24	20
Frequent	28	80
Neutral	80	60
Rare	124	136
Very rare	144	104
Total	400	400

The influence of politicians on program content is measured by the following three statements in the questionnaire; 1) your media owners or superiors once mentioned his/her support of certain politicians or political parties; 2) my media once supported certain political parties; 3) my media once conflicted with politicians or political parties. Feedbacks from respondent were shown in Table 5

Table 5: Politicians influence on program content

Scale	Dimensions		
	Owners support political parties	Media support political parties	Media conflicted with politicians
Very frequent	20	68	28
Frequent	76	80	60
Neutral	116	96	136
Rare	72	64	88
Very rare	116	92	116
Total	400	400	400

Table 5 indicates that as many as 96 television workers said television owners or the television management were very frequent or frequent expressing their support for certain politicians or political parties; Some 148 said the television stations where they worked were very frequent or frequent supporting certain political parties while some 88 workers stated that their stations were very frequent or frequent involving in a conflict with politicians or political parties. On average, politicians affect frequently or very frequently some 110.6 respondents or 27.6 percent.

Based on the feedbacks from television workers, it can be concluded that audience is the most influential factor since it affected the most 33.3 percent television workers employed at 10 national private television stations in Indonesia See Table 6). Television workers considered audience as the greatest influence on their works among other political, economic pressures that influenced them in shaping the program content. They said the influence was recognized from the rating reports obtained from a rating agency.

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Table 6: The average number of television workers affected frequently or very frequently by political economic factors

<i>Political economy factors</i>	<i>Number of television workers affected</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Owners	156.0	19.7
Advertisers	184.6	23.4
Audience	262.8	33.3
Regulator	76.0	9.6
Politicians	110.6	14.0
Total	790.0	100

The second most influential political economic factors on program content was advertisers (23.4 percent) followed by owners (19.7 percent). Politicians came the third (14.0 percent) and the last is regulators (9.6 percent). Regulators appear the least influence on program content on daily basis. However, the influence of politicians increased significantly ahead of elections.

The impact of the political economic factors discussed above is not the same among television channels. There are stations where the workers said that mostly audience affected them while workers at other stations said they were less affected by audience but mostly by owners. Table 7 shows the magnitude of each political economic variable on television workers in shaping content in each television channels. The magnitude scale is produced by measuring the weight of response (from very frequent to very rare) from television workers to each the political economic factors discussed above.

Table 7: Analysis of the weight of political economy influences in each TV stations observed

<i>Stations</i>	<i>Leading programs</i>	<i>Owners</i>	<i>Advertisers</i>	<i>Audience</i>	<i>Regulators</i>	<i>Politicians</i>
RCTI	Soap opera	***	****	*****	**	***
SCTV	Soap opera	***	****	*****	**	*
Trans TV	Variety show	***	****	*****	****	*
MNC TV	Local music	**	****	*****	**	**
Trans 7	Reality show	***	****	*****	****	*
Indosiar	Reality show	**	****	*****	**	*
Global TV	Movies	**	****	*****	**	**
ANTV	Sport	***	****	*****	**	***
TV One	News	*****	***	***	***	*****
Metro TV	News	*****	***	**	***	*****

***** = Very strong influence,

**** = Strong influence,

*** = Moderate influence

** = Less influence

* = Almost no influence

11. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

We can conclude from the survey data presented above that audience through its inferential feedback (rating reports) constitutes the most influential factor on program content. Audience affected 33.3 percent television workers employed at 10 national private television stations in Indonesia. The second and third most influential political economic factors were occupied by advertiser (23.4 percent) and television owners (19.7 percent). Politicians (14 percent) trail in number four. Regulators showed the least influence on program content since they affected only 9.6 percent television workers on a daily basis.

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The findings of this study were generally in line with earlier studies. For example Altschull (1984) who found that the interests of media owners were always reflected in the television content. Owners in market-based media have ultimate power over content, and there is no doubt that they can ask for what they want to be included or left out in the production of content. In other study on owner, Turow (1994) indicated informal and indirect pressure on particular issues that matter to owners. For instance, relating to their other business interest. This study found that television owners affected 19.7 percent of workers in shaping program content and stood in the third most influential political economic factors.

Shoemaker and Reese (1991) found that most media in free-market countries are finely tuned to jointly optimizing the needs of advertisers and sponsors as well as their own interests as a normal condition of operation. Baker (1994) found that advertisers influenced personnel as well as editorial decisions in the media in diverse forms that are often hard to detect. This study acknowledged the influence of advertisers on television content as the second most influential political economic factors affecting 23.4 percent television workers. Other studies by Kessler (1989), Gitlin (1985) and Janus (1984) also indicated advertisers' influence on program content. However they didn't measure the influence strength.

Previous studies found that the number of audience is crucial for media. This study found that audience was the most influential factor on program content affecting 33.3 percent television workers. According to Burton (2005, p.17) audiences appear to participate and influence media content through email, letters, phone-ins and other communication devices. This study found that audience influence was manifested through inferential feedback (rating reports). Wimmer and Dominick (2003) found that rating remained the primary decision-making tool in programming and advertising.

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