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The Cultural Expression in the Local Television: The Cultural Political Economy Perspective

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Abstract - Since the beginning of the reformation era in 1998 and the enactment of Broadcasting Law No. 32/2002, local television channels has grown significantly. These emerging local television channels were expected to serve as an antithesis to Jakarta-based national television while also providing a space for cultural expression. This study investigates how local television express local culture using the cultural-political economy perspective. The research employs a case study with an instrumental case design and was conducted at ADiTV in Yogyakarta from April to September 2023. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings indicate that local television stations like ADiTV play a crucial role in providing a platform for local cultural expression. However, as private broadcasting institutions, the cultural contents featured in programs such as *Jenggleng Manasuka*, *Mocopat Syafaat*, and *Wedang Ronde* cannot be separated from commercial motive. In other words, culture-based television programs are products of the cultural industry that must be marketable to generate profit, often making economic considerations more dominant. As a result, cultural expression on ADiTV becomes highly limited and fails to foster diverse cultural representations. This study concludes that economic interests shape the local cultural expression, as culture-based television programs are inherently part of the cultural industry—products intended for sale. This is a dimension often overlooked by researchers studying local television in Indonesia.

Keywords: Cultural Expression; Cultural-Political Economy; Cultural Industry; Cultural Space; Local Television Channels

Introduction

The 1998 reform led to the democratization of broadcasting. The enactment of the regional autonomy law in 1999, followed by the broadcasting law in 2002, encouraged the emergence of new local television stations in Indonesia, breaking the monopoly previously held by *Televisi Republik Indonesia* (TVRI) during the New Order era (Kitley, 2000). In the late 1980s, a limited form of liberalization occurred through the licensing of several private television stations within President Soeharto's inner circle, known as the *Cendana circle*. These included *Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia* (RCTI), which had limited broadcasts in Jakarta and its surrounding areas, and *Surya Citra Televisi* (SCTV), which aired in Surabaya.

In 1989, the government granted *Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia* (TPI) permission to broadcast nationally using TVRI's infrastructure, prompting other television stations to demand the same rights. Over time, this led to the dominance of Jakarta-based national television, marginalizing Indonesia's cultural diversity (Armando, 2014a, 2014b). Local cultures remained on the sideline, as the liberalization process since the 1980s continued to reinforce Jakarta as the center of broadcasting services while relegating other regions to the sideline (Sen & Hill, 2000).

This study argues that local television channels play a crucial role in serving local communities (Brogi et al., 2016; Harahap et al., 2020) which includes ensuring the expression of local culture and identity. However, local private television stations are also part of an industry that produces symbolic content within the framework of the cultural industry. Therefore, media products cannot be separated from the dynamics of cultural-political economy. Referring to Maxwell (R. Maxwell, 2001, p. 10), "…from a political economy perspective, culture has always been and is inherently part of the political economy…" and communication itself can never be detached from culture (Fuchs, 2020).

The cultural-political economy perspective can be seen as a further "evolution" of the political economy of communication or political economy of media, emerging from the tradition of critical social science (Sau, 2021). Its origins can be traced to various moments, including the *cultural turn* (Inverardi-Ferri, 2021; Jessop, 2010; Sum, 2015), as well as the revival of neo-Marxism and the cultural industry theory of the Frankfurt school of thought (Garnham, 2011). Its development can be categorized into two traditions: One that applies the cultural political economy approach to broader fields by integrating various disciplines and methodologies, and another that focuses on the cultural-political economy approach as the means to analyze media. The latter was pioneered by Nicholas Garnham (2011) and Maxwell (2001).

This study follows the second line of thought, based on the argument that media is a cultural industry, where symbolic forms are generally produced, distributed, and consumed as commodities within capitalist market exchanges (Garnham, 2000). In other words, media content is a commodity within the economic exchange system. The cultural-political economy approach, in this context, examines the power relations that shape the production, distribution, and consumption of symbolic commodities produced by the media (Garnham, 2011; Kenny & Stevenson, 1998). By using the cultural-political economy perspective, local television is no longer viewed solely as a social institution serving an idealistic vision for the public culture but also as a business institution within the capitalist cultural industry. This perspective is rarely applied by researchers studying local television, especially in Indonesia.

In general, local television researchers can be categorized into three major perspectives. *First*, those focusing on broadcasting policies and its implications for local television in ensuring diversity (Barca, 1999; Yan & Park, 2009; Yanich, 2015). *Second*, studies examining the role of local television in representing culture and local identity—this is the most extensively researched perspective (Bogaerts, 2017; Harahap et al., 2020; Rianto & Poerwaningtias, 2013; Sun, 2013). These studies emphasize that local television channels play a vital role in representing local culture and identity, primarily through programming, both factual and non-factual. *Third*, research analyzing local television from a media political economy standpoint (Fadhilah et al., 2016; Maryani et al., 2018; Warto, 2019), particularly in terms of the survival of local television.

Other studies explore cultural resistance (Rianto et al., 2024). Resistance arose due to the dominance of Jakarta-based television, not only in terms of political economy but also in cultural influence. In this context, local television served as a counterculture, challenging the hegemony of national television, which primarily promoted national and global cultural narratives.

Among the many studies mentioned, none has applied the cultural-political economy perspective. Therefore, to bridge the gap left by previous researchers, this study adopts the cultural-political economy perspective to investigate cultural programs on local television. From this perspective, local television is positioned as a business institution where all its productions belong to the cultural industry. By employing this approach, this study aims to offer a new perspective on local television research in Indonesia—moving beyond textual analysis (representation) and the mainstream media political economy approach, which primarily concerns issues of ownership and diversity.

In Indonesia, this mainstream political economy approach can be observed in the works of Hermin Indah Wahyuni, who examines broadcasting policies (2006, 2016) and state control (2000) as well as in several studies conducted by Sudibyo and Patria (2013), Armando (2014b), Rianto et al., (2012) and Masduki et al., (2023) which address issues of concentration, ownership, and their threats to diversity and the democratization of broadcasting. These studies are, however, interesting but, as Garnham (2011), points out, their empirical positions are questionable, and their political and theoretical foundations are debatable.

Therefore, the political economy approach in this research situates media products as cultural industries, with a focus on local private television. This is based on two main arguments. First, empirically, the political economy dynamics of local television culture are far more complex. On one hand, they are required to survive economically, while on the other, they must preserve local culture. Consequently, there is a tension between the need to commercialize culture and the idealistic mission to maintain it (Hendrawan, 2017). This situation differs from local public television, which receives state funding, thereby reducing the need to commercialize culture compared to local private television.

Theoretical Framework

Cultural Political Economy Perspective

The core principles of cultural-political economy emerge from an intellectual current that challenges the epistemological colonization of economics by mainstream economists (Kenny & Stevenson, 1998). Its fundamental idea aligns with political economy, particularly critical political economy, which rejects the strict distinction between economics and politics. Instead, political economy views economic organization as inseparable from politics and the broader social context (Mosco, 2009).

As a perspective, cultural political economy is used to analyze media by viewing media products as culture (symbolic) (Lawrence & Phillips, 2002) or as part of the cultural industry (Garnham, 2011). Therefore, cultural-political economy emphasizes the role of culture within industry (R. Maxwell, 2001). The primary focus of this version of political economy in the cultural industry is on the unique characteristics of market structures and the dynamics of the cultural sector, given the symbolic or immaterial nature of its products, which justifies regulation based on specific forms of market failure involved (Garnham, 2005; Hesmondhalgh & Pratt, 2005).

Cultural products, on the other hand, differ from general consumer goods. Cultural products are goods or services that hold value due to their "meaning." They are utilized based on interpretations of their symbolic meaning rather than their ability to solve practical problems, as is the case with traditional goods (Lawrence & Phillips, 2002). Meanwhile, as part of the cultural industry, media products reflect the reality that symbolic forms are generally produced, distributed, and consumed as commodities within the capitalist market (Garnham, 2011). In this regard, cultural-political economy refers to the historical materialist analysis of the cultural sphere—the production, circulation, and consumption of symbolic forms in all their variations—where studies on communication channels and mass media processes constitute a subfield (Garnham, 2011).

The cultural industry encompasses a vast domain, including all media products such as books, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and film (Gibson, 2003; Kong, 2014). Today, it also includes various digital platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and others (for example see Keane, 2019; Ma et al., 2023). Although these media possess different characteristics, both traditional and new media produce symbolic products that are created, distributed, and consumed within the capitalist exchange system. This means that all media industries adhere to market demand principles. In analyzing media as a cultural industry, Nicholas Garnham (2000) emphasizes the importance of considering two forms of power: structural power and agency power.

The first form relates to how market systems allocate resources and constrain corporate or agent behavior. The second form, meanwhile, is exercised by economic actors within the broader structural limitations, but ownership or control over resources allows for deliberate or strategic maneuvering. Here, the nature of the market (whether monopolistic or oligopolistic) and the type of agent (public media or private media) significantly influence the media products generated.

Local Television Channels and Cultural Expressions

The role of local television channels are significantly influenced by the political complexities and social conditions in which it operates. In well-established democratic countries, in the United States for example, local television channels are vital sources of information for local communities (Makuch & Levy, 2021). In the United Kingdom, Ofscom emphasizes the importance of local television channels in providing local information and public affairs coverage, enabling local communities to understand political events. Additionally, local television channels reflect the interests, culture, and traditions of the communities in which it operates (Brogi et al., 2016). Meanwhile, in authoritarian or centralized countries such as China and Indonesia, local media serves as a tool for local communities to resist central media domination (Rianto et al., 2024) or, in some cases, local communities create their own media to reinforce their identity and reconstruct their communal imagination (Liu, 2013).

One of the key characteristics of local media and television is its emphasis on localism (Makuch & Levy, 2021). The communicative space created by local media allows regional identity—including culture, language, and religion—to be explored, developed, preserved, and promoted to a greater extent than would be possible on national television (Brogi et al., 2016). Brogi et al., argue that local or regional identities and languages are often marginalized by dominant national mainstream media. The shared nature of the communicative space created by local media thus facilitates intercultural dialogue, understanding, and tolerance, contributing to the prevention and mitigation of hate speech.

Local television channels contribute to the expression of local culture and identity for two main reasons. The first reason is proximity. Unlike national television channels, local channels has a much closer connection with its local audience. While national television continues to adopt global formats and styles with broader reach or engage in what is known as "jumping scale" (Liu, 2013), local television maintains and reinforces its scale. Here, proximity is not only understood in geographical terms (physical distance) but also in sociological-anthropological dimensions. In this context, the locality in local television refers to both geographic and cultural spaces. The former is represented through places within the local scope, while the latter is depicted through cultural symbols (Noviani, 2012). The second reason is the fact that local television channels are best positioned to foster locality. Locality refers to the negotiation space between the local/traditional and the global/modern (Noviani, 2012).

Regarding cultural understanding, this study follows Bikhu Parekh (2008), who detailed the articulation of culture in communal life. The most fundamental articulation is in the form of language, encompassing syntax, grammar, and vocabulary used to divide and describe the world. The next level of cultural articulation includes proverbs, sayings, myths, rituals, symbols, collective memory, jokes, body language, non-linguistic communication models, customs, traditions, institutions, and forms of social interaction. On a slightly different level, culture is articulated through artistic literature, music, oral and written literary works, moral values, ideals of excellence, exemplary individuals, and visions of a good life. At an even broader level, cultural articulation includes rules and norms governing various social activities and relationships, such as eating habits (how, where, when, and with whom people eat), socializing and romantic relationships, mourning customs, ways of coping with death, and how a particular culture treats parents, children, spouses, neighbors, and outsiders.

Bikhu Parekh's cultural articulation is very helpful in analyzing cultural programs on local television. As previously mentioned, local television plays a crucial role in preserving local identity and culture. This role is fulfilled by positioning local television as a cultural sphere. Through this cultural sphere, local culture gains access to express itself through various formats. Typically, cultural program are packaged in diverse formats that adopt national and global television styles, such as music programs, news, television films (FTF), reality shows, and variety shows. Here, the influence of global media is unavoidable; local television adopts these formats but fills them with local culture

and content (Ganguly, 2019). For example, Net TV Ambon broadcasts "*Musik Baronda*," which adopts a news feature format (Lopulalan et al., 2022) while *"Pojok Kampung,"* aired on Jawa Pos TV, combines news and informal community discussions (*cangkru'an*) within a variety show format (Surya, 2006). In this context, formats have emerged as important cultural negotiation spaces for local television.

Material and Methodology

This study investigates cultural expression on AdiTV, a local television channel in Yogyakarta, using the cultural-political economy perspective. To achieve this objective, the study employs an instrumental case study design. This design views the case as a means to understand a broader social phenomenon rather than focusing on the case itself, as is common in intrinsic case study designs (Yin, 2014). The researcher selected ADiTV as the case study for this research based on three main reasons. *First*, ADiTV initially operated as a campus-based community television station but transitioned into a commercial television channel in 2009. *Second*, the station is owned by Muhammadiyah, which inherently positions it as a medium for religious outreach (*dakwah*). From the perspective of cultural political economy, which concerns the organization of media systems and power relations within social life (Garnham, 2000; Mosco, 2009), ADiTV presents an intriguing case. *Lastly*, as an independent local television station, ADiTV faces significantly greater challenges in terms of cultural political economy compared to network-affiliated local stations such as Bali TV or Jawa Pos TV (JPP).

In general, case study research collects data from multiple sources of evidence, including in-depth interviews, documents, observations, publications, and research reports published in various academic journals. The in-depth interviews were primarily conducted with the director of ADiTV, as well as the creative and marketing teams. Additionally, interviews involved observers concerned with local television broadcasting programs and cultural practitioners who contribute to ADiTV's cultural programs. Direct observations were conducted on cultural broadcasts and programs, both those aired via television and those available on YouTube.

The research was conducted at AdiTV channel in Yogyakarta between April and September 2023. The collected data were analyzed through coding based on relevant themes (J. A. Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014), such as types of cultural programs, background factors, and economic considerations. The coding results were then narrated according to the identified thematic similarities. The analyzed data were subsequently interpreted using theoretical frameworks and placed within a broader social context.

Result and Discussion

Cultural programs in ADiTV

The cultural programs broadcasted by ADiTV are influenced by three main factors: the cultural backgrounds of ADiTV's management, the motives and interests of the owners as reflected in ADiTV's vision and mission, and economic interests. These three factors collectively shape the forms of cultural programs on ADiTV. For example, ADiTV's mission to carry out the mission of *dakwah* (Islamic preaching) based on principles adopted by Muhammadiyah (One of the major Islamic organizations in Indonesia) influences the nature of the cultural programs it presents. ADiTV does not feature *dangdut* music, as it is considered inconsistent with Islamic *da'wah*. *Dangdut* music combines elements from Indian music, Malay orchestras, and heavy metal (Bader & Richter, 2014) while some scholars describe it as a fusion of Indonesian, Arab, and Western musical traditions (Ibrahim, 1997).

Generally, *dangdut* music often sparks debates concerning ethics and morality due to the frequently provocative and sensual performances of its singers (Bader & Richter, 2014). On the other hand, the format of cultural programs such as *Jenggleng Manusuka* is largely determined by the presence of sponsors. The same applies to *Mocopat Syafaat*. Although this program is not driven by sponsorship like *Jenggleng Manusuka*, its production costs are close to zero. However, *Mocopat Syafaat* has high ratings and a large audience, giving it significant economic value.

Wedang Ronde

Among the broadcasted cultural programs on ADiTV, *Wedang Ronde* can be considered the most successful. This program has been running for a long time on ADiTV, sustained by continuous sponsorship. Its concept draws inspiration from *Angkringan*, a similar program that aired earlier on

TVRI. Although *Wedang Ronde* is essentially a talk show, it incorporates various gimmicks, making it a variety show.

As a variety show, *Wedang Ronde* blends elements such as dialogue, music or *gamelan*, Javanese songs or *gending*, and comedy. Similar to *Angkringan* on TVRI, the setting of this show reflects the daily lives of Yogyakarta's diverse communities. The conversations in *Wedang Ronde*, named after a traditional Yogyakarta drink, showcase the communal nature of Yogyakarta society (Darmanto, interview, September 6, 2023). People from various social backgrounds gather to discuss current issues, accompanied by the distinctive humor of Yogyakarta region. These conversations serve as a kind of public forum where anyone can express opinions and grievances, often related to public concerns. However, within the context of *Wedang Ronde*, these grievances are typically met with solutions. This is where sponsors influence the program's content.

For instance, in the *Wedang Ronde* episode aired on July 1, 2023, a representative from the Yogyakarta Health Office appeared as a guest to discuss the dangers of smoking. Despite such government-sponsored themes, not all conversations on *Wedang Ronde* focus on public awareness campaigns. More often, the discussions revolve around everyday issues and popular gossip within the community. Examples include the episode on *umuk keblusuk* (September 9, 2023), referring to boastful talk that backfires, and *ghibah* (October 3, 2023), which explored gossip culture, including beliefs in mystical practices done by Javanese merchants for attracting customers named *pelarisan*.

The show's host is a local artist named Wisben, who typically wears traditional Yogyakarta attire: a *lurik* shirt, *jarik* (Yogyakarta's signature lower garment), and a *blangkon* (Javanese headdress). Beyond Wisben's clothing, Yogyakarta's identity is further highlighted through the set design, which features an *omah joglo* (a traditional Javanese house). Conversations on the show are conducted in a mix of Javanese and Indonesian. Ranitia Mardawasti, ADiTV's Program Manager (interview, May 8, 2023), describes *Wedang Ronde* as follows:

> "So, there is a local artist named Wisben, who serves as the host. [Before the show] they have a script, and there is a specific theme. The guest speaker can be from a government office or an institution, and the discussion topic usually comes from that institution. There are gimmicks, and the language is Javanese, but we also include some Indonesian. The set features an *angkringan* (traditional Javanese street food stall), and the location is staged within a Javanese-style gate. The conversations take place in that *angkringan* setting."

True to its name, *Wedang Ronde*, which is based on the angkringan setting, primarily targets the lower-middle-class audience (Ranitia Mardawasti, interview, May 8, 2023). This aligns with the program's sponsors, which are mostly government agencies aiming to promote their initiatives. Pudjatmo (interview, September 23, 2023) stated that *Wedang Ronde* is the most commercially successful program, both on-air and off-air. The high demand from institutions willing to fund it has contributed to its popularity. Sponsorship appears to be the key factor in determining the sustainability of the program. This reflects the reality of private local television stations: if sponsorship remains consistent, cultural programs or shows that highlight local traditions are far more likely to survive than those without sufficient financial support.



Picture 1. *Wedang Ronde* program in ADiTV
Source: YouTube channel ADiTV

Mocopat Syafaat

Outside of *Wedang Ronde*, the cultural program *Macapat Syafaat* has also been one of the longest-running programs on ADiTV. This program has endured through a collaboration with Kyai Kanjeng (A Javanese-Islamic musical group), led by Emha Ainun Nadjib (commonly known as Cak Nun). He is a cultural figure known for his active engagement in *dakwah* alongside Kyai Kanjeng. As part of his *dakwah* activities, Cak Nun organizes a recurring event called *Pitulasan*, literally meant ”seventeenth”, which takes place on the 17th day of each month. During these events, he hosts a broadcasted event that combines music, dialogue, and religious teachings. The event often features guest stars from various backgrounds, though they are generally figures involved in cultural activities.

Mocopat Syafaat is an open Islamic study session held every night on the 17th day of the month in Tamantirto, Kasihan, Bantul, Yogyakarta. Individuals who participate in these gatherings are called *Jamaah* (An Arabic term meaning ”members” or ”participants) of the *Maiyah Mocopat Syafaat* (MMS). Membership is non-binding and not exclusive to Muslims alone—anyone is free to attend and engage in the discussions. The study session runs from 8:00 PM to 3:00 AM.

ADiTV has been granted the privilege of recording (taping) the event, turning it into a cultural program that is periodically broadcasted. ADiTV incurs no financial costs for this collaboration, as Cak Nun does not charge any fees. Commercials are allowed during segment breaks. Rani Mardawasti described this collaboration as follows:

> "For *Mocopat Syafaat*, we operate on zero finance. We don’t have a budget allocated for it. Our collaboration is based on kinship. Cak Nun does nott ask for anything—not even royalties. The important thing is that the program is aired. Additionally, during his *Pitulasan* events, no commercial elements are allowed—no coffee brands, logos, or anything like that. He doesn’t want them. We simply record the event. If we want to generate revenue, it can only be through advertisements, and even then, only during breaks."

Pudjatmo (interview, September 23, 2023) stated that Cak Nun's events—whether off-air or on-air—attract significant public attentiveness. This is because many of his events are watched communally in various regions such as Magelang, Tawangmangu, and other locations. Some of these areas fall within ADiTV’s broadcast coverage, leading to a strong viewer base. On the other hand, as Pujiatmo pointed out, *Mocopat Syafaat* aligns with one of ADiTV’s missions, which emphasizes *dakwah*. However, its Islamic nature is not exclusive to Muhammadiyah, as the Islamic landscape in Yogyakarta and Solo is diverse and not limited to members and followers of Muhammadiyah. At the same time, as a private broadcasting institution, ADiTV is legally required to maintain general programming that is accessible to the wider public.

The term *Mocopat Syafaat* itself combines Javanese and Arabic elements. The word *Mocopat* (written in Javanese script as ꦩꦺꦴꦕꦺꦴꦥꦠ꧀) refers to a form of traditional Javanese poetry characterized by a specific syllabic pattern (*guru wilangan*) and ending rhymes (*guru lagu*). Each stanza (*bait*) of *Macapat* consists of lines (*gatra*), which are traditionally sung without instrumental accompaniment, although modern performances often include traditional musical instruments. *Mocopat Syafaat* is a form of Islamic entertainment infused with religious values, designed as a means of preaching through art. Art serves as both entertainment and a means to achieve spiritual guidance, helping individuals draw closer to the God (Mulyadi et al., 2021).

Pocung Kabudayan

Pocung is a *tembang macapat* that describes the final stage of a human's journey in this world. In Javanese culture, particularly in traditional *gending* (musical compositions), *Pocung* carries deep philosophical meaning, symbolizing the ritual of letting go of someone who has passed away.

Pocung Kabudayan is a cultural television program that is represented not only through the attire of its performers but also through the use of traditional Javanese musical instruments (*gamelan*) and songs (*tembang*). Similar to *Wedang Ronde*, *Pocung Kabudayan* is set against the backdrop of a traditional Yogyakarta-style house, featuring a *joglo* structure. At times, the *joglo* background is accompanied by vintage-style lamps typically found in Yogyakarta region, evoking the image of a village head's (*Pak Lurah*) or subdistrict head's (*Pak Camat*) residence.

The show's host is Dimas Tejo, a well-known local young artist who is in his 40s. His energetic stage presence aims to attract younger audience. In contrast to *Wedang Ronde*, which portrays lower-class society, *Pocung Kabudayan* primarily showcases Javanese aristocratic (*priyayi*) culture. Nearly all performers in this program embody the *priyayi* class, as opposed to *Wedang Ronde*, which reflects the working-class community. In this program, the performers, with Dimas Tejo at the center, wear traditional Javanese attire, including *kebaya* for women, *lurik*, and *blangkon* for men. The clothing and overall appearance of the performers highlight the refined lifestyle of Javanese aristocrats, presenting a stark contrast to *Wedang Ronde*, which represents the lower social class. Therefore, the *joglo* house used as the setting in this program is envisioned as the residence of a *Pak Lurah*, serving as a representation of the *priyayi* in the framework of Geertz's terminology (Geertz, 2017).



Picture 2. One of the *Pocung Kabudayan* broadcasts on ADiTV with sponsor attribution
Source: YouTube channel ADiTV

In each of its performances, *Pocung Kabudayan* also has a theme. Within each theme, messages from the sponsors of the program are always incorporated. For example, in the *Pocung Kabudayan* broadcast on April 27, 2022, the sponsor was the Indonesian National Land Agency. The theme presented was *Ganti Bathi*'. The program discussed land-related issues, with representatives from the National Land Agency participating in the event. However, unlike *Wedang Ronde*, where guest speakers can wear their official uniforms, in *Pocung Kabudayan*, they must wear traditional Yogyakarta attire—*lurik, jarik, and a blangkon*. Javanese remains the primary language of the

program, though it is occasionally interspersed with Indonesian. This choice of attire clearly aligns with the *priyayi* concept, as all performers, including guest stars and speakers, are regarded as equals within the priyayi social class.

Jenggleng Manasuka

Similar to *Pocung Kabudayan*, *Jenggleng Manasuka* is also a cultural arts variety show. The performers are largely the same, including Dimas Tejo, Dalijo, Angger Sukisno, Sumisih Yuningsih, Uut Salsabila, and Pursegi Panjang. The main difference lies in the themes. While *Pocung Kabudayan* follows themes set by sponsors, *Jenggleng Manasuka* allows the artists to decide, often focusing on everyday societal issues. This autonomy is possible because the show has permanent sponsors, namely the Hanum Rais Foundation and Ummat Center. Hanum Salsabila, the owner of the foundation, frequently attends the performances.



Picture 3. One of the episodes in *Jenggleng Manasuka*
Source: YouTube channel ADiTV

The Political Economy of Cultural Expressions in ADiTV

Initially, ADiTV was a university-based community broadcasting institution enacted by Ahmad Dahlan University. However, over time, it transformed into a commercial broadcasting. As a consequence, its programs became inseparable from commercial interests. In other words, ADiTV's productions are part of the cultural industry, which must generate profits. As a result, economic considerations influence the selection of cultural programs broadcasted by ADiTV. There are two factors that determine whether a cultural program will be aired: production costs and sponsorship. If a cultural program has "zero finance" or at least approaching to zero finance, such as *Mocopat Syafaat*, then it will continue to be produced. Coincidentally, *Mocopat Syafaat* is not only zero finance but also has high ratings, allowing it to last for a long time on ADiTV. This program aired for the first time in 2010 until ADiTV was shut down in May 2024. As Pudjatmo stated, "The program with the highest rating so far is Cak Nun's show (*Mocopat Syafaat*) because it has been proven to attract a large audience. The theme is also good. So, it serves as a medium between the narrative and the audience."

Another major factor is sponsorship. Cultural programs require substantial funding to bring in local artists, but they continue to receive sponsorships. This includes Javanese cultural programs such as *Pocung Kabudayan*, *Wedang Ronde*, and *Jenggleng Manasuka*. It is important to note that the cultural programs on ADiTV are not entirely new. Instead, programs with formats like *Jenggleng Manasuka* were previously popular on RRI and TVRI. On TVRI, the program was called *Pangkur Jenggleng Ayom Ayem*. It became the most-watched cultural broadcast program, even surpassing several national television programs in viewership (Rianto & Poerwaningtias, 2013). This program was sponsored by the Amien Rais Center. On ADiTV, *Jenggleng Manasuka* was sponsored by the Hanum Rais Foundation and Ummat Center. Regarding sponsorship and advertising, Pudjatmo stated:

> *Wedang Ronde* is the most in-demand both on-air and off-air because many institutions are interested in funding it due to its strong presence in both formats. The same goes for Cak Nun's show, which has many off-air and on-air viewers. Cak Nun's events often have a watch-party system, such as in Magelang or Tawangmangu. People gather to watch together, which is why it has so many fans (interview, August 23, 2021)."

From the above statements, it can be concluded that commercial interests play a significant role in determining the continuity of cultural programs on ADiTV. A program's longevity is highly dependent on these two factors. While Islamic programs may sometimes be financially unprofitable, non-religious programs that are not directly related to Islamic *dakwah* must adhere to the dual television economy principle—financial and symbolic economy (Fiske, 1991). Cultural production quickly evolved into a cultural economy (Sanz, 2014). This explains why cultural programs like *Wedang Ronde* and *Jenggleng Manasuka* continued to be aired, as they were economically viable. This study thus reinforces previous research on local television channels, particularly the work of Hendrawan (2017) on TATV. Hendrawan concluded that the social function of local television channel as a public sphere and means of promoting cultural identity cannot be separated from its commercial character.

This research also supports the argument that local television channels play a crucial role in serving local communities, which are often overlooked by national television based in Jakarta. Many studies on local television channels have confirmed this argument. For example, Primasanti (2009) observed local TV stations in East Java, such as JTV, ArekTV, and Batu TV, concluding that local television programming in East Java is dominated by local contents, including local culture, arts, locations, communities, and interests.

In another study, Priyowidodo (2008) examined several local television stations, including Manado TV (TVM), Televisi Orang Papua (TOP TV), and Favorit TV Padang, affirming the strong presence of local identity in these stations. However, market-driven adjustments are inevitable, especially for local TV stations established by powerful local media business networks, such as Riau TV (Primasanti, 2009). Meanwhile, the study by Aslam (2019) on JTV Banyuwangi drew a similar conclusion, emphasizing that advertising revenue is a top priority. This economic pressure pushes local television to prioritize entertainment programs over informative programs that could foster a local public sphere.

On the other hand, local TV news and information programs are generally sponsored by local governments, which disrupts the public sphere. Collaborating with local governments has become a survival strategy for many local television stations in Indonesia, as extensively documented by numerous local TV researchers (see Hermarani & Gelgel, 2021; Ramli N et al., 2021; Surokim, 2015; Syafri & Pannindriya, 2019). However, this cooperation has come at the cost of the public sphere. Ideally, the public sphere should provide a space for critical discussion among community members on public issues, allowing diverse perspectives (Adut, 2012; Dawes, 2014; Verstraeten, 2000). Instead, it is often dominated by government narratives.

From the discussion above, this study concludes that decisions regarding local content are not always idealistic reflections of television as a social institution. Rather, cultural programs—through which communities express their culture and identity—cannot be separated from local television as part of the cultural industry. As a cultural industry, the production, distribution, and consumption of cultural products are inevitably tied to the capitalist exchange system (Garnham, 2011). By highlighting media products as part of the cultural industry, this study provides a more critical perspective on local television while refining previous research that explored the economic dimensions of cultural programming in local TV. The implications of local television as part of the cultural industry extend beyond cultural programs to include news and information broadcasts. In the latter case, economic interests are often pursued through collaborations with local governments, leading to a distortion of the public sphere.

Islam and Cultural Expression in ADiTV

The previous discussion focused on the cultural political economy dimension in determining the forms of cultural expression at ADiTV, with an emphasis on the economic aspect. However, cultural political economy does not solely concentrate on economic factors, which often leads to

economic determinism (Garnham, 2011), but also considers power relations more broadly (Mosco, 2009). As Mosco (2009, p. 2), states, it is "the study of social relations, particularly power relations, that collectively shape the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources." From this perspective, the power shaping the forms of cultural expression on local television is not determined solely by economic factors but also by other forms of power. This includes the ideology underlying the organization of local television stations such as ADiTV. In other words, the position of this television station, owned by one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, ultimately influences the forms of cultural expression at ADiTV.

As mentioned earlier, ADiTV does not broadcast *dangdut* music because this genre is often associated with erotism or music that is not fully aligned with Islamic values, particularly in terms of dance movements and attire. Islam has been central to many debates concerning morality. Such debates are well exemplified by the case of Inul Darastita's "*goyang ngebor*" dance. Critics regard Inul's dance as a symbol of moral and cultural decay in Indonesian society (Heryanto, 2012). This background explains why ADiTV refrains from featuring *dangdut* music, despite its recognition as a quintessentially Indonesian genre. In several cases, cultural programs aired on ADiTV are also inseparable from the station's mission to carry out Islamic *dakwah*. For instance, studio audiences in cultural programs such as *Jenggleng Manasuka* and *Wedang Ronde* wear the jilbab or hijab. These audiences generally come from religious study groups who attend ADiTV as studio viewers.

In fact, ADiTV management also desires that *sinden* (traditional Javanese female singers) and artists in *Jenggleng Manasuka* wear the jilbab or hijab. However, the artists objected, arguing that this would disrupt the established norms (*pakem*) of Javanese culture (Angger Sukisno, interview, 22 May 2024). Consequently, the artists and sinden continue to wear traditional Javanese attire, namely *kebaya* for women and *surjan* for men (see picture 3). Nevertheless, when Hanum Salsabiela Rais appeared on the program, she wore a hijab combined with a Javanese *kebaya*. Hanum Rais is a sponsor of the program through the Hanum Rais Foundation. This indicates that, beyond economic-political factors, ADiTV's role as a medium for Islamic *dakwah* also shapes the forms of cultural expression on the station.

Conclusions

This study investigates cultural expression on local television channels using the cultural political economy perspective by tracing cultural programs on ADiTV and positioning them as cultural industry products. The study reveals that although local television plays a crucial role in expressing local culture and identity, cultural broadcast programs cannot be separated from economic interests. In other words, cultural programs, which serve as a medium for expressing local culture and identity, are subject to a capitalist organizational system, where the processes of production, distribution, and consumption operate within a capitalist exchange framework.

This condition ultimately determines the cultural programs that appear on ADiTV and, consequently, shapes its cultural expression. Thus, cultural programs are limited to those that are economically profitable. This study also discovered that the forms of cultural expression in ADiTV are also determined by elements that are not related to the political economy of culture. Culture that is inconsistent with the goal of Islamic preaching is not transmitted by ADiTV.

This study employs a highly limited case study approach and is therefore not intended for generalization. Consequently, similar studies on various local television stations are highly recommended. Such research is essential because local television products cannot be detached from the cultural industry. Additionally, this type of study is crucial to complement existing research on local television channels in Indonesia, which has predominantly used conventional political economy studies or mainstream perspectives on the role of local television in preserving culture and local identity.

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