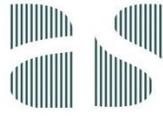


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Post-Authoritarian Discourses of “Indonesia” in Television Commercials

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Universiti Brunei Darussalam

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Post-Authoritarian Discourses of “Indonesia” in Television Commercials

Stefani Nugroho

Abstract:

This working paper examines the symbolic construction of “Indonesia” in eighteen television commercials that were aired between 2006 and 2013. Employing critical discourse analysis, I identify two imaginings of Indonesia: the first is a reproduction of the New Order’s notion of Indonesia as a country of diverse cultural traditions, and the second is the discourse of Indonesia as a nation of hardworking and self-reliant people. While the former is oriented towards the past, the latter is oriented towards the future. Interestingly, this second discourse is symptomatic of the paradigmatic shift towards pragmatism that was manifested in Joko Widodo’s win of the presidency in 2014. This research indicates that in post-authoritarian Indonesia, narratives of the nation and nationalism are no longer exclusively dictated by the state. This is convergent with a widespread phenomenon, where neo-liberal principles and market logic are increasingly informing discourses of nationhood.

Keywords: *commercial nationalism, television commercials, Indonesia, New Order, Joko Widodo*

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Post-Authoritarian Discourses of “Indonesia” in Television Commercials¹

Stefani Nugroho

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesian nation-building, the creation of a single national identity among the diverse people inhabiting the archipelago has been one of the key concerns. Both Sukarno as well as Suharto employed comprehensive measures to instil a singular “imagined community” (Anderson 2006). The New Order, ruling between 1967 and 1998, strongly dictated and guarded narratives of the nation. While studies on the New Order’s strategies of nation-building are numerous, less is known about how Indonesia is imagined after the New Order. This research addresses this gap. The more democratic socio-political environment means that discussions over the collective imagining of Indonesia also take place in non-state spheres. One of these spheres is the “commercial culture”, defined by McAllister (2003) as “culture designed to sell a product”, this includes product launches, sponsorships, product placement, and television commercials (henceforward TVC). The research focuses on the latter, and examines how Indonesia is constructed in the TVCs’ narratives.

The paper analyses eighteen of these nationalist-themed TVCs of ten brands that were aired between 2006 and 2013. The products of these commercials range from food, beverage, tobacco, to shampoo. By nationalist-themed commercials, I refer to advertisements that promote the products by associating them with nationalist sentiments. The main objective of these advertisements is to persuade the audience to consume the promoted goods, by framing consumption as expressions of civic identity and national belonging (Ozkan & Foster 2005). Embedded in the promotional and persuasive narratives of these nationalist TVCs are ideal imaginings of what Indonesia is and what being Indonesia means, particularly among the

¹ An earlier version of this paper was published in *Inside Indonesia 110*: Oct-Dec 2012 (Nugroho 2012).

Indonesian urban middle class. To examine how their narratives construct “Indonesia”, I employ critical discourse analysis. I look at how the TVCs construct ideas of “Indonesia” by normalizing and naturalizing particular conditions and relations in the country. Based on the analysis, I identify two distinct discourses: one that centres on the diversity of traditional, regional cultures, and the other that concentrates on Indonesia’s future and the nationalistic virtues of hard work and self-reliance. This working paper elaborates both discourses, and maps the differences and similarities between the two. The paper also points out the neo-liberal principles that are informing the imaginings of Indonesia.

Before engaging with the two discourses, I will situate this research in its theoretical and historical contexts. Theoretically, this working paper is part of the growing body of work on nationhood and consumption practices, a consequence of the rising impact of neo-liberal discourses on nationhood. The paper also asserts the significance of studying nationhood at the everyday level, or “banal nationalism” in Billig’s (1995) well-known term. It is this banality that makes TVCs serve as rich material to study imaginings of the nation. This part is followed by a discussion of the historically contentious relation between commercial culture, television, and nation-building in Indonesia. This is important to appreciate the substantial changes that have taken place in Indonesia in current decades.

The production of everyday nationhood in TVCs

There has been an increasing interest in studying the construction of the nation in TVCs (cf. Ozkan & Foster 2005, Mock 2012, Screti 2013). This trend is a response to the growing impact of the neo-liberal discourses on nation-state. Neo-liberalism appears to be antithetical to the nation-state, as the ideology is marked by the prominence of the market logic and its dynamics, with an emphasis on global trade and limitations of the state’s regulatory role. However, what has eventually unfolded is a widespread tendency to see the nation through the logic of neo-liberalism (Kania-Lundholm 2014). So far, there are two manifestations of this discursive amalgamation: the trend to “commercialize the nation”, and to “nationalize the commercial” (Kania Lundholm 2014). The former is exemplified by the budding industry of nation-branding, where nation-states are treated as commodities, while the latter can be represented by nationalist-themed TVCs, where commodities are branded with nationalist values and sentiments. This research is hence part of the second trend. In this context, what this paper sets out to do is thus to

examine in greater detail the conjunction between the discourse of nationhood and the discourse of neo-liberalism: how and which principles are appropriated, synthesized, or modified.

Using TVCs to examine nationhood, this paper is positioned within the study of banal nationalism and everyday nationhood that see mundane, often unreflective, interactions, habits and routines as sites of the production of tacit meaning, including taken for granted notions of nationhood (Billig 1995, Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008). Advertisements “organize perceptions and create ‘structures of meaning’” (Williamson 1978 in Goldman 2005: 38). At the same time, they serve as a barometer of the contemporary concerns, interests, beliefs, attitudes, and values of a society. To be able to produce advertisements that are relatable to the audience, marketing practitioners need to be receptive of current trends, and need to have a deep understanding of the audience’s universe of meaning. Ads reflect the topical concerns of the larger society, and so “offer a unique opportunity to examine those assumptions that a given society takes for granted” (Mock 2012: 208). Because ads are based on the most recent trends, they reflect the contemporary imaginings of the nation.

There are several reasons why TVCs are very effective in instilling ideas of the nation. Statistical data from 2012 show that 91.55% of the Indonesian population who were over ten years old watch television (BPS 2012). Compared to other forms of media, the reach of television is substantially larger, which means that the majority of the population are potentially exposed to the narratives proposed by the TVCs. Moreover, because TVCs are designed to be persuasive, they need to be entertaining and memorable. This is partly why the messages of TVCs are conveyed repeatedly and in short bursts, making them easier to remember and digest. Adding to the persuasive strength is the indirect manner through which the message is communicated. The audience is encouraged to interpret the message, leading to an increase in the effectiveness of the advertisement (Screti 2013). The indirectness of TVCs in instilling narratives of the nation stands in strong contrast with the nation-building strategies of the Indonesian government, especially during the New Order that relied heavily on directive slogans. This difference makes the study of TVCs in post-authoritarian nationalism in Indonesia all the more interesting.

Indonesian nation-building, television, and advertisements

Television has been an integral, and integrating, element of Indonesia's nation-building. The inaugural broadcast of the first state television in Indonesia, TVRI, took place in 1962, just in time for the 17th commemoration of Indonesia's independence and the fourth Asian Games. Since its inception, TVRI was the stage on which national pride and unity are displayed. The area reached by TVRI substantially increased after Suharto launched the domestic satellite in 1976, the reach of TVRI expanded from 24.7% in 1972, to 64.1% in 1982, and ownership of television sets rose from 512 000 in 1976 to 2 126 000 in 1980 (Armando 2011). Until the early 90's, TVRI was the only available station for Indonesians. It was extensively used to promote "national unity and integration...national stability...and political stability" (Kitley 2000).

Television was one of the key instruments to mould ideal Indonesian citizens. Sukarno and Suharto's ideal images of the model Indonesian citizen were reflected in the strategies and policies regarding TVRI. In both administrations, the model citizen should remain unspoilt by the hedonistic urges of consumerism that they saw to be counter-productive to national development. Due to this belief, both administrations exercised control over TVCs. TVCs were aired in a dedicated 30-minute daily program (Armando 2011). Along with the opening soundtrack of the program, the screen flashed textual guidance on how to be a responsible consumer: "Attractive goods might not be useful goods", or "The more things are on offer, the more one has to be careful at spending". Despite this cautiousness, in the 70's, TVRI was still significantly sustained by revenues from commercials. However, from 1981, the state's aversion of commercial culture hardened. In a decision that shocked many practitioners (Persatuan Perusahaan Periklanan Indonesia 2004, Armando 2011), commercials were thoroughly barred from television. Aside from inculcating consumerism, the New Order government also alleged that ads instil the desire for luxurious and foreign goods. Because these goods are beyond the financial means of many Indonesians, the socio-economic gap between the affluent and the underprivileged groups would be dangerously exposed (Armando 2011). TVCs were thus not only perceived as counter-productive to national development, but also a threat to national and political stability.

Things gradually shifted in late 80's and early 90's, when two of Suharto's children entered the television business (Armando 2011). In 1989, Bambang Trihatmodjo, in a joint

venture with prominent conglomerates, launched the first private and subscription-based television channel in Indonesia, Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia (RCTI). A year later, Siti Hardijanti Rukmana, Suharto's eldest daughter, established a new state channel, *Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia* (TPI) that set itself apart as being education-oriented. In 1991, TPI started to air commercials that are "educational", although the exact criteria to be categorized as such remained vague (Kitley 2000). The ban on TVC became harder to sustain. Within the next five years, five more private television stations were established, many of them owned by Suharto's cronies. As the economic crises hit Asia, a political crisis was inevitable. In 1998, after a turbulent period of student demonstrations and ethnic-based riots, Suharto relinquished the presidential power he had wielded for over thirty years. This launched Indonesia into rapid social and political changes.

With the end of the authoritarian administration, the socio-political condition in Indonesia became more liberal and democratic. The media is no longer an instrument of the state, but serves the public interest (KPI 2009). By 2009, there were ten private national channels and 54 regional television channels (Lindblad 2011). Aside from the Indonesian channels, access to foreign television channels became available. Fifteen percent of the population accessed international channels through satellite, while three percent of the population used cable subscription (Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities 2014). Within a decade, Indonesia's advertising industry has expanded to become "one of the most vibrant and competitive in Asia" (Jeffreys & Kuncinas 2009). Television remains the dominant sector, totalling 63% of advertisement expenditure in 2007 (Jeffreys & Kuncinas 2009).

By the 2000's, the notion that TVCs are detrimental to national development and stability has disappeared from the public discourse. On the contrary, advertisements began to attach nationalist and patriotic values to their products, and so promulgate nationalism. How is "Indonesia" constructed in these TVCs? What are the nation's virtues and ideals? How do the imaginings that are produced with a commercial intent relate to the discourses produced by the state? What can the discourses tell us about post-authoritarian Indonesia? This paper attempts to address these questions.

TVCs and nationhood in contemporary Indonesia

I conducted critical discourse analysis on eighteen TVCs that were aired between 2006 and 2013. These TVCs frame their products as representing certain aspects of “Indonesianness”, and it is in their representations that I am interested in. The eighteen TVCs are produced to promote ten brands, thus some are ad-series while others are single-ads. None of the brands are related to state-owned companies (e.g. the flagship airline) or part of a political campaign. Furthermore, some of them were aired to commemorate certain national holidays (e.g. Independence Day or National Awakening Day), while others were not. Nationalist-themed ads like these have become popular, and the significance of the trend can be evaluated by the increasing number of academic work that centres on this topic (cf. Wibisono 2008, Widiatmoko & Khairunissa 2009, Rachdian 2012). However, to the best of my knowledge, none of the studies have employed critical discourse analysis. Wibisono (2008) examines how nationalism is semiotically represented, Widiatmoko and Khairunissa (2009) concentrate on the visual strategies, while Rachdian’s work (2012) focuses on the audience’s reception to nationhood.

To maintain the consistency of the working paper, I have not included the small number of TVCs that convey discourses that are outside of the two main narratives discussed here (e.g. TVCs of the noodle brand, Indomie,² or of the electronic goods, Maspion)³. The two discourses that are conveyed by a significantly larger number of TVCs, and the ones I wish to focus on, are the idea of Indonesia as a country that encompasses a rich diversity of traditional culture, and as a country that is in the process of becoming. The existence of two somewhat contrastive discourses (one looking to the past, one to the future) is indicative of the discussions and debates that are being held in the public arena regarding the meaning of “Indonesia”.

2 Although this is a pioneering brand in terms of nationalist-themed TVC, the discourse of Indonesia conveyed is not shared by other brands. The TVCs display different regions, (although the presentation of tradition is less prominent than what is present in the ads I am discussing here), but would always have their climatic scenes depicting people from these various regions coming together in the city. Indomie’s flow of narrative, from villages to the city, indicates the direction that development should take. It deserves a more extensive elaboration.

3 Maspion’s TVCs are not included because of the directness of the message that does not lend itself to a more elaborate analysis. Maspion’s TVCs generally show a number of their products, and closes with the owner and an endorser (a long time famous female singer) stating bluntly to the camera, “Love Indonesia’s products!” This content provides little data on how Indonesia is imagined.

Traditional Indonesia: a nation rich in cultural and natural diversity

The first discourse constructs Indonesia as a nation of cultural and natural diversity. These TVCs have the same story line: a group of young adults travel to different corners of Indonesia, where they become acquainted with the people who live there, and/or the wild natural environment. Through their travels, they discover and realize the extent of the diversity of the nation. The advertisements that explore the subject of diversity are that of *Nutrisari* (NS), a beverage brand, the tobacco brands *Djarum Super* (DS), *Gudang Garam* (GG), an ad-series for *Kuku Bima* (KB) which is a brand of energy drink, that consists of five TVCs with each focusing on a different region in Indonesia, and the herbal drink, *Tolak Angin* (TA). TA and KB are owned by the same company, *Sido Muncul*. Although the videos shown on television are usually the short versions, the analysis was conducted on longer versions that are available online (60 seconds or more).

National diversity in these TVCs is represented through the use of the same cultural categories: folk songs, folk dances, ceremonial/regional costumes, rituals, or traditional architecture. Each of the five ads of KB that centres on five different regions uses this semiotic strategy extensively (see Table 1). Similarly, NS signifies the cultural diversity of Papua, Ambon, Java, Bali, and Betawi⁴ by having supporting actors and actresses dressed up in the ceremonial costumes of each region. TA's ad presents a series of folk rituals accompanied by a voice-over that tells the audience that they are all "Truly Indonesia" (in English). In its ad, trance-inducing rituals like *Reog Ponorogo* and *Kuda Lumping* are presented as aesthetically pleasing performance arts.

Natural diversity is heavily emphasized in the DS ad-series that narrate the adventures of a group of men in the wild and challenging parts of the country, a semiotic strategy that clearly draws from the hyper-masculine trope common in tobacco ads. Natural challenges overcome include volcanoes, tropical rainforests, underground caves, and the ocean. Cultural diversity in the DS ad-series is represented by physical activities that are idiosyncratic to the regions, such as riding on elephants, or playing with a ball set on fire, but also by stereotypical images of Papuan men wearing feather headdress and long-grass skirts, corresponding with how they are depicted in other TVCs within this discursive category.

⁴ *Betawi* is not the name of a region, but of the native ethnic group of Jakarta, suggesting the interchangeability of ethnic group with administrative units

Table 1. Representations of “cultural diversity” in TVCs

	Advertisement	Provinces/Regions covered	Examples of cultural and natural attractions depicted (aside from traditional costumes)
1	Gudang Garam (GG) “Indonesia, my home” (2006)	Merauke, Miangas Island, Dana Island, and Sabang Island, the four corners of Indonesia, are shown on a map.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balinese Pecak dance • Borobudur • Depictions of natives in feather headdress, with accessories from shells, carrying spears, and face/body painted.
2	Tolak Angin (TA) (2007)	Ad focuses on cultural expressions, not regions/provinces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folksong “Rasa Sayange” • Reog Ponorogo (lion dance from Ponorogo) • Angklung music instrument • Balinese Pendet Dance • Batik-making • Kuda Lumping • Hombo Batu (stone jumping, also showcased in KB West Sumatera)
3	KB Papua (2009)	Papua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sajojo” folk song and dance • Traditional huts
4	KB East Nusa Tenggara (2010)	East Nusa Tenggara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional huts • Ngadu and Bhaga statues • Komodo dragon • Kelimutu Lake
5	KB Maluku (2011)	The Moluccas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amsterdam fort • Pearl diving • Folk songs
6	KB Kalimantan (2012)	Kalimantan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floating market • Tanjung Puting National Park • Orangutan • Sea turtles • Folk songs and dance
7	Kuku Bima (KB) West Sumatera (2013)	West Sumatera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tor-tor dance • Hombo batu ceremony • Tongkongan house • Sigale-gale statue • Ulos weaving • Toba lake • Folk songs
8	Nutrisari (NS) “Heritage” (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papua • The Moluccas • Java • Bali • Betawi. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folk songs and dances • Batik • Traditional games • Preparation for Balinese rituals
9	Djarum Super (DS I) My Great Adventure Indonesia (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sumatera • Way Kambas, Riau • Rinjani, Lombok • Raja Ampat, Papua • Kuta, Bali • Krakatoa, Lampung 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riding elephants • Elephant football (both in Way Kambas) • DS focus more on the natural challenges of each location (e.g. rivers, caves, sea, or mountains).
10	DS “My Great Adventure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jombang Cave, Jogjakarta • Meranti Strait and Kampar River, Riau 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire football (in West Sumba) • Natural challenges in each location.

	Indonesia” II (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maratua, East Kalimantan • Lapopu, West Sumba • Cimaja, West Java 	
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The narrative of these TVCs is modelled on the official discourse of Indonesia as a country of cultural and natural diversity, particularly propagated by the New Order (1967-1998). Ironically, the state’s definition of “cultural diversity” is very narrow: it limits and represses the identities of many ethnic groups. Contained within the state-sanctioned definition of “culture” are items from a pre-fixed set of categories, e.g. ceremonial costumes, songs, dances, architectural style, and weaponry. Each set is considered to originate from an ethnic group inhabiting a province. Ethnic symbols and practices are perceived as part of the national collection. They are essentialized, decontextualized, and desensitized, effectively stripping them of agentic properties. This is what happens to the abovementioned *Reog Ponorogo* and *Kuda Lumping* in the TA TVC. In a similar manner, the *Sigale-gale* wooden puppet that is used in funerary rites of a childless person in the Toba culture becomes props to signify West Sumatran (and by extension, Indonesian culture) in KB “West Sumatera” TVC.

By assuming the boundaries of ethnic groups to be coterminous with that of provinces, the discourse flattens the fluidity and complexity of social groupings, and privileges administrative units, putting the national realm in the foreground. This discourse of diversity is part of the New Order’s strategy to control internal differences that potentially threaten the nation’s unity. To a great extent, the advertisements in this category reproduce this discourse. To signify “diversity”, all the ads in this category present a series of “unique” and “authentic” cultural products from various regions.

Aside from the New Order discourse of national identity, this category of advertisements is also inspired by the growing trend of nation branding, a term coined by Simon Anholt. Three of the six dimensions of the Anholt-GfK Roper National Branding Index, the authoritative tool developed by Anholt that is used by many nations to assess their international reputations, are addressed in these advertisings, i.e. culture, people, and tourism. Although nation branding is about the image of countries on the international stage, inwardly, for the people of a country, the index provides a set of internationally acknowledged standards of how a world-class nation should be. These TVCs are made with these standards in mind. By showcasing Indonesia’s

selling points, such as cultural authenticity, people's friendliness, and exoticism, the ads position the country as a valuable competitor in the global marketplace, a status that is expected to positively correlate with national revenue.⁵

The most salient international context of these TVCs is Indonesia's cultural dispute with Malaysia. In 2007, disagreement over ownership of cultural items erupted between the two countries. A video for Malaysia's tourism campaign uses the folk song "*Rasa Sayange*" (The Love) as soundtrack to signify unity among the diverse racial groups (Malay, Indian, and Chinese). Most Indonesians, however, believe that *Rasa Sayange* is a traditional folksong from the Moluccas, an ethnic group living in the Eastern part of the country. The Indonesian public argued that Malaysia has wrongfully claimed proprietorship of the song. In subsequent years, the list of disputed items grew longer: from dances, to culinary specialties, to batik, a textile waxing technology (cf. Gelling 2009). The Indonesian public retaliated through various means: public officials asked their Malaysian counterpart to apologize, while hackers defaced Malaysia's websites. Irwan Hidayat, the director of Sido Muncul, the company that owns TA as well as KB, said in an interview that TA's advertising is intended as a rebuff against Malaysia, while also raising the awareness of fellow Indonesians of their own culture (Triyanto 2007). Symbolically reclaiming Indonesia's heritage, their ad also opens with the song "*Rasa Sayange*". Embedded in the logic of the market place, nations are even more conditioned to compete with other nations, including over which country is more "unique", "exotic" or "traditional". This is the point of synthesis between the official discourse of "Indonesia" and the logic of neo-liberalism: the idea of culture as national possessions, and hence also, national commodities.

It is not only the cultural items and performances that are objectified in the TVCs, but also the natives of the far-flung regions of the country. These TVCs reproduce the hegemonic hierarchy between the modern, urban-residing citizens who could afford to explore parts of Indonesia, and the primitive, village-residing citizens who are being visited, discovered, and explored by the former. The binary characterization deserves an elaboration, for it is this dichotomy that indicates frictions in the narratives of a unitary Indonesia.

⁵ No evidence for the correlation has been identified (Anholt 2013).

The modern 'Indonesians' vs. the backward Indonesians

To understand how an ad structures the subject position of the audience, one needs to look at the endorsers or the main characters in the TVCs' storyline: these are the characters with whom the audience are expected to identify themselves. In this category of TVCs, they are depicted as travellers: thus temporary, leisurely visitors in various remote corners of Indonesia. KB's ad-serial is titled unambiguously, "Let's travel in our own country". The travellers are portrayed as enjoying the traditional spectacles, whether it is dancing or singing, at times trying to learn from the locals by imitating their movements. The status as travellers is identifiable by the endorsers' casual clothing (e.g. t-shirts and shorts, dresses, or sport wear) and their accessories (e.g. aviator sunglasses, cameras, surfboards and backpacks). They use motorized vehicles (e.g. jeeps, pick-up trucks, a sailboat, and a small airplane) to travel. These visual signs connote the identity of the main characters as members of the "modern" world, who temporarily stepped outside their environment to visit and explore the hidden corners of Indonesia.

The meaning of the signs attached to the main characters becomes more discernible when they are put in contrast with the depiction of the indigenous natives. While the wardrobe of the endorsers consists of casual clothing, the locals wear ceremonial costumes, whether it is the Ambonese sarong in the NS ad, or *ulos* dresses in the KB clip. People from Papua, the region that is covered by four ads (NS, KB, DS, and GG), and thus by far the most popular location and ethnic group to signify diversity, are invariably depicted with feather headdresses, painted faces and chests, and adorned with accessories made from shells, while their lower bodies are covered in long-grass skirts. Locals, from Papua and elsewhere, are depicted as being engaged in traditional dances or ceremonies, often with traditional houses in the background. They use un-motorized technologies: from weaving looms to bamboo rafts. GG and three KB ads show native men carrying and using spears, arrows, and bows, suggesting a primitive mode of survival. To emphasize purity and innocence, many of these ads (including the tobacco brand, GG) depict young natives running barefoot or diving freely. The choice of wardrobe, the setting, the tools, and the use of children, all serve to signify that the natives are vestiges of the simpler and purer past.

Another sign of social distance between the main characters (and audience), with the "natives" is the use of explanatory captions in the ads. The texts indicate the names of the region

and/or the cultural items that are being shown on screen. Thus, NS opening scene of the dots of islands is accompanied by the caption “*Wayag, Papua*”. DS mimics the travel-itinerary of explorers, noting the time and the place: “Day 2: Sumatera” or “Day 19: Raja Ampat, Papua” (in English). TA, aiming to reclaim cultural products from Malaysia, prefers to explain the names of the showcased cultural performances instead, e.g. “*Reog Ponorogo*” or “*Tari Pendet*”. Obviously, the captions are addressed to those who are unfamiliar with the places or the performances, as they would have been superfluous for the locals, e.g. people who live in Papua, or Sumatera, or who are practitioners of the dances. These captions imply the foreignness of the natives’ world to the main characters and audience.

The social distance between the main characters and the natives is accompanied by the physical distance suggested by the extensive use of bird-eye shots of the locations. NS opens with a shot of islands dotting the azure blue sea. KB “West Sumatera” starts with an aerial shot of the volcanic Toba Lake, while the first frame of DS I is filled with floating clouds that separate to reveal a thick, lush jungle below. More than just situating the narrative, these shots are taken from the point of view of those who are able to traverse great distances and overcome the challenges posed by the earth’s topography. At the same time the aerial perspective literally gives the traveller a “larger picture” of the location that would facilitate manoeuvring on foreign grounds. A similar function is served by the map with which GG opts to open its ad. If one is there to navigate and explore mysterious and unknown locations, then aerial perspectives and maps are superior to the view from the ground.

The dichotomous representation of the travellers versus the indigenous people indicates the unequal position between the urbanites of Indonesia, and their “others”. Belonging to the former group is the mobile and modern middle-class who can afford leisurely travels. By contrast, the latter group consists of the authentic, but also, backwards, natives who stay put in the undiscovered regions of the country. The “us” in these ads, represented by the main characters and identifiable to the audience, is undoubtedly the superior and more powerful urbanites. Their claim over diversity, however, is dependent on the latter group. In this sense, the backward locals are the “internal others” that constitute “our” identity *without posing as an antagonistic threat*. It is in this latter aspect that this study indicates a different understanding of “the other” than how it is commonly conceptualized in ethnic and nation studies. In most studies,

“the other” is used to refer to an external or internal group that is perceived as a threat to “our” identity (Triandafyllidou 1998). It is the threat of “the other”, whether real or imagined, that unites and strengthens social groups. Malaysia, for instance, is a more typical example of an external antagonistic other in regards to Indonesian identity. In the case of regional natives, however, the position of the internal other is more complex and ambivalent. They represent primitiveness, thus the extreme point of difference from “our” modernity. Depicted as such, the locals are not antagonistic to the nation as their role is to affirm the idea of Indonesia as a country of diversity, consisting both of modern people (us), and primitive people (them/the indigenous others). This suggests the need to expand the current understanding of how “others” constitute group identities, a proposition that will have to be explored elsewhere.

Indonesia in progress: a country working towards the future

The second discourse of Indonesia is significantly different from the first one. The main storyline centres on people who are working hard to make changes and driven by an ambition to live better lives. The ads narrate the existing obstacles and the characters’ quests to overcome them. The virtues of the characters, e.g. determination, motivation, and innovation, are transposed to the national plane, and are then represented as the virtues of “all” Indonesians. Nationalism is thus expressed as a collective endeavour for national progress and improvement. This discourse is identifiable in TVCs for the multi-vitamin, Fatigon (Fg), Coca-Cola (CC), Kapal Api (KA) coffee, the brand of mineral water, Aqua (Aq) and Clear (Cr) shampoo.

The nature of adversities in the TVCs ranges widely (see Table 2): from personal ones (e.g. born with a physical disability in Fg “Solihun”), to wider social problems (e.g. no access to clean water for some villages in East Indonesia, as covered in Aq’s TVC). The obstacles can also be integral to personal dreams and ambitions, like the dream to become a footballer in Cr, or a badminton player in Fg “Susi Susanti”. Whatever the difficulty, the main characters are resolved to overcome them (with the exception of KA that has a slightly different plot, to be discussed later). Scenes that narrate the main characters’ persistent fights to beat the odds make up the largest part of the ads. Core characters are shown to clean a beach in CC’s TVC, carried by a friend to an electronic shop in Fg “Solihun”, installing water pipes in Aq, and navigating the crowd in a big city in KA’s ad. What matters, as these ads convey, are determination and concrete efforts to accomplish the goals.

Table 2. Representations of Indonesians as ambitious, hard workers in TVCs

	Advertising	Adversity and solution
1	Aqua (Aq) “The water source is near now!” (2009)	Access to clean water in parts of East Nusa Tenggara used to be difficult. Aqua, through its CSR program, makes clean water easily available for some villages in the province.
2	Fatigon (Fg) “Energetic action for Indonesia” I: Solihun (2010)	Mr. Solihun suffers from a congenital disability that makes him unable to walk. Through perseverance, and helped by friends, Mr Solihun succeeds in establishing his own radio station.
3	Fg II: Agung Nugroho Susanto (2010)	Mr. Susanto worked as delivery guy for a laundry service when he was a student. Over time, he opens and manages his own laundry service.
4	Fg III: Susi Susanti (2010)	Ms. Susanti is a world champion in badminton from Indonesia. The ad shows how hard she trained to achieve the status.
5	Clear (Cr) “Come on! Indonesia can do it!” (2011)	The ad depicts the obstacles faced by a young man who aspires to be a football player: having to jog at night, getting a red card, or failing to score a goal. At his lowest point, he realizes that he has the support of other Indonesians, and so picks himself up. The ad ends with him about to kick-off in a large match.
6	Kapal Api (KA) “A cup of energy for Indonesia” (2011)	KA’s ad is slightly different from the other TVCs in this category, because it intersperses images of work-related activities (e.g. villagers going to work on bicycles, people going to work in the city, or doing experiments in a lab) with images of tradition (e.g. dances and the shadow puppet, wayang), albeit not within the endorser-as-traveller mode. However, like the other TVCs, the emphasis is on achievement, thus the voice-over tells of Indonesia as a country with ambitions, and tells Indonesians to be more confident and to work towards international respect.
7	Coca-Cola (CC) “Youth Pledge” (2011)	TVC shows series of positive activities that are part of Coca-Cola’s CSR programs: technical and material support for existing libraries, the Coca-Cola football cup, and beach cleaning activities. At the end, it asks the audience to email suggestions on the changes they want to see happening.
8	CC “Reasons to believe” (in English) (2012)	This is the Indonesian version of CC’s international ad campaign. The ad presents a series of negative conditions (e.g. corruption, traffic jams) that are balanced with positive actions (e.g. blood donations, people graduating from college). The soundtrack (“Whatever” by Oasis) is sung by children from <i>Sanggar Akar</i> , a volunteer-based, alternative education program for underprivileged youngsters based in East Jakarta.

The TVCs invite the public to be involved in initiating changes. CC tells us, “A big change starts with one person. And the person is you”, while KA asserts that “The people of Indonesia are united and never give up on their dreams”. Not only through uplifting and encouraging voice-overs and taglines, all TVCs in this category are part of larger CSR programs that depend on the public’s participation. Fg, in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resources and Transmigration, funds selected proposals for small-scale businesses. The same strategy is employed by CC with their “Dare to Change” initiative. Aq supplies 10 litres of water

to villages in East Nusa Tenggara, for every 1 litre bought by consumers. KA donates two books for underprivileged schools for every uplifting tweet sent to their account. Also relying on online interaction, Cr asks the public to show support to Indonesia's football team by registering on Cr's website and taking part in quizzes.

These TVCs portray Indonesia as a nation in progress, one that is in the process of becoming. This idea is of course not unfamiliar. After all, the aforementioned ban against TVCs is based on the belief that consumerism would be counter-productive to the nation's development and progress. Development was a key feature of the New Order, to the extent that Suharto let himself be known as the "Father of development". However, the chief difference between the development during the New Order and the progress envisioned by these ads lies in the role of the public. The New Order employs a top-down approach to development: the public was perceived as being ignorant of their own needs, they needed to be told what (not) to do, and were largely mere receivers of the state's benevolence. In contrast, as it has been elaborated, the discourse of progress conveyed by the TVCs encourages the public to be involved. The nation's advancement depends on the actions of its people, and not solely on the actions of the government. This puts the individual and the private sector at the centre of progress, a key characteristic of neo-liberalism (cf. Thorsen & Lie 2010). Here is thus another site of convergence between ideas of neo-liberalism with notions of nationhood. It has gradually taken hold of Indonesia's political realm in recent years.

Capturing the social changes taking place in Indonesia, these ads are indicative of the paradigmatic shift regarding nationhood and citizenship that would become evident in the presidential election in 2014. The electoral decision to appoint Joko Widodo as Indonesia's president reveals an appreciation of the values of pragmatism that his brand of leadership stands for. Similar to the main characters of the TVCs, Joko Widodo's public image is that of a down-to-earth and solution-oriented individual, significantly deviating from the more ostentatious images of his predecessors. He is not the only political figure to do so, Indonesia is seeing the rise of a growing number of mayors and regents with the same no-nonsense and can-do attitude (cf. Moestafa 2014). At the same time, the growth of volunteerism becomes one of the markers in the current political environment (cf. Lukman 2014). In 2016, as this paper is being written, Jakarta's gubernatorial candidate with the highest electability rate has opted to enter the race

unaffiliated to any political party. The requirement, i.e. copies of the identity cards of 525 000 individual supporters, is met (and superseded) through the work of a group of volunteers. The virtues extolled by the ads, like hard work, perseverance, and self-reliance, are gradually appreciated by the general public, and importantly, seen as a means to advance the nation. The parallel between the discourse in the TVCs and the current changes in Indonesian politics is an unambiguous example of advertising's strength in capturing the latest concerns and interests of a society.

Informed by neo-liberal principles, the TVCs in this category share its pitfalls and blind spots. Individual innovation, self-reliance and hard work are portrayed as keys towards advancement, yet more socially ingrained issues, like systemic discrimination, are ignored. Although the TVCs counter poverty by volunteering, in the bigger scheme of things, the brands use volunteering to enhance the brand images of the products. Ultimately the CSR projects serve the corporate interests.

Conclusion

The paper discusses the two discourses of Indonesia that are conveyed in nationalist-themed TVCs. One discourse represents Indonesia as a beautiful country with a rich diversity of people, culture and nature. It is modelled on a discourse propagated by the New Order that glorifies traditional cultural heritages while suppressing the multi-dimensional disparity and inequality between regions, classes and ethnic groups. The second discourse portrays Indonesia as a nation-in-the-making, and emphasizes the importance of self-reliance and persistence for national progress, while somewhat simplifying pre-existing systemic inequalities in society. This discourse reflects the strong pragmatism that colours the Indonesian socio-political arena in subsequent years, thus suggesting that advertising is able to capture the moods and inclinations of a society before they become more concretized. These discourses reflect how Indonesia is currently imagined, at least by some part of the population. This latter aspect is important to remember: the discourses presented in the TVCs, whether it is of the traveling or the travelling citizen, mainly relate to the urban middle class. It is not generalizable to other demographic groups of Indonesia, and research about how Indonesia is constructed among these other groups is required.

As a last note, I do not argue that the existence of two seemingly oppositional discourses represent a clash, or even a shift from one to the other, for the data do not lend itself to this conclusion. The data however assert that the construction of “Indonesia” in the post-authoritarian era is no longer dictated by the state, and that there are other social agents that contribute to how Indonesia is imagined. In the field of Indonesian Studies, the significance of these other social agents in the construction of Indonesia should be taken into account.

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