

Locality as a space for negotiation and resistance in local television

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ABSTRACT

Background: Local television has an important role in displaying local culture and identity. This role is becoming crucial amidst the dominance of Jakarta's national television, which not only broadcasts certain cultures and groups but also tends to be biased. **Purpose:** This study was conducted to explain how locality is used as a means of negotiation and resistance of local television against the domination of national television. **Method:** This research was conducted using qualitative methods by taking local television, RBTv, part of the national television network Kompas TV, as a case. Data was collected with in-depth interviews, observations, and documents. **Result:** This research shows that although local television has limited broadcast time (5 hours), it creatively uses locality to negotiate and resist the domination of national television. RBTv uses three tactics to bargain its position with Kompas TV. *First, they negotiate the presenter's standard. For instance, RBTv welcomes presenters who speak at standard speed but does not accept people with oriental faces and Jakarta accents. Second, they broadcast local communities to increase engagement with the audience. Third, they broadcast local culture, such as tradition, customs, food, and fashion.* **Conclusion:** RBTv makes the most of its time to serve and show the local community. Something that Jakarta national television cannot do well. **Implications:** Local television has become an "arena" for cultural battles and acts as an actor. The thesis of imperialism and cultural domination in the context of RBTv fails. This research suggests the importance of studies with a local perspective so that the dialogue between local, national and global cultures can be investigated.

Keywords: Culture; locality; local television; negotiation; resistance

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INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, a nation with more than 200 ethnic groups, culture has become an arena for power struggles between the central and the locals. The central authorities continue to insist on the national culture they define, namely a culture compatible with the project of modernity (Jones, 2015; Miharja, 2017; Larasati, 2022; Sjachro, et.al, 2023). It is the line of thinking that drives The New Order regime under the commands of President Soeharto to continue controlling the only national television, TVRI, to build national identity (Kitley, 2000). The liberalization of the television industry during the late 1980s dismantled the domination of TVRI (Armando, 2014b; Kitley, 2000; Souisa, 2020). However, the late television stations born after the policy remained under the control of The New Order (Armando, 2014a; Wahyuni, 2017; Kitley, 2000) until the regime collapsed in 1998.

After the reformation, the broadcasting system in Indonesia was still very centralized due to the strong dominance of Jakarta television stations, which broadcast nationally (Armando, 2014b; Nainggolan, 2018; Masduki & d'haenens, 2022). Their great power of capital and broad reach had hampered local television's development in such a way (Rahayu, 2023) and the lack of local resources themselves (Armando, 2014a; Iswari & Herawati, 2020).

The dominance of national television in Indonesia has led to the marginalization of local communities. National television tends to

represent only certain ethnic groups, especially Sundanese and Javanese, while news coverage mainly focuses on areas around the capital city of Jakarta, ignoring the rest of the country (Heychael & Wibowo, 2014). It has caused concern and resistance among local people who feel that their cultures and identities are not being represented (Harahap et al., 2020; Surokim, 2015). As a result, local television has emerged as a way to combat the domination of national television. Unlike national television, which is part of the "global culture penetration," local television remains loyal to its local culture and strives to represent and preserve it (Maryani et al., 2019).

National television might argue that it is not easy to represent local cultures on their channels, given the diversity of local cultures in Indonesia. However, this is the issue that Law Number 32 in 2002 about broadcasting seeks to address by implementing a networked broadcasting system (Armando, 2014a). Unfortunately, the failure to implement this system has resulted in a centralized broadcasting system (Siregar, 2014), which simultaneously hinders the development of local television (Armando, 2014a). On the other hand, although local television stations are given the freedom to showcase their cultures, the central authority is absent. The regulation does not grant protection for local television because the distinction between local television and Jakarta's national broadcast television is only based on broadcast coverage. The impression emerges that the

central authority allows local television to remain ‘regional television,’ perceived as uninteresting and outdated and, therefore, not worth encouraging to develop. As a result, the cultural notion constructed by Jakarta’s national television channels inadvertently marginalizes and reduces local cultures (Rianto et al., 2014). Yet, regional cultures are an integral part of the national identity and a source of national culture.

Globalization is considered one of the reasons that causes local cultural identities to decline through the influx of foreign values that weaken local cultural traditions and social structures (Fenelon & Murguía, 2016). Various efforts to revitalize local culture have been made by communities using modern media to showcase the original values of local culture unaffected by national culture. The locality of local television, through its programs and content, strives to preserve these values. By integrating elements of local culture such as music, language, and local traditions, local television is negotiating and resisting attempts to homogenize Indonesian culture with the national culture (Jakarta) at the center. Through programs rich in local culture, local television challenges the dominant narrative that has long hegemony over local television stations by ignoring or reducing the uniqueness and diversity of regional cultures in Indonesia.

As a space for negotiation and resistance, local television continues interacting with national and global cultures but packages them

within a local context. It aims to create a unique, dynamic, and evolving cultural hybridity (Pieterse, 2019). Such unique hybridity can be seen in the phenomenon of the Korean-style *kebaya* (traditional Javanese clothing for women) that went viral despite the objection of some scholars who argued that the emergence of the Korean-style *kebaya* with a crop top design no longer represents the original values of Indonesia (Hana, 2024). Thus, cultural hybridization becomes a way for cultures to survive and endure amidst the interaction and dominance of other, more powerful cultures.

South Korea can serve as an example of the successful integration of local culture into the younger generation through drama or music. This pop cultural wave is more commonly known as Hallyu. South Korea’s pop culture adapts global television formats tailored to local culture. By injecting diverse local cultural elements from South Korea into programs like music and drama, Korean culture and the locality it promotes have become famous worldwide (Kim, 2016). It can be seen, for example, in the success of the Korean drama *Reply 1994*, which aired in 2013 on TVN. The drama tells the story of young people from regions like Masan, Sacheon, or Samcheonpo who migrate to Seoul. Different dialects are showcased in their journey, and each region’s uniqueness and distinctive characteristics are also displayed.

The adoption of television formats, whether national or global, has become a means for local television to negotiate their local culture

(Keinonen, 2016). Through format adoption, local television may imitate popular television formats but replace the content with local culture. In this way, local television broadcasts remain highly relevant to the communities they are supposed to serve.

Locality itself is not limited to the physical space where people live. Locality goes beyond just a physical space that a group of people inhabits. It also includes an imaginary and symbolic space, which is interpreted, reproduced, and contested in social relations and power. Locality provides a new space for negotiation and allows for the emergence of new positions that are outside of the central aspiration. The creation of locality is a result of drawing lines and setting limits, including map-making that has been going on for centuries (Appadurai, 1997).

According to Appadurai (1997), locality is perceived as more relational and contextual rather than scalar or spatial. For him, locality is a complex phenomenological quality composed of relations between social intimacy, technology interactivity, and context relativity. Appadurai also believes that locality is a phenomenological character of social life, a structure of feelings generated by certain intentional activities and producing certain material effects.

The neighborhood plays an important role in building locality because it provides context for the interpretation of social actions. The surrounding environment gives context to the interpretation of social actions because the

neighborhood “draws the line” and “sets the limits” (Appadurai, 1997).

Locality values are integrated into cultural understanding (Adi, 2020). Each region’s different traditions and customs have their local values. Even though the traditions practiced are the same, they have different names and meanings. It makes locality seen as something complex (Adi, 2020). Local values that continue to be preserved are part of the local community’s identity. Modernity and globalization have unwittingly eroded the values and purity of local culture, ultimately affecting local communities’ identity.

Locality presents itself as a “space and new negotiation space” that gives way to the emergence of new positions outside the central aspiration (Baso, 2002). In this context, locality or “local ones” is extremely complex since the moving space is very flexible, without perpetual identity, so the global ones are always read or interpreted differently.

Positioning locality as a form of negotiation also opens space for resistance. Several studies have shown how centralized the broadcasting system is in Indonesia (Armando, 2014b; Masduki & d’haenens, 2022; Souisa, 2020), which has systematically sidelined local television channels. It has created a cultural hegemony in the center (Jakarta) over other regions. The study by Rianto et al. (2014) concluded that national television intensively and continuously constructs Indonesia from a Jakarta-centric perspective. It can be seen in soap

operas, dialects, and metropolitan lifestyles. Thus, Jakarta's national television has become an instrument for the highly centralized Jakarta television "regime" in constructing regions as objects. As a result, regional communities are never given the space to express their politics, social issues, and culture from a regional perspective. Moreover, since Jakarta's national television tends to be profit-oriented despite claiming to be a "society-based channel", the objectification of regions is not only related to representation and expression but also to commodification. It occurs, for example, in the commodification of local tourist attractions and cultures, which are presented superficially and carelessly.

Nevertheless, domination never occurs completely. Domination always gives rise to resistance (Seymour, 2006). In this context, culture becomes a space for domination and resistance because culture is inherently ambiguous. On one hand, culture can be a space for the dominant group's power to operate, but on the other hand, it also provides a space for resistance (Batz, 2014), show that Mayan children in Los Angeles are recovering, reconstructing, and developing their identity and culture despite being far from their ancestral lands. They resist the imposed identities (Indio, Latino, Hispanic) by reaffirming their Mayan roots and history through playing marimba, using the Maya language, talking with their grandparents, reading literature, and celebrating religious events.

Studies on local television have often overlooked the perspective of hegemony and resistance within the locality framework. Previous research has mainly focused on the roles of local television in serving the local community and public in a democratic system or in representing local culture. On the other hand, studies with a locality perspective have analyzed the confluence of global and national cultures in the national broadcasting system. Such studies usually reject the thesis of cultural imperialism, arguing that it does not occur because local programs are dominant or because global broadcasting programs adjust themselves to local tastes.

Studies on local television in Indonesia are also similar to the trend of studies at the global level. It is done either by foreign researchers or by Indonesian scholars. Most studies on local television analyze its role in presenting local culture (Bogaerts, 2017; Harahap et al., 2020; Putri et al., 2018), while others are interested in media economics issues (Firmiyanti et al., 2019; Maryani et al., 2018) or creative process in production (Abdussalam & Wahyudi, 2016). The perspective of media ecology also attracts several researchers (Ramli N et al., 2021). This perspective appeals to researchers because it explains media strategies for surviving in a highly competitive market. Niche theory often explains the market niche factors that media outlets adopt to survive (Ji & Lee, 2020).

Unlike the studies mentioned above, studies focusing on local television as a space

for negotiation and resistance to culture are rare. This study argues that in a broadcasting ecosystem dominated by Jakarta, local television provides a space for negotiation and resistance to the national cultural domination imposed by Jakarta television. While studies of this kind have been conducted in many fields outside of television (Hu, 2021; Kim, 2021; Yue et al., 2019), negotiation and resistance are particularly useful in local television in confronting and negotiating their local culture. As Mulla (2019) and Heidi Keinonen (2016) show, television has become a medium for cultural negotiation in various forms.

This study aims to explain how the “locality” displayed in local television broadcast programs becomes a form of resistance and a space for negotiation against the dominance of national television at once. This study, therefore, places local television as an active subject in negotiating their positions when dealing with a centralized and hegemonic national power. By placing local television as an active subject, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the study of local television in Indonesia, which has so far been dominated by textual, economic, and political economy analyses of media.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study investigates how local televisions in Indonesia utilize their locality as a space for negotiation and resistance. The research is conducted using a qualitative approach.

Qualitative research centers on the firsthand accounts of participants, detailed storytelling, and the utilization of various data sources such as interviews, transcripts from focus group discussions, and observation methods. These traditional data are now complemented by visual, virtual, textual, acoustic, and other data (Flick, 2023).

The object of this study is Yogyakarta’s local television station, RBTv, which collaborates with the Kompas TV network. RBTv was chosen as the object of the study because of the unique nature of its collaboration with Kompas TV. Under this partnership, RBTv has a broadcast time of 4-5 hours, aired in the morning (05:00-09:00 WIB). During this time slot, RBTv has the right to fill its broadcast programs, including selling their air time to local advertisers. Within this limited broadcast time, RBTv creates a space for negotiation and resistance against Kompas TV.

This research was conducted in Yogyakarta, where RBTv operates. The study was formally carried out from July to November 2021. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with three key informants: the Director of RBTv, a practitioner, and an expert from Commission I of the regional parliament of Yogyakarta. The interview with the Director of RBTv, Wahyu Sudarmawan, focused on two main topics: the collaboration scheme with Kompas TV and how RBTv’s broadcast programs, especially cultural programs, are developed. The interview also covered RBTv’s strategies for developing

local broadcast programs and how these broadcasts are negotiated with Kompas TV. This information is crucial because, although RBTB is allocated a specific time slot for local broadcasts, it must adhere to the standards set by Kompas TV, such as the speaking style of the announcers, technology, and so forth.

The information gathered from the interview with the Director was further enriched through an in-depth interview with a practitioner. The interview with the marketing practitioner was conducted with Tantri Relatami, a former representative of local television marketing in Jakarta. This interview primarily aimed to uncover the marketing dimension of local broadcast programs, including cultural programs. This interview provided the research with insights into the advertising opportunities available for local broadcasts.

The interview with expert staff from Commission I of the Yogyakarta regional parliament aimed to uncover the development of local television and its policy framework. The informant selected for this interview was Amad Budiman. This choice was based on several reasons. First, Amad Budiman has been involved in multiple sessions of broadcasting law discussions, enabling him to provide information on the position of local television within Indonesia's broadcasting regulations. Second, as an expert, he has interacted with many local television stations, allowing him to offer useful insights into the conditions of local television on the one hand and the impact of

the dominance of Jakarta's national television broadcasts on the other hand.

In addition to interviews, data were also enriched through observation and literature review. Observations were conducted by watching television broadcasts via terrestrial channels and YouTube. The primary purpose of these observations was to examine cultural broadcast programs to validate and enrich the interviews with key informants.

The collected data were then analyzed using the three stages of analysis proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which include data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The data were coded based on relevant themes such as domination, negotiation, resistance, and the context of domination and resistance. The coded data were then presented according to these themes, and conclusions were drawn based on the interpretation of elements, the organization of explanations, possible configurations, cause-and-effect sequences, and propositions (Miles et al., 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since the Broadcasting Law was validated in 2002, there have been some changes in Indonesia's broadcasting system. However, the changes are not fundamental, as the private sector still dominates the broadcasting system and is Jakarta-centered. Although the law supports the decentralization of broadcasting and guarantees the existence of public broadcasting institutions

and local television, it has not led to a significant shift (Armando, 2014b; Masduki & d'haenens, 2022; Nainggolan, 2018).

After the liberalization of the broadcasting sector in the late 1980s, the dominance of TVRI collapsed. However, the post-liberalization situation was not significantly better. The broadcasting system remained centralized, with the center (Jakarta) still retaining control (Siregar, 2014). If, during the New Order era, TVRI was dominant and hegemonized the discourse about Indonesia, then post-liberalization saw the shift to domination by television channels affiliated with the Indonesian Television Association (ATVSI) (Masduki & d'haenens, 2022; Nainggolan, 2018) which marginalized local television (Rianto et al., 2014).

From a business perspective, broadcasting centralization has devastating implications for local television (Armando, 2014a; Maryani et al., 2018). Due to competitive pressures from the dominant power of national television, local television has to offer low prices without any bargaining power with Jakarta advertisers (Firmiyanti et al., 2019). The limited signal range of local television has destroyed the competitive values of local television in competing with national television. Rating is somehow related to the number of viewers, which is related to broad reach. As a result, when it comes to efficiency in selling space for advertising, local television only has very limited options. On the other hand, economic activity is still centred in Jakarta.

Consequently, there is a lack of carrying capacity in the local economy. The simplest example is Yogyakarta. Even though Yogyakarta is a Special Region called Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY), the original revenue (PAD) in Yogyakarta is very low compared to other provinces in Indonesia. However, in DIY, there are approximately four local televisions (Adi TV, RBTB, Jogja TV, and Kresna TV). As a result, there is a very fierce competition among local television stations: Ess networks, both print, electronic, and digital media.

When the local television's capital does not develop, local television programs can not grow well either. There are four reasons behind the observations. First, local television programs are not attractive. Cultural broadcasting programs for young people are presented more in a caricaturist and essentialist way (Tantri Relatami, ex-marketing representative of a local television station in Jakarta, personal interview, October 22, 2021). Almost all Cultural programs are expressed in traditional clothing or art performances.

Second, lack of human resources. Many of these scarce human resources have been "hijacked" by national television (Wahyu Sudarman, Director of RBTB, personal interview). Since local television is less attractive from an economic point of view, broadcasters and some workers have migrated to national television. Ironically, local television celebrated this as a success, even though their investment in the relevant human resources had

been costly. Consequently, this will enhance the dominance of national television broadcasting nationally because it has far better and more well-trained human resources.

Third, a lack of capital. Capital has become the most significant problem faced by local television in Indonesia. Inadequate capital severely restricts creativity (Ahmad Budiman, Expert Staff to Commission I, House of Representatives, personal interview, May 22, 2022). Local television programs generally tend to be talk shows and news programs. Talk shows are usually inexpensive and can be sold to the local government.

Fourth, the technology. Because of outdated technology, the quality of local television programs is not equivalent to national television programs. It is closely related to the capital owned by local televisions. Many local television owners are local media conglomerates. But they are not parallel with national media group owners such as MNC Group, Trans Corp, Viva Media Asia, Media Group, Emtek Group, and Kompas Gramedia.

The previous explanation sheds light on the forms of domination of national television in the broadcasting system in Indonesia and their effects on local television. This domination has created a highly centralized and biased Jakarta broadcasting system. This domination has resulted in an imbalanced and centralized broadcasting system that favors Jakarta. The new Job Creation Act no. 11 of 2020 only strengthens this centralism by classifying

broadcasting institutions as businesses and removing the provisions in Broadcasting Law no. 32 of 2002 that limit broadcast coverage. It will further strengthen the centralism of the broadcasting system and the domination of Jakarta's nationally broadcast televisions. Thus, the position of local television will be increasingly difficult because Law No. 11 confirmed the existence of Jakarta's national television. Through the Job Creation Act, the network system is no longer mandatory for national television, especially for those members of ATVSI. Therefore, unbalanced competition will lead to difficulties for local television's survival.

From the perspective of the political economy of regulation, local television has suffered many defeats. They must accept Jakarta television domination and hegemony, which broadcasts nationally. However, as Foucault has pointed out (Seymour, 2006), the power is spread to allow dynamic relations between subordinate and dominant groups. According to Foucault (Seymour, 2006), "Where there is power, there is resistance". Therefore, when the dominant groups continue to strengthen their domination, the subordinate groups use their power to fight the domination or carry out resistance. In short, authority will always be accompanied by resistance. Because the domination structure at the central level is too strong, resistance to domination is carried out on a minor or micro level. Such resistance is reflected in the case of local television in Indonesia.

Compared to other local television stations, RBTB has a unique position. As a local media network under Retjo Buntung Group in Yogyakarta, the media group formerly ran a very successful radio station (Radio Retjo Buntung). Motivated by the passion to develop local potential, RB Group established RBTB. The channel began broadcasting on August 15, 2004, encouraged by the dedication of local business people to promote local potential through the television business, similar to other local television in Indonesia.

As a local television, RBTB has difficulties managing its programs, and it has to look for alternatives that will allow it to survive. Therefore, it offered collaborations with various national television stations in Jakarta. However, several Jakarta television stations that broadcast nationally tend to “take over” the frequency and do not allow RBTB to have local broadcast time. It is burdensome and unacceptable. RBTB finally chose to build a network with Kompas TV because the television station is willing to provide broadcast time for local television (Wahyu Sudarman, Director of RBTB, personal interview, September 17, 2021).

RBTB collaborates with Kompas TV to air their programs for five hours daily, from morning until noon. The rest of the airtime is managed by Kompas TV. However, this arrangement is not ideal for RBTB since their allotted time is not during prime time. It is necessary because Kompas TV needs prime time to compete with other television industries in Jakarta. Despite

this, the collaboration has been beneficial for RBTB, providing them with a better chance of survival until now.

The collaboration mentioned above makes RBTB face a challenge due to limited airtime (5 hours a day), which makes it difficult to broadcast programs during primetime. However, RBTB has managed to support itself through a series of bargains. Kompas TV provides a 25 thousand watts transmitter infrastructure and electricity that enables RBTB to improve the quality of its broadcasts. It is an expensive investment as the transmitter costs nearly 25 to 30 billion rupiahs, and the electricity costs approximately 100 million rupiahs per month. With better transmitter facilities, RBTB can improve its broadcast quality, especially by expanding its coverage in the Special Region of Yogyakarta and several parts of Central Java. It is not surprising that RBTB has the best rating among 38 local television channels that work with Kompas TV.

The negotiation process is not just about discussing broadcast hours and infrastructure. It is also important to consider broadcast management. It was evident in the initial talks with Kompas TV regarding broadcasting standards and content. Kompas TV planned to establish a television channel resembling Nat Geo, Indonesia’s Discovery Channel. However, the production process was expensive and failed to attract sponsors and advertisements, so it was eventually discontinued.

This type of collaboration also creates

problems for local television because, in reality, it does not represent local content that can be accepted by the public. As a result, there is no significant difference between local television and, for example, RCTI, SCTV, Trans, and many more (national television; members of the National Television Association). Therefore, RBTv is trying to negotiate with Kompas TV, especially about decoration and broadcasters. According to Wahyu Sudarmawan, it is because the presenters who are considered ideal are always those who have light skin tones. The speech rate that is considered ideal refers to Jakarta television anchors, such as Rosiana Silalahi. Rosiana Silalahi is well-known as an intelligent and analytical national television anchor, especially while conducting interviews. For years, Rosiana has become a model for numerous national television anchors.

Wahyu Sudarmawan has stated that the basic standards established by Kompas TV are unacceptable and need to be negotiated. Kompas TV requires a faster speech rate from its anchors to meet program duration standards. However, the announcer's local accent is still maintained. The new formula for presenters is to adhere to Kompas TV's standard speech rate or speed, as it is closely related to program duration. Presenters do not need to completely adopt the Jakarta style. National television presenters generally have an oriental appearance with a Jakarta accent, while RBTv presenters, both male and female, have a tanned skin tone and a Javanese accent associated with

the Yogyakarta region. In conclusion, RBTv presenters represent Javanese men and women with their unique accents and dialects. It is done to distinguish RBTv Jogja from national televisions such as Kompas TV or RCTI.

In addition to negotiating the presenter standards, RBTv makes the best use of its 5 hours of broadcasting duration to show the Yogyakarta locality in two methods. First, RBTv programs always show local communities. In pragmatic, by holding out to local communities, RBTv attempts to build a local audience. It is related to gaining income from advertisements. There is also a more idealist basis by showing local communities. RBTv gives space for local communities to show up on television. This opportunity is considered rare on Jakarta television. Even if local communities appear on national television, they are usually shown in unpleasant stereotypes (Ras Amanda, academician, Universitas Udayana, Bali, personal interview, June 21, 2022). For example, when Balinese appear on national television, they tend to focus on the mystical aura rather than the Balinese spiritual way of life, which balances the relationship between humans and God, human and mother nature, and human and human.

Secondly, local culture is presented as caricaturist and essentialist, but it still provides a much-needed space for local culture. National televisions are flooded with global broadcasting program genres, such as telenovelas (known as *sinetron* or electronic cinema in Indonesia's

context) and reality shows. In contrast, local television continues to present local culture. This representation is done through customs, traditional clothing, and local languages. Take the Pelangi Jogja broadcasting program, for instance. One of its episodes talks about efforts to preserve culture through traditional clothing. Like other regions in Indonesia, Yogyakarta has traditional clothing inherited from Keraton Yogyakarta or The Palace of Yogyakarta. Keraton Yogyakarta is the only kingdom that still exists today and holds a “special” status because the king also acts as the governor or the head of the province.

RBTv’s efforts to present a local atmosphere on its programs require, as Appadurai (1997) has said, locality cannot be read as materiality confined by modernization. Its presence is also not present as a standardization in life and society. This situation shows that the effort to produce a locality is not only carried out as a product of anxiety about social change but needs to be derived as an activity deliberately carried out to generate specific types of material effects (Appadurai, 1997). Therefore, efforts to produce local content carried out by RBTv can also be derived as a way to make it more subjective to recognize and exercise control over it. An understanding of what is local is made present as comfortable as possible and makes it familiar to the local community. Locality has finally become a commodity for RBTv to gain viewers, along with bargaining power for negotiating with national TV.

Local televisions survive by using a locality strategy. This strategy results from boundary-making, which has been taking place for centuries through activities such as map-making. According to Ajun Appadurai (1997), locality is a complex quality that involves a series of relationships between a sense of social closeness, technological interactivity, and the relativity of context. Put simply, locality is a mix of social, technological, and contextual factors that create a sense of closeness within a community.

RBTv uses locality to challenge Jakarta television’s dominance and bring the audience closer. This locality has two dimensions: social and economic. Socially, RBTv maintains presenters’ original Javanese dialect and brown skin tone as a way to challenge oriental broadcasters that fit Jakarta or national TV standards. Economically, the locality increases the number of viewers, contributing to advertising revenue. If RBTv becomes the only Kompas TV network with a rating above 2.0, it will significantly contribute to advertising. Therefore, RBTv utilizes its 5-hour broadcast time to showcase local identity and culture.

RBTv was established in 2004 as a local private television network which primarily broadcasted regional nature programs. The network has always aimed to showcase the developing Yogyakarta tradition in its broadcasts, particularly through the *Leyeh-leyeh* music program. This program features *Campursari* music, an essential part of the

community's creativity, providing a separate space for music lovers. Through *Leyeh-leyeh*, people can enjoy selected songs in the Javanese language of Yogyakarta and also get a chance to share jokes and complaints and be addressed as part of the program. This program has gained critical acclaim and was awarded the 2019 DIY KPID as the best program.

Leyeh-leyeh was first aired in 2014, after ten years of RBTV, and is hosted by two local comedians from Yogyakarta named Fuad and Poersegi Panjang. They consistently wear traditional Javanese clothes, including *blangkon*, and the *gebyog*, a traditional Javanese background, adds to the Javanese cultural atmosphere of the program (see Figure 1). By using Yogyakarta Javanese narration, traditional

clothing and a *gebyog* studio background, this program has received support from many viewers in Central Java and Yogyakarta. The show brings together viewers in a way that makes them feel close and familiar with the Yogyakarta space.

According to Appadurai (1997), locality is not something that already exists and needs to be sought after; instead, it is the result of production. This paper understands that modernization comes with the spirit of seeking liberation from materiality, while locality comes by seeking the limit of materiality. In other words, producing a locality is an attempt to produce materiality by looking at historical dialectics while paying attention to the limitations of the material until it deserves to be called something local.



Sumber: YouTube RBTV, 2023

Figure 1 Photo Capture from the Video

This understanding shows that locality is a creation that requires effort, thought, consideration, and perseverance. The limitations of materiality are no longer understood as a form of powerlessness but rather as a form of empowerment over materiality. When the position of an entity is limited (in the locality frame), the position of that entity is being celebrated.

Leyeh-leyeh received a warm response from the audience and decided to introduce the Dolan-dolan edition on a separate day. Previously, Leyeh-leyeh was only shot in broadcast studios (figure 1). The Dolan-Dolan edition showcases an outdoor setting where the presenters can interact with local sources (figure 2). The term “dolan” means going out for fun in

the Indonesian dictionary. In Javanese society, people do not hesitate to take a break and have fun even on a work mission, as having fun does not always require vacation time.

This article features additional readings related to the Dolan-dolan edition of the Leyeh-leyeh program. The term “dolan-dolan” refers to engaging in fun outdoor activities. The idea behind this program edition is to present it dynamically and attractively. The assumption is that this is an opportunity for the crew to explore the best way to present the program. The crew can experiment with scenarios, shooting, or video editing techniques. However, the study’s findings indicate that the technical packaging of this program is not particularly attractive or dynamic.



Sumber: YouTube RBTv, 2023

Figure 2 Photo Capture from the Video

The program is designed so the hosts can visit a place and have conversations with informants who can provide valuable information. Most of the time, the show consists of these conversations between the hosts and speakers. This setup indicates a negotiation between RBTv and their current situation. RBTv acknowledges that they have limited technological and equipment resources at the moment. However, thanks to Fuad and Poersemi Panjang, experts in presenting this program, this does not hinder them from producing content. Their humor comes from their innocent responses to things, which is a unique value that makes people comfortable with the way they present their shows. When visiting a place, they do not present themselves as tourists or experts in a particular field, unlike what is often shown on national television.

RBTv's effort to present a local atmosphere has an impact on defining an essentialist culture. In this context, culture is seen as something that can be separated and its purity maintained (Martinez, 2017). This representation reinforces the notion that culture should be preserved and never fade over time. For instance, RBTv's presenters always wear traditional clothing, regardless of the location, when presenting the *dolan-dolan* edition of *Leyeh-leyeh*. Fuad and Poersemi Panjang are good examples, as they always wear their regional clothing outdoors or indoors.

This study demonstrates the significance of local television as a platform for cultural

resistance and negotiation. If local culture is seen as secondary to national culture in Indonesia (Kitley, 2000), the case of RBTv illustrates how subordinate cultures can still challenge dominant culture effectively (Seymour, 2006). The research challenges the notion that domination is absolute, as often argued by proponents of cultural imperialism (Salih, 2021). Baso (2002) also highlights the agency of local communities in negotiating their cultural identity. In any hegemonic structure, there will always be counter-hegemony (Kim, 2021). At RBTv, negotiations took place through television programming such as the *leyeh-leyeh* and *dolan-dolan* shows, which served as a platform for cultural negotiation, blending global influences and local elements across different aspects of television culture (production, content, and reception), each of which involved various symbolic or actual negotiation processes (Keinonen, 2016). Another form of negotiation is evident in broadcasters' use of language, accent, and skin color, all of which contribute to the ethnic and cultural identity within society (Cabaness, 2014; Chapman, 2021).

This research is considered a micro-study and cannot be applied or generalized to other places. It is also not applicable to other local televisions within the Kompas TV network in Indonesia. However, it highlights the need for further research on other local televisions in Indonesia, both within and outside the Kompas TV network. It is important because local

televisions constantly face difficulties due to the strong domination of Jakarta televisions, and they have become a continuous battle arena for politics and culture, as pointed out by Kitley (2000). Even after twenty years, local and Jakarta televisions with national broadcasts are competing not only in economic and political dimensions but also over culture and identity, which are worthy of further study.

CONCLUSION

According to this study, local televisions struggle to compete with nationally broadcast television, which dominates the market. It is mainly due to the difficulty local television faces in securing commercial advertisements. National broadcasters have greater access to capital, human resources, infrastructure, and a wider range of broadcast content.

The strong dominance of Jakarta-based national television has pushed local television like RBTv to collaborate with Jakarta-based national broadcasters such as Kompas TV. This collaboration ensures that local television can survive in a highly competitive media environment. The assumption is that if they can endure, local television will continue to serve their local communities. In other words, local television will play a crucial role as a space for local cultural expression while maintaining local aesthetics—something Jakarta-based national television channels find challenging to achieve. It is important because the dominance of Jakarta's national television channels extends

not only to economic and coverage aspects but also to social and cultural aspects. When showcasing local culture, Jakarta television channels often exhibit biases and keep local cultures on the periphery. Only certain cultures, such as Javanese, Sundanese, or Betawi, are featured, while others are largely neglected. Ultimately, Jakarta television channels not only sets broadcast standards but also dictate the representation and flavor of local cultures.

However, it is worth noting that the domination of national television is not absolute. There is still space for local voices to be heard and for resistance to be mounted. Therefore, although the centralization of Jakarta's television industry can lead to biased broadcasts, it can also be countered by promoting local content.

This analysis of RBTv clearly shows that they struggle to compete with Jakarta television and local television. However, they can survive by negotiating with Jakarta television powers. Despite being only entitled to 5 hours of broadcast, which is not prime time, they can maximize their local content. Moreover, they are also fighting against the standardization of Jakarta television broadcasts that potentially neglect the local culture. By doing so, they help maintain the uniqueness of Yogyakarta's locality.

Local television stations like RBTv have significantly contributed to the struggle for meaning and power in cultural arenas. Despite the dominance of national and global culture in mainstream media, local television

has become a voice for local identity and culture. It is important to study local television from a local perspective to understand how locals negotiate and resist dominant cultural influences. With the increasing number of local television stations, such studies can provide rich information on how these stations shape cultural identity. Furthermore, in the digital age, it is also important to examine how local television responds to global cultural penetration. Despite globalization's impact on cultural homogenization, local television stations can use digital platforms to promote cultural interpenetration.

This study focuses solely on RBTV, which may not be sufficient to explain phenomena in other local television stations. It is because the cultural context of local communities is crucial in influencing negotiation and resistance processes. Therefore, research on local television stations within the Kompas TV network would also be worthwhile. In this way, resistance and negotiation practices can be explained more comprehensively. A multi-case study design is therefore highly recommended.

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