

Commodification of Workers in *Tempo Magazine*

Nurlailah Sari Amallah¹, Gun Gun Heryanto,² Adeni³

¹Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, Indonesia

²Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, Indonesia

³Walisongo State Islamic University, Semarang, Indonesia



ABSTRACT: *Tempo Magazine* commodifies workers through increased working hours, low wages, multiple tasks, and marketing promotions that become exchange value for the public. This research aims to reveal the commodification of workers in *Tempo Magazine* and fill the unique gaps in previous research. The paradigm used is critical because the researcher wants to show that *Tempo Magazine* journalists are considered commodities measured based on economic factors. Journalists are willing to exchange their labor and even spend time on holidays to meet sources for low wages. The data collection technique is carried out through observation; namely, the researcher observes the research object by classifying and combining articles in *Tempo Magazine*. Researchers also interviewed the Editor-in-Chief of *Tempo Magazine*, *Tempo Magazine* journalists, and eight former *Tempo Magazine* journalists as critical informants to see different sides of *Tempo*. The research results show that *Tempo Magazine* journalists do not apply a specific working time pattern when covering an issue. It is not uncommon for them to use their holiday time to meet sources. They are trapped in false consciousness and do not understand their exploitation by assuming that when they succeed in getting a source, it is a matter of prestige and will always be remembered. They also work more than regular hours but do not receive overtime pay or other compensation. In addition, photo works produced by journalists do not receive copyright protection. *Tempo* sold it without permission, and this is a copyright issue and protection of intellectual property rights in the media industry. The use or sale of images without permission can harm the creator financially and violate rights that should be protected. Journalists, as a profession that focuses on providing information, often support the human rights of others. However, they also face challenges and risks related to their human rights in their duties. Thus, this study confirms that worker commodification is for workers who are re-produced or renewed through exploitation processes such as increasing working time or intensifying the work process.

KEYWORDS: Commodification of workers, journalist, *Tempo Magazine*, compensation

INTRODUCTION

The commodification of labor refers to the process in which labor is considered and treated as a commodity that can be bought and sold like any other good or service. The method of commodification of labor involves two main aspects. In the first process, labor commodification consists of using communication systems and technology to expand and facilitate the commodification process. The second process involves commodifying labor in producing goods and services. Labour is a production factor that can be measured, regulated, and optimized to increase efficiency and profits (Heryanto, 2018). This study is urgent because media workers, as an essential part of the media, are often overlooked in communication studies.

Apart from that, the growth and development of the media will almost certainly also have implications for the governance of its workforce, such as regarding working hours, legal protection, and welfare (Sibaweh, 2022). *Tempo Magazine* commodifies workers through increased working hours, low wages, multiple tasks, and marketing promotions that become exchange value for the public. Vincent Mosco divides the concept of commodification into three main aspects: content commodification, namely capital owners who change media content such as articles, news sections, and others into products that can be sold. Audience commodification reflects the media industry's efforts to turn audiences into commodities that can be used to attract capital owners (Mosco, 2009). Apart from that, the commodification of workers means that workers in this sector are considered production factors that capital owners can control and utilize. In general, many studies have been carried out regarding media labor. From the problems above, we want to answer the question: What is the commodification of workers in *Tempo Magazine*?

Previous research conducted by Wahyudi Marhaen Pratopo revealed that the process of commodification of workers occurred through increasing working hours, low wages, chasing targets, double tasks, marketing responsibilities, and adjustments for *Tempo*

Commodification of Workers in *Tempo Magazine*

journalists (Setyatmojo, 2017). Besides that, research from Muhammad Nur Rohman also explained that absolute exploitation could be seen in the irregular working hours of iNews TV Semarang journalists, disrupting their prayer hours. INews TV Semarang journalists are also given double duties and other obligations to find clients (Rohman, 2023). According to research from Irma El-Mira Husbuyanti, people believe they work freely, and the media does not take any advantage. Furthermore, citizens who participate in citizen journalism enjoy their work and give their time and energy without being paid. Apart from that, they do not mind whether personal data is used as the primary foundation in site development (Husbuyanti, 2021). Workers are considered commodities exploited by capital owners to optimize their production and profits, often without considering the welfare or justice of the workers themselves (Haryono, 2019)—Research from Mohammad Jhanattan about Idntimes.com in the form of using Community Writers. Idntimes.com benefited from increasing portal traffic, which attracted 2.8 million readers per day without employing many journalists or researchers and without needing to pay wages per the applicable UMR regulations (Jhanattan, 2020).

Weber stated that in the early development stages of capitalism, moral or religious values were often used as the main driving force to convince individuals to work hard. However, this paradigm is changing; now, the primary motivation for workers is more influenced by economic factors such as salary levels, financial incentives, and economic opportunities (Weber, 2005). Ben Maddison also expressed the same thing: the central concept of capitalism is turning labor into commodities. In more detail, companies can use human resources efficiently to achieve profit optimization (Maddison, n.d.). Petrovic and Yazan said that work is a commodity whose ability can be bought and sold like goods or services (Petrovic & Yazan, 2021). This research aims to reveal the commodification of workers in *Tempo Magazine* and fill the unique gaps in previous research.

The research results show that *Tempo Magazine* journalists do not apply a specific working time pattern when covering an issue. *Tempo Magazine* journalists sometimes still take the time to interview sources, even on holidays. It is not uncommon for them to use their holiday time to meet sources. They are trapped in false consciousness and do not understand their exploitation by assuming that when they succeed in getting a source, it is a matter of prestige and will always be remembered. They also work more than regular hours but do not receive overtime pay or other compensation. In addition, photo works produced by journalists do not receive copyright protection. *Tempo* sold it without permission, and this is a copyright issue and protection of intellectual property rights in the media industry. Researchers also interviewed the Editor-in-Chief of *Tempo Magazine*, *Tempo Magazine* journalists, and eight former *Tempo Magazine* journalists as critical informants to see different sides of *Tempo*.

He revealed that journalists often have to adapt to the demands of their work situation. They must be on standby and work long hours (Prasetya, 2023). Even though they work more than regular hours, they do not receive overtime pay or other compensation. Apart from that, a journalist with the initials EW explained that he was subject to a 50% salary cut by *Tempo* with a nominal wage of 2,500,000 within six months during the pandemic, which has been going on for a year (EW, 2023).

METHODS

This research uses a critical paradigm that focuses on the relationship between economic structure, media industry dynamics, and media content, where a correlation between media, audiences, and advertisers will be seen. Egon G. Guba explains that the critical paradigm of viewing observed objects or social realities is an expression of humans' false awareness, not a goal or truth that is by the true essence (Guba, 1991). Therefore, the political economy practice used in this research is the critical paradigm by Vincent Mosco (1996). This essential theory criticizes positivism, which tends to see social life as a natural process. Meanwhile, critical theory sees social life as a complex reality and uses dialectical methods. The critical theory holds that positivism is no longer merely a theory of knowledge. However, it has become an essential new ideology in the era of late capitalism that supports adaptation to everyday life (Agger, 2013).

The political economy holds that the media market is part of the capitalist economic system and is closely related to a country's political system (Fourie, 2007). From a political economy perspective, Mosco sees that power and social relations play an essential role in shaping how society produces, distributes, and consumes resources, including communication resources (Mosco, 2009). Vincent Mosco's conceptualizations for understanding the political economy of communication are commodification, spatialization, and structuration. Commodification changes use and exchange values (Mosco, 2009, p. 129). Spatialization examines how media corporations expand their presence and power in the communications industry (Mosco, 2009, p. 157). Structuration is the relationship between structure and agency, which are interrelated and influence each other, forming a complex societal dynamic (Mosco, 2009, p. 185).

Commodification occurs through a production process where capitalists buy capital through labor power and the means of production to bring in surplus value, which can be used to accumulate even greater capital. During the escalation of capital, exploitative processes occur. The commodity of labor is reproduced through absolute exploitation through increasing hours of work

Commodification of Workers in *Tempo Magazine*

and relatively by expanding the labor process, which optimizes the acquisition of exchange value for the capitalist (Mosco, 2009, p. 131). Commodification is divided into three, namely content commodification, audience commodification, and worker commodification. Media workers are often treated like workers in other sectors, and they are instructed to work effectively, increase productivity, and support the company's mission to achieve maximum profits. In this process, media workers become commodities that must generate economic value and fulfill the business goals of media companies (Mosco, 2009, p. 139).

In this case, the researcher uses a critical paradigm to reveal the political economy, which consists of increasing circulation and page views in *Tempo Magazine*. They believe in the ideology of false consciousness that being a journalist is a noble profession and do not agree that they are workers. This is based on working hours, low wages, no compensation for overtime, and multiple tasks involving marketing promotions for various *Tempo* products.

This qualitative research produces descriptive data from people and observable written or spoken word behavior. This approach is directed at the setting and the individual (Moleong, 2000, p. 4). A qualitative approach is used to obtain in-depth data containing meaning. This means actual data, a value behind the visible data (Sugiyono, 2010). Theory placement in qualitative research is used for verification and analysis in the field (Creswell, 2002). In this case, the researcher used a qualitative approach because the data was sourced from interview activities; researchers also interviewed the Editor-in-Chief of *Tempo Magazine*, *Tempo Magazine* journalists, and eight former *Tempo Magazine* journalists as critical informants to see different sides of *Tempo*.

This research by Vincent Mosco is more suitable for using commodification in the political economy of communication. Commodification occurs through a production process where capitalists buy capital through labor power and the means of production to bring in surplus value, which can be used to accumulate even greater capital (Moleong, 2000). Commodification is divided into three main concepts. First, content commodification, namely media content, whether information or ideas, is processed and packaged to become a product with economic value and can be traded on the market (Mosco, 2009, p. 134). Second, audience commodification is where media companies use their programs to shape audiences, and advertisers pay media companies to gain access to these audiences (Mosco, 2009, p. 137). Lastly, the commodification of workers constitutes labor as a marketable commodity. They are considered to have economic value and can be acquired or traded like other goods or services (Mosco, 2009, p. 140).

We focus this research on the commodification of workers based on facts consisting of increased working hours, being a journalist for *Tempo Magazine* working 24 hours a day. Then wages are low; even though they work more than regular hours, *Tempo Magazine* journalists do not receive overtime or other compensation: double duty and marketing promotions. Then wages are low; even though they work more than regular hours, *Tempo Magazine* journalists do not receive overtime or other compensation. The editor-in-chief of *Tempo Magazine* carries out the double duties. He said that the value held by *Tempo* seniors is that their duties must be carried out as well as possible, even to the last drop of blood. Even though his position is editor-in-chief, he is still a reporter. Finally, the researcher explored the involvement of journalists in promoting various *Tempo* business units through their social media.

The subject of this research is *Tempo Magazine*. Meanwhile, the object of this research is the commodification of workers in *Tempo Magazine*. The data were collected using observation. Qualitative research often uses This data collection technique (Birowo, 2004). The data collection technique is carried out through observation; namely, the researcher observes the research object by classifying and combining articles in *Tempo Magazine*. In addition, we also use the documentation technique by a particular review in the Main Report Rubric of *Tempo Magazine*. Lastly, we do an interview. An interview is a process of obtaining information for research using face-to-face questions and answers between the interviewer and the relevant informant (Rolnicki, 2008). In this research, researchers interviewed vital informants and sources, namely the Editor-in-Chief of *Tempo Magazine*, *Tempo Magazine* journalists, and eight former *Tempo Magazine* journalists, as critical informants to see different sides of *Tempo*.

RESULTS

Additional Working Hours

Based on research data and findings, *Tempo Magazine* journalists do not apply a specific working time pattern in various practices covering various issues. According to the journalist *Tempo Magazine*, Linda Trianita, sometimes on Saturday, a holiday, we still meet the informant. For example, she once went to Bogor to verify several vendors and get the necessary information. Even though the activity lasted until midnight, he still went to fulfill this commitment (Trianita, 2023a). Chief Editor of *Tempo Magazine*, Setri Yasra, also said that being a journalist works 24 hours a day. He also continued that journalism is a noble profession. Regarding obligations, they will never be measured by working hours. For him, succeeding in getting a source is a matter of prestige and will always be remembered (Yasra, 2023b).

I am referring to Law Number 13 of 2003, article 77 paragraph (2), article 78 paragraph (2), and article 79 paragraph (2) regarding regulations regarding working time, overtime, and rest hours (ILO, n.d.). Based on the results of the 2023 Journalist Living Wage Survey released by the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Jakarta, throughout 2022, there were eight complaints related to rights disputes. This includes delaying wage payments, withholding wages, paying in installments, or not paying salaries. Another complaint related to disagreements over ownership and interests was one case. Besides cutting wages, the company requires workers to work during holidays (Putranto, 2023).

Commodification of Workers in *Tempo Magazine*

Table 1. Work time and rest for workers according to Law Number 13 of 2003

Regulation	Law Number 13 of 2003
The Working Hours	a. 7 (seven) hours a day and 40 (forty) hours a week for 6 (six) workdays in a week; or b. 8 (eight) hours a day, 40 (forty) hours a week for 5 (five) workdays in a week;
Overtime	If workers are required to work overtime, they may work for no longer than 3 (three) hours in a day or 14 (fourteen) hours a week.
The Weekly Period of Rest	The weekly period of rest that is no shorter than 1 (one) day after 6 (six) workdays in a week or no shorter than 2 (two) days after 5 (five) workdays in a week;
A Long Period of Rest	An extended period of rest of no less than two months, which shall be awarded in the seventh and eighth year of work each for one month to workers/laborers who have been working for 6 (six) years consecutively at the same enterprise on the condition that the said workers/laborers will no longer be entitled to their annual period of rest in 2 (two) current years. This ruling shall henceforth be applicable every 6 (six) years of work.

*Table Act Concerning Manpower (Indonesian Labour Law)

Several *Tempo Magazine* journalists were willing to work during holidays; some even used their leave time for reporting. Then, the researchers also wanted to look at *Tempo* from a different perspective. Researchers tried interviewing several informants, such as former *Tempo Magazine* journalist Adi Prasetya and his working experiences there. He explained the challenges faced by journalists in Indonesia regarding working hours and their rights. Journalists often have to adapt to the demands of their work situation. They have to be on standby and work long hours. This is different from television, which generally has set working hours. So, there is no such thing as working hours, which are limited to eight hours; there is overtime, and so on. That is one of the shortcomings of media workers in Indonesia; we always shout about teachers' rights, but our rights are neglected (Prasetya, 2023).

Low Wages

Even though they work beyond regular working hours, *Tempo Magazine* journalists do not receive overtime pay or other compensation. *Tempo Magazine* journalist Linda Trianita said there was no compensation from the office for overtime. Because it is treated like that in various media, as well as in *Tempo*. So, I only receive a monthly salary and sometimes an annual bonus (Trianita, 2023b). One informant with the initials E also revealed that he had been affected by the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the amount varies between 15 to 50%. He was subject to a 50% salary cut by *Tempo* with a nominal wage of 2,500,000 within six months during the pandemic, which has been going on for a year (EW, 2023).

A *Tempo* journalist does not receive a decent wage considering the hours worked. For him, being a *Tempo* journalist means there is no time. When compared with other media, *Tempo* journalists' salaries are low. He said that when he was an intern there, he was not paid, and for prospective reporters, the salary was below the DKI Jakarta regional minimum wage. He did not receive work safety facilities and was involved in the Social Security program (EW, 2023). Referring to the Minister of Manpower Regulation Number 6 of 2020 Article 13 paragraph (1), the rights received by apprentices are to obtain occupational safety and health facilities while participating in the internship (Permenaker, n.d.). Marx described that the wages workers receive do not reflect the actual value of their contribution because wages are calculated based on the average minimum subsistence minimum, not on the actual value produced by the worker (Holborow, 2018).

Table 2. Regulation of the Minister of Manpower No. 6 of 2020 on the Organization of Domestic Internships

a.	Obtain guidance from an Apprenticeship Mentor or instructor;
b.	Obtain fulfillment of rights by the Apprenticeship Agreement;
c.	Obtain occupational safety and health facilities while participating in the Apprenticeship;
d.	Get allowance;
e.	Be enrolled in social security programs; and
f.	Obtain an apprenticeship certificate or a statement of apprenticeship participation.

*Table Domestic Apprenticeship Organizing

As for *Tempo*, occupational health and pocket money are based on reimbursement methods. E added that he only obtained insurance through BPJS Employment when he worked at *Tempo*. It does not provide additional health insurance besides BPJS Health (EW, 2023). Researchers also tracked down information from a former journalist, Robin Ong, a *Tempo* photographer. He

Commodification of Workers in *Tempo Magazine*

also explained his experience that *Tempo* is not an ordinary company. For him, *Tempo* constantly insults and discredits other people. He also continued living in a difficult economic situation as a journalist (Ong, 2023).

Robin continued that *Tempo* is not an ordinary company but likes insulting and bad-mouthing people. The *Tempo* was even worse. Our photographic work is not subject to copyright. To this day, our pictures and photographs are sold to the public at *Tempo*. There is no compensation, just salary. In the past, I lived poor (Ong, 2023).

Tempo is not an ordinary company; it likes insulting and bad-mouthing people, but is it clean? Yes, no, it is even worse. Our photo work does not have a copyright. To this day, our pictures and photographs are sold to the public at *Tempo*. There is no compensation; your salary is already that much. In the past, we lived in poverty, sis. Oh, my child is playing on the swing in the complex. His swing broke on his forehead, and he was taken to a doctor for stitches for 150,000. I do not have money; my child is disabled until now. The next day, I just borrowed from a cooperative to take my child, but it was too late; he is disabled now (Ong, 2023).

Double Duty

In this case, a journalist is simultaneously burdened with various main tasks. Their duties include interviews, taking photos, videos, and data. According to the Main Director of Tempo Digital, Wahyu Dhyatmika, the primary obligations of a journalist are two classifications, namely news gathering and news processing. Of course, he has to carry out all processes related to news gathering. Whether it involves taking photos, videos, data, or interviews, as long as it is news gathering, it is the reporter's responsibility (Dhyatmika, 2023). In news gathering, the journalist's job is to collect news through interviews, research, and investigations in the field.

Meanwhile, news processing is the process of processing news, including selecting, editing, and determining what information is presented to readers. The Chief Editor of *Tempo Magazine*, Setri Yasra, also carries out this dual task. He said that the value held by *Tempo* seniors is that their duties must be carried out as well as possible, even to the last drop of blood. Even though his position is editor-in-chief, he is still a reporter. He added that for him, being a journalist is a noble profession. Even though I am the editor-in-chief, I work 24 hours daily and still write magazine opinions. For him, being a journalist is a noble profession (Yasra, 2023a).

Marketing Promotions

The commodification of workers is also found through the involvement of journalists in marketing promotions. President Director of Tempo Digital, Wahyu Dhyatmika, said that the standard operating procedures (SOP) in job duties and responsibilities do not specifically encourage journalists to be involved in promotional activities. However, researchers traced the involvement of journalists in promoting various Tempo business units via social media. They also do not hesitate to use their accounts to participate in this marketing.



Figure 1. Promotion of Tempo Magazine by Executive Editor of Tempo.co, Anton Septian on Facebook

Commodification of Workers in *Tempo* Magazine



Figure 2. Promotion of Tempo Magazine by the Main Director of PT. Tempo Inti Media, Arif Zulkifli on Facebook



Figure 3. Promotion of Tempo Magazine by the Main Director of Tempo.co, Wahyu Dhyatmika on Facebook



Figure 4. Promotion of *Koran Tempo* by the Main Director of PT. *Tempo Inti Media*, Budi Setyarso on Twitter

DISCUSSION

Additional Working Hours

There are no specific working hours for a journalist. Especially for this social assistance coverage, you sometimes meet the informant on Saturday, a holiday (Trianita, 2023a). Chief Editor of *Tempo Magazine*, Setri Yasra, also said that being a journalist works 24 hours a day. He also continued that journalism is a noble profession. Regarding obligations, they will never be measured by working hours. For him, succeeding in getting a source is a matter of prestige and will always be remembered (Yasra, 2023a). False consciousness in the context of work refers to the failure of workers to realize the larger dimensions of their class struggle. Workers are considered false consciousness when they do not fully understand that their battle is limited to their class interests and has a broader impact on society (Lewy, 1982). This is called the mystification process, which refers to a process where meanings such as independent, brave, and credible are synonymous with the status of *Tempo* journalists, who are often fascinated by this image attached to their profession.

In Marxist ideology, this is called false consciousness. The birth of false consciousness focuses on those who cannot understand this inequality. They even work to maintain the status quo. They adopt ideas that are equal to the owners' interests, even though they are not in line with their interests. Marxist attention is on how corporations and social institutions, including the media, are responsible for maintaining this inequality. When people collectively trust these power entities, they may not be aware of the inequality and exploitation. They work to maintain the status quo, which is detrimental (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). His concept responds to an essential Marxist question: Why do workers always find it challenging to know the meaning of their exploitation? Friedrich Engel first implemented the term in a letter to a German communist, Franz Mehring, in 1893.

False consciousness intensely has relevance to ideology. Ideologies implanted by the bourgeoisie often influence the public. This ideology clouds their thinking regarding exploitation because they may be brainwashed into believing that the system currently implemented is complete and just, even if it is wrong (Hossler, 2020). According to Mosco, the general image of a journalist is often that of a diligent professional. However, the reality is very different in the media industry and the context of advanced technology. Most workers in this sector work under conditions that are perhaps similar to those of the past, harsh and incompatible with the luxuries often presented in the media (Mosco, 2009).

Researchers' findings prove that even though *Tempo Magazine* journalists work more than regular hours, they do not receive overtime or other compensation. They only receive a monthly salary and sometimes an annual bonus. Apart from that, one of the informants with the initials E revealed that he had also been affected by the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the amount varies between 15 to 50%. He was subject to a 50% salary cut by *Tempo* with a nominal wage of 2,500,000 within six months during the pandemic, which has been going on for a year. For him, working as a *Tempo* journalist is timeless, and compared to other media, *Tempo* journalists' salaries are low (EW, 2023).

I am referring to Law Number 13 of 2003, article 77 paragraph (2), article 78 paragraph (2), and Article 79 paragraph (2) regarding regulations regarding working time, overtime, and rest hours. Overtime work can only be done at a maximum of three

Commodification of Workers in *Tempo Magazine*

hours in one day and 14 hours in one week (Kemenperin, 2003). Based on the results of the 2023 Journalist Living Wage Survey released by the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Jakarta, throughout 2022, there were eight complaints related to rights disputes. This includes delaying wage payments, withholding wages, paying in installments, or not paying salaries. Another complaint related to disputes over rights and interests was one case. Besides cutting wages, the company requires workers to work during holidays (Putranto, 2023).

In this context, several *Tempo Magazine* journalists are willing to work during holidays; some even use their leave time for reporting. This statement is coherent with previous research conducted by Estavita and Indro regarding the commodification of media workers, starting from the many problems that have arisen in Indonesia. This relates to the potential for excessive workloads that may be placed on workers, as these changes could result in them undertaking tasks that previously may not have been specifically outlined in the employment contract. However, they must carry out these tasks related to program or content production to meet market needs in this era of convergence (Pembayun & Yuwono, 2023). Researchers tried interviewing one of the informants, a former *Tempo Magazine* journalist, Arif Adi Kuswardono, about his working experiences there. He said he had to adapt to the informant's schedule, which was only available at certain times, such as 1 am (Kuswardono, 2023).

This is commonplace, especially when dealing with essential figures. Arif also added that he never took leave while working at *Tempo* and only realized this after he decided to resign (Kuswardono, 2023). This statement refers to the concept of production fetishism in Marxist theory. This term refers to the phenomenon in which commodities exude their fetish charm as objects of worship for consumers. Thus, commodity fetishism creates a dynamic where workers, even though they are physically involved in production, experience separation and loss of control because capital owners or capitalists control the results of their production. This reflects the fundamental inequality of power in the structure of capitalism, where control over output and ownership of critical resources is centralized in the hands of capital owners (Marx, 1887).

The term 'fetishism' implies the disdainful stance adopted by European intellectuals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries towards the religious customs of Africans, associating magical or divine abilities with material items. As mentioned earlier, the term 'fetishism' has, from its inception, encompassed the attribution of some form of religious or magical influence to material objects (Andrews, 2018). Researchers also traced similar information from another informant, former *Tempo* journalist Adi Prasetya. He explained the challenges faced by journalists in Indonesia regarding working hours and their rights. Journalists often have to adapt to the demands of their work situation. They have to be on standby and work long hours. This differs from television, which generally has set working hours (Prasetya, 2023).

"If we chase someone being questioned at the Attorney General's Office until 2 am before they come out, we will wait. So there is no such thing as working hours, which are limited to eight hours; there is overtime and all kinds of things, but nothing. That is one of the shortcomings of media workers in Indonesia; we always shout about teachers' rights, but our rights are neglected because we are so busy." (Adi Prasetya)

Low Wages

Even though they work beyond regular working hours, *Tempo Magazine* journalists do not receive overtime pay or other compensation (Trianita, 2023b). One informant with the initials E revealed that he had also been affected by the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the amount varies between 15 and 50%. He was subject to a 50% salary cut by *Tempo* with a nominal wage of 2,500,000 within six months during the pandemic, which has been going on for a year. A *Tempo* journalist does not receive a decent salary, considering the hours worked (EW, 2023). In this case, a class structure emerged in *Tempo Magazine*, which meant forcing journalists to produce more, which was necessary for their survival.

"If you say it is worth it, it is not because working as a *Tempo* journalist does not take time. Compared to other media, *Tempo* journalists' salaries are low. It is just relative. When I first started my internship, I did not get paid. If the reporter candidate is below the DKI Jakarta UMR (EW, 2023)."

This is coherent with previous research conducted by Chris Wright that there are groups of people who are enslaved people, land servants, wage workers, and the like, who are obliged to produce goods or services, while other groups are enslavers, landed gentry, capitalists, and so on (Wright, 2021). This relationship is considered unbalanced because there is an inequality in power between capital owners and workers. Capitalists have control over the means of production and resources, while workers depend more on such work to earn a living. As Fuchs has argued, this inequality in ownership creates a situation in which capitalists can

Commodification of Workers in *Tempo Magazine*

exploit labor to make a profit. The value workers produce through their contributions to the production process is often more significant than the wages they receive in return (Fuchs, 2021).

In capitalist systems, humans are often seen as resources or labor that can be used to generate profits. In this context, a person's value is placed more on how much they can contribute or benefit production and the economy rather than respecting their human aspects (Tsogas, 2018). According to Mosco, previously, workers had specific craft skills or expertise that enabled them to control or contribute significantly to the work process. They may have particular knowledge and skills in carrying out their duties. However, measuring time and effort to achieve maximum efficiency is becoming more dominant, and workers are directed to meet strictly measured performance targets (Mosco, 2009, p. 139).

The resource person with E's initials shared his experience when he first interned at the *Tempo* newsroom. He does not receive work safety facilities and is involved in the social security program. Referring to the Minister of Manpower Regulation Number 6 of 2020 Article 13 paragraph (1), the rights received by apprentices are to obtain occupational safety and health facilities while participating in the internship (Kemnaker, n.d.). As for *Tempo*, work health and pocket money are based on reimbursement methods. He added that he only obtained insurance through BPJS Employment when he worked at *Tempo*. It does not provide additional health insurance besides BPJS Health (EW, 2023).

Researchers also interviewed a former *Tempo Magazine* journalist, Adi Prasetya. Based on his experience while working there, he was not compensated for overtime.

“So I was at *Tempo* because I was still young then; my life was for *Tempo*. I had dinner at *Tempo* for free; I am still a single child, right? When I am exhausted at 12, I go home to bed at 1 o'clock. Sometimes, in the morning, he leaves again. So, I often sleep in the office and shower there. The AC behind the office has many hooks for magic items that do not come home; they wash them there. We sleep in the prayer room, under the editorial desk; that is normal. Yes, that is what journalists used to say, often celebrating people's human rights, their human rights being neglected (Prasetya, 2023).”

This is called alienation, a condition where workers experience feelings of alienation or separation from the results of their work (Ulya, 2019). A journalist is a professional with specific standards and ethics in presenting information. They are responsible for maintaining the integrity and reliability of the information they convey (Michailidou & Trenz, 2021). On the other hand, excessive workload requires them to work to achieve company targets. This hard work is further exacerbated by unlimited working hours, especially if the wages are low (Agustiani et al., 2022).

This is related to the journalist profession at *Tempo Magazine*; they do work such as interviewing sources, meeting several informants until midnight, and writing news. Considering working hours, they also do not receive a decent wage. Apart from that, *Tempo* does not copyright or sell their photo work freely. They seem shackled and focused on producing quality news presentations by implementing high journalism standards. However, they ignore their human rights, and some even have to give up time with their families and their youth and live in poverty. Capitalists pay workers' wages equal to the labor the worker provides in producing goods or services. However, workers often have more excellent value (surplus value) than their wages. In the concept of alienation presented by Marx, workers lose control and rights over the products of their labor because the productive forces they create are not for their interests but for the interests of capital and its owners (Markus, 1982).

Apart from that, the form of alienation that workers usually experience is the alienation of workers from the product. In a capitalist society, workers do not own the products or goods produced through hard work. Although workers create these values through their labor, these products belong to the owners of capital or capitalists. They have complete control over the production results and can use, sell, or distribute them according to their economic interests and desires. On the other hand, if workers want to own the products they produce, they must repurchase them from the market as consumers, just like the general public. This reflects the inequality in the distribution of ownership and economic control in capitalist societies, where ownership of the fruits of labor is centralized with the capitalist, and workers have limited direct access to the products they produce (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004).

Double Duty

In commodifying labor, capital takes the initiative to manage workers as a commodity that can be regulated and adjusted to achieve the desired results for the company's progress (Mosco, 2009, p. 139). The majority of journalists consider themselves to be professionals. This understanding arises because they are required to have special skills and responsibilities and comply with

Commodification of Workers in *Tempo Magazine*

professional codes of ethics in carrying out their work. Apart from that, company culture factors include work demands that involve tight deadlines and intensive roles that require complete dedication from the professionals in them. This is proven by journalists burdened with carrying out various main tasks simultaneously. Their duties include interviews, taking photos, videos, and data.

This exploitation of workers is what Mosco explains as a form of worker commodification (Mosco, 2009, p. 131). Labor power is a commodity that can be bought and sold in the labor market. This exploitation process involves one method, namely relative exploitation, such as *Tempo Magazine* journalists being burdened with double tasks. The Chief Editor of *Tempo Magazine*, Setri Yasra, also said that even though he is the editor-in-chief, he is still a reporter. He added that the value held by *Tempo* seniors is that duties must be carried out as well as possible, even to the last drop of blood. Apart from that, another confession came from former *Tempo* journalist Robin Ong.

In this perspective, the market is where individuals can choose the work they want without coercion from other parties (Caporaso & Levine, 1992). He said there were differences between *Tempo* journalists then and now. *Tempo* journalists used to apply the principle of going home before bringing news. Meanwhile, *Tempo* journalists currently go home when they do not get sources. A company's production relations area assumes that when someone signs an employment contract, they will be subject to the people who own and manage the company where they work.

Human capital refers to the investment made by individuals in education and learning to improve their qualifications, expertise, and skills in a particular job or field. When someone takes steps to increase their level of education or undertake special training, the goal is to make a more significant contribution to their chosen scope of work or economic activity (Smith, 2023). This is proven despite his position as editor-in-chief. However, Setri revealed that he works 24 hours daily and still writes opinions in magazines. For him, being a journalist is a noble profession. In a class society, the distribution system is organized through exchange, meaning one product or good is exchanged for another. If someone has nothing to trade because they do not have ownership of goods or services, then that person cannot obtain other goods and services through the exchange mechanism (Fuchs, 2014).

By selling their labor power, workers contribute to the production process and create added value that exceeds the value needed to sustain their lives. This added value becomes an advantage for capitalists, who control the means of production and control the production results. Thus, the relationship between workers and capitalists in capitalism is based on the exchange of labor for wages, with the value created by workers becoming a source of added value and profit for the capitalist (Marx, n.d.). In the capitalist system, work or work is often seen as a way to meet economic needs, such as earning income to buy necessary goods to control the production results or power, which are considered factors of production used to produce goods and services. In this process, an individual's goal of achieving personal well-being or fulfillment may sometimes become overlooked or neglected (Ritzer & Goodman, 2011).

Marketing Promotions

The commodification of workers also occurs when journalists are seen as journalistic actors who convey information and as entities that can be used for marketing and promotional purposes through their social media. President Director of Tempo Digital, Wahyu Dhyatmika, said that the standard operating procedures (SOP) in job duties and responsibilities do not specifically encourage journalists to be involved in promotional activities. However, researchers traced the involvement of journalists in promoting various Tempo business units via social media. They also do not hesitate to use their accounts to participate in this marketing. In some situations, efforts are made to use new marketing strategies and products to find and define audiences that have not previously been identified. This audience refers to a group of people or potential customers who could be the target of a particular product or service (Burton, 2002). Journalists are workers in the technical worker's category, namely specific work that requires certain knowledge or skills. This indicates that these tasks cannot be performed effectively by people who do not have the necessary specialized skills or knowledge (Hesmondhalgh, 2007).

CONCLUSION

Tempo journalists face several challenges regarding their working hours and rights. They often have to work long hours and be on standby, adapting to the demands of their work situation. This is different from television, which generally has set working hours. As a result, there is no such thing as working hours that are limited to eight hours, and overtime is common. Former *Tempo Magazine* journalist Adi Prasetya shared his experiences working at the company, where he often slept in the office and showered

Commodification of Workers in *Tempo Magazine*

there due to his long working hours. He also mentioned that media workers' rights in Indonesia are often neglected despite their efforts to advocate for other professions' rights, such as teachers. Furthermore, the researcher highlights the issue of wage disputes and delayed payments for journalists. According to the 2023 Journalist Living Wage Survey results released by the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Jakarta, eight complaints related to rights disputes existed throughout 2022. These complaints included delaying wage payments, withholding wages, paying in installments, or not paying salaries. Overall, the researcher sheds light on *Tempo* journalists' challenges and the need for better working conditions and protection of rights in the media industry.

REFERENCES

- 1) Agger, B. (2013). *Teori Sosial Kritis: Kritik, Penerapan, dan Implikasinya*. Kreasi Wacana.
- 2) Agustiani, R. R., Kusmajayadi, I. M., & Karlinah, S. (2022). The Effect of Job Demands on Journalist Performance in *Pikiran Rakyat* Newspaper. *Kajian Jurnalisme*, 6(1), 78.
- 3) Andrews, D. (2018). Error or Absurdity? A Non-Cognitive Approach to Commodity Fetishism. *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 25(5), 5. <https://doi.org/Doi: 10.1080/09672567.2018.1475501>
- 4) Birowo, M. A. (2004). *Metode Penelitian Komunikasi: Teori dan Aplikasi*. Gitanyali.
- 5) Burton, G. (2002). *More than Meets the Eye: An Introduction to Media Studies third edition*. Arnold.
- 6) Caporaso, J. A., & Levine, D. P. (1992). *Theories of Political Economy*. Cambridge University Press.
- 7) Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Research Design Qualitative And Quantitative Approaches*. Sage Publication.
- 8) Dhyatmika, W. (2023). *Wawancara dengan Direktur Utama Tempo Digital dan Ketua Umum Asosiasi Media Siber Indonesia (AMSI)*.
- 9) EW. (2023). *Wawancara dengan mantan jurnalis Tempo*.
- 10) Fourie, P. J. (2007). *Approaches to the Study of Mass Communication In Media Studies: Media History, Media and Society second edition*. Juta and Company.
- 11) Fuchs, C. (2014). *Digital Labour and Karl Marx*. Routledge.
- 12) Fuchs, C. (2021). Cornel West and Marxist Humanism. *Critical Sociology*, 47(7–8), 1225.
- 13) Guba, E. G. (1991). *The Paradigm Dialog*. Sage Publications.
- 14) Haryono, C. G. (2019). *Kajian Ekonomi Politik Media: Komodifikasi Pekerja dan Fetisisme Komoditas dalam Industri Media*. CV Jejak.
- 15) Heryanto, G. G. (2018). *Media Komunikasi Politik: Relasi Kuasa Media di Panggung Politik*. IRCiSoD.
- 16) Hesmondhalgh, D. (2007). *The Cultural Industries 2nd Edition*. Sage Publication.
- 17) Holborow, M. (2018). Language, Commodification, and Labour: The Relevance of Marx. *Language Sciences*, p. 70. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2018.02.002>
- 18) Hossler, P. (2020). *Encyclopedia of Critical Whiteness Studies in Education*. Brill Sense.
- 19) Husbuyanti, I. E.-M. (2021). Proletariat Digital dalam Citizen Journalism: Kasus Kompasiana. *JISPO: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 11(1), 167.
- 20) ILO. (n.d.). *Act of The Republic of Indonesia Number 13 Year 2003 Concerning Manpower*. Retrieved January 5, 2024, from <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/760/Indonesian+Labour+Law+++Act+13+of+2003.pdf>
- 21) Jhanattan, M. (2020). Komodifikasi Pekerja Lepas di Industri Media Online: Pemanfaatan Community Writers oleh Idntimes.com. *Jurnal Komunika: Jurnal Komunikasi, Media, Dan Informatika*, 9(2), 74.
- 22) Kemenperin. (2003). *Kompetensi/UU_13_2003*. https://kemenperin.go.id/kompetensi/UU_13_2003.pdf.
- 23) Kemnaker. (n.d.). *Regulation of The Minister of Manpower of The Republic of Indonesia Number 6 of 2020 Domestic Apprenticeship Organizing*. Retrieved October 31, 2023, from https://jdih.kemnaker.go.id/asset/data_puu/Permen_6_2020.pdf
- 24) Kuswardono, A. A. (2023). *Wawancara dengan mantan jurnalis Majalah Tempo dan mantan Komisioner Komisi Informasi Pusat (KIP)*.
- 25) Lewy, G. (1982). *False Consciousness; An Essay of Mystification*. Routledge.
- 26) Littlejohn, S. W., & Foss, K. A. (2009). *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*. Sage Publications.
- 27) Maddison, B. (n.d.). Labours Commodification and Skilled Selves in Late Nineteenth-Century Australia. *International Review of Social History*, 43(2), 265. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859098000133>.

Commodification of Workers in *Tempo Magazine*

- 28) Markus, G. (1982). Alienation and Reification in Marx and Lukacs. *Thesis Eleven*, p. 5–6(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/072551368200500111>
- 29) Marx, K. (n.d.). *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. Random House.
- 30) Marx, K. (1887). *Das Kapital Volume One; The Production Process of Capital*. Progress Publishers.
- 31) Michailidou, A., & Trenz, H.-J. (2021). Rethinking Journalism Standards in the Era of Post-Truth Politics: from Truth Keepers to Truth Mediators. *Media, Culture, and Society*, 43(7), 1340.
- 32) Moleong, L. J. (2000). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- 33) Mosco, V. (2009). *The Political Economy of Communication 2 edition*. Sage Publications.
- 34) Ong, R. (2023). *Wawancara dengan mantan jurnalis dan fotografer Majalah Tempo*.
- 35) Pembayaran, E. C., & Yuwono, A. I. (2023). The Conventional Media's Political Economy Practices in the Media Convergence Era: Case Study of Labor Commodification in TV Industry. *Informasi*, 53(01), 56. <https://doi.org/10.21831/informasi.v53i1.57013>
- 36) Permenaker. (n.d.). *Regulation of The Minister of Manpower of The Republic of Indonesia Number 6 of 2020 Domestic Apprenticeship Organizing*. https://www.peraturan.go.id/files2/permenaker-no-6-tahun-2020_terjemah.pdf
- 37) Petrovic, J. E., & Yazan, B. (2021). *The Commodification of Language: Conceptual Concerns and Empirical Manifestations*. Routledge.
- 38) Prasetya, A. (2023). *Wawancara dengan mantan jurnalis Majalah Tempo dan Direktur Eksekutif Asosiasi Media Siber Indonesia (AMSI)*.
- 39) Putranto, A. (2023). *Hasil wawancara dengan Ketua AJI Jakarta*.
- 40) Ritzer, G., & Goodman, D. J. (2004). *Sociological Theory: Karl Marx and Varieties of Ne-Marxian Theory*. McGraw-Hill.
- 41) Ritzer, G., & Goodman, D. J. (2011). *Teori Marxis dan Berbagai Ragam Teori Neo-Marxian*. Kreasi Wacana.
- 42) Rohman, M. N. (2023). It is Hard for Journalists to Pray on Time: Commodification of Media Workers in the Digital Age. *Kalijaga Journal of Communication*, 5(1), 46–51. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/kjc.51.03.2023>.
- 43) Rolnicki, T. E. (2008). *Pengantar Dasar Jurnalisme*. Kencana Prenada Media Group.
- 44) Setyatmojo, W. M. P. E. (2017). Komodifikasi Wartawan di Era Konvergensi: Studi Kasus Tempo. *Jurnal Komunikasi Indonesia*, 4(2), 131.
- 45) Sibaweh, N. (2022). Labor in the Study of Media Political Economy (An Overview of Vincent Mosco's Thought. *Propaganda*, 2(2), 136. <https://doi.org/https://www.doi.org/10.37010>
- 46) Smith, M. (2023). Adam Smith on Growth and Economic Development. *History of Economics Review*, 86(1).
- 47) Sugiyono. (2010). *Memahami Penelitian Kualitatif*. Alfabeta.
- 48) Trianita, L. (2023a). *Upeti Bansos untuk Tim Banteng di Majalah Tempo dalam edisi Korupsi Bansos Kubu Banteng*.
- 49) Trianita, L. (2023b). *Wawancara dengan jurnalis Majalah Tempo*.
- 50) Tsogas, G. (2018). Transnational Labor Regulation, Reification, and Commodification: A Critical Review. *Journal of Labor and Society*, 21(4), 2. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lands.12362>
- 51) Ulya, H. (2019). Komodifikasi Pekerja pada Youtuber Pemula dan Underrated (Studi Kasus YouTube Indonesia). *Interaksi: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 8(2).
- 52) Weber, M. (2005). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Routledge.
- 53) Wright, C. (2021). Marxism and the Solidarity Economy: Toward a New Theory of Revolution. *Class, Race, and Corporate Power*, 9(1), 5. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.25148/CRCP>
- 54) Yasra, S. (2023a). *Wawancara dengan Pemimpin Redaksi Majalah Tempo*.
- 55) Yasra, S. (2023b). *Wawancara mendalam dengan Pemimpin Redaksi Majalah Tempo*.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.