



## Media Conglomeration and Worker Commodification: Analyzing the Political Economy of Media Spatialization in Indonesia

Asep Sunandar<sup>1</sup>, Rizki Briandana<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Universitas Mercu Buana, Jakarta, Indonesia

(\*) Corresponding Author: [rizki.briandana@mercubuana.ac.id](mailto:rizki.briandana@mercubuana.ac.id)

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### Abstract

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The rapid transformation of the media industry, marked by conglomeration and spatialization, raises concerns about the commodification of media workers. This study investigates the practice of media spatialization within PT: Media Nusantara Citra (MNC) and its impact on the commodification of reporters and camera persons. Drawing on Vincent Mosco's theory of political economy and Foucault's power relations framework, the study employs a critical case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with key informants and observations, complemented by secondary data. The findings reveal three typologies of spatialization—open, closed, and hidden—and their implications for media workers, including labor, psychological, economic, and capability exploitation. While efficient for the corporation, the integration system has led to excessive workloads, disproportionate wages, and diminished autonomy for media workers. Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on media political economy by affirming the relevance of spatialization in understanding contemporary media practices and worker commodification. Practically, the findings advocate for strengthening trade unions and regulatory enforcement to safeguard media workers' rights and promote a more equitable media ecosystem. The study underscores the need for corporate strategies prioritizing employee well-being to mitigate the adverse effects of conglomeration-driven spatialization.

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## INTRODUCTION

Media is a means of information that various groups in society massively use. Many interests participate in the working mechanism of the media, which cannot be separated, namely, those closely related to economic and political or power interests (Geni et al., 2021). Viewed from the perspective of the political economy of the media, the condition of contemporary media is marked by the expansion of media concentration and conglomeration (Byerly, 2014). Therefore, the media industry is associated with the growth of the spirit of capitalism through the emergence of media conglomerates

(Habsari, 2012). The support of technology has also facilitated the emergence of various communication media. The transformation allows the communicator to distribute their message to the audience and the audience's feedback on their interpreted message (Mathieu et al., 2020; Nugroho et al., 2024). One such example of technology's transformation in media is social media, where communicators and audiences interact to have an interactive communication space within the media (Ida & Saud, 2020).

Conglomeration also brings the trend of media in Indonesia to carry out spatialization, as one of the political economy concepts of media owned by Vincent Mosco, which can also be said to be a process of institutional extension of the media in the form of corporations (Adila, 2011). Conglomerates carry out spatialization in the form of vertical integration, which threatens the principle of content diversity, which leads to the homogenization of information and public discourse (Christiani, 2015). There are two integrations in the spatialization concept discovered by Vincent Mosco. The first is horizontal concentration, referring to mergers within the same market. Then, vertical concentration, namely the media industry as a business entity, expands the power of its production process (Simamora, 2016).

Among the media in Indonesia, PT. Media Nusantara Citra (MNC) is one of the largest media groups in Indonesia and even labels itself as the largest integrated media in Southeast Asia, which applies spatialization with vertical integration. A study states that this system is considered successful at the corporate level (Mutiah et al., 2019). As a large media group, MNCs are responsible for being Indonesia's primary source of information. The public already has a high credibility towards MNC Media Group and is responsible for ensuring it will remain the same (Samiaji et al., 2022).

MNC Media's business strategy is based on an integration pattern, by rebranding all news departments. The iNews name is set as branding in the news department, including four Free To Air TVs. Under the iNews institution, news gathering is responsible for accommodating the needs of four Free TVs and one TV channel or cable TV in the news department. This can be seen in TV news broadcasts, where a reporter is doing a report or a live report for four TV stations. This indicates that reporters have an increased workload with system integration. Integrating identity within different media will harmonize message construction and distribution. The identity ensures that each communicator will have common goals to share with their audience (Briandana et al., 2021).

This is related to research by Briandana et al. (2020), which stated that there was an increase in turnover every year at MNC Media, primarily after integration was implemented. The study results show that workload is a significant factor in increasing turnover with increased working time, many assignments, and tasks with high mental challenges. This triggers a decrease in employee satisfaction, which increases post-integration turnover (Gunawan et al., 2019). Consumer satisfaction is another crucial thing to be monitored by communication media. Their satisfactory value would build loyalty within the community to benefit further the organization (Fransisca & Briandana, 2022).

This condition gives media workers a means of production to maximize profits (Pratopo, 2018). This is known as the commodification of media workers to increase profits. The commodification of media workers occurs due to the transformation of the media towards conglomeration as capital accumulation following capitalist goals. Maulana & Astagini (2021) also stated that there had been exploitation of media workers in carrying out their functions. Previous studies stated that most of the impact occurred on reporters who entered the news-gathering division. However, the newsgathering is a

reporter and a camera person. Reporters and camera persons are an interrelated unit. If there is an increase in reporter turnover, then there is the potential for a decrease in the number of existing reporters. When there is a decrease in the number of reporters, there is a potential imbalance in the number of human resources between reporters and camera persons, where the number of camera persons will be more than reporters.

Based on this background, the formulation of the problem in this study is how the practice of media spatialization occurs in MNC Media and how the commodification of workers is practiced at news gatherings in MNC Media. Meanwhile, this study aims to analyze the practice of media spatialization that occurs in MNC Media and investigate the commodification practice of workers at news gatherings in MNC Media. Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on the political economy of media by examining media spatialization practices and the commodification of workers in the Indonesian media industry. The findings affirm the relevance of Vincent Mosco's concept of spatialization in the context of media conglomeration, mainly through the vertical integration implemented by MNC Media. This study provides deeper insights into the impacts of spatialization on the homogenization of information and public discourse. It highlights how media transformation contributes to capitalism through the exploitation of workers. Additionally, it offers a fresh perspective on workload and its effects on employee turnover, especially within the news-gathering division. Nevertheless, practically, the findings serve as a reference for media industry management, particularly at MNC Media, to evaluate integration strategies and workload management. Insights into high workloads and increased turnover rates can guide companies in designing policies prioritizing employee well-being, such as fairer task allocation, workload management, and improved job satisfaction. Furthermore, the study is relevant for media regulators to maintain the content diversity principle despite media concentration and conglomeration. These practical recommendations aim to foster a more equitable and sustainable media ecosystem.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Political Economy of Media

Media Political Economy Theory originates from Marxist thought, which sees a power relations problem behind a production routine and policy in the mass media (Haryono, 2019). Vincent Mosco focuses on the political economy in the media context, which is related to the problem of capital, namely capital. The media is used as a money machine whose profits will be reinvested for media development by the owners of capital (Briandana, Haris, et al., 2024). Vincent Mosco identified three processes that form the main starting point in the political economy of communication: commodification, spatialization, and structuration (Christiani, 2015).

Commodification is changing the utility value of goods and services into a commodity that can be marketed and valued at its exchange rate, which can be used to accumulate even greater capital. During the development of capital, there is a process of exploitation. Tannady et al. (2020) said that there are three core concepts of commodification, namely that commodification can happen to anything, commodification exists as a process (initial and final conditions for anything that is commodified), and commodification changes the way society views things that are commodified. This means that in the industrial context, workers can also be categorized as objects involved in commodification.

Maulana & Astagini (2021) mention that commodities also contain other meanings in the context of the commodification of workers, where workers as product producers are positioned as a result of the exchange of abilities, not because of skills. This is expressed in Marxian theory, which states that capital is a value that develops through production and exchange, resulting in workers being forced to exchange their labor power for wages that do not fully compensate for the labor they sell.

Mosco (2009) argued that there are three forms of commodification in communication: the commodification of content, audiences, and workers. The commodification of content relates to converting messages and data into meaning systems in production marketed by the media (Briandana, Hesti, et al., 2024). An example is a form of advertising converted into television show production. Audience commodification relates to the media's gathering of audiences, which is then used as quantity data for advertisers (Christiani, 2015). The commodification of workers relates to using communication systems and technology to expand the commodification of labor processes. Then, the commodification of workers is also carried out by regulating flexibility and control over workers and "selling" workers to increase the exchange rate of the contents of media messages (Rahmadani et al., 2024).

Spatialization is overcoming space and time constraints between mass media and communication technology (Khadziq, 2016). Communication content, audience, and workforce are turned into marketable commodities. Structuring creates social relations, especially those organized around social class, gender, and race. The political economy of communication has specifically discussed the spatialization related to the institutional expansion of corporate power in the communications industry (Simamora, 2016). This is manifested in the growth in the size of media companies, which can be measured through assets, revenues, profits, employees, and the value of shares in financial markets. The most significant emphasis is studying the various forms of corporate concentration or how firms strengthen their organizations to dominate the market. There are two main types of concentration related to media concentration: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal concentration relates to a company in one media line buying a significant interest in another media operation that is not directly related to its principal business (Tapsell, 2015). Meanwhile, vertical concentration relates to the company's concentration in a line of business, which expands the company's control over the production process.

There are two types of integration in vertical concentration: forward and backward. Forward integration is realized when media production institutions acquire themselves with media distributors to expand their reach. Backward integration is expanding company control to the basis of the production process. This is manifested when a media distributor acquires a media production institution or a media production institution acquires a media-supporting raw material institution.

## **Power Relations**

To analyze the spatialization of media and the commodification of media workers, Foucault's theory of power relations is also needed as a scalpel to explore this research further (Pratopo, 2018). In ideas about power and knowledge, Foucault argues that power and knowledge have a strong and perfect relationship (Adila, 2011). Foucault's simple understanding is that power can create or produce knowledge to perpetuate power itself, and knowledge can produce power. Power, in Foucault's perspective, is defined not as a subject in terms of being a ruler, as in traditional terminology or the classical era, where power is only understood as a kingdom or government, where there is a king who is at

the top of the pyramid, then his ministers are in the middle and subordinates the king (the people) below. If the king issued an order, his ministers would carry it out, imposing it on the king's subjects (Murschetz, 2016). Foucault makes the meaning of power broad, no longer limited to being a subject, but that power exists in a relationship or interaction between humans.

He observed that power exists in various relationships and can be built from the bottom of a pyramid (Kishore & Stiff, 2020). So, the measure of power does not lie in the subject of that power but in the relationships built between many people. Power has an accompanying characteristic: every person or power from whatever form of relationship always tends to dictate or form a discourse, which, in the end, will produce knowledge.

### **Hierarchy of Influence**

This theory is supported by Shoemaker and Stephen Reese's Hierarchy of Influences theory, a framework to help explain the many things that influence news content consumed by audiences. This concept or theory assumes that the content of media messages is a series of influences resulting from internal policies of media institutions and influences from external media. Internal influence on media content refers to the interests of media owners, individual journalists, and the practices of media institutions. External factors influencing media content include advertisers, government, society, and other external factors. This indicates that the contents of the message or media agenda result from pressure from within and outside the media institution. From this, it can be illustrated that strong influences accumulate at each level (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016).

To explain the many things that affect news content consumed by audiences, this theory can find significance and relevance in answering critical questions through various levels of analysis (Krisdinanto, 2014). This level of analysis can be defined and linked from micro to macro through the following characteristics: (1) Individual level, which takes into account the personal characteristics of media workers, the news values they espouse, the professional roles they take, and demographic characteristics others (for example, gender, race, class), because this influences a journalist's decisions based on psychological level attributes (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). (2) Media routine is a daily habit that media organizations carry out in packaging and processing news (Kuncoro, 2022). It relates to the mechanism and process of determining news, whereby as a social practice, power is exercised not always by the specific orders of leaders but also through establishing patterns of practice that serve the needs of the organization, conform to the requirements of information sources, control workflow, and provide it with a structure that meaning (Nugroho, 2021; Reese & Shoemaker, 2016). The media routine has three elements, namely, news sources (suppliers), society (consumers), and media organizations (processors) (F. S. Nugroho & Andhita, 2021). (3) The Organizational level relates to the organization's management structure, policies, and media objectives. Shoemaker assesses that this level has a more significant impact on the content of media coverage. This is because media organizations generate policies and regulations that govern the media, including editorial issues, which can be the primary determinant in formulating provisions in news coverage (Kuncoro, 2022). Reese & Shoemaker (2016) regards this level as the dominant factor in message mediation mechanisms, compared to the individual level and media routines. Individual media workers and routines are subject to the structures and policies of the organizations or institutions that encompass them. The power of this organization can be illustrated when media owners put pressure on specific reports, and media workers have to obey them individually and routinely. (4)

Social institutions relate to how various organizations that carry out media work unite to become an institution. On the other hand, media institutions are affected by how they enter into structural interdependence with other large systemic actors such as the state, public relations, and advertising (Yoedtadi et al., 2021). Advertisers can influence news coverage with various favorable demands from advertisers. This can then make essential news portions minimal or even postponed. This intervention can be carried out by holding the ad withdrawal hostage if it does not match what the advertiser wants. (5) The social system, where Shoemaker and Reese present this level as a structure that generally connects society with institutions created by the community. Because the social system is comprehensive, Shoemaker and Reese simplified it into four subsystems: ideology, economy, politics, and culture (Dave, 2011). These subsystems are in the macro domain and can sometimes be challenging to identify.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a critical case study method. This case study is critical because the researcher deliberately chooses to empirically analyze in detail a case that provides a particular focus for analyzing the structure of social media. The researcher conducts a detailed analysis of media workers to uncover the political economy practices of the media. Various data collection techniques are adopted in this critical case study approach (Miles et al., 2014). Case studies are, therefore, not an end in themselves but rather an empirical resource for exploring broader questions about the nature of oppressive social structures (Yin, 2013). Most importantly, this study is designed to critically address the spatialization of media and the commodification of media workers at the level of actual practice about the broader question of the exploitation of media workers. The subjects in the study consisted of seven informants, including news directors, active reporters, active camera persons, former reporters, former camera persons, coverage coordinators, and camera person coordinators. The data collection method in this study consisted of primary data obtained from in-depth interviews with key informants and observations. Data was obtained through in-depth interviews using open-ended questions about perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. Then, the primary data is obtained through observation and an overview of the field through attitudes, actions, conversations, interpersonal interactions, and so on (Raco, 2010). Meanwhile, secondary data is collected through essential documents and records related to research problems, which are used as complementary data to support this research. The data obtained is complete, valid, and not based on estimates. The data analysis technique used in this study is the interactive model analysis technique owned by Miles and Huberman, where the data analysis is carried out interactively during data collection and continues until completion (Asipi et al., 2022).

In this study, the researcher carried out several stages in data reduction; namely, the data obtained was then collected into written data. After that, data is edited by grouping and selecting data that is relevant to the research problem. Afterward, the researcher compiled data relevant to the research problem to be grouped (categorized) and arranged based on the problem formulation and predetermined goals. Then, the researcher compiled the concepts and explanations regarding the data group obtained during the research. For data that has been reduced, there is a process of presenting the data in the form of explanatory text that describes charts, tables, and the like related to the research object that has been reduced previously. This is in line with the opinion of Miles and

Huberman, who stated that narrative text is most often used to present data in qualitative research (Miles et al., 2014).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The media industry landscape is not far from that of the big players who create power through media group schemes. From the perspective of the political economy of the media, this condition is referred to as media concentration, which then creates media conglomeration. MNC Media concentrates on media as the holding company for large corporations, forming media conglomerates. In terms of reporting, MNC Media has run its business through the news department, using the concept of media integration since 2016, which focuses on news production. The big picture of the MNC Media news ecosystem relates to the ownership and management of six TVs, six portals, one radio, and one OTT. Each platform has an editorial that has links to production and distribution. A Director of News leads all these reporting platforms, each editorial outlet having its Editor in Chief. The Editors are assisted by the News Manager, who oversees their respective production units, such as Executive Producers, Producers, and Assistant Producers. There are fifteen editorial units whose material fulfillment is supported by one sizeable integrated gathering unit through iNews gathering. I am one news director who now leads all these news platforms. Each editorial outlet has its editor, Inews editor, MNC TV editor, Okezone editor, Sindo News editor, and so on, all of them have editors. Below that, there will be production units, such as producers, executive producers, and so on.

Now that is the production, bro. Imagine the production. For all these production units, the gathering is supported by one gathering from Inews. So yes, how many were there? There were 15 editorial units, supported by a large gathering unit integrated with Inews (Personal Communication, January 2023). The entire gathering, including reporters and camera operators, serves all platforms owned by MNC Media. MNC Media's business model is more one-to-many, where only one reporter and cameraman are necessary in the field. The resulting scripts are distributed through the coverage coordinators to television gatherings, gathering portals, and radio via email pools.

In order to analyze the spatialization practices carried out by MNC Media, there are at least two primary concentration forms related to media concentration: horizontal and vertical. MNC Media has a reasonably large distribution area. This can be analyzed by first explaining the expansion of the business as an overview. This description will be able to parse and describe the company's concentration on a line of business, which then expands the company's control over the production process, which is referred to as vertical concentration. Vertical concentration has two types of integration: forward and backward. Forward integration is the further extension of the enterprise for value realization. This integration is realized when media production institutions acquire themselves with media distributors to expand their reach (Rahmadani et al., 2024). In this context, based on the company's footprints, MNC Media established a holding company in advertising and content-based media through MNCN in 2001 after owning shares in the media and broadcasting industry since 1981. This MNCN acquired 70% of GlobalTV shares (Annual Report Global Mediacom, 2021). After that, MNCN also maneuvered by acquiring RCTI in 2004, which is currently RCTI, then establishing the Seputar Indonesia daily newspaper or Koransindo, establishing and overseeing four radio stations, acquiring PT MNI Global (MNI Global), which publishes the Genie tabloid, then launching MNC News and MNC Entertainment in Indovision in, acquired 75% shares from TPI through

PT Cipta Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia which later changed its name to MNC TV, acquired PT MNC Sky Vision (MSKY) with the Indovision, Top TV and OkeVision brands which were then merged with the MNC Vision branding. Finally, MNC Media launched SindoTV, which was later changed to iNews TV. Also, it established a large media portal base through MNC Portal Indonesia, which operates seven online portals with more than 80 million monthly active users. All the maneuvers show MNC's dominance in the media market, especially television media, which can achieve significant cumulative ratings. This means that most of the Indonesian audience is within the scope of MNC Media. Vincent Mosco also conceptualized backward integration, which extends the company's control to the basis of the production process. This is manifested when a media distributor acquires a media production institution or a media production institution acquires a media-supporting raw material institution whose goal is to control the production of the business results it controls.

In media practice in the context of media political economy, capitalist institutions and media workers cannot be separated. This makes it appear that the domination of the capitalist class over media workers has the potential to experience commodification. Domination can be seen as a monopoly on the Indonesian media market to broaden the scope of business and narrow industry competition. This is evidence of the practice of media conglomeration by increasing efficiency in media production. Efficiency can be seen in the formation of management centralization related to fulfilling news materials and company administration. This efficiency then triggers the commodification of media workers, which is increasingly felt in media groups that carry out spatialization, especially with vertical concentration. This study's exploitation was related to multiple workloads, uncertain work contracts, relatively minimal wages, and demands for adaptation to the built spatialization. So, the main goal of integration is to make adjustments, yes, or adaptation to the birth of new media. This idea of integration probably would not have arisen without pressure from the new media (Personal Communication, January 2023). From the perspective of the media's political economy, talking about the political economy is about power relations. It involves production, distribution, and consumption, right? Now, if we talk from this perspective, this is a kind of skepticism because many paradoxes arise due to this spatialization. Vertical and horizontal back-spatialization has consequences for the media in question.

For example, if an MNC goes up sideways, it means that going up is the same as the media business, sideways to other businesses. So, outside the media, of course, it has political consequences, rights, and consequences whether you like it or not; the media cannot necessarily be as free or independent from the factors of its power relations (Personal Communication, January 2023).

Furthermore, this study also found that from the spatialization applied, there were problems related to the wages of media workers who felt disproportionate. The multiple tasks given psychologically affect the way of thinking of media workers who feel exploited at work, coupled with the uncertainty of the tiring employee contract system, with long or short contract durations. The issue of wages has always been a sensitive matter for debate because it involves the interests of workers and corporations, which conflict with each other's rights and obligations. However, in practice, the average loser is the worker because the proletariat is in the lowest caste, and corporations have all the instruments in the institutional ecosystem that have the power to make all decisions for workers.

Media corporations have always used The standard minimum wage as a benchmark for paying their workers. This means that reporters and camera persons who incidentally

are journalists are considered worthy of getting a minimum wage, even though the workload they carry influences the audience, namely as a means of social control. According to AJI (Alliance of Independent Journalists), standardized wages do not favor media workers because they are determined only based on purchasing power parity, level of absorption of purchasing power, and median wages. Meanwhile, the variable aspects of workers' decent living needs were not considered. This opens a loophole for bribery or gratuities, contrary to the principles of journalistic ethics, and threatens independence.

Another finding was related to the demand for rapid adaptation, where workers who were initially scattered in each business unit were forced to merge into a significant media business entity and collaborate for the corporation's benefit. This adaptation is related to differences in work culture. This demand becomes the responsibility of each media worker through the reporting process, where the reporter and camera person will face a complex multi-redactional situation with limited time. It is common for reporters to come to a stalemate in thinking and being creative with information. The data collected is challenging to update or extract for reporting on other TVs because the data has previously been provided for reporting on other TVs.

Adaptation demands continue on the technological side, where they must also join in media convergence. This has implications for a shift in the function of the profession. As a result of convergence, reporters and camera persons must face the identical consequences of digital media, namely multitasking. Reporters not only conduct data research but are also faced with demands to be able to produce images or videos to legitimize the information obtained. The concentration of media ownership in one group with significant capital illustrates the dominance of large media in Indonesia today. Directly or indirectly, this was caused by the 1998 reform, which dismantled the authority for approximately 32 years and held freedom of expression in public hostage. The 1998 reform era marked the beginning of the opening of the faucet for freedom of expression and opinion in public, which automatically opened the democratization of information with the rapid growth of the media in Indonesia (Badawi et al., 2024).

However, this turned out to be the beginning of the emergence of the concentration of media ownership in large groups of investors who owned several media at once, which was later referred to as a media conglomeration. That is the media, in this context, functions as a machine to accumulate capital value under corporate control. It has great potential to turn the instruments contained therein, including news, into commodities that can be sold. The perspective of liberalism has an influence on media conglomeration with the freedom that the media has. Meanwhile (Tapsell, 2015) revealed that in Indonesia, politically rich and powerful oligarchs with media companies have argued for greater market freedom and less government involvement to enable them to build more giant conglomerates. In Marxism, the audience is seen as a class domination, and the media is part of the ideological battle arena for various class views, including the domination of certain classes. This dominance occurs due to the increasing concentration of control in the capital monopoly (Walters, 2022).

Therefore, based on the description of the research results, the researcher categorizes the types of spatialization that occur in MNC Media based on the integration process, namely open, closed, and hidden spatialization. Open spatialization is a transparent integration process. All parties involved in the production and distribution process in the integrated system have good two-way communication by following procedures. All production needs are stored and arranged according to the needs, and then there will be a delegation process. This means there is potential for content differentiation because it does not apply a centralized system but a requesting system. Closed

spatialization is a one-way integration process in which the production and distribution of raw materials are centralized without any prior mapping or listing of each business unit. Each business unit only accepts materials prepared by production units, such as news gatherings, to be distributed through a central system used in each business unit. This can potentially cause content uniformity because it uses a content-sharing system. Lastly, hidden spatialization is a form of integration resulting from the integration system's complexity, resulting in communication chaos between related units. The demands of actuality, combined with procedural complexity, force interventions that occur for reporters, in particular, to carry out tasks in a non-procedural manner. Patterns arranged by the agreement can be intervened suddenly by one of the existing business units without carrying out the proper procedures, namely through production mapping.

As the categorization of spatialization has explained, media workers, particularly reporters and camera persons, are objects of exploitation. Establishing an integrated large gathering division is proof of power relations as a way to control the entire production process. This is the picture explained by Foucault, which states that power exists in human relationships or interactions. This means that power can appear in all kinds of relationships where the measure of power lies not in the subject of that power but in the relationships built between many people. This means that the products produced by the media result from influences created and shaped by media industry entities through a hierarchical system.

This is further explained by the concept of the hierarchy of influence expressed by Shoemaker and Reese through five levels of influence from internal and external media institutions. Of the five levels, namely individuals, media routines, organizations, social institutions, and social systems, the organizational level occurs or has a lot of influence and conformity because it can make policies and regulations that govern the media. The policy or regulation is the integrated system built to make media workers the weakest people required to conform to the rules set.

Reporters carry out orders from the coverage coordinator based on projections set or built through editorial powers. Editorial movements that occur are under the control of the editor-in-chief, who regulates the direction of reporting based on observations to achieve rating and share targets. The goal is to generate a source of revenue through advertisers for the sake of profit. Media owners structure this network by forming a media ecosystem to generate profits through the media's content.

The commodification is evidence of the exploitation experienced by reporters and camera persons at MNC Media. Exploitation is almost felt by journalists in various media, such as research conducted by Mochamad Putra Maulana and Nuria Astagini that there is a practice of commodification of workers by media companies who are forced to exchange their labor for wages that do not match (Maulana & Astagini, 2021).

This means that the profession of a journalist, whether reporter or camera operator, is prone to exploitation, which is sometimes wrapped up in the argument of professionalism and the public interest. The researcher then categorizes commodification based on the exploitation that occurs, namely labor, psychological, economic, and capability exploitation.

Exploitation of Personnel is related to utilizing media workers to produce performance effectiveness using HR efficiency. This human resource is used to achieve the success of spatialization built by instilling the principles of journalistic professionalism for the benefit of the public. However, without realizing it, the process of exploitation against him is taking place through a double task.

Psychological Exploitation relates to forms of utilization of media workers to achieve loyalty through psychological roles. Media workers are bound through work contracts mutually agreed upon through various mechanisms. Media institutions can control media workers through regulations or rules that confine them. Long-term contracts with various regulatory uncertainties are enough to put media workers under even more pressure. The need for continuity can indirectly affect the legitimacy of long-term work contracts experienced by media workers.

Economic exploitation relates to using media workers to accumulate capital from media institutions. Establishing a work appraisal system can impact media workers. Wage conformity is a consequence that media workers must bear as a form of fairness. It is felt that the workload that must be borne by media workers, especially those under the media conglomerate, is not worth the wages they get.

Exploitation of Capabilities involves exploiting media workers to gain speed in all aspects. Industry demands amid media competition are arguments for legitimizing the fulfillment of multitasking demands from media workers (Geni et al., 2021). Technology is the reason that this must be done in order to achieve existence. With the competition system implemented, there will be a natural selection of personnel who cannot adapt quickly to situations.

However, the reality of commodification is not only the owner's motives but also the initiative of the workers themselves through the phenomenon of journalists seeking additional activities by becoming advertisers as research from (Madonna, 2018). This was confirmed by Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, who stated that the commodification of media workers (journalists) was not caused by external factors alone but by pressure from the media corporation or company needs. However, there were also internal factors from the individual journalists themselves (Madonna, 2018).

This is also the case with the commodification of workers at MNC Media. Reports carried out by reporters on one theme have the potential to be displayed on all television editors. This is what is sold by this media entity to attract the attention of media workers, especially reporters, and then used by reporters to get exposure to achieve existence. However, this existence covers up the exploitation that occurs by exploiting the unconscious of media workers. This is what Shoemaker calls an internal factor, which is one of the factors that contribute to the commodification of media workers.

The following discussion, related to the centralization of news production, turns out to cause communication problems between the running media, reporters, and camera persons. Communication became a problem because of frequent clashes in requests for material from each editor. This happens because a competition system runs through the struggle for ratings and shares demanded by every media, especially television. This rating and sharing trigger each media to have an ego to prioritize the number of results at stake.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that media conglomeration through media spatialization raises suspicions that there is a practice of commodification of media workers, especially reporters and camera persons who are members of the news-gathering division. Media conglomeration is still happening and is increasingly evident in Indonesia, with the expansion of power over many media outlets by centralizing ownership into a media group. This indicates an expansion in the value of capital, which shows a capitalist spirit carried out with the desire to get as much profit as possible, one of which is by making

efficiency. This efficiency is of course for media workers. Therefore, this research produces typification or categorization of media spatialization, namely open, closed, and hidden spatialization. From this spatialization, media workers are proven to experience commodification with the emergence of professional exploitation. Therefore, this study formulates commodification based on the exploitation process, namely the exploitation of labor, psychology, economy, and ability. With the implementation of an integration system, media workers become powerless because reporters and camera persons, such as journalists, become instrumentalists due to the exclusivity of the works they produce fading away. This means that the spatialization carried out by media corporations has a tendency or is almost sure to result in the commodification of media workers it.

Therefore, the presence of trade unions in the media must be strengthened because that is an essential factor in advocating for the rights of journalists or media workers. This is to anticipate the weak strength of media workers in the technical area. They are strengthening the identity of work as a right inherent in the journalistic profession. Then, no less important, in my opinion, are the positions of journalists or media workers who should be much more vocal when, for example, there is a kind of co-optation to, for example, work outside their profession. Media workers provide recommendations that require regulation enforcement. This must be done so that existing regulations can regulate things that can be said to be out of flow. This is related to the rights of journalists and also to the obligations of journalists, which are the territory of the regulator.

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