

VCD Pornography of Indonesia

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Pornography in Indonesia, says Rachmad Hidayat (2003), is a cultural rather than a legal issue.¹ The recent debates surrounding the Pornography and Porno-action laws (RUU-APP) have obscured this important point as attention has been placed on the legal definition of pornography and in objection, how it will affect the diverse ethnic groups of Indonesia, artistic expression and women's social mobility.² Cultural interpretations often interpret pornography within a moral framework in terms of essentialised Indonesian tradition or according to Islam (e.g. Muntaqo 2006). Leaving the cultural origins of pornography an open question. This essay will bypass the legal quagmire and polemic that is pornography in Indonesia and attempt to explicate a more cultural understanding.

This essay analyses six locally made pornographic VCD films that became public in Indonesia

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between 2000 and June 2003. They represent the first time in Indonesian history that locally made films of such explicitness have been produced and distributed and this important cultural event has so far gone unanalysed. This study uses an empirical analysis of these films' composition in order to understand their cultural contents and context. Pornography in Indonesia is not just copies of Western products and culture or as the result of post-1998 press freedoms. Pornography is a complex issue and this essay seeks to present a more nuanced and embedded contemporary socio-cultural understanding.

These six films are comfortably classed as pornography, not because they conform to any particular definition *per se*, but because they are broadly understood and regarded as pornographic in Indonesia. Whilst it is true that Indonesia is struggling with this exact problem – i.e. what constitutes or defines pornography – this essay will not attempt to explicate any particular definition of pornography. On this topic of definitions however, two points should at least be mentioned. First is that what is defined as pornographic is in large part socially and discursively constructed, offering little stability to an empirical analysis. Second is that pornography is a very modern creation, far removed from its Greek lexical roots as the “writing of harlots” (Muntaqo 2006:11) and is intimately intertwined with modern legal apparatuses and print capitalism (Soble 1986). It will instead rely on a popular understanding that whilst problematic, especially in how broad it is, will itself be problematized in the process of this analysis by differentiating this local VCD pornography from other types.

Despite this imprecise definition of pornography, it is possible to talk of a history of pornography in Indonesia. Focussing on the modern era and how the state has conceived pornography, various types of material have been subject to censure since Indonesia became an independent nation in 1949. Both the Sukarno (1949-1967) and Suharto ('New Order' 1967-1998) regimes controlled the media and viewed expressions of sexuality as detrimental to the nation's morals and superfluous to national development. Despite their control, Tjipta Lesmana published a study of pornography in Indonesia in 1995 in part documenting incidents and examples of pornographic content in the Indonesian media during both regimes. Although the measure of pornography that he uses is imprecise, he shows that various films, magazines, stories, pictures and drawings have been considered as pornographic and hence censored. His point is that pornography continually re-emerged in the Indonesian media not least of all after the anti-pornography drives initiated by the New Order in 1971, 1984 and 1994 and would continue to do so unless the state had clear and effective laws in place.

The last two decades have seen Indonesia more integrated with the world economy and a recipient of global cultural products including pornography. During the 1980s, Indonesia was a part of the rapid economic growth of Asia, significantly aided by the pro-capitalist policies of the New Order, which facilitated consumption by an emerging middle class (Gerke 2000). At the same time the video cassette was growing as a consumer good in the West, along with the private, home consumption of pornography. Invariably this pornography entered Indonesia, but not in any significant quantity until the 1990s when VCD technology became ubiquitous in homes across the archipelago. As Kelly Hu (2004) has shown, the VCD revolutionised entertainment markets throughout Asia. The cheapness and ease of duplication of VCD discs enabled Indonesian viewers access to popular culture products such as pop music and Hollywood films but

also, to those who wanted it, pornography.

In parallel to this influx of foreign film pornography, Indonesian film studios produced 'softcore' films from the 1970s until the 1990s ('Steamy Local Films Leave Censors Hot and Bothered', *The Jakarta Post*, Feb 11, 2000). The stories of these feature films revolved around themes of horror and sex in a relatively crude way, akin to B-grade films. Films such as *Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan* (1988) (Revenge of the South Sea Queen) whilst provocative, were subject to state approval which included pre-filming approval of the script and later censorship by the board of censors (Sen and Hill 2000:140). Film, according to Krishna Sen and David Hill was the most strictly censored media during the New Order particularly focussed on ensuring the films reflected the cohesive maintenance of social order (2000:141-143). The production of these films was hit hard by the 1997 financial crises and the already declining audience numbers brought about by television and VCDs.

The current market in VCD pornography is hard to quantify, and only a rough indication can be given of its possible size. Pornography is sold with a certain amount of discretion but relatively easily available at VCD stalls and at VCD rental shops, and most prominent in metropolitan centres. The most famous area in Indonesia to buy pornography is Glodok in Jakarta, where sellers openly tout their wares. In 2001 *Tempo* estimated the daily turnover in Glodok at about Rp. 1 billion (A\$160000) with one VCD seller saying he would sell about 50 discs a day, 40 of which were porn (Dewanto et al 2001). Much of what is sold are copies of foreign pornography, so numerous and standardised as to be impossible to survey. The local films considered in this essay are part of this market but are far more specific in their source and range suggesting that their availability is less than these foreign films.

Six VCD Films

The six VCD films that are the focus of this essay enter this market as a new paradigm. They emerged one by one onto the market in the period from 2000 until June 2003. They were the only publicly circulating, locally-produced films available at that time although others may have existed within sexual subcultures. Since then, others have been made but none have had the same impact on the public as some of these first films did. What they represent is a new phenomenon in Indonesia but one which needs careful analysis. Each of the six films will be briefly described below in chronological order of their public release.

The first film, *Anak Ingusan*, released in 2000 is a well planned although badly executed encounter between two men and a sex worker in a *losmen*, a local low-budget hotel. The film opens on a conversation around a table, the camera focussed on the lady who it is gathered is a sex worker. The conversation is about her sexuality and the men are asking her questions which she answers confidently and throws backs to them, eliciting awkward responses. The scene changes to show one of the men and the lady on the bed, and a 13 minute sex scene ensues. After, the lady is filmed alone on the bed masturbating disinterestedly. During this scene she receives two phone calls from clients, and returns to herself without a climax. She and the man then shower together, washing themselves individually. In the next scene the first man is replaced by the second who is on the bed with the lady. They proceed to have sex but he is clumsy and unable to sustain an

erection, and the film closes.

Tempo suggests filming took place in a *losmen* in Tretes, East Java on July 13, 2000 and the film was released soon after in August or September ('Indecent Exposure, Police Indecency', *Tempo*, November 12, 2001). The sex worker was paid Rp. 2 million (A\$400) to be filmed; Mahfud, one of the male protagonists, a building labourer by day, claims he was paid Rp. 200 000 (A\$40) to make the film. He and another man Amin were later arrested in October, and charged under Article 282 of the criminal code which relates to the distribution of pornographic material. The sex worker and the supposed "boss" have never been arrested, although she was interviewed by *Liberty* magazine.³

About a year later a very different film was released. Filmed in July 2001, and becoming public in October of that year, *Itenas* or *Bandung Lautan Asmara* showed a young couple from Bandung have passionate sex in a hotel room in South Jakarta. Adi Bin Achmad (Amed) a twenty year old student from Itenas University and his girlfriend Nanda, a nineteen year-old student from Padjadjaran University (Unpad), made a film together, performing various sexual acts over a weekend of filming, producing an hour long memento of their weekend. The film opens on a group of friends in a hotel room, who soon after leave the couple to themselves. They start petting on a couch and later in the night, move to the bed performing mutual genital stimulation, coitus and oral sex. The following morning they play with the camera, then later in the bathroom they bathe together and have sex. The mood throughout the film is congenial and erotic, with the two students enjoying their sex romp together.

After the weekend, Amed transferred the film to VCD at a local VCD shop to make private copies. The VCD shop worker retrieved the film from the computer's 'recycle bin', copied it and the film entered public circulation and by November had attracted the attention of many Indonesians and the film was circulating widely. The police arrested Yayan, the VCD shop worker and three of his colleagues, two VCD vendors and three others at other VCD shops. Later they arrested the two students primarily under Article 282 of the Criminal Code, and also under Article 40(c) of the 1992 Film Law for not submitting the film to the censors and Emergency Law No. 1/1951 which provides for the continuation of customary law. The public in this case were largely polarised, either in abhorrence at their acts or in support of their innocence in regards to intending to release the film. Social and religious sanctions were strong, Amed was expelled from his university and according to hearsay, Nanda left Indonesia. The Bandung Prosecutor's Office later dropped the case against Amed and Nanda on the grounds that they had never intended to distribute or show the film ('Indecent Exposure, Police Indecency', *Tempo*, November 12, 2001).

A lot less is known about the following film with a similar title to its predecessor, *Medan Lautan Asmara* released later in 2001. The film shows a young couple from Medan in a cheap hotel room possibly having sex for the first time. The camera is placed in the corner of the room, and records continuously for the film's twenty minute duration. The girl is fairly inactive during the film, and it is he who prompts sexual relations. Early on she asks him "Do you love me or not? After it you may lie". He replies "I swear" and, at this point, climbs on top of her. Without foreplay he removes their pants, she unsure, asks "Straight away in?". He continues to have sex with her, ejaculating moments later, and says "Finished darling" on completion. During the sex she is passive and stiff. He climbs off leaves the shot and returns with a glass of

water. Again he climbs on her to have sex, to which she responds to by wrapping herself up further in the sheets. The film thus closes.

Medan Lautan Asmara documents some of the relationship dynamics at work in one particular couples' sex life. It is fraught by ill-communication, and by the pressure of the camera in the room, filming what could be their first time having sex. At points during the film she is worried about getting pregnant, but he seems oblivious to the possibility, ejaculating inside her without using a condom. His general attitude is callous, with little regard for his girlfriend. Rumour has it that the boy released this film as revenge on his girlfriend after she broke up with him soon after this film. The film received very little attention in the media and nothing of the scale of *Bandung Lautan Asmara*, of which *Medan Lautan Asmara* was named after.

The trajectory of Indonesian pornography took a different turn with the May 2002 release of the exploitative voyeur film, *9 Artis / Casting Iklan Sabun*. The 62 minute film is divided into two sections, and it was only the first part that received much public attention. In the first section nine models appear in a studio setting, in what appears to be the rough cut from a bath soap advertisement casting. The girls, ranging in age from 16 to 22 describe themselves, and taking orders from the 'director', pose to varying stages of undress and simulate washing themselves. The second half of the film is less clear and is shot elsewhere. Much of it is similar to the first section, and appears like a casting. It includes a section where two stark naked women are on a bed together, posing.

As it turns out, the soap casting was a scam, engineered by three men who worked in a Jakarta based video company. George Irvan the owner of PT Indocho Rama, a video production house in Percetakan Negara in Central Jakarta, was arrested for the scam, and later his two assistants. The girls involved believed that it was a proper casting and had auditioned without realising the scam. They were at one point questioned by the police as accomplices. The men were arrested under Articles 281 and 282 and sentenced.

Another less reported film called *Gadis Baliku*, was filmed in a karaoke bar in Bali and shows a Caucasian man have sex with a sex worker. It opens on the scene of a young Indonesian girl singing in front of a screen that is showing a porn film. She sings: "Don't be naughty with this man; later you'll be sorry" in Indonesian. A Caucasian man sits before her on a couch masturbating. A standard pornography film sequence follows with fellatio, cunnilingus, vaginal and anal penetration and finally his orgasm. Throughout the film she is scared but acquiescent toward him, and he is brutal and forceful in his actions. Very little came out in the media about this film and nobody was identified in the film. Personal contacts suggested that the film may not have actually been from Bali, but the song she sings at the beginning is clearly in Indonesian. The Caucasian as tourist also suggests Bali as its site of production. The film also involves an unknown third party who operates the camera, and at one point gives directions to the girl. The film lasts for ten minutes and was given the title *Gadis Baliku* (My Balinese Girl).

Six Indonesian models of varying fame were filmed through a changing room's two-way mirror in a voyeur film dubbed *Ganti Baju*, or Changing Clothes. In October 1997 these models were modelling for advertisements at a photo studio in Asem Baris, Tebet, in Jakarta. A studio owned and run by Budi Han. The six models were Rachel Maryan, Shanti, Sarah Azhari, Meggy Megawati, Yosephine Waas and Femmy Permatasari. This thirty minute long film shows them, one by one, preparing themselves for the audition and

changing outfits during the session. At times the cameraman is reflected in the mirror he is filming through, and he is also accompanied by a second man at one point. The two-way mirror has been purposely installed in the changing room and its uses other than this are not known. The film became public in April 2003, and was prominent in the news during April and May.

The artists involved were scandalised, and their bodies had become public property. All had gone onto more prominent media positions: Shanty had become a VJ for MTV and Meggy Megawati a sinetron actress. One of the models was only 16 at the time. Femmy Permatasari and Shanty filed a lawsuit against Budi Han. He was arrested along with his two accomplices Kodim bin Wahid, Benhur Bougun Karjaya (Beung) and the cameraman Benny Gunardi Ginting. Budi Han admitted to being the mastermind of the film and was later sentenced to one year in prison. The artists involved were outraged at his light sentence, claiming their reputations were ruined ('Pornography: Soft-core Courts?', *Tempo* Jakarta: Dec 8, 2003).

The two defining features of these six films – that separate them from other pornographic film in Indonesia – is that these films are non-professional and not foreign, or amateur and local. This not only significantly differentiates them from other products on the market such that we can talk of a new phenomenon, moreover they contain within them descriptions of Indonesian sexuality. This important difference and consequence has not been sufficiently noted in the Indonesian press or in analysis of pornography in Indonesia. The approach taken by *Tempo* journalists has been on the one hand to sensationalise these films and on the other to treat them as if they were industry pornography. Likewise, Muntaqo in his book *Porno: Definisi dan Kontroversi*⁴ (2006) takes pornography unproblematically as a monolithic form without considering these nuances.

A few points will suffice to highlight how these six films differ from other professional or industry produced films. First the films contain no evidence of post-production and none of them have titles or credits. The titles that each film has was euphemistically given after their release, and whilst descriptive do imitate the titles of softcore films. Most notable is the title *Bandung Lautan Asmara* which is a parody of Bandung Lautan Api (Bandung Ocean of Fire), the famous 1946 burning of Bandung by its residents so that the returning Dutch could not retake control. Likewise the covers of the films, similar in style to the covers of other porn films available on the black market, were not made by the filmmakers but made afterwards by people copying the CDs.

Secondly, in most of the films with the exception of *Gadis Baliku* and *Medan Lautan Asmara* the police were able to identify and arrest those involved in the films. Despite the absence of credits and titles, pornography's illegality led to the necessary pursuit of those involved. In *Anak Ingusan* and *Bandung Lautan Asmara*, the police revealed that the people involved were ordinary people who had made the film as a one-off venture. Both the voyeur films, although made by men already in the industry, were made separate to their profession, and the victims were able to identify where and when they were filmed. All six films involve 'real people' and not people acting or following a script.

Thirdly, the situations and encounters they document are not fictional and in that sense non-commercial. The films are hardly successful either: the sexual encounters in *Anak Ingusan* and *Medan*

Lautan Asmara are uninspiring failures in terms of pleasure, and are quite embarrassing for those involved. The closest film to a professional production is *Gadis Baliku*. This sexual encounter is obviously intended as a copy of standard US porn and the karaoke bar setting is well lit and a cameraman/director is used. The role of the Western protagonist in this case cannot be underestimated in trying to create a professional-looking film. In that this film is a copy, or an individual's attempt to copy, is the closest any of the six films comes to being professional and all are markedly amateur productions.

The most notable characteristic of these six films is they are not professional or industrial productions and this has important implications for the consideration of pornography in this case. Much of the media discourse about these films has seen them as Indonesian versions of foreign industrial pornography, the police pursued those involved using Article 282 of the criminal code relating to the distribution of pornographic material and the black market itself sells these films alongside foreign titles, such that together the general understanding of these films is that they are on a par with professional pornography. It is therefore necessary to consider these films outside of popular discourses and away from legal discussions in order to understand these films as cultural products.

Tracing the genesis of these films is a more complicated but necessary operation and two often discussed possibilities come to mind. The first is that these films are a direct result of Westernisation, and they are another example of how Indonesians are adopting Western norms and values in regards to sex and pornography. The experience of foreign pornography has certainly contributed to the production of these pieces in varying ways to each of the protagonists. However the films are not replicas of foreign pornography. The assumption that they are is politically and morally convenient reasoning which relies on a simple association than any empirical basis.

Secondly is that this pornography has emerged as a direct consequence of the press freedom which came after the 1999 dissolution of the Ministry of Information. As these films are private productions, these films are not part of the press *per se* and are quite distinct in their mode of existence. They exist outside the formal media sphere as illegal material produced and distributed by the black market. Lukas Luwarso (2002) the Executive Director of the Indonesian Press Council wrote an impassioned defence of the press in Indonesia, arguing that whilst the press was yet to mature pornography is very different to the press. The moral panic surrounding pornography – in all its forms – has led to the simple belief that press freedom is responsible for pornography. The emergence of locally made VCD pornography in Indonesia is far more complicated and it is necessary to turn to the content of the six films themselves.

The men who made *Anak Ingusan* and *Gadis Baliku* obtained their female partners by patronising a sex worker. It is an easy step from hiring a sex worker for sex and to filming that encounter and no doubt part of the exchange in both cases was to make a film out of the encounter. These two films are only possible because of the commodified services of the sex worker, and she makes it easier for these men, who have no other access to the female body. Particularly the case for the Caucasian tourist whose only access to the eroticised body of the other is through the medium of money. This places a much greater emphasis on the act of sexual intercourse and more than in any of the other films, especially noticeably in *Anak Ingusan* in the scene in which the sex worker masturbates for the purposes of the film and not because she was unsatisfied

as one magazine at the time suggested.⁵ This use of a sex worker suggests a greater intent to replicate foreign pornographic films.

The sex worker-client relationship, whilst established as a premise, in neither case does it fully determine the encounter or determine the content of the film being made. From the beginning of *Anak Ingusan* it is clear that the sex worker has had more sexual experience than the two men and that she is clearly more confident and dominant. Further, the men's poor sexual performance undermines their position as competent sexual actors. *Gadis Baliku* is different in that the Caucasian man is powerfully dominant of her. Clearly he is trying to imitate a standard pornography film and whilst she is available for him, escapes recognising pleasure as is so dominant in industrial pornography. This is quiet subtle and the film is still very sadistic as a result of his sexuality, such that her 'resistance' is subsumed by his misogyny. Neither film however is a success in creating a purely pornographic utopia rather they succumb to the variability inherent in the sex worker-client relationship (Law 2000:7) and the films document this fraught encounter.

It is not surprising that sex workers have been used as an avenue to making pornography films given their prevalence in Indonesian society. Hull, Sulistyarningsih and Jones (1999) quantified the sex sector in Indonesia at about 0.8-2.4% of GDP representing usage by about 5-8% of the male population aged 15 to 64. Whilst they suggest that this represents a minority of the population, prostitution is definitely culturally significant. In one way, Lin (1998:1) has said that for Southeast Asian countries the "commercial sex sector...(is) integrated into [the] social and political life". She made this observation in 1998, the same year that the New Order regime ended, which for many years had cultivated prostitution as the hidden side to its construction of sexuality (Suryakusuma 1996:115). The irony of these films is that they reveal this secret side of New Order politics by showing what was tacitly kept secret.

The films *Bandung Lautan Asmara* and *Bandung Lautan Asmara* rely on the different paradigm of youth engaging in "consensual" sexual relations. Consensual is placed in inverted commas because in the film *Medan Lautan Asmara* even though they are a couple when she submits to his sexual advances there is still refusal in her words and action. *Bandung Lautan Asmara* on the other hand involves a relationship more equal and understood. In differing from *Anak Ingusan* and *Gadis Baliku* in this way, these two films document more everyday relationships rather than the commodified relation between sex worker and client. Youth sexuality, especially pre-marital sex, is still heavily sanctioned socially and morally and these films reveal it not as unrestrained and irresponsible but as exploratory, troubled (Medan) or blissful (Bandung).

The location for both these films in a hotel room (also in *Anak Ingusan*) provides space in which couples can have sex and in these cases, make their films. Both couples are contravening prevailing mores in Indonesian society by engaging in pre-marital sex, and on a political level, for pleasure instead of procreative reasons. The hotel is a colloquial place in which private space away from the restrictions and observation of home and public life is available. The couples are acknowledging that their sexual relations do contravene what is socially acceptable but do at the same time follow a well-worn reasoning of conducting their activities in a hotel. On release, both these films revealed the privacy of the hotel and broke an Indonesian convention that these social transgressions are known to occur and are accepted as long as they remain secret.

The shock for the Indonesian public is that they confirm that the youth do engage in pre-marital sexual relations and seemingly without remorse or concern for prevailing norms of society. According to Tjipta Lesmana, the New Order government often blamed the intrinsic lack of discipline of the youth for the declining morals in society and for the rise of pornography (1995:9) and still it is often the youth who are construed as both the agents and victims of immorality in society (Muntaqo 2006:4-5). Youth, or 'adolescence' as Jones (1999:232-233) labels them, have become important social agents because the trend towards later marriage has lengthened the period between puberty and marriage giving rise to a mobile social group with less responsibility. This has, he continues (233), brought to the fore issues of sexuality and pre-marital relations in an environment in which strong traditional and religious values still predominate.

Their proclivity to making pornography is generational and linked with the post-New Order environment. From a 1994-5 study into the sexual attitudes of young middle class youth in Jakarta, Iwu Dwisetyani Utomo (2002) found that before the 1998 end of the New Order, middle class, metropolitan youth, especially non-Muslim males, were increasingly liberal towards sex and often used pornography as a substitute for their lack of formal sexual education (219). Combined with these tendencies, Nuraini Juliastuti (2006) has identified a 'generational moment' for Indonesian youth, those who were born during the New Order in the late 1970s and early 1980s but have come of age and are now attending university post-1998. They found legitimization in bringing down Suharto in 1998 and in losing their political relevance, have found identity in lifestyle, pop culture, fashion and trends as expressions of self, freedom and their youth (142). Both couples in *Bandung Lautan Asmara* and *Medan Lautan Asmara* fit squarely into this generation; Nanda and Amed were aged 19 and 20 respectively when they made their film in 2001.

Many in this post-Suharto generation have made their mark in creative arts expressing sexuality and pleasure and embracing within them global trends and motifs. Since the sensational 1997 publication of the novel *Saman* by Ayu Utami, Indonesia has experienced a renaissance in the arts with revivals in pop music, new literature film and art (Hatley 2005; Nieto-García 2004). Sexuality in particular has been a driving motive of these works – expressed as love, sex, female desire – and in the process crossing normally perceived taboos. The novel *Garis Tepi Seorang Lesbian* written by a Yogyakarta Muslim is an assertion of love and sexuality without labels (Duncan 2003) the controversial art of Agus and Davy depicts Anjasmara and Isabel as nude Adam and Eve figures in a piece called 'Pinksing Park' (Khalik 2006). Most interesting is the film *Arisan!* (2003) which contains a scene of two gay men kissing, as it not only shows a kiss normally cautiously displayed or obscured moreover a passionate kiss between two men.

Alongside this creative impulse of a section of the youth has been a broader fragmentation of social cohesion. Both this creativity and the possibility to create pornography have been eased by the decline in state hegemony post-1998 and the fragmentation of society into various identity and interest groups. The emergence of ethnic identity has been one such case, which Gerry Van Klinken (2002) has described as *disintegrasi* or disintegration of Indonesian society, linked to both globalisation and the decline of the Indonesian state. These social developments are also contradictory or ambiguous as Dédé Oetomo (2001) describes the ransacking of a queer conference in north Yogyakarta by Muslim youth suggesting that “the opening up of democratic space for gay men and the attacks from the thugs and other elements as related

sides of the same emerging phenomenon.” For pornography the controversial publication of *Playboy* in 2006 led to it being both a commercial success and a focus of violent protest. Current social fragmentation has helped pornography emerge in Indonesia, but it is not indicative of a widespread liberalisation of sexuality.

The third method used to make films is voyeurism as found in *9 Artis / Casting Iklan Sabun* and *Ganti Baju*. The place of the camera in these films is observational and the female objects of the films are either unaware of the camera (*Ganti Baju*) or its false pretensions (*Casting Iklan Sabun*). Gender lines are far more marked in these two films than any of the others with a far stronger patriarchal determination. This extends from the division of labour in the modelling industry where women are the models and the men in positions of power as cameramen, directors and owners. In these two businesses the men have used their positions in the industry to exploit female models in order to gain access to their naked bodies.

One Indonesian designer at the time suggested that models are quite unreflexive about their position in the industry and are prone to exploitation.⁶ Adjie Notonegoro thought that many people want to achieve fame and wealth quickly and as a result were willing to do anything to get there. Melvy Novita Z, one of the girls involved in *Casting Iklan Sabun* said she thought there was nothing wrong with the fake casting setup⁷ and another girl, Rizki Pritasari went on to pose nude with photographs available on the internet.⁸ Julia Suryakusuma is quite pessimistic on this point suggesting that “Loosening sexual mores among Indonesian women, especially in the younger generation” also means “unwittingly, they lend themselves even more to be used and dominated by men” (1996:115).

The employment of women as models goes hand-in-hand with the broader increase in sexual content in the media, predominately based on images of the sexualised female body. Ariel Heryanto and Vedi Hadiz (2005) point to out that role of globalisation and capitalism is central in the formation of the media post-1998, and includes increased sexual content in the media. At the pinnacle of this media culture is the 2006 publication of the Indonesian *Playboy* magazine, although tame, nevertheless relies on the centrality of the female model as its selling point. The variety of publications are “engaged in a process of defining the limits of the post-Suharto field of politics and culture” which has included a strong trend towards sex and sensationalism (Olle 2000).

With their focus on the naked female form, these voyeur films continue a trend of fantasising the feminine whose long history in Indonesia Sears (1996) has identified. She is concerned with how Indonesian women have been represented by others and how their own voices are rarely heard. Although since 1996 women have moved more into the political sphere as Krishna Sen (1999) has suggested, these voyeur films continue that process of representation by publicising the naked bodies of these women and exploiting them as sexual objects. In the process sexual exploitation is trivialised for the sake of titillation and consumption and as public spectacle is legitimised.

Finally as a concluding point, and the 'glue' that makes the production and distribution of these films possible, is technology. The VCD revolution and its impact on consumer entertainment has been previously noted and it goes hand-in-hand with the availability of other consumer technologies that make production possible. Although access to this technology is limited because of its cost, its availability coincidental with

⁸‘Rizki Pritasari’, <http://www.xfreehosting.com/asian/indosexindex/photos/rizki1.htm> and <http://www.xfreehosting.com/asian/indosexindex/photos/rizki2.htm>, accessed 31/7/2006.

these other cultural changes has been beneficial to the production of pornography. The internet, David Hill and Krishna Sen (2000) argue, was an important technology used by activists in 1998 aiding the protests that brought the New Order to an end. Such local appropriation and use of technologies have been extensively noticed, and Berry, Martin and Yue (2003:7) have noted the “localization and indigenization of globally mobile understandings of sexuality” by Asian queer communities through the use of new technologies. VCD Pornography as Indonesians have made it would not have been possible without technology for both producers and consumers.

Conclusion

This essay attempts to highlight the unexpected newness of Indonesian-made pornography in the sensitive and recently 'free' mediascape of Indonesia. The recent emergence of VCD pornography provides an unusual perspective on some of the recent cultural changes underway in the post New Order era of democracy. The differences between these six films sheds further light on some of the developments of actual practised sexuality and its capture on film including the continued role of prostitution for some, opportunistic and deceitful voyeurism for others and youthful experimentation. Others may no doubt exist. This diversity of content and intent destabilises arguments about a monolithic pornography in Indonesia, particularly relevant considering the current debates about the new pornography and porno-action laws.

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