

THE NEW LINK BETWEEN ART FESTIVAL AND THE MEDIA: THE ENGAGEMENT OF A MEDIA INSTITUTION IN SURABAYA ART FESTIVAL

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ABSTRAK

Studi yang dilakukan ini mencoba untuk mendalami kecenderungan baru perilaku media dan praktek non-jurnalistik yang dilakukan oleh organisasi media dalam masyarakat di Indonesia paska pemerintahan otoritarian. Studi ini mendiskusikan tentang keterlibatan institusi besar media lokal dalam penyelenggaraan Festival Seni Surabaya selama pertengahan tahun 2000an. Keterlibatan satu media besar, Jawa Pos, dalam penyelenggaraan festival seni budaya Surabaya telah membentuk model baru hubungan antara media dan masyarakat dalam konteks Indonesia. Melalui metode wawancara dengan para anggota kepanitiaan festival dan seniman di Surabaya, serta didukung oleh data-data dari media massa, studi ini berargumen bahwa kepentingan ekonomi politik media telah menjadi faktor penentu konten dan manajemen festival seni tersebut, mengabaikan faktor kepentingan untuk menampilkan kekayaan seni budaya dan inovasi budaya yang menjadi tujuan dari festival seni itu. Dalam festival ini, institusi media telah memberikan bantuan dana yang besar sehingga mendominasi kekuasaan media untuk menentukan konsep festival seni tahunan kota Surabaya sejak itu. Ternyata, setelah institusi media memilih untuk tidak lagi memberikan dukungan dana dan menarik diri sebagai sponsor utama FSS, penyelenggaraan festival seni budaya itu menjadi bermasalah dan tidak bergaung lagi.

Kata Kunci: *ekonomi politik media, festival seni, kepentingan media*

ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to investigate a new trend of media behaviour and to study an aspect of the non-journalistic practice of the media organization in the society in post-authoritarian Indonesia. It discusses the engagement of a major local media institution in the organization of the Surabaya Art Festival in the early 2000s. The involvement of one wealthy media institution, Jawa Pos, in the organization of Surabaya's cultural art festival, therefore, could shape a new model of relationship between the media and the society in the Indonesian context. Based on interviews with several existing and ex-members of the festival committees and media documentations, this study argues that the political economy of the media interest has played a major role in determining the contents and management of the festival, disregarding the need to exhibit the remarkable cultural richness and innovations. In this particular cultural event, the media has played a significant role in supplying the funding for the festival, and consequently, the media control the power in conceptualising the city's annual art festival since then. Yet, when the owner of the media institution chose to stop supporting the funding to the festival organization, the result was palpable. After the withdrawal of this major media magnate from the festival organization, the continuation of the Surabaya Art Festival has become troublesome and susceptible

Keywords: art festival, media interest, political economy media

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INTRODUCTION

Festivals and events are organised to celebrate people's particular interest in culture and tradition. They can help promote countries, or cities and towns, or villages and hamlets, in rural or coastal areas, and attract tourists. They have been seen as a new form of tourism to anchor economic prosperity and development. Governments, entrepreneurs, and artists have also grasped their values and benefits. The success or failure of festivals or events could be enhanced or damaged by the management of the festivals themselves. Festivals and events also have a different level of operating costs. There are not-for-profit and profit-making festivals depending on their purposes. Some have an entertainment and educational purpose, and can be used to bring different communities together, whilst others can be used for business promotions. The role of sponsorship is significant in determining the goal of the festivals. Whoever is sponsoring the festival becomes a major issue in defining the feature of the festival.

The tension between the economic role and the social function of the media, and the line between media independence and political and/or economical opportunisms of the media owners in the context of regionalism in Indonesia, needs to be drawn. This paper examines the participation of a media organization in the activities of a local annual art festival, and to show how such participation exemplifies a (new) model of media-society relations in the regional context of Indonesia. This paper is a case study of the organization of the Surabaya Art Festival, known as *Festival Seni Surabaya* (FSS), and the involvement of *Jawa Pos*, a major national media group, based in Surabaya, East Java, in sponsoring this annual festival between the years 2000 and 2006. This paper aims to demonstrate how such involvement had brought tension to a potentially contradictory ambition of the media: for its economic or commercial interest and its public good image.

Studies on the political economy of mass communication have tended to focus on the pivotal

position of media in contemporary politics, and to consider the media as a political institution. The media do have extraordinary political importance. However, as Ian Ward (1995) believes, with their typical characteristics of "privately owned, commercial enterprises and can –unlike, say political parties– be legitimately bought and sold," the media of course are different from all other political institutions that are 'public bodies' (Ward, 1995:125). According to Ward, as a distinguished political institution, the media may carry information and sometimes shape the course of political events in the place of the media institution. Ward also suggests that private ownership of the media have emphasised their particular interests into their media news. He has demonstrated some cases of how media moguls in Australia had used their media for their own political ends (Ward, 1995:125). Similar to those in Australia, particular media owners in Indonesia such as Surya Paloh, who owns *Media Indonesia* Group, or Hary Tanoesoedibyo of MNC Groups, or Aburizal Bakrie, the major share holder of TVOne, are examples of those who have used their media for their own political interests in the country (see Sen & Hill, 2000, and Ida, 2011).

However, not all media proprietors in Indonesia use their media to reach a political end. Some of them choose not to become compulsive with their own political position in any governmental or political bodies; rather, they tend to play a significant role in a 'non-political' institution or in other social institutions. The goal is to be pervasive. Such involvement is aimed at securing their existence in the society, whilst at the same time maintaining and building large regional markets and public acceptance. This paper, therefore, is an attempt to understand a new trend of media behaviour in Indonesia and to look into another aspect of the practice of media organization in the society in post-Soeharto era.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT IN THE SOCIETY'S EVENT: THE INITIAL INVOLVEMENT

Jawa Pos media group is a major media

institution, which is the only national media that operates outside Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. *Jawa Pos* headquarter is in Surabaya, but the media has its branch offices across Indonesia, ranging from Aceh to Papua. The circulations of the dailies and its local television stations are remarkable, and have placed the media group as the largest media group in the country in these days. In Surabaya, the involvement of *Jawa Pos* in various social events, ranging from Sunday car free days, community sport events, safety riding events with local police, green and clean kampong competitions, art festivals, and some others, has been prominent and repeatedly successful. Every community and social event sponsored or initiated by *Jawa Pos* in Surabaya is always particularly well-liked and invites massive participation from the Surabaya society. This study is an attempt to look at a particular involvement of this media company to the annual art festival organization in Surabaya. It examines the engagement form and the power negotiation of this media institution in conceptualising the city art festival and how far the owner has practised the media power in this context.

Jawa Pos Group is the second largest press empire in Indonesia (Sen & Hill, 2000:58). This publishing company is situated in Surabaya, the capital of the East Java province. *Jawa Pos* was established as a family business in 1949. When this provincial press was about to collapse in the early 1980s, Dahlan Iskan, who used to be a journalist of the leading news magazine *Tempo*, was assigned to manage this daily. Within a decade, Iskan had changed the company into one of the top twenty businesses in Indonesia. "*Jawa Pos* has demonstrated the capacity of large city papers to survive and expand into national commercial enterprises" (Sen & Hill, 2000:59).

At present, Dahlan Iskan controls more than 140 companies spanning the archipelago under the holding company PT. *Jawa Pos* Group. The companies hold more than twenty provincial dailies, thirty district (*kabupaten*) dailies, local private television stations in East Java, Riau, and Borneo provinces, tabloids, magazines, printing companies,

a paper factory, a book publication, and non-press companies in the fields as diverse as hotels, tours travel, and real estate. His personal relationships with the East Java government, political elites and with national and provincial major entrepreneurs are very well maintained. From 1999 until 2005, the East Java government appointed Iskan as the CEO of 55 provincial enterprises. Knowing his good handling in local state-owned enterprises, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono selected Iskan as the Director of the state-owned power company, PLN, in 2011. He has then been assigned as the Minister of State-Owned Enterprises, BUMN, under President Yudhoyono's cabinet in 2012-2014.

The position of Dahlan Iskan as the major media magnate in the East Java province in 1999-2005, had privileged him. He was approached both by the provincial and Surabaya city governments and by the many social groups for sponsoring and/or supervising their activities. However, his intention to participate in the organization of the annual Surabaya Art Festival (FSS) since 1995-2006 exemplified a new role of the regional media owner and his organization in the society.

The Surabaya Art Festival was initiated in 1993 by a local artist of Surabaya, Kadaruslan and several other artists. Kadaruslan¹ and his colleagues were frustrated by the lack of art performance(s) in Surabaya at that time (personal interview with Kadaruslan). Using a moment of Surabaya city's 700th anniversary in 1993, these artists voluntarily organised a week of contemporary art festival, namely *Sepekan Seni Surabaya* (Art Week of Surabaya), without the involvement of the government and any influential bodies. They invited their colleagues in Jakarta and Surabaya to perform and conduct exhibitions for that event. With a very limited budget and no permanent office, Kadaruslan invited groups of artists from *Aksera* and *Bengkel Muda Surabaya* to organise the festival. The result of Kadaruslan's efforts was impressive. The first and second festival events were successful and granted supportive appreciation from the public in Surabaya.

The success of the festival in 1993 and 1994

had drawn the attention of Dahlan Iskan. In my fieldwork interview with one prominent East Java's artist, Kadaruslan, in 1995, Dahlan Iskan called Kadaruslan and told his intention to contribute or donate some funding to the festival organization. Iskan donated 75 million rupiahs. Kadaruslan and his colleagues were so happy to receive that contribution as they were desperately looking for financial supports at that time. In the following year, Iskan was more confident to contribute more funding for the festival than the previous year. So, in 1996, Iskan added some more money for the committee. He contributed in cash 150 million rupiahs. However, according to Kadaruslan, other than contributing money, Iskan was not involved in organising the event. On top of that cash funding, Iskan's contribution also contributed the full coverage and promotion of the festival through his newspaper, *Jawa Pos*, a month before and during the festival event. Iskan received an honour to give a speech in the opening ceremony in the 1996 festival for compensation as being a principal sponsor of the festival, and it had been continued since then.

Since much more funding resources contributed to the committee in 1996, Kadaruslan then realised that the festival organization could not be managed by only himself and several artists. He thought that he should invite more participation from the (Surabaya) public. As this art festival was dedicated to the Surabaya public, Kadaruslan decided that the festival should not be privatised or claimed as an individual project. With the spirit for public accountability, starting in 1996, Kadaruslan initiated to establish a social foundation, namely *Yayasan Seni Surabaya* (the Surabaya Art Foundation, hereafter, YSS) in order to invite more funding for resources and other possible sponsorships for the continuation of the festival.

In a personal interview, Kadaruslan explained that he invited Dahlan Iskan and later, appointed Iskan as the chairman of the foundation, whilst Kadaruslan himself took a position as a chief executive, which had been continued up to his life (2010). Kadaruslan also asked one East Java

governmental officer, Edy Indrayana, an engineer and was the head of the financial and development division of the East Java province, for the position of treasurer in the foundation. To accommodate more people in the YSS, Kadaruslan invited also two other people, one was a well-known Surabaya female actor, Wiwik, as the secretary of YSS and Harun Haryadi, son-in-law of Ciputra, one of the country's wealthiest entrepreneurs and owner of Ciputra Group. These five people have been continuing as board members of *Yayasan Seni Surabaya*. However, according to Kadaruslan, he had been the only member, who had actively looked after and contributed more to the foundation. He even took responsibility when the organization of the 1996 festival, which was run for a month, suffered from a financial loss for up to 30 million rupiahs. Kadaruslan had mortgaged his house to forfeit the loss (personal interview, August 2006). He then went to Papua to calm down his life for couple of months.

Since 1996, *Yayasan Seni Surabaya* has become an advisory body as well as a funding resource body for the festival. The art week festival consequently changed its name into *Festival Seni Surabaya* (Surabaya Art Festival, or FSS) and is run every year for fifteen days. Starting from the 1996 festival, the foundation then has formed an annual committee structure consisting of two structural level: first is the steering committee (SC) that is a supervisory body, and the other is the organising committee (OC), where the members change every year. Also, since 1996, the committees have invited performers not only from Surabaya and Jakarta, but from other regional parts of Indonesia and from overseas such as Australia, Japan, America, and Europe.

According to Kadaruslan, the economic crisis in 1997 and 1998 had made the foundation suffer more than it did in 1996. For two years the festival was terminated. However, when the country's economic condition started to recover in 1999, the foundation took an initiative to revive the festival. Fortunately, there was some funding coming from the central government through the so-called

'*inpres*² funding' (or *dana Inpres*), which was used to run the festival. The *Inpres* was actually allocated to the regional (East Java) arts council (known as *Dewan Kesenian Daerah*, or DKD) as financial support for art activities in the regional provinces of Indonesia. Sourced by *Inpres* funding and a contribution from Dahlan Iskan's *Jawa Pos* for 150 million rupiahs, the Surabaya art festival was run again in 1999.

It was then continued in 2000 using the same pattern of format and funding of the 1999 festival organization. The Surabaya Art Foundation (YSS) worked together with the East Java regional arts council (DKD) during those years. However, since 2001, the foundation has become stronger and more supported funding have approached from private sponsors such as *Citra Raya*, a member of Ciputra Groups, *Pakuwon* Group, a local large construction business group in Surabaya, and other non-cash contributions from overseas consulates such as the France Cultural Consulate (CCCL), the British Council, and the American Consulate in Surabaya. When more support arrived to the foundation and the festival's organising committee, the more energy and supportive actions for the festival were had. Since 2001, the Surabaya Art Festival (FSS) has been run for fifteen days, from 1st to 15th June every year, and it has also received more supportive responses from the public, national and regional artists, and overseas performers. FSS has become one of the recognized icons of Surabaya city. Since, this art festival has been acknowledged as the annual event in the official East Java and Surabaya governments' tourism calendar, these two regional governments have allocated some cash funding in their annual budget. However, according to Kadaruslan, the amount given to the festival from these governments was far below the contribution of *Jawa Pos*, which covered almost 70 per cent of the festival costs.

The festival has also become popular and bigger. More regional art performances outside East Java and overseas performers have been invited to participate in the festival. Sourced from my observation and several festivals booklets and

brochures in the FSS Official workplace situated in the DKS building, the festival has shown not only contemporary theatres and traditional plays e.g. *ludruk* and *wayang* as in earlier organization, but it also starts to run more painting and art installation exhibitions. Moreover, the organising committee has also shown Indonesian feature films and independent movies by the local and regional young film makers in an open air screening (locally known as *layar tancap*). Several film workshops and seminars have also run for the public.

Jawa Pos newspaper and the company continued to support the festival up to the 2006's organization. The owner of *Jawa Pos*, Dahlan Iskan, contributed a cash of 150 million rupiahs every year. Adding to that, the newspaper continued to cover the event a month before the festival started and during fifteen days of the festival and two days after the closing ceremony. The company also printed the festival catalogues, banners for all events, and outdoor festival promotions.

For all these contributions, the festival foundation members, including Dahlan Iskan, appointed Arif Afandi, who was a chief editor of the *Jawa Pos* newspaper, as the chair of the steering committee from 2000 to 2004. However, since Afandi has been voted as the vice mayor of Surabaya, there has been no single *Jawa Pos*'s staff to occupy this position. However, in 2005, YSS appointed Arif Santoso, a senior member of board editors of *Jawa Pos*, as a chief executive of the festival. A couple weeks after the selection, Santoso was withdrawn from his position and was replaced by Sandiantoro, an art critic and curator. The withdrawal of Santoso was concealed from the public exposure. Sandi then was promoted in the public as the project officer of the festival. Some speculations were circulated around the issue of Santoso's withdrawal at that time. In fact, Kadaruslan explained in a personal interview, that the reason to replace Santoso was mainly because Dahlan Iskan did not want the people of *Jawa Pos* to monopolise the organization of FSS. After this crucial issue, the organising committee of FSS have been given to those Surabaya artists.

Accordingly, the feature of the FSS after *Jawa Pos's* management leaving the organising committee of the festival in 2007, it had then slightly shifted. The Surabaya Art Festival since then became quiet and gained less attention from the public. Moreover, the impact after the withdrawal of *Jawa Pos* in the festival was, first and foremost, the lack of cash funding and promotion. As such, ideologically, there had been no significant changes in terms of the festival themes and performers. During the involvement of *Jawa Pos* Group in the management of FSS, contemporary art performances, invited performers outside of Surabaya and overseas artists were presented, although there were little art dialogues between Surabaya's artists and the visitors. In 2005's festival and afterwards, particularly in 2007's festival, the presentation of visual arts and more pluralist arts have become notable in the some art exhibitions during the festival in several art galleries in the city. The themes of FSS, since then, had been focused on the discussion of nation, nationalism, and globalisation in arts.

During my fieldwork and interview with the key informants, I found that both *Jawa Pos* management staff, who were involved in the festival, and several prominent artists of Dewan Kesenian Surabaya (DKS) and Dewan Kesenian *Jawa Timur* (DKJT) had not showed their strong criticism to the dominant role and influence of *Jawa Pos's* owner, particularly Azrul Ananda, in the organization of FSS before 2006. People such as Kadaruslan and Meimura claimed that, at that time, the FSS had difficulty finding the money for the festival; and when Dahlan Iskan lent his hands to support the funding of the festival, Surabaya's artists welcomed the offer. These people explained that without the contribution of *Jawa Pos*, they believed the FSS would not be run during those difficult years (2000-2006).

Both Kadaruslan and Meimura stated that the crucial problem they perceived with the engagement of *Jawa Pos* into the organization of the festival was the disconnection between the artists (as organising committee) and *Jawa*

Pos's management, particularly the marketing department. *Jawa Pos* was firm in that only the marketing staff of the group would be allowed to seek supporting sponsors and conducting promotions and publications for the festival. Several artists, who were involved in the organising committee, did not agree to this decision and felt that they were not trusted by the *Jawa Pos* management. *Jawa Pos's* management itself, represented by Arif Santoso, denied the allegation in an interview. He said that the media institution did not mean that. His company just insisted on the accountability of the financial usage for the festival, since the festival was free for public and belonged to the Surabaya public.

Sourced from these data findings above mentioned, it can be seen that in the management of the art festival, sponsorship seemed to become a main factor in organising the festival. In Indonesia, the organization of art and cultural festival is mainly managed directly by the national and local/regional governments. As a consequence of this condition, art and cultural festivals in Indonesia depend mostly on the government's funding either designated in APBN or APBD. Although nowadays, several art festivals have been organised by an independent art community such as Jember Fashion Carnival or Yogyakarta Video Art Festival, the running of these festivals have become part of tourism promotion event for the country or the city.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FESTIVALS: THE MEANING, THE MANAGEMENT, AND ITS ROLE IN SOCIETY

Donald Getz (2010) explains that art and cultural festivals have keenly become the attention of the entertainment business rather than the field of festival studies. Festivals have become an important component in popular culture. As part of the entertainment business, Getz says, "festivals are often featured in place marketing and tourism," (Getz, 2010:2). Festivals themselves have various definitions. Falassi (1987:2) has defined festival in classical cultural-anthropological perspective, as

“a sacred or profane time of celebration, marked by special observances.” For Falassi, festivals are events that are used by the communities to celebrate their values, identity, ideologies, and their cultural continuity. Getz also defines festivals as “themed, public celebrations,” (Getz, 2010:2).

From his study on festivals studies, Getz has come to the conclusion that in terms of festival management, there has been a trend in which “event and festival management is dominated by generic management concepts and methods (covering the full range management functions, but especially marketing),” (Getz, 2010:6). According to Getz, this view of festival management occurs because people remain thinking that festivals are part of tourism or image-making marketing for the country or the city. In this sense, the management of festivals have been given to marketing or promotional event managements in the country where the festivals are running. Therefore, there is little requirement to select the curator of the festival, since the festivals have given attention to seeking many sponsorships and the selling of the tickets.

However, no matter what the reason is for hosting a festival, there is a wide range of audiences, each with different expectations, and this will impact on the management processes considered for the festival. The model of festivals or event management, which is adopted, have to match the interest of all parties involved in the festival or event, and means like who are employed in managing the projects and quality are valuable (Yeoman, et.al., 2004).

The management is an important part of the art festival. Besides the success of the festival, there remain a hefty amount of groundwork and preparation needed to manifest an arts festival such as financial aspects, administration, and focused organization, that must meet in harmony with careful marketing and liaising with multitudes of people. Indeed, producing art festivals often needs much energy and effort. In fact, as Meimura mentioned, the FSS management felt that managing the festival with *Jawa Pos* was not perceived as a big deal. The management of the festival did not

run as a professional arts festival management model, in which managers, producers, volunteers and interns were well trained, managed, and paid. As far as volunteered persons involved in the organising committee were eager to work hard and ‘*kompak*’ (feel togetherness), the FSS was running.

As such, during the management of FSS in 2000-2006, the use of the festival curator did not really become an issue of the festival. According to Meimura in a personal interview, the role of curator in the FSS had been played by the members of the festival’s committee; and several prominent artists of DKS and DKJT, who were asked by the committee to select the performers. Commonly, the curator is needed in the arts festival to be a mediator or interpreter, “someone who acts as a kind of bridge between the artist, the work and the audience,” said Kate Martin. Kate Martin, an international freelance curator, explains that “with so many artist/curators, or without a collection or an institution behind you, there is no real necessity for the freelance curator, and perhaps maybe in some circumstances this is valid,” (cited in www.ignite.me/articles/culture/why-art-curators-matter/, 2013).

Parallel to Martin’s view, Meimura maintained that during the organization of FSS in 2000-2006, the curators were only required to select which performers came from Surabaya, other East Java regions, and outside East Java that could be invited to perform in the festivals. The curators might also be needed to select the art installation created by Surabaya’s artists, some visual arts and films to be screened for the public. In this regard, *Jawa Pos* did not strongly influence the choice of the curators and the festival committee; except, the media company chose the performers for the opening and closing ceremony, since these events would gain large attention of the public and an image-making for *Jawa Pos* in the FSS. As for overseas performer(s) invited for the festival, the committee and the media company decided together that the media paid their transport and accommodation during the festival in Surabaya.

The objective of art or cultural festivals and events in Indonesia often is to celebrate cultural

tradition and the heritage of the community. Conny Handayani (2006) wrote that cultural festival, such as the one of Cheng Ho Festival in Semarang, was dedicated to celebrate the Chinese ethnic cultural traditions and heritage. As in the past, the celebration of Chinese cultural exhibition was prohibited during the Suharto's New Order. The Cheng Ho Festival in Semarang has become a portrait of acculturation between Chinese-Javanese and Islam in Java and, as well, a remark of the acceptance of indigenous (non-Chinese) communities in Semarang to collaborate and work together for the event. The festival also becomes a positive sign for tourism in Indonesia (Handayani, 2006).

As I discussed somewhere in this paper, it can be viewed that arts and cultural festivals in Indonesia often remain in the interest of the government, politicians, and the business entrepreneurs. The case of FSS and *Jawa Pos* is another feature of a new link between the media and the cultural festival in the Indonesian context. The following part will discuss this new link and analysing how the media's power has been determining the existence of public art festivals in the country.

THE POLITICS OF MEDIA AND THE ART FESTIVAL

Although the organising committee of the FSS was sterilised from *Jawa Pos's* management in 2004 and beyond, it did not mean that the involvement of *Jawa Pos* in the organization of the festival was over. Under the management of Dahlan Iskan's eldest son, Azrul Ananda, who has been appointed as the chief editor of *Jawa Pos* newspaper since 2005, *Jawa Pos* maintains its commitment to support the organization of FSS. *Jawa Pos* not only continues to contribute money (150 million rupiahs as since 1996), media coverage consisting of one fullpage for the festival, and organising promotions, *Jawa Pos's* management also provided assistance to seek sponsorships from private companies for the festival.

An incident occurred in the 2006 festival, *Jawa Pos's* management, through its marketing department, offered assistance to the organising committee of FSS to seek sponsorships. The marketing department of *Jawa Pos* sent some of its marketing staff to seek sponsorship from private companies. The deal agreed between the FSS committee and the department was for every account obtained, *Jawa Pos's* marketing staff received 10% of the amount obtained, as an incentive for their efforts. This mode of cooperation between the FSS committee and *Jawa Pos* has been seen helpful for the committee members as they, who are mainly artists and actors, do not bother to waste their energy to seek more funding. Sabrot Malioboro, the chairman of organising committee for the 2006 festival, expressed in a personal interview that this deal was advantageous. He said that many artists lack experience in dealing with sponsorships. However, Malioboro said that this help will make the organising committee of FSS continually dependent to the marketing department of *Jawa Pos*.

The selection of Malioboro as the chair for the 2006 festival displeased Azrul Ananda. As Malioboro is a middle aged male artist, it was rumoured that Ananda seemed reluctant to him and to the involvement of some elderly persons (i.e. Malioboro's gang) in the organising committee, which consisted of 40 members. He wished young people could engage the major roles in the organising committee. To show his disappointment, Ananda approached Meimura, a young male actor and director of Teater Ragil, and treat him as a 'shadow chairman' (*ketua bayangan*) for FSS. Meimura was placed in a position as a chief executive (*ketua pelaksana*), and played an active role in organising the festival. Apart from that, *Jawa Pos* organised the night of the opening ceremony of the 2006 festival, and Ananda assigned one of *Jawa Pos's* caricaturists, Leak Koestiya (currently the Chief Editor of *Jawa Pos* newspaper), as the project officer for the opening ceremony. All the performances, the stage, the fireworks, and all costs of the ceremony were paid

by *Jawa Pos*. Since Ananda has been crowned to be in charge of the *Jawa Pos* and *Indo Pos* dailies, including the *Jawa Pos* News Network (JPNN) by his father in 2005, his role in the media and in the society of Surabaya has started to become influential. One of my informants in the FSS's administrative centre explained that as a result of Ananda's disappointment with Malioboro, he held the money at the outset and was reluctant to hand it to the organising committee. A couple weeks before the festival started, and after Ananda was confident with the position of Meimura in the committee, he then transferred the money.

The dominant role of Ananda in deciding the position of the FSS's chairperson had resulted in the formation of performers included in the festival. The strong negotiation of the owner of the media group in this sense has resulted to the way the festival organization had been made. In other words, the power of media organization in managing the public's art festival had ruined the process of democratisation in the country. The negotiation between the media organization and the idealism of artists in the case of FSS seems to be left behind when the economic interest of the media had taken place. As major funding of the festival depended on *Jawa Pos*, the idealism of the artists and the art performances themselves was questionable. The media, in various ways, had used its authority in deciding who could be included in the festival, such as who performed in the opening ceremony and who would perform in the closing event to please *Jawa Pos's* owner. It has become obvious that when money has become the main factor to fund the continuation of the festival, and the wealthy media owner played his hands and stated as a main sponsor of it, then, whoever was involved in the festival's organization became subordinates to the power of the media holder.

Since Sabrot D. Malioboro was excluded from the organising committee of the festival, the organising committee of FSS had been occupied with Surabaya's young artists and activists. The replacement of Malioboro slightly changed the decision of the festival's themes and performers.

However, according to Meimura in a personal interview, the presence of him in the organising committee did not change the way Surabaya's artists see the festival. Meimura said that Surabaya's artists supported the continuation of the festival. Meimura and his own group, *Teater Ragil*, continued to perform in the festival up to 2008's festival event with other invited performers. In 2009, Sabrot D. Malioboro was elected as chairperson of Dewan Kesenian Surabaya (known as DKS) and had accommodated academician, art professionals, and young people from Sekolah Tinggi Wilwatika, SMKI and Unesa in his organization (*Jawa Pos*, 1 March 2009). His experience from the FSS incident might have made Malioboro think to include and accommodate the participation and voices of young people and artists in the art organization. In his interview with *Jawa Pos* in 2009 after being elected as chairperson of DKS, Malioboro stated, "[my real program], may be, organising art and cultural events in Surabaya. We are now having many festivals. There is Festival Seni Surabaya, Festival Cak Durasim, Cross Culture Festival [sic.], and so forth. The organising committees for those festivals are different. I want to invite all to sit down in one table and plan the agenda well. So, later on, people outside Surabaya will know. For instance, in January there is FSS in Surabaya, in February there is Cak Durasim Festival, and so on," (cited in *Jawa Pos*, 1 March 2009).

The media owner's disruption in deciding the chairperson of FSS committee in Surabaya is not the case when the media proprietors blatantly use their media as political instruments to build and maintain large heterogeneous consumers for their political position. Rather, this is a case of a proprietorial intervention in such a public organization, not for the owner's political opportunism, but it is for the economics or the commercial interests of the media. In other words, the efforts, costs, and other contributions made by the media company in this case, have attempted to secure the prospects for growth and profit by spreading the media operation not only across

different media and markets, but also into unrelated areas of economic activity such as this art festival. The result is quite pervasive, in which many people have called the Surabaya Art Festival as the *Jawa Pos* Art Festival.

Indeed, state control and ownership in Indonesian media have given way to control by large corporations and ‘media moguls’. The media have become predominantly invested in private concerns. The press in Indonesia has particularly transformed from a medium of political discourse or ideological tool for political groups to a commercially significant industry (see Dhakidae, 1991 and Sen & Hill, 2000). Although there are still some media owners that continue to use their media for their political interests, there is also another approach attempted by the media owner, who seeks to influence the political processes not by participating directly in the political process itself, but through other social institutions in the society. Therefore, as Schultz (1994, p. 20) notes that it is an irony that the media wish to be seen as to be different to other business, but in fact, the media enjoy and exploit the power of their special roles to serve for the so-called ‘public interest’.

Festivals or events cannot only be seen as a form of celebration and bringing the community together. Festivals can also be viewed as the expression of “public culture,” (Giorgi & Sassatelli, 2011). All culture is public: “meanings are, by definition, shared understandings that we learn, produce and reproduce in and for interaction; even subcultures are public in this sense, although their reach may be more limited and self-enclosed” (Giorgi & Sassatelli, 2011:2). Moreover, the concept of public culture is important since the cultural sphere, “is associated with the private domain, especially in terms of the disengaged consumption of culture industry entertainment,” (Hartley and Green 2006; Gray 2006 cited in Giorgi & Sassatelli, 2011:2). According to Giorgi et.al, by emphasising on the public dimension of culture, then the concept of culture, including its aesthetic forms, is determined and influenced from “different standpoints, and by different actors, agendas, and

taste preferences” (Giorgi & Sassatelli, 2011:2). From here, the presence of arts festival in a city like Surabaya can be viewed as a form of public culture expression. The need and interest of the public (of Surabaya, at least) toward the exhibition of their cultural productions and aesthetics should be valued as important rather than the interest of the government of Surabaya and the media company. Since the objective of FSS, mentioned by Surabaya’s prominent artists somewhere above in this paper, was to accommodate the cultural expressions of Surabaya’s artists and brought about the community of Surabaya together in the festival, therefore the FSS is a form of a ‘public sphere’ cultural festival, where the civil society—including the artists, the performers, and the audiences—allowed the ‘public use of reason’ in their festival rather than the capitalist media company domination.

Despite the ubiquity and cultural prominence, the urban art festival in Surabaya remains problematic and has become a site of political negotiation between the artists and the external institutions such as the local government, the media institutions and the sponsorship bodies. According to Waterman (1998), art festivals (around the world) have traditionally been innovative and have always been controlled by elites and other political significance. In addition to that, Quinn (2005) also suggests that the involvement of local/city government in the urban art festivals consistently accounts more on the economic and political aspects of the festival than to the socio-cultural values of the festival itself. She maintains, “[...] city authorities tend to disregard the social value of festivals and to construe them simply as vehicles of economic generation or as ‘quick fix’ solution to city image problem,” (Quinn, 2005:1).

In the context of the Surabaya Art Festival, the city government of Surabaya appears to support the position of the local media institution as the main sponsor of the festival. The Surabaya city government provided an annual budget for the annual art festival, but the amount given to the committee was considered small to cover all the

costs of the festival organization compared to the funding from those commercial sponsors, including *Jawa Pos* media group. The Surabaya city government, indeed, benefitted from this annual art festival for tourism promotion. Yet, their support and involvement in this festival seems minimal.

Scholars on Media Studies have a keen awareness of the embedded institutional power of media in society's lives. James W. Carey (1992) examined that the electronic revolution, mass media and its institution have had an equally strong sense of influencing not only the behaviour of the people, but also the cultural institutions in the society. He asserts, "modern communications have drastically altered the ordinary terms of experience and consciousness, the ordinary structures of interest and feeling, the normal sense of being alive, of having a social relation," (Carey, 1992:1-2). Mass media has constructed, self-consciously and ideologically attuned, the discourse that dominates cultural interpretation of all sorts in the society. In that sense, media power could determine and shape the discourse of culture in society. Media institutions play significant contribution in mediating and moderating the existence of cultural institutions. For Carey, culture is not a one-way process. Culture embodies the virtues of dialogue and a ritualised sharing or interaction. Taking a clue from Carey's propositions and the potential influence of media power in shaping the formation of cultural (as well as political and economic) discourse in society, this study argues that media institution, like *Jawa Pos* media group in this context, is not merely the news organization that will provide the citizens with information and purpose a definite forms of cultural life to the society. The media institution is an "organism," so to say, that is reproduced in miniature to the contradictions of society's thoughts, actions and social relations, particularly in the context of the media and the art society in Surabaya.

CONCLUSION

Media institutions are not only a site of business, investment, and source of employment, but it is also an instrument to extend influence and a long-term economical security and perseverance. The involvement of large media company *Jawa Pos* and its owner in the organization of the Surabaya Art Festival has exemplified the model of how the power of the capitalist media has been exercised not for the purpose of political interest, but for sustaining the growth of the media business and image-making profit.

The strong influence of the media management on the management of FSS and the domination of the media owner to choose the people suitable to be involved in chairing the committee had become a crucial issue of media interruption in organising such art festivals, as a site of "cultural public sphere." The organization of art festivals, which should be professionally managed by competent artist(s) and art professionals, eventually, cannot be managed in a professional way as often practised in national and international arts festivals. The problem of funding, thus, seemed to make the Surabaya Art Festival's management was vulnerable under the control of the media owner, who took part dominantly as the major sponsor for the festival.

The initiative of *Jawa Pos* owners, Dahlan Iskan and his son Azrul Ananda, to support the continuation of such a local cultural festival was remarkable. The family's enduring commitment and concern to maintain the organization of the public event in Surabaya has become a positive contribution to the local public. Furthermore, their financial contributions have also become essential to fulfil the lack of the festival budget. However, with their financial power, the *Jawa Pos* media proprietor seems to have their hands upon the many levels operating socio-cultural sites of the public,

including the public cultural festival like FSS in years 2000-2006, not for the interests of the public, but for the economic opportunism of the media mogul and their business empires.

Notes:

- 1 Kadaruslan passed away on 13th April 2010. The 2010's Surabaya Art Festival was dedicated to his enduring commitment to the festival.
- 2 Inpres is an acronym of 'Instruksi Presiden' (President's instruction). During the New Order era, the Indonesian government provided financial supports for education, cultural activities, and building constructions (for more discussion about Inpres see Hal Hill, 1994, William Liddle, and others).

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