Electric media in rural development: Individual freedoms to choose versus politics of power and control.

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11 IDEAL-TYPES OF E-MEDIA INFORMATION FLOWS

11.1 INTRODUCTION
The case studies addressed the socio-political and economic contexts of Vietnam, Peru and Indonesia and contained overviews of the situation of electronic media. Emphasizing the socio-political and economic context and its level of conduciveness is relevant because of the relationship between the conduciveness to social change and interactivity and the link to the ideal-types of electronically mediated information flows described in tables 6.4 and 6.5. Chapter three elaborates my interpretation of social change in a conception of development as freedom of choice. That conception serves as the input for chapter four, which discusses development paradigms and contains the outlines for a policy framework, aimed at realizing autonomous development spheres of empowerment1. Chapter five discusses the need for a democratic setting for such autonomous spheres and also addresses the impact of political, social and economic freedoms on the role of, and contribution by, electronic media to rural development. The second central concept, interactivity, is discussed in chapter six in relation to features of electronic media. In this chapter, however, interactivity is used at a more abstract level, as defined in the remark on my interpretation of Foucault's ideal-types (see section 6.7n14).

The first part of this chapter (sections 11.2 – 11.5), addresses the central concept conduciveness through an analysis and comparison of the socio-political and economic contexts of the case study countries. Starting points for the analysis and comparison are my conception of development as freedom of choice2 and the policy framework outlined in chapter four. The assessment of the conduciveness to social change, or development as freedom of choice, of the contexts of the respective countries is based on the following key concepts of chapter five:

- the democratic deficit, as measured by formal democratic institutions, depth and scope of democratic practices and the degree and evolution of popular political participation (sections 5.2 and 5.3);
- the formal and actual state of the individual political, social and economic freedoms and its impact on information dissemination and the social actor role of electronic media in support of rural development (sections 5.4 and 5.5); and
- the degree to which individuals in rural areas are able to achieve autonomous development by means of political, social and economic empowerment (section 5.6).

On the basis of a comparison of the case studies, the conduciveness of the socio-political and economic context to my conception of development is evaluated in section 11.5, where I distinguish between relatively low, medium and high levels of conduciveness.

The second part of this chapter (section 11.6), contains the analyses and comparisons of the electronic media landscapes of the case studies, based on Bordewijn and Van Kaam's concept of ITPs, and addresses the central concept of interactivity. The ITP-concept has been applied to preferred (as indicated by policy, legislation and regulation) and actual information flows, which are initiated by the electronic media listed in chapter one (see section 1.2). The analyses and comparisons are based on the following three issues, the theoretical aspects of which have been addressed in chapter six:

- power, knowledge and information flows (sections 6.3 and 6.4);
- electronic mass media as social actors in rural development (sections 6.5 and 6.7); and
- electronically mediated communication networks in rural development (section 6.6).

The analyses provide rough outlines of the respective I&C power structure and are based on the origin and nature of the ITPs which are most relevant to information dissemination in rural development3.

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1 For the remainder of this chapter, and in chapter twelve, I will refer to autonomous development spheres of empowerment simply as autonomous spheres.

2 For the remainder of this chapter, as well as in chapter twelve, I will simply use development as freedom of choice to refer to my conception of development as freedom of choice.

3 Theoretically, I conceive of the I&C power structure as an object of the socio-political and economic context of a nation-state.
In the third part (section 11.7), the results of the analyses and comparisons are used to illustrate a relation between conduciveness to social change and interactivity using the ideal-types, described in tables 6.4 and 6.5. The central concepts have been linked to define nine ideal-types of electronically mediated information flows in rural areas. For each of the case study countries, the examples of electronic media in development are allocated to the ideal-types. The ideal-types are also used to confirm the assessment of the conduciveness to social change of the case study countries in section 11.5.

11.2 DEMOCRATIC DEFICITS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION
This section assesses the case study countries on their respective levels of conduciveness to social change, with respect to democratic settings for autonomous spheres. In my opinion, a democratic setting, consisting of democratic institutions and practices, is required to prevent autonomous spheres from leading towards local anarchy. At the same time, the relation among the three freedoms and the role of electronic media in development is discussed. Increased individual freedoms, the essence of autonomous spheres, require increased depth and scope of democratic practices and an increased popular political participation, but also political accountability and democratic checks and balances. In my opinion, all three democratic elements mentioned below influence the democratic deficit and add to a conduciveness to social change. Therefore, the comparison between the case studies is based on the following aspects of a nation-state:

- formal democratic institutions (sections 5.2 and 5.3);
- depth and scope of democratic practices (sections 5.2 and 5.3); and
- popular political participation (Tanaka in section 5.7).

The elaboration of the central concept of conduciveness to social change is relevant to sections 11.6 and 11.7, since it provides the context for the discussion of electronic media and ideal-types in those sections.

Formal democratic institutions
Fukuyama’s definition of democracy reads that ‘a country is democratic if it grants its people the right to choose their own government through periodic, secret-ballot, multi-party elections, on the basis of universal and equal adult suffrage’ (Fukuyama, 1992: 43). Rawls adds that ballots should be regularly held and fair and he defines government as ‘a representative body selected for limited terms by and ultimately accountable to the electorate’ (Rawls, 1971: 222) and adds a written constitution as ‘the highest-order system of social rules for making rules’ (Rawls, 1971: 221/222). In addition, Rawls conceives of his theory of justice in the context of a pluralist constitutional democracy, stressing a need for a multi-party system based on his conception of a loyal opposition. Together, Fukuyama’s liberal democracy and Rawls’ pluralist constitutional democracy, lead to the following theoretical and formal elements of a democracy:

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4 By advocating autonomous spheres for rural development I do not intend to deny the relevance of nation-states. I agree with Rawls in conceiving of nation-states less as entities with autonomy in dealing with its citizens (its internal sovereignty), than as a facilitating institutions creating the conditions for development as freedom of choice (Rawls, 1999). The autonomous spheres should not be confused with protective associations which, according to Nozick, form the basis for a minimal State (Nozick, 1974). Autonomous spheres do not require a smaller State, but rather a different one, a State with less autonomy over its citizens' individual choices and more autonomy (freedom of choice) for those citizens, within a democratic setting.

5 Rawls' principle of loyal opposition holds that 'the clash of political beliefs, and of the interests and attitudes that are likely to influence them, are accepted as a normal condition of human life'. He continues that 'without the conception of loyal opposition, and an attachment to constitutional rules which express and protect it, the politics of democracy cannot be properly conducted or long endure' (Rawls, 1971: 223). I conceive of Rawls' principle of loyal opposition as the theoretical essence of a well-functioning multi-party political system.

6 In chapter five I argued that democracy is an ambiguous concept, but I have decided to refer to the concept here mainly because of a lack of alternative terms. Therefore, by using the term 'democracy' I still do not refer to any specific implementation of the concept.

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universal and equal adult suffrage;

- fair, secret-ballot and multi-party elections for representative bodies of government;

- periodic accountability of elected individuals and representative bodies of government to their constituencies and the general electorate, respectively; and

- a written constitution as the highest-order system of law in a nation-state.

However, the case studies also illustrate the arbitrariness of using these elements as indicators of a well-functioning democracy. For example, apart from the fairness of election processes, which is difficult to assess, the political systems of both Indonesia and Peru contain all the formal democratic institutions. However, neither country is considered an established democracy. Although both countries officially and effectively have a multi-party system, those systems, amongst others, have not been accompanied by a devolution of power to formal democratic institutions at lower administrative levels or an increased depth and scope of democratic practices. The latter are, in my opinion, one of the basic conditions for autonomous spheres. Nevertheless, I assume that the above mentioned theoretical and formal elements address those elements of a democracy which my assessments of conduciveness require.

**Vietnam**

The constitution has guaranteed universal and equal adult suffrage (1992 Const., art. 54) for people of 18 years of age and older (effectively since 1946; UNDP, 1998c: 169). However, Vietnam does not have multi-party elections and the formal democratic institutions are controlled by the VNCP. Although independent candidates are legally allowed to run for positions in representative bodies, the electorate can typically only choose from a list of candidates prepared by the VNCP and containing only party members. Political accountability of elected individuals and representative bodies at all levels of the political and administrative structure is limited due to a restricted electoral system. The constitution of Vietnam, formally the highest-order system of law, was enacted in 1992. The 1992 Constitution confirms the leading status of the VNCP in Vietnam, although that position is now formally subjected to legal provisions. However, the VNCP is still the only political party in Vietnam, which illustrates the formal democratic institution which is absent in Vietnam: a multi-party system. In Vietnam’s 1992 Constitution, individual political freedoms are still based on a communitarian interpretation of human rights and, therefore, effectively restricted. Despite the presence of most of the formal democratic institutions, the political system in Vietnam has a significant democratic deficit. The influence of the continued perception of a leading role for the VNCP on the value of the democratic deficit, combined with a communitarian perspective, suggest that a multi-party system may well be an important formal democratic institution in a well-functioning democracy.

The concept of democratic centralism (1992 Const., art. 6), the position of the VNCP as the sole representative of the people (1992 Const., art. 4) and the intertwined dual political and administrative structure are central to Vietnam’s political system. The hierarchical political system of Vietnam has not centralized all executive power in Hanoi, but centralism is incorporated in the omnipresence and dominant position of the VNCP, and its cadres, at all levels of the political and administrative structure, as well as in the centralized allocation of funds. The State, the VNCP’s Central Committee and the Politburo, as well as the national VNCP congresses are the official political policy- and decision-making institutions, but local People’s Councils and Committees (administrative) and VNCP branches (political) have retained some autonomy. That autonomy is, to some extent, influenced by the physical distances, in combination with a limited infrastructure, between Hanoi and the lower level administrations, which at times appears to result in almost absolute power over daily affairs, as well as in different interpretations by local leaders of official policies, decrees and directives.

**Indonesia**

The constitution has implicitly guaranteed universal and equal adult suffrage (1945 Const., preamble, art. 1.1 and 2.1) (effectively since 1945; UNDP, 1998c: 168). The DPR elections, perceived by Golkar and Soeharto as a ‘festival of democracy’ every five years (Schwarz, 2000: 265), were not considered fair and could hardly be considered multi-party elections. Indonesia’s recent political developments did not really change the number, presence or nature of the formal democratic institutions, but the 1999...
The fact that Wahid has not been able to use the concentration of power as effectively as Soeharto has, is the result of his fragmented, multi-party power-base in a more assertive DPR, which serves as a confirmation of the importance of an effective multi-party system.

The aggressive approach towards president Wahid by the August 2000 session of the MPR serves as an illustration of the increased assertiveness of the MPR, although intense deliberations and political maneuvering prevented the MPR from accomplishing much in the sense of legislation and amendments to the 1945 Constitution.
Depth and scope of democratic practices

The depth of democratic practices refers to the extent of popular political participation, or popular sovereignty in Roberts' words. The scope of democratic practices, on the other hand, refers to the domains in society to which popular participation is applied. In my opinion, the deepening and widening of democratic processes has a positive impact on a nation-state's conduciveness to development as freedom of choice, since it would include empowerment of individual people. From that point of view, democratic practices are a means for individual people to achieve different functionings. With respect to autonomous spheres, popular participation in political, social and economic domains are crucial elements of the socio-political and economic context. In my opinion, the following participatory democratic practices, described in chapter five, are particularly relevant for my conception of development:

- participation in needs/problems identification processes;
- participation in rural development policy discussions/debates;
- participation in political, social and economic discussions/debates; and
- participation in political, social and economic decision-making processes.

Participation is a popular, but ambiguous, concept and its interpretation varies, depending on who advocates the concept and with what objective. I conceive of participation as a deepened democratic practice, which is instrumental to, and constitutive of, political, social and economic empowerment. I consider a nation-state to be more conducive to development as freedom of choice, if participatory democratic practices exist and effectively lead to some degree of popular empowerment. However, in order to be capable of participating in democratic practices, people need individual political, social and economic freedoms, an issue which is addressed in section 11.3. I acknowledge that other important democratic practices can be distinguished, but I limit myself to the above mentioned four.

Vietnam

In the political and social domains of society, the VNCP is constitutionally the party which represents the people and acts on behalf of the people. Economic reforms have reduced the VNCP's dominance in the economic domain, leaving some scope for individual participation. Nevertheless, the VNCP remains the most dominant political, social and economic actor in society. Its structure is strictly hierarchical and popular political and social participation is controlled by a party elite and mainly restricted to VNCP party members, which means that the depth of democratic practices in Vietnam is constrained. Popular participation in needs identifying processes and development related discussions and debates is restricted to the procedural, VNCP-guided and -controlled, participatory consultation process which is held every five years in preparation of national VNCP congresses. However, that popular participation in political processes is limited to party members attending local congresses, which are presumed to provide input for a draft report for the national VNCP congress. Popular political influence on the composition of policy- and decision-making institutions (e.g., government, Politburo, Central Committee and VNCP congresses) is minimal.

At later stages, decisions of VNCP congresses are disseminated in meetings of party members at all levels of the political and administrative hierarchy. The democratic practices in Vietnam extend to political, social and economic domains, although the State has granted market forces some control over parts of the economic domain. Nevertheless, the limited depth of democratic practices over a broad range of societal domains, implies a strict control over most aspects of society by a small elite. Democratic practices operating independently from the VNCP in political or social domains are virtually non-existing and the country can thus be classified as an authoritarian social democracy (Roberts, 1998: 30/31).

Indonesia

The situation in Indonesia under Soeharto was not very different from Vietnam, although political parties, other than the government-controlled Golkar, were allowed nominally to contest elections and to participate in local governments. The fourth sila contains the musyawarah-principle, but that formal
acknowledgement of the importance of decision-making through deliberations did not lead to popular participation in decision-making in any of the domains of society. Soeharto officially supported popular participation in social and economic domains, but mostly through State-controlled KUDs. Furthermore, the development planning process for Repelitas technically includes popular participation, but this is mainly procedural. In addition, the effective power of local governments, as well as their actual influence on administrative affairs, was limited. The Golkar domination of the administrative structure effectively denied non-Golkar members real participation in decision-making processes.

The political, social and economic domains were all hierarchically organized, which led to control over most domains of society by a small political and economic elite. Formal democratic institutions are now more than nominally present in Indonesia, but a strict separation of administrative bureaucracies and formal democratic institutions prevails. Under Wahid, the government has not suggested deepening or widening of any democratic practices and centralism appears to be the preferred political organizational option. Soeharto’s New Order could be classified as a nominal social democracy under strict authoritarian rule. However, since Soeharto’s resignation, Indonesia appears to be moving towards a liberal democracy with some centralizing features (Roberts, 1998: 30). The limited depth and scope of democratic practices in such a democracy may feed demands for more autonomy by regional, secessionist movements.

Peru
In the 1970s, and for most of the 1980s, Peru’s civil society was expansive and consisted of many political and grassroots organizations. The State also encouraged popular participation through State-affiliated and -controlled organizations, whereas political parties and civil society used participation to mobilize people. Nevertheless, actual participation in decision-making processes was limited. The partial collapse of Peruvian civil society and the total collapse of political parties as a result of the guerrilla-insurgency of the 1980s, which led to Fujimori’s election in 1990, illustrated the atomization of Peru’s political landscape. Under Fujimori, the scope of participatory democratic practices was quickly limited to the political domain and market forces gradually took over the social and economic domain. In 1999, participatory processes are promoted by some NGOs and at lower administrative levels, but largely through isolated efforts. Fujimori promoted the participation of independent candidates in municipal elections as an attempt at increasing popular participation in political processes, but his initiative has been perceived as an attempt to prevent political parties from regrouping (Roberts, 1998).

The left-leaning military regimes of the late-1960s and the 1970s favored hierarchical control over political, social and economic domains, which led to strict control over most aspects of society, a situation similar to Vietnam and Indonesia. The situation under Fujimori was different in appearance, but in the political domain the executive power was (and still is) centralized in the presidential office and MinPres. Hierarchical control evolved into personal control, which means that under Fujimori, Peru could be classified as a liberal democracy with authoritarian features and a tendency to autocratic leadership (Roberts, 1998: 30).

Popular political participation
The previous sections in this chapter emphasized the importance of democratic practices for popular

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9 Chapter five discussed the ambiguous nature of the concepts of democracy and participation. Held points at different interpretations of ‘the people’ in the formal translation of democracia as ‘rule of the people’. In Indonesia, during the Old and New Order deliberations definitely took place, but were mostly limited to a small political and economic elite.

10 Roberts’ perception of a liberal democracy has many similarities with Fukuyama’s version, as well as with Held’s model of a protective democracy. In his discussion of classical models of democracy, Held identifies a second model of liberal democracy, which he labels a developmental democracy. A key difference between Held’s two models is that in a protective democracy, citizens are only expected to require protection from its rulers and each other, whereas in a developmental democracy participation in political life is also necessary to create an informed, committed and developing citizenship. According to Held, a general condition for a developmental democracy is an ‘independent civil society with minimum state interference’ as opposed to the ‘development of a [strictly] politically autonomous civil society’ in a protective democracy (Held, 1996: 70 – 120). In my conception of development I conceive of autonomous spheres as being more compatible with a developmental democracy than with a protective democracy.
political participation. However, popular political participation does not automatically result in benefits for people in the social and economic domains of society. Tanaka’s model (table 5.2) identifies three variables, which determine the relation between citizens, as represented by civil society, and the State. He argues that participatory democracy can yield benefits for participants if:

- the State has a high distributive capability;
- support groups in civil society are strong; and
- people share strong collective identities.

A relatively low distributive capability of the State can also lead to benefits, but requires a different type of political participation. According to Tanaka, the distributive capability of a State is determined by economic conditions and by the percentage of the GDP related financial flows which the State controls. Secondly, support groups in civil society can be active in political, social and economic domains and have different natures and objectives, but the key factor is their strength in relation to the State. Finally, Tanaka defines collective identities as the strength of collectively organized groups to force a share in distributed commodities from the State. At issue is whether in the case study countries conditions exist for autonomous spheres to guarantee opportunities for socio-economic benefits from popular political participation through such spheres. In this section, the strength and leverage of political participation in Vietnam, Indonesia and Peru are assessed using Tanaka’s eight ideal-types. The result is a tentative description of the relation between the State and its citizens in the three countries. The rationale for the analyses is the assumption that the ideal-type capable of converting popular political participation into benefits for the people is a participatory democracy (democracia participativa), which is characterized by a high relative distributive capability of the State, an autonomous, strong civil society and a strong bargaining position for collectively organized groups in society. In my opinion, such a democratic setting would be most suited to a conception of development featuring autonomous spheres.

Despite the low GDP of Vietnam, the relative distributive capability of the State in Vietnamese society is high, largely as a result of the VNCP’s control over political, social and most of the economic domains. It is virtually impossible for collectively and independently organized groups to obtain a share in State distributed commodities. In that sense, collective identities in Vietnam are weak. In addition, restrictions on political freedoms prevent the emergence of a civil society as an independent part of Vietnamese society. Thus, the relation between the VNCP-controlled State and citizens is characterized by Tanaka’s model of neo-clientelism, which essentially indicates a relation of dependency (Tanaka, In: Crabtree and Thomas, 1999: 417 - 422).

The situation for Indonesia is similar to Vietnam, since the relative distributive capabilities of the State are high, but both collective identities and civil society were weak under Soeharto. Therefore, the relation between citizens and the State under the New Order regimes was one of dependency in the form of neo-clientelism. However, currently Indonesia is in transition and the various secessionist movements point at increasingly strong collective identities in certain regions of the country, while civil society also appears to be becoming stronger as a result of increased political freedoms. However, given the violence surrounding the secession movements stronger collective identities do not necessarily coincide with a stronger civil society in the same region. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the current status of popular political participation in Indonesia and differences may be significant between separate regions. Wahid seems reluctant to accede to autonomy demands, but encourages the development of a civil society and, as a result, Indonesia may evolve towards popular political participation characterized by a relatively high distributive capability of the State, a strong civil society, but with relatively weak collective identities, or an elitist democracy according to Tanaka (Tanaka, In: Crabtree and Thomas, 1999: 417 - 422). Tanaka’s ideal-type of an elitist democracy shows similarities with Roberts’ liberal democracy, which illustrates that depth, scope and nature of popular political participation in Indonesia all appear to point towards the same development.

The neo-liberal economic policies of privatization and the current economic slow-down cause the relative distributive capability of the Peruvian State to be low to medium. The process of atomization has weakened civil society and the collective identities, although civil society is still strong compared to Vietnam and Indonesia. As a result, the nature of political participation appears to be a mixture between Tanaka’s ideal-types negotiation and pragmatism (Tanaka, In: Crabtree and Thomas,
11.3 POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FREEDOMS?
In my opinion, these three individual freedoms are constitutive of, conditions for, and means to, as well as objectives of, development. For the comparison of the case studies, the current state of individual political, social and economic freedoms is most relevant. I conceive of the state of these individual freedoms as an indicator of the feasibility of autonomous spheres and of the potential role of electronic media in such a conception of development. Although I have adopted a broad approach to social and economic freedoms in chapter five, this section focuses on (i) the freedom for electronic media to disseminate information, (ii) the individual political freedom of people to participate in, and to benefit from, electronic media, and (iii) the importance of the three freedoms for a social actor role of electronic media in rural development. The issue, which is addressed in chapter twelve, is whether differences in political, social and economic freedoms in the case study countries result in differences in (i) information dissemination, (ii) actor roles for electronic media or (iii) participation by people in electronic media.

A political freedom: free speech
In my opinion, the democratic deficit of nation-states is linked to the political freedom of speech in that a low democratic deficit correlates with increased freedom of speech. Therefore, I consider the ability of electronic media to freely disseminate information to be an indicator of a conduciveness to development as freedom of choice. Two interpretations of free speech as a political freedom have been discussed in chapter five, free speech to stimulate the dissemination of information (policy approach, Mill) and free speech as a matter of principle, as an inalienable individual right (principle approach, Dworkin). In my opinion, the policy approach is a pragmatic argumentation in favor of free speech, but the principle approach forms the basis of the political right to free speech. The difficulty with the principle approach, however, is that nation-states may have subscribed formally to the principle, but that in reality, laws, regulations and policies may undermine free speech and covert actions may be undertaken to constrain the freedom of speech, because those in power fear a free and independent dissemination of information.

Vietnam
Vietnam has enshrined free speech as a matter of principle in its constitution, but it restricts its citizens in exercising their right to free speech. These restrictions are based on Vietnam’s communitarian perspective on rights, which means that individual rights are interpreted in relation to the State’s perceived interest of the community. Within this context, freedoms, liberties and rights in Vietnam, with respect to freedom of the press and free speech, are interpreted for the good of the community and ‘the state shall strictly ban all activities (...) that are detrimental to national interests’ (1992 Const., art. 33).

Dissemination of information through electronic media in rural areas is expected to take place within constraints set by national legislation and regulation in general, and rural development policies in particular. Allowing independent electronic mass media seems to be incompatible with a communitarian perspective on free speech and the VNCP perceives networked electronic media more as a threat to its position than as a development opportunity. Therefore, in my opinion, free speech, as a political freedom, is contingent on the extent to which disseminated information is considered to be in the national interest. Despite increased social and economic freedoms in other areas, the VNCP’s position on free information dissemination still determines whether free speech is a political freedom. The status of free speech as a political freedom does not allow for independent electronic media, let alone for those electronic media to be social actors, nor does it allow for independent information dissemination, or for participation by individual people in electronic media.

Indonesia
Under Soekarno and Soeharto, Indonesia shared Vietnam’s communitarian perspective on individual
rights. Dissemination of information through electronic media was not perceived from a perspective of free speech as a matter of principle, but rather as a matter of policy in the broader context of Pancasila. A priority on economic development and political stability defined the Indonesian interpretation of free speech as a political freedom. Independent electronic mass media were allowed, but restricted to a neutral economic actor role of providing information and entertainment on a commercial basis. In addition, the content of news reports was confined to official interpretations of events. Laws and regulations allowed the State to restrict free speech and to close down electronic media enterprises if their use of free speech was considered to be contrary to Pancasila, which meant it was perceived to be violating communitarian rights, or damaging the national interest. The media laws were intended for mass media to commit themselves to the cause of Indonesia’s development, but without disturbing the strictly controlled political and economic stability. Recently expressed opinions by State-officials stress this emphasis on social responsibility for the electronic mass media in Indonesia. The political and economic elite is yet to accept the consequences of free speech as a political freedom. Although electronic media enjoy a large degree of free speech, the focus of information dissemination is on the political domain. Independent electronic mass media have not assumed a social actor role in rural areas and networked electronic media are perceived from a perspective of profitability. However, the situation of free speech as a political freedom in Indonesia appears to be in a positive flux, as a result of the recent political changes.

Peru

Formally, the situation in Peru differs from Vietnam and Indonesia. In Peru, the individual perspective on human rights prevails over a communitarian perspective. Although a communitarian approach prevailed during the left-leaning regimes, the neo-liberal economic policies of Fujimori’s government emphasized individual freedoms to choose under free market conditions. To a large extent, the free market system determines the interpretation of free speech as a political freedom.

Electronic media enterprises are mainly perceived as entertainment providing and profit generating commercial entities and economic policy favors conglomerates of media enterprises. Under the pretext of stimulating commercial enterprises, the Peruvian government has also suggested laws and regulations which favor commercial radio stations over independent radio stations. Although electronic mass media are not explicitly used for propaganda purposes, State-initiatives have been directed at influencing information dissemination in rural Peru by establishing State-sponsored radio stations in the border regions and MinAg-controlled radio stations in the sierra. Under the state of emergency, freedom of movement of people (1993 Const., art. 2.11) is restricted and, therewith, also the freedom to gather information. Finally, similar to Vietnam and Indonesia, Peru’s constitution contains an article which urges the (electronic) mass media to contribute to national development and to ‘collaborate with the State in education and with the formation of moral and cultural values’ (1993 Const., art. 14). Nevertheless, people enjoy the actual political freedom to participate in electronic mass media activities, as well as in electronically networked electronic media.

Social and economic freedoms

Sen mentions education and health as two social freedoms which improve on a person’s capabilities to choose different lifestyles. Within the social freedoms, I consider education, particularly literacy, as the most relevant social freedom with respect to a social actor role of electronic mass media and the psychological accessibility of, and participation in, electronic media in general. Rawls conceives of literacy as the ability of an individual to become an informed participant in political debates, but in this section I emphasize the impact basic literacy levels can have on increased individual social free-doms. In my opinion, an important aspect of Sen’s interpretation of social freedom, with respect to a role for electronic media in rural development, is the participation by people in information dissemi-nation through electronic media. Therefore, the most important social freedoms for development as freedom of choice are literacy and other educational skills, which not only allow people to receive and process information, as well as to accumulate knowledge, but also to generate and send information.

In my opinion, the four key issues with respect to economic facilities and electronic media in rural development are (i) the economic rationale underlying the expansion of physical access to
electronic media, (ii) the financial accessibility to electronic media by individual people in rural areas, (iii) the ownership of electronic media and (iv) the potential government use of economic policies as a substitute for political control of information dissemination. In his discussion of market mechanisms and social opportunities, Sen makes a distinction between the merits of market mechanisms and the reasons for favoring market mechanisms. In line with his emphasis on individual freedoms, he stresses that the individual freedom to execute economic transactions is of more fundamental importance than the distribution of economic utilities that results from applying market mechanisms (Sen, 1999: 111–145). Without explicitly addressing the issue of electronic media, Sen points out that ‘the availability or absence of particular kinds of information [and] the presence or absence of economies of large scale’ can limit what can be achieved through pure market mechanisms (Sen, 1999: 116/117). In my opinion, this observation addresses the potential political use of economic policies to limit the economic freedom of small-scale and independent electronic media in favor of media conglomerates.

**Vietnam**

Average adult literacy rates in Vietnam are relatively high compared to developing countries with similar GDP/GNP levels and just above the South-East Asian (SEA) average, which indicates that significant efforts have been made by the State to increase this aspect of individual social freedom. Still, differences exist between enrollment ratios in urban and rural areas, with the lowest levels occurring in remote rural areas and among minority groups. Despite relatively high adult literacy levels, State-control of local electronic mass media leaves little or no room to generate local content through audience participation. Furthermore, the professional skills of electronic mass media production are limited. As a result, the social actor role for electronic mass media is constrained. Restrictive political and economic policies towards networked electronic media also hamper a contribution of electronic media in freely meeting information demands in rural areas. Despite the fact that people have some individual social opportunities, political constraints on information dissemination limit the impact of electronic media on rural development.

The rationale underlying expansion of access to electronic media is a political issue, rather than an economic one. Legislation and regulation prohibit or restrict private enterprise in information dissemination activities, as well as in networked electronic media. The situation with respect to economic facilities (i.e., Sen’s economic freedoms) and electronic media in Vietnam hinges on the ownership issue. All electronic mass media are owned and controlled either by the State or by VNCP affiliates. Although there may be economic facilities for independent local electronic media, political constraints restrict ownership of electronic mass media to the VNCP, or State, affiliated power elite. A similar situation exists for networked electronic media. Through legislation and regulation, the State-owned telecom company has acquired a monopoly in a formally deregulated telecom market. The State monopoly of electronically mediated information dissemination restricts access by people to independent information and also keeps access to networked electronic media expensive. In Vietnam, both restrictions on political and economic freedom, with respect to electronic media, prevent a social actor role of those media and prevents people from enjoying their social opportunity to freely exchange and disseminate information.

**Indonesia**

The situation of individual social freedoms in Indonesia resembles the situation in Vietnam and average adult literacy levels are almost the same. Access to education and health care is limited in rural areas, even more so in remote rural areas, and the quality of educational and health care services decreases with the distance from urban centers, which negatively affect people’s enjoyed individual social opportunities. Popular participation in independent electronic mass media was not encouraged by Soeharto, although the Ministry of Education has started using electronic media to expand access to secondary education, but within a State-controlled context. According to latest the five-year plan, ‘the mass media should facilitate and enhance interactions among members of the community as well as between the community and the government in an open and responsible manner’ (Repelita VI). The government has also started programs to encourage people in rural areas to use electronic mass media as a source of information. However, under Soeharto, the limitations on political freedom minimized...
opportunities for independent information dissemination or a social actor role of electronic mass media. In general, legislation and regulation favor electronic media conglomerates over small-scale initiatives. The political freedom for free information dissemination has increased under Wahid and people in rural areas may in the future be able to enjoy their social freedom to participate in, and benefit from, information dissemination through electronic mass media. However, the lack of economic facilities may constrain access and accessibility in the short run.

The rationale behind the development of networked electronic media is economic, which implies relatively slim chances for people in rural areas to access networked electronic media to acquire information. In addition, people in rural areas often lack economic facilities to access networked electronic media. As in Vietnam, ownership of electronic media under Soeharto had been important to the role of electronic media in rural development. Licenses for television stations were issued to a small economic elite and commercial radio stations operated under content constraints. Currently, however, significant groups in rural areas appear to have individual social opportunities to benefit from improved information dissemination through electronic media and under Wahid the political freedoms appear to be matching social freedoms. Despite the political freedom and social opportunities, a lack of economic facilities constrain access and accessibility and prevents networked electronic media from widely contributing to information dissemination in rural areas.

Peru
As in most Latin-American countries, the average adult literacy levels in Peru are fairly high, but with major differences between urban and remote rural areas. The socio-political context of Peru in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s created an active civil society and electronic mass media, particularly independent radio stations, which have played a significant role in rural development. Local radio stations use audience participation and local content generation to improve the creation and dissemination of locally generated information. Similar remarks apply to networked electronic media, which are used by elements in civil society to create local content and local level information exchanges in rural areas. Apart from areas under a state of emergency, the political freedom to free speech enhances the social actor role of educational electronic mass media and networked electronic media. The formal political freedoms and social opportunities appear to be supporting a social actor role by electronic media in rural development.

However, legislation and regulation in the economic domain may prevent an expansion of the social actor role of electronic media in rural development. Peru’s neo-liberal economic policies favor large-scale, urban based electronic media entities and may effectively substitute for political controls on information dissemination through small-scale independent electronic mass media. Improvements in free and independent information dissemination through networked electronic media, however, seem less affected by legislation and regulation in the economic domain. In fact, expansion of access to networked electronic media is actively promoted, partially also on the basis of a social rationale. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether the reason for this is genuine support for independent electronically mediated information networks or a lack of awareness at government level of the potential consequences for the free dissemination of information. The absence of vision on using information in development suggests that a lack of awareness is the more likely cause.

11.4 AUTONOMOUS RURAL DEVELOPMENT?
The central element of my theoretical argumentation is my conception of autonomous spheres. The existing political, social and economic freedoms essentially define the extent to which development spheres are present in the case study countries. However, in my opinion, rural development policies more immediately illustrate the feasibility of my conception of development. The issue is the extent to which the governments of Vietnam, Indonesia and Peru favor autonomous development and self-empowerment of people. In my opinion, policy documents indicate a country’s conception of development. I have added information from expert-interviews with stakeholders in rural development in the case study countries. In my perception, autonomous spheres require a preference for a devolution of power and a decentralized development approach, an approach which favors independent electronic mass media and electronically mediated rural networks in rural development.
A comparison: policies and orientation
The issue addressed in this section is whether the prevailing approaches to rural development in Vietnam, Indonesia and Peru support my conception of autonomous rural development.

Vietnam and Indonesia are two examples of countries with an institutionalized, top-down oriented rural development approach. In Vietnam, rural development has largely been institutionalized in a centrally guided consultative process in preparation of VNCP congresses, as well as in the omnipresence of VNCP party members in the administrative (People’s Committees, People’s Councils) and political (VNCP and its branches) structure. VNCP congresses result in five-year plans, ideological rhetoric, sweeping observations and detailed plans. A desire for political survival may have forced the VNCP to allow some degree of market mechanisms, but so far the VNCP has seemingly safeguarded its legitimacy to act on behalf of the Vietnamese people by attempting to alleviate poverty. In Indonesia, the present political changes are unlikely to affect the institutionalized approach to rural development in the short run and the development bureaucracy will most likely continue to produce Repelitas, Indonesia’s five-year plans. In my opinion, the main rationale behind the top-down rural development orientations in Vietnam and Indonesia is a desire to maintain central control in Hanoi and Jakarta, respectively. In both countries, the dual political and administrative structure has created an elite of powerful administrators. The one-party-system in Vietnam has led to an entwined dual structure, with a dual function elite capable of exercising central control over top-down development. The nominally multi-party system in Indonesia required a separation of political and administrative structure, but its objective was also to centralize control over top-down development. However, abolishing the separation between the centralized administrative and the new, more democratic, political structure in Indonesia does not appear to be a major priority of the DPR, MPR or president Wahid. The centralized Vietnamese and Indonesian governments do not favor autonomous spheres in rural development, although Vietnam may effectively be less centralized than Indonesia as a remnant from the wartime organization of the country. Peru’s situation used to be similar to Vietnam and Indonesia, but president Fujimori’s neo-liberal policies have caused a major roll-back of the State. However, executive power has been centralized and autonomous rural development is only possible by using free market mechanisms. The economic policies have created new economic (and political) dependency relations in Peru and despite investments in infrastructure, people in rural areas lack economic facilities and political power to establish autonomous spheres.

11.5 CONDUCTIVENESS TO SOCIAL CHANGE: AN ASSESSMENT
In chapter two, social change has been defined as increasing people’s individual political freedoms, social opportunities and economic facilities in a conducive socio-political and economic context, which allows for autonomous spheres. My conception is a personal, perhaps slightly libertarian, interpretation of Sen’s development as freedom, which focuses on the capability of people to choose different lifestyles. I have defined the contribution of electronic media to my conception of development (i) as facilitating independent information dissemination in rural areas and (ii) as playing a social actor role in rural development. In my opinion, the extent to which my conception of development is feasible, as well as the degree to which the electronic media are able to fulfill the two roles within the socio-political and economic contexts of the case study countries, determines their level of conduciveness to social change. As a result of the qualitative nature of the research, this assessment provides a rough indication of the conduciveness of the case study countries.

Levels of conduciveness of the case study countries
On the basis of the material of the case study chapters and the analysis of that material in this chapter, the levels of conduciveness to social change of Vietnam, Indonesia and Peru have been assessed. The sections on the case study countries provide my estimates of their respective levels of conduciveness.

Vietnam
I estimate the conduciveness of the socio-political and economic context to be low because:
• the democratic deficit is institutionalized in the one-party system and, despite allowing some economic reforms, the VNCP appears to be intent on maintaining control in the political and
social domain, as well as in the parts of the economic domain which are critical for information dissemination, such as telecom and mass media; individual political, social and economic freedoms are subordinated to the communitarian perspective on human rights, which is used to justify violations of individual human rights as being in the common interest (of the State or the people?); popular political participation is restricted and centrally controlled; an analysis of the relation between citizens and the State, based on Tanaka’s ideal-types, indicates that the State deliberately maintains a dependency relation with its citizens;

- a small power elite in the hierarchical (VNCP-controlled) and entwined dual administrative and political structure effectively controls rural development and determines its almost completely top-down oriented nature; even though the actual influence of five-year plans on rural development may have diminished, the State now uses legislation and regulation to constrain the direction of rural development to one that does not challenge the legitimacy of the VNCP too strongly; and

- the role of electronic mass media is mostly restricted to providing officially approved information, an increase in independent information dissemination is unlikely to be provided by the state- or VNCP-controlled electronic mass media and a social actor role for independent electronic mass media seems to be even less likely; networked electronic media remain the domain of SOEs and limited political, social and economic freedom exists for private initiative to establish electronically mediated autonomous local rural networks.

Table 11.1 in section 11.7 suggests that the low level of conduciveness of the socio-political and economic context of Vietnam has mostly resulted in State-controlled initiatives in electronic media with relatively low levels of interactivity and very few electronic media initiatives independent of the State.

**Indonesia**

In my opinion, the conduciveness of the socio-political and economic context of Indonesia under Soeharto was situated between low and medium levels. The transition to a more democratic, but still centralized, nation-state, appears to push the conduciveness to a medium level, for which I list the following reasons:

- the reformasi/demokrasi-movement, which led to the resignation of Soeharto, free multi-party elections and the election of president Wahid by a newly elected MPR, has reduced Indonesia’s democratic deficit; however, apart from improvements in the functioning of a number of the formal democratic institutions and a major reduction of the official political influence of the armed forces, no significant improvements have been achieved with respect to political decentralization and devolution of power; in its annual session held in August 2000, the MPR devoted most of the session to criticizing president Wahid, instead of discussing the proposed amendments to the constitution; furthermore, amendments to documents do not necessarily lead to implementation and enforcement of those amendments, and the Pancasila-ideology still appears to be unchallenged; under Soeharto, popular political participation was limited and suppressed, but under Wahid restrictions on popular political participation appear to lead to secessionist violence; if Indonesia moves towards Tanaka’s ideal-type of an elitist democracy, the conduciveness may not reach a medium level;

- the centralized, top-down approach to rural development is more institutionalized in Indonesia than in Vietnam, particularly because of the largely autonomous development bureaucracies; the dual political and administrative structure and the politically-motivated separation between these two elements of the dual structure, which allowed the powerful administrative structure (as opposed to the powerless political structure) to control the orientation, nature and content of rural development; however, the continuing violent activities by secessionist movements in various regions, notably Aceh and Irian Jaya, in combination with the fragile economic situation, may force the Indonesian State to some measure of decentralization of decision-making and devolution of power to regions outside Java; and

- the most positive impact of the political changes, in my opinion, will be on the contribution of electronic media to information dissemination in rural areas; although the electronic mass media appear to focus on the political domain, the increased political freedom will most likely allow for
small-scale independent local electronic mass media to play a social actor role in rural development; the contribution of electronic networked media is politically possible, but the economic freedom may still be limited and awareness of the potential of information dissemination through electronically mediated rural networks is limited.

Although the field research took place in the first months after Soeharto’s resignation, the information dissemination through electronic and other mass media already indicated a potentially higher level of conduciveness of the socio-political and economic context of Indonesia. Various interviewed experts expressed the opinion that freedom of speech and of the press had already increased under Habibie, if only de facto and not de jure. Under Wahid, the increased freedom of speech and the press were institutionalized in legislation. Table 11.2 indicates that government related ideal-types suggest a low level of conduciveness, but that sufficient initiatives outside the State exist to support the assessment of a medium level of conduciveness.

**Peru**

I consider the conduciveness of the socio-political and economic context to be medium in the short run, but in the medium to high range in the longer run. The reasons for assessing Peru in this way are the following:

- the democratic deficit of Peru was, and as far as the situation of the political parties is concerned still is, largely determined by a combination of two factors: president Fujimori’s tendency towards autocratic rule and the lack of viable political alternatives as a result of the continued disorganization of Peru’s political parties; however, the 1993 Constitution offers formal support for a reduced democratic deficit and because Fujimori has resigned, reducing the democratic deficit seems to be a possibility; Peru also still has a significant and active civil society, which, in my opinion, will be capable of supporting autonomous spheres in the longer run; in Peru, conditions for popular political participation are partly in place (civil society), but such participation was effectively being restricted by Fujimori’s government; at present, the State appears to be deliberately developing a dependency relation with its citizens in rural areas, but much can probably be attributed to Fujimori’s autocratic tendencies; in my opinion, it is unlikely that this will change under the transitional government, but it may do so under a newly elected president;

- the approach to rural development is dominated by two factors: neo-liberal economic policies, which essentially have resulted in a rural development policy vacuum, and the dependency relation created by the concentration of executive power and fund allocation in the office of the president and the affiliated MinPres; however, civil society and some infrastructure are in place, to the extent that political change, expected after Fujimori’s resignation, could build on those conditions for autonomous spheres; furthermore, contrary to Vietnam and Indonesia, Peru does not have an institutionalized development approach, which would have to be dismantled; and

- although political constraints exist, the current state of political, social and economic freedoms already support a social actor role for electronic mass media and in civil society the awareness of the potential contribution of improved information dissemination through electronically mediated rural networks is clear; the main constraint to the role of electronic media is the use of economic measures to control independent information dissemination, although the origins of those measures are of a political nature.

In comparison to Vietnam and Indonesia, the more conducive nature of Peru’s socio-political and economic context has resulted in ideal-types matching a medium level conduciveness, as has been illustrated in table 11.3 of section 11.7. State-controlled initiatives are minimal, but the existence of a significant number of electronic initiatives outside of the State support the assessment of a medium level of conduciveness.

**A summarizing overview**

Although all formal democratic institutions can have some positive impact on the level of conduciveness to social change of a nation state, it seems that real multi-party representation of the various groups in society is a key democratic institution. In addition, the political parties would have to be able to convert representation into popular power-sharing and participation in decision-making. In that strict
sense, formal democratic institutions appear to meet the standards in any of the three case study countries. In Vietnam, a multi-party system does not exist, in Indonesia true representation is hampered by electoral laws and a concentration of executive power, and in Peru the concentration of executive power in the office of the president made the multi-party system under Fujimori more or less an empty shell.

Evaluating the case study countries from the perspective of participatory democratic practices, the assessment for all three is that at present few participatory democratic practices exist, although possibly in Indonesia some developments may start in the short run towards deepening democracy. Despite the different models of democracy of the three countries, all three models appear to have resulted in a small elite controlling most domains of society and in limited popular participation in political, social and economic discussions and decision-making processes. In none of the three countries are conditions in place for Tanaka’s ideal-type of participatory democracy and autonomous spheres do not appear to be feasible in the short run.

Social opportunities for people in rural areas are limited, something which is also mostly valid for individual economic freedoms. In Vietnam political freedoms are restricted. In Peru formal political freedoms, which seem to be present, are constrained by deliberate strategies to undermine the political freedoms with neo-liberal economic policies. Indonesia is in a state of flux, but the individual freedoms of people in rural areas appear to be relatively limited and, until now, the flux appears to be positive for political freedoms only.

Despite significant differences between development orientations in Vietnam and Indonesia on the one hand, and Peru on the other hand, the relation between the State and its citizens in rural areas appears to be one of dependence in all three countries. In Vietnam and Indonesia, the dependence is created by the centralized and top-down nature of the development approach. However, in Peru, the State appeared to use the poverty in rural areas, created by neo-liberal policies, to create a dependency, perhaps politically motivated, between poor people in rural areas and the development funds allocating State.

Summarizing, none of the three socio-political and economic contexts seem to contain the political conditions for autonomous spheres. Since in all three case study countries (in Soeharto’s, but less so in Wahid’s Indonesia) the state of the socio-political and economic context appears, to a large extent, to be the result of deliberate policies, the governments of Vietnam, Indonesia and Peru do not seem to favor the conception of development elaborated in my theoretical argumentation. Sections 11.6 to 11.8 elaborate on the importance of this conclusion for electronic media’s contribution to information dissemination in rural areas.

11.6 POWER AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN DEVELOPMENT
The objective of this section is to address the suggested relationship between the conduciveness to social change and the degrees of interactivity of electronic media, which are used in rural development. The rationale for this relationship is that, in my opinion, specific uses of technology are partly determined by various aspects of the context in which the technology is applied. This means that, in my opinion, the power structures in society have a preference for certain ideal-types of information flows and will use aspects of the socio-political and economic context of a nation-state to create a conducive environment for preferred ideal-types of information flows. However, this doesn’t mean that I subscribe to the reverse argumentation that society, and more specifically social change, is determined by the specific use of technology. In the preface and summary to the dissertation I have already briefly expressed my opinion on the too one-dimensional nature of the positive (Innis, McLuhan and Rogers) and negative (Marcuse) interpretations of technological determinism with respect to social changes in society.

In chapter six, the influence of central control over content, nature and storage of information by nodes in the I&C power structures has been discussed. The case studies suggest that the State and State-controlled electronic media, as well as the predominantly economics-oriented electronic mass media conglomerates, tend to favor allocation patterns which allow for sender control over content and nature of information flows. At the same time, a few information content distorting structural factors in the electronic mass media landscape have briefly been addressed (Herman and Chomsky, 1994: 1 - 35).
In order to reveal the rough outlines of the prevailing I&C power structures in the case study countries, the analytical concept of ITPs was introduced. Finally, a preference for electronically mediated, autonomous rural networks was elaborated (see section 6.7) and a relation between the conduciveness to social change and the level of interactivity of electronic media, applied in rural development, was suggested.

In this section, the ITP-concept provides some insight into the power aspect of information dissemination in rural development, based on analyzing policy documents, legislative and regulatory frameworks and examples of electronic media in rural development in Vietnam, Indonesia and Peru. The analysis yields an overview of the dominant ITPs in the case study countries and implicitly provides a rough indication of where the power nodes are located.

For my conception of development, I conceive of interactive communication in autonomous rural networks as most suited to facilitate independent information dissemination. The second important role for electronic media is as a social actor in rural development. I conceive of electronic media as elements of civil society, in addition to their roles as economic, and sometimes, political actors. Along the same lines, State-controlled information provision and predominantly political actor roles by electronic media are considered to indicate State-controlled and centralized rural development.

Power, knowledge and information flows
Table 6.4 presumes direct relations between ideal-types of electronically mediated information flows and ITPs. Therefore, in my perception, an assessment of actual and preferred ITPs provides insight into which ideal-types are applied and preferred. I also conceive of the different values of the two central concepts as indicating State-preferences for specific types of electronic media. On the other hand, actual and preferred ITPs are, in my opinion, indicators of the value of the central concepts for the respective case study countries. Whether these assumptions are valid requires further qualitative research, but in the theoretical argumentation and, within the framework of this dissertation, the relation is assumed.

On the basis of the collected data in the three case study countries, the following nodes of I&C power structures have been identified in Vietnam, Indonesia and Peru as most relevant with respect to information dissemination in rural areas:
- government and government-affiliated institutions (the State);
- international organizations;
- electronic mass media;
- networked electronic media;
- non-electronic mass media (not included in research, see section 1.2);
- civil society; and
- people-based organizations.

I conceive of the ITPs, which these entities use or prefer for information dissemination, as indicators of whether the policy, legal and regulatory frameworks concerning information dissemination are in support of autonomous spheres or of strengthening existing I&C power structures. The following paragraphs (i) illustrate preferences for ITPs on the basis of policy, legislation and regulation, (ii) provide insight into actual ITPs through electronic media examples and (iii) summarizes the previous two issues in rough outlines of I&C power structures.

Policy, legislation and regulations: preferred ITPs
State-documents on development, economic and electronic media policies indicate which ITPs are formally preferred. Nevertheless, legislation and regulation is also required to convert policies into enforceable elements of socio-political and economic contexts. In multi-party political systems, policies may not necessarily be converted one-on-one into legislation and regulation, typically due to a need for compromises. On the other hand, policy documents in one-party systems may partly serve to pre-sent an image of the State’s intentions, which is more acceptable to its citizens and international actors, rather than representing actual plans. Therefore, policy documents only serve as a rough indicator of preferred ITPs, whereas legislative and regulatory frameworks provide more accurate insights into pre-
ferred ITPs. However, in my opinion, the extent to which legislation and regulations are enforced and implemented provides the most accurate indication of which ITPs are preferred. Finally, policies, legislation and regulations may be directly relevant to electronic media or may have a more indirect impact.

**Vietnam**

Policy on networked electronic media is limited to hardware and information as a product. In addition, a vision on how information dissemination processes could facilitate rural development is absent. National level policy on information technology is directed at obtaining hardware and developing an IT industry. In the context of Vietnam’s product oriented development approach, information is considered a product. The State-controlled electronic media are perceived as providers of that information product following allocation patterns. The regulatory framework for telecom and broadcasting is influenced by a reluctance towards political reforms, in this case freedom of information provision and exchange by, for example, privately owned enterprises. At the same time, the State balks at foreign ownership of electronic media. Private enterprise in basic telecom services is prohibited, private broadcasting is not allowed and radio communication is only allowed under certain conditions and subject to permits, which have to be issued by official, VNCP affiliated, authorities. Despite formal deregulation, Vietnam’s national telecom market is dominated by VNPT and its subsidiaries. Free competition at national network operator level exists only nominally, resulting in high price levels for both telecom services and Internet access. The Internet is dominated by the State-owned VNPT, which operates two gateways. Prohibitively high prices inhibit expansion of Internet access outside major metropolitan and urban areas. Apart from the price levels, development appears to suffer from a lack of understanding of the nature of the technology at decision-making levels. The artificial construction of IAPs, ISPs and ICPs indicates that the State prefers to control electronically mediated information flows through ownership, legislation and regulation. ICPs are formally the only local content providers and access to Internet domains outside of Vietnam is restricted by technical means, which, as a result, suppress the development of cross-border conversation patterns.

The preferred and prevailing ITPs in Vietnam are allocation and registration, while the emergence of networked electronic media has led to some State interest in consultation patterns with allocation characteristics. The latter is used in combination with strengthened registration patterns. Allocation patterns are typically used by State-owned or -affiliated electronic mass media. So far, registration patterns seem to be of poor quality in Vietnam, since information disseminated through allocation patterns does not meet demands in rural areas. The emergence of computer mediated communication started the development of electronically mediated services by SOFs and State-institutions, using consultation patterns, albeit only in larger urban areas and seldom accessible to the general public. Related to emerging consultation patterns is an emphasis on electronically mediated vertical registration patterns. The registration patterns are expected to generate, or improve on the quality of, databases. In my opinion, the regulatory support for intra-networks confirms an official preference for consultation patterns in controllable environments. Although networked electronic media are capable of facilitating electronically mediated conversation patterns, such patterns do not have ideological and political support. Therefore, the State’s reluctance towards political reforms inhibits the creation of conversation patterns through networked electronic media in rural development. Until now, the only State-initiated electronic media initiative favoring horizontal information flows appears to be a pilot project with rural information networks by a MARD department. However, the initiative is still in its infancy stage and no prediction on how it will develop can be made now.

**Indonesia**

The emphasis of the policy document for Indonesia’s NII, Nusantara 21, is on large scale infrastructure development in and between urban centers. N21 does not contain a clear and coherent vision on the role of information dissemination in rural development, nor do other policy documents. The N21 and Repelita VI documents mainly focus on electronic media (mostly networked electronic media) to improve vertical registration patterns, which are expected to feed into a centrally organized development bureaucracy. In general, no feedback to suppliers of information is foreseen. As a result,
the emphasis is on information dissemination through allocation or consultation patterns. The regulatory framework on telecom uses an economic rationale and supports monopolies of dominant telecom operators at the expense of regional or local level initiatives.

The State’s preferred use of electronic media for information purposes is restricted to information provision following allocation patterns. However, as was mentioned above, policy documents point at an increased awareness of the potential of networked electronic media to improve vertical registration patterns. Furthermore, the State supports some conversation patterns (kelompencapir and paket kejar) in rural areas to improve on information processing provided through allocation patterns. The number of applications of electronic media in rural development is limited, partly due to lack of insight into needs/demands for information at kecamatan, desa and sub-desa level. A small number of NGOs has started to work on local electronically mediated networks, but so far legislation and regulation prevent local radio-communication networks to be linked to the basic telecom infrastructure. Under Soeharto, independent electronic mass media did not have sufficient political freedom to soften allocation patterns, to create consultation patterns or to emulate conversation patterns and formal information provision was reserved for local RRI branches. However, the recent political developments are likely to allow for independent information dissemination, as well as for a social actor role of electronic media, but people typically lack economic facilities to access electronically mediated rural networks.

Peru
Specific national level policy statements on using information and communication technology in rural development could not be identified. State-initiatives concerning networked electronic media are limited and aimed at increasing efficiency within and between government institutions. In line with neo-liberal economic policies, information is considered an economic good, which is provided through free market mechanisms. Legislation and regulation in support of independent electronic mass media, which could stimulate processes of information exchange along conversation patterns, is not promoted and active independent involvement in rural development of those electronic mass media is not envisaged by the State. Peru’s legislation effectively favors commercial exploitation of electronic mass media rather than supporting a commercial sustainability of independent electronic mass media. A reliance on market forces has led to infrastructure expansion of basic telecom services and created a conducive environment for entertainment oriented electronic mass media conglomerates, but has done little for a social actor role and improved information dissemination by local electronic media in rural development. Nevertheless, deregulation of the telecom market has led to significant qualitative and quantitative improvements in the telecom infrastructure and the creation of FITEL stimulates the expansion of basic telecom service provision to rural and remote regions. Establishing small-scale basic telecom service providers is free and to some extent promoted.

The State prefers commercial information provision following an allocation pattern, which is encouraged through legislation and regulation. The neo-liberal economic policies do not create conditions for conversation patterns through electronically mediated rural networks. Nevertheless, independent electronic mass media enjoy sufficient political freedom to create soft allocation patterns, by creating consultation patterns and emulating conversation patterns through audience participation.

Electronic mass media and communication networks in rural development: actual ITPs
In all three case study countries, electronic media are, to some extent, present in rural areas, mostly electronic mass media, but also, to a lesser degree, networked electronic media. In Vietnam, networked electronic media refer almost only to basic telecom services, whereas in Indonesia computer mediated communication is used, in a few cases, to electronically network larger rural towns, e.g., Indonesian postal services. The presence of electronic mass media and networked electronic media is more expansive in rural Peru, although still relatively limited. This section contains a brief overview of examples of electronic media in rural development on which data has been collected during field research. During the field research preparations I selected electronic media representatives out of the different groups of electronic media, as classified by means of the ideal-types, which were present in the respective case study country. Sometimes representatives of ideal-types couldn’t be identified and I
consider the absence of those electronic media also as indicative of the situation of electronic media in rural development in the respective countries.

Vietnam
The electronic media used in rural development cover the entire range of interactivity described in tables 6.4 and 6.5. However, only a few examples of electronically mediated networks could be identified during the field research (1998). A more recent government initiative is a pilot communication network, launched by MARD. The network intends to improve existing registration patterns and to provide more relevant information to rural communities. Another aspect of the network is the intention to stimulate horizontal information flows. However, the project has not moved beyond a pilot phase. Another example, the SFIRS-network, is an initiative of a Swiss NGO to build a virtual network of institutions to stimulate information exchanges. The exchanges would enable the institutions to build databases for consultation by groups and individuals in rural areas. A few State-affiliated ICPs are creating web content and, in the case of CINET and MARD, also intend to establish some local access points for consultation by people in rural towns. An international initiative undertaken by the ITU and UNESCO concerns creating multi-purpose communication telecenters (MCTs), which are expected to provide access to basic telecom services, the Internet and other sources of information. However, the State bureaucracy has stifled progress on the MCT project and apparently prefers information provision through allocation patterns. As a result, the State prevents MCTs from being used in an electronically mediated rural network. In rural Vietnam, the majority of electronically mediated information is still disseminated through electronic mass media. Local radio and TV stations, the latter part of the national VTV network, mainly relay national broadcasts and lack both funds and skills to produce more than short daily broadcasts with general information. Local People's Committees control the radio stations, which means that to some degree two-way communication (allocation combined with audience feedback) is technically possible, but audience participation is limited. Table 11.1 contains Vietnam’s electronic media examples and distinguishes among State, non-State and commercial electronic media initiatives.

Indonesia
In Indonesia, the use of electronic media in rural development also covers the entire range of interactivity, although the situation is very skewed between Java and the rest of the archipelago. My actual field research was restricted to Java, but some data on other islands has been collected. Some organizations have started to build virtual networks with the use of the Internet (e.g., CITN, PUPUK, DIKBUDD and ITB), but the nodes of the networks are in larger towns. However, CITN attempts to link non-electronic rural networks to its electronically mediated network. The State-owned postal services (Pos Indonesia) have linked a large number of the post offices to the Internet and provide Internet access, albeit only in larger towns and cities. The provision of basic telecom services is being expanded to rural areas through communication centers, but only in larger towns and cities do communication centers offer more than telephone access. On a small scale, radio communication is used in DIKBUDD's distance learning project to facilitate access to education, but not to create conversation patterns or electronically mediated rural networks11. At ITB Bandung, an initiative was started to construct local radio communication networks, with access to the Internet, in rural areas. However, in 1998 the legislative and regulatory environment did not support the independent nature of the initiative. In the Soeharto era, electronic mass media were the dominant source of electronically mediated information and the information was provided through local branches of RRI. The State-owned and -controlled TVRI and RRI provided information through allocation patterns, whereas the commercial television stations were allowed to independently provide information within the Pancasila constraints. Because of the increased openness in newspapers in the months after Soeharto's resignation, the provision of information through electronic mass media is also likely to move towards soft allocation and information provision ideal-types. Table 11.2 contains the electronic media examples for Indonesia and

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11 Information flows in an educational context typically follow allocation patterns, apart from possible interaction in classrooms, and I consider such information in public schools to be State-controlled and dependent on the existing power structure.
also distinguishes among State, non-State or strictly commercial electronic media initiatives.

Peru

In rural Peru, electronic mass media have long played an important role in information dissemination. The Tierra Fecunda radio program (CEPES) pioneered a model of audience participation in the 1970s. Under the Fujimori administration, independent radio stations continued to perform a social actor role in civil society. A large number of the local electronic mass media are affiliated with religious groups, and some of them operate on a commercial basis. Although demand for commercial television and radio stations is enormous, the information provided by these electronic mass media tends to have an urban bias and very few programs are aimed at rural information needs. However, independent information is provided by some commercial television stations (e.g., Frecuencia Latina), despite cumbersome attempts by the Peruvian State to restrict the flows of such information. The State itself does not actively censor radio stations, nor does it use State-owned electronic mass media for active propaganda. Nevertheless, the State has established local radio stations in border regions to counter the flow of information from cross-border radio stations with Peruvian information. After international involvement (FIDA) stopped, the State brought experimental community radio stations under control of MinAg and their continued contribution to free and independent information dissemination in their rural constituencies is considered doubtful. However, apart from using the legislative and regulatory framework, the State allegedly also more covertly attempts to influence information disseminated by local electronic mass media.

The use of networked electronic media for rural development is dominated by NGOs and other entities in civil society, a few of whom have started to construct electronically mediated networks (e.g., CCTA Red-CINTEL, ITDG-CIDER and RCP), mostly to create consultation patterns. Electronic networking is in its infancy and supported by few international development organizations and most of those organizations prefer to work through government channels (MinPres). Registration patterns appear to be poorly developed, partly caused by the roll-back of State-institutions in rural areas. Nevertheless, a number of local NGOs support isolated initiatives improving local registration patterns and supporting information dissemination through soft allocation, consultation and emulated conversation patterns. An important obstacle to establishing local level electronically mediated conversation patterns is a lack of economic facilities for people in rural areas. Privately owned communication and Internet centers are present in a number of rural towns, but operate on a strictly commercial basis. The telecom infrastructure has been improving and expanding since 1994 and is expected to continue doing so in the coming years. All district capitals are expected to have at least one public telephone by 2003, but due to the remoteness of villages and small settlements in rural areas and the low population density in those areas, provision of telecom services beyond the district level is expected to take much longer. The State has restricted its use of networked electronic media to internal networking, a few web sites (e.g., Congreso Virtual, MinAg and other ministries) and efficiency initiatives. Perhaps the most interesting networked electronic media initiative is Quipunet, which is a US-based NGO connecting Peruvians in the diaspora with Peru. The network serves as a platform for interactive communication and for the coordination of development and disaster relief activities in Peru. Table 11.1 contains the electronic media examples and distinguishes between State, non-State or strictly commercial electronic media initiatives.

Outlines of I&C power structures

The case studies and the brief overview of preferred and actual ITPs in Vietnam, Indonesia and Peru, provide only a global overview of the I&C power structures in the respective countries. However, in my opinion, the case material is sufficient to maintain that I&C power structures have a significant impact on information flows in nation-states in general, and in rural areas in particular. The assessments of I&C power structures in the case study countries is based on which entities control content, nature and storage of information. The preferred and actual ITPs provide some insight as to whether information flows are likely to strengthen or change the I&C power structure.
**Vietnam**
The State (i.e., the VNCP) is the main, and perhaps the only relevant, node in the I&C power structure of Vietnam. The electronic mass media are owned and controlled by the State, the VNCP and its affiliated mass organizations and networked electronic media are controlled by the State or SOE monopolies. International organizations must work through the State, independent civil society is nonexistent and electronically mediated information flows within and among people-based organizations are limited. The dominant ITPs are allocation, allocation-like consultation and vertical registration patterns, which all serve to maintain or strengthen the existing I&C power structure. Legislation and regulation support existing patterns and appear aimed at constraining the ITPs which allow for individual control over content and nature of information flows. However, political restrictions on the freedom of speech, and a priority of communitarian rights over individual rights, favor central control over individual control.

**Indonesia**
The situation concerning the I&C power structure in Indonesia under Soeharto was more complex than in Vietnam, but the State, together with Golkar and its closely connected vested economic interests, was still the main node in the I&C power structure. Some of the electronic mass media were State-owned and others were controlled by people connected to Soeharto. Only a few national electronic mass media were relatively independent. International organizations had to work through the State-bureaucracy and most elements of civil society, as well as the nominally people-based organizations, were State-controlled. However, commercial electronic mass media, national and local, initiated information flows and, thus, can at least be considered nodes of subordinate importance in the I&C power structure. The dominant ITP was allocation and in Repelita VI networked electronic media were increasingly being considered for vertical registration patterns. However, the actual and preferred ITPs essentially all served to strengthen the I&C power structure. Legislation and regulation supported SOE monopolies, as well as oligopolies of State-connected vested economic interests, in the electronic media markets. Restrictions on the political freedom of speech, formal and more informal, a priority of communitarian rights over individual rights, as well as a preference for political and economic stability over social change, further illustrated the State’s intention to maintain the centralized nature of the I&C power structure during the New Order-era.

Under Wahid, the situation has changed in the sense that increased political freedom of speech has allowed for independent electronic mass media to become a more important node of the I&C power structure. However, the State-bureaucracy is largely intact, albeit less powerful and effective, and the State remains the dominant node in the I&C power structure, with SOEs continuing to hold on to monopolies in the networked electronic media markets. On the other hand, civil society and people-based organizations can be expected to thrive in the present political climate. However, the economic condition of Indonesia may prevent these I&C power structure nodes from becoming important in the short run.

**Peru**
The I&C power structure in Peru is the most diverse of the three countries. The direct role of the State is limited, but its impact on the composition and balance of power in the I&C power structure is significant as a result of the centralization of executive power and a rubber stamp parliament. The electronic media conglomerates are arguably the main nodes in the I&C power structure, although small-scale electronic mass media, NGOs, civil society and people-based organizations are to some extent also relevant nodes in the I&C power structure. The main ITPs are hard allocation and registration patterns, but a number of soft allocation, consultation and conversation patterns can be distinguished. The less powerful nodes initiate those patterns and prevent the balance in the I&C power structure from shifting too strongly towards a dominant position by vested interests. However, the State influences the balance of power through economic legislation and regulation, which all favor hard allocation patterns and discourage patterns with individual and independent control information flows. As a result, alternative ITPs, other than hard allocation, are constantly under threat of being marginalized.
11.7 IDEAL-TYPES OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA USE

This section summarizes section 11.6, illustrating the suggested relation and ideal-types of table 6.4 with examples of electronic media use in Vietnam, Indonesia and Peru. The limited sample does not allow for validation of the assumed relation. However, the examples do, in my opinion, provide an incentive for validation, or rejection, through further research. Due to the fact that the field research had a qualitative nature and, given time and financial limitations, only a relatively small number of representatives of electronic media had been interviewed. However, information obtained through expert-interviews, official documents, Internet publications and literature have provided enough material for an illustrative overview of ideal-types of electronic media in rural development in Vietnam, Indonesia and Peru.

In all three countries, a difference exists between ideal-types preferred by the State on the one side, and local NGOs, private initiatives and commercial enterprises on the other. In the tables for the case study countries, the State-controlled or -supported use of electronic media in rural development has been given a darker shade to distinguish those initiatives from non-government electronic media initiatives. In most cases, the use of the electronic media is at an operational level of interactivity below the functional interactivity of those electronic media. I perceive that such differences indicate the extent to which governments effectively support or discourage electronic media to facilitate rural development as freedom of choice. The extent to which a State wants to control electronic media in rural development is a further indicator of the conduciveness of a country's socio-political and economic context.

**Vietnam**

On the basis of its democratic deficit, the conduciveness of Vietnam's socio-political and economic context has been assessed in section 11.5 been as low. This section confirms the low level of conduciveness through table 11.1, which illustrates the prevailing ideal-types for electronically mediated information flows. The low level of conduciveness of Vietnam apparently coincides with State-controlled electronic media, which corresponds with ideal-types for low levels of conduciveness. In my opinion, part of the explanation is the cautious approach of the VNCP and the State towards information issues in general. Another element is the restriction on private enterprise in networked electronic media. Together these two factors seem to limit non-governmental electronic media initiatives to international organizations, such as Helvetas, a Swiss NGO, which worked on an electronically mediated network project. The Hanoi-based, government-affiliated, Institute of Information Technology (IOIT), an Internet-pioneer in Vietnam, initiated two virtual communities, which could, to some extent, be considered an example of interactive communication. However, the participants tend to be highly educated and urban and the State is said to monitor the information exchanges. Through software-technical measures, the VDC (a VNPT subsidiary) also limits access to web sites outside of Vietnam.

If the State-initiated and -supported ideal-types can be considered an indicator of the level of conduciveness of the socio-political and economic context, the actual applications of electronic media in information dissemination all point to a low level of conduciveness. Legislation and regulation, as well as the lack of economic freedom, have kept application of electronic media with a high level of interactivity mostly restricted to urban areas and a few rural towns. Furthermore, the information aspect of networked electronic media initiatives is strictly regulated, which, amongst other things, has also led to delays in, and amendments to, the MCT-initiative. In fact, working through official government channels arguably restricts the use of highly interactive technology because of the low level of conduciveness to social change. Information flows for information dissemination, electronically mediated through networks, are effectively controlled with respect to content and nature. This has led to information patterns, generated by networked electronic media, but with features of allocation and allocation-like consultation patterns, rather than interactive consultation or conversation patterns. Although identifying more applications of electronic media is possible, the ideal-types 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are definitely absent in rural areas and not feasible given restrictions on political freedoms, as well as limitations on individual economic freedoms of people in rural areas. The socio-political and economic context does not allow for local-level independent or commercial provision of information (ideal-types...
Table 11.1  Ideal-types of electronically mediated information dissemination in Vietnam

| NetNam, VAREnet | (independent information provision, local) | (independent information provision, national) |
| SFIRS-network | (commercial information provision, local) | (commercial information provision, national) |
| Internet, CINET, MARID | local radio (People's Comm.) | VoV (radio), VTV (television) |

1.2 and 2.2), nor national-level commercial or independent electronically mediated information provision following allocation patterns (ideal-types 2.2 and 2.3). The identifiable ideal-types point to the same conclusion as the analysis of ITP patterns, which is a preference for allocation patterns and a prohibitive (ideal-types 1.2, 1.3, 2.2 and 2.3) and restrictive (ideal-types 1.1, 3.1) environment for consultation and conversation patterns. Although a need for increased individual social and economic freedoms in Vietnam also exists, the constraints resulting from a lack of political freedoms appear to be the most prominent factor with respect to the role of electronic media and the ideal-types of electronically mediated information dissemination in Vietnam in general, and in rural areas in particular.

**Indonesia**

The situation in Indonesia is slightly more complicated than in Vietnam, if only because of the recent political changes. The political freedom for electronic media in Indonesia had already increased in the early months after Soeharto’s resignation (the period of the field research), which was illustrated by the openness of electronic mass media on issues previously considered too sensitive. Further changes have followed and, to some extent, my field data may no longer give a completely accurate impression of the current situation. However, reports and publications on Indonesia suggest that electronic media are using their increased freedom of speech to focus on political events, instead of on information dissemination to facilitate increased individual freedoms in rural areas or on a social actor role in development.

Policy documents and five-year plans indicate that the emphasis in Indonesia is on allocation and registration patterns and, therefore, on information provision through the State-owned electronic mass media and its local level branches. In section 11.5, the level of conduciveness under Soeharto was estimated as ranging from low to medium. Even under Soeharto, however, the socio-political and economic context of Indonesia was more conducive than in Vietnam, which appears to be illustrated by table 11.2. Although most State initiatives correspond with the low levels of conduciveness associated with a top-down orientation of development, private initiatives indicate a medium level of conduciveness as a result of a larger political, and particularly a larger economic, freedom in Indonesia as compared to Vietnam. However, ideal-types 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are still absent in rural Indonesia, which may be partly due to a lack of economic facilities of organizations and people. However, even the interviewed experts lacked awareness of electronic media’s potential to facilitate interactive communication, electronically mediated consultation patterns and audience participation in broadcasts supporting rural development.

In my opinion, the emphasis on allocation under Soeharto illustrates the low level of conduciveness to social change, at least concerning initiatives other than via State-controlled, centralized and top-down
development. However, political freedom was not as restricted as in Vietnam and if the electronic media initiatives for rural development were not considered contrary to *Pancasila*, some room existed for information other than through allocation patterns.

The Wahid administration does not appear to be as sensitive to the consequences of non-controlled information flows via the Internet as the Vietnamese State. In Indonesia, the Internet is not as tightly regulated as it is in Vietnam and, in the larger cities on Java and in major tourist destinations, Internet access is widely available through commercial cyber-cafes and post offices. However, Internet access has not spread to rural areas of Indonesia, other than to a number of larger rural towns with access in post offices. Similar to Vietnam, virtual communities (mailing lists) have been established, but participants of information exchanges that take place on the Indonesian mailing lists (Indonesia-L is a good example) are predominantly urban based. The commercial electronic mass media do provide, to a certain extent, independent information, although some of them are owned by Soeharto’s children and business friends. The new political situation may already have created examples of soft allocation and local commercial radio stations may have shifted, partially, from only providing entertainment to also disseminating information directed at specific needs of the rural population.

Although individual political freedom has increased under president Wahid, individual social and economic freedoms are still limited in rural Indonesia. The ideal-types of electronically mediated information dissemination indicate that, even under Soeharto, the State did not control the economic domain to the same extent as in Vietnam. As a result, commercial information dissemination could be identified. The relative economic freedom, in combination with a lack of awareness of the potential of the Internet, led to few initiatives concerning networked electronic media and information dissemination.

**Peru**

The situation in Peru is significantly different from Vietnam and Indonesia. Despite the current democratic deficit, a number of the ideal-types which can be identified in (rural) Peru correspond with a high level of conduciveness to social change of the socio-political and economic context. However, all the examples of electronic mass media, listed in ideal-types 1.2 and 1.3 of table 11.3 have been the subject of scrutiny by the State and of attempts to limit their activities and impact.

To restrict the activities of independent local electronic mass media, a law has been proposed to reduce their income from commercial sources and provide funds through the State instead. At the same time, journalists of independent electronic mass media receive threats and the owner of *Frecuencia Latina* has been stripped of his citizenship and banned. As a result of Fujimori’s neo-liberal economic policies, State-controlled electronic media use virtually does not exist, except for some small projects concerning community radio stations. The government’s preference is information provision through commercial electronic mass media conglomerates. The supportive economic conditions have resulted in the acquisitions by media conglomerates, which are based in Lima, of local stations.
As in Vietnam and Indonesia, limited individual social and economic freedoms in rural areas in Peru hamper a role for electronic media in rural development. Formally, Peru does not restrict individual political freedoms, but actual freedom of the press is under continuous pressure from the State. In addition, the State attempts to control electronically mediated information dissemination by influencing economic facilities in favor of a predominantly economically-oriented information provision by media conglomerates. Economic policies are de facto political restrictions and the representations of ideal-types 1.2 and 1.3, in particular 1.2, increasingly face legislative and regulatory economic constraints.

### 11.8 CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of the case studies has been to illustrate a suggested relationship among (i) the nature of the socio-political and economic context of a nation-state, (ii) the interactivity of electronic media and (iii) the preferred and actual use of electronic media in facilitating information dissemination for rural development. This chapter has presented an overview of the analyses of, and comparisons among, the case study countries. The central concept of conduciveness to social change, interpreted as increased individual freedoms for people, was linked to a feasibility of autonomous spheres. Finally, examples of ITPs, outlines of I&C power structures and examples of ideal-types were presented.

The comparison has led to some interesting conclusions. Despite clear deficiencies in the political systems of Indonesia and Peru, the democratic deficit gradually decreases from Vietnam to Indonesia to Peru, with the accompanying improvement in the status of electronic mass media. Vietnam does not allow independent electronic mass media, Indonesia restricts those media to entertainment and Peru allows some national and local electronic mass media to provide independent information and to perform a social actor role. Parallel to decreasing democratic deficits, the political freedom of free speech is being less interpreted in political terms from Vietnam to Indonesia to Peru, but more so in economic terms of legislation and regulation. The three case study countries illustrate that the political freedom to free speech is likely to be larger in countries with a lower democratic deficit, but that economic policies can compensate to a certain extent for the absence of political control over information dissemination. The recent presidential elections in Peru illustrate this in the sense that access to the electronic mass media was skewed in favor of the incumbent. Most of the electronic mass media are owned by a few families who have long formed an economic elite in Peru. The situation for networked electronic media also appears to improve with decreasing democratic deficits, mainly as a result of a shift in priority from communitarian to individual rights. An emphasis on free markets, which seems to coincide with this shift, allows for private initiatives with networked electronic media and more individual control over content and nature of information flows. However, a reliance on free market mechanisms also appears to increase the possibility of a substitution of political
controls with economic policies, legislation and regulation, which favor information dissemination through electronic media on the basis of an economic rationale alone. Until now, Peru’s neo-liberal economic context has been beneficial to the expansion of infrastructure for networked electronic media, whereas Vietnam’s political context has strictly limited free information flows through those electronic media. With respect to Indonesia, its economic context is less conducive than Peru, but its political context is less restrictive than that in Vietnam. The intermediate position of Indonesia’s socio-political and economic context is also reflected in the presence of ideal-types linked to networked electronic media. In my opinion, the case studies appear to support a relation between conduciveness to social change, with the democratic deficit being an important element, and the level of interactivity of electronic media used for information dissemination in rural areas.

A final conclusion from the comparison is that, although the approaches to rural development vary from authoritarian and State-controlled (Vietnam) to a laissez-faire reliance on the trickle-down effects of free market mechanisms and a limited economic role by the State (Peru), in none of the three countries does the socio-political and economic context appear to be conducive to social change as development as freedom of choice through autonomous spheres. In my opinion, all three States favor centralization of executive power in the name of development and under the guise of sovereignty of the nation-state instead of sovereignty of the people. The composition of the I&C power structures, their existing balance of power, as well as the State preference for a few central nodes in the I&C power structure illustrate the dominance of allocation and registration patterns and the relative scarcity of conversation-like consultation and real conversation patterns.