

MNC MEDIA GROUP: POLITICAL ECONOMICS ANALYSIS IN COMMUNICATION AND STRUCTURATION THEORY

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Tanggal diterima: 17 Maret 2023 Tanggal direvisi: 22 Maret 2023 Tanggal disetujui: 27 Maret 2023

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the construction of media coverage under the auspices of MNC Media. The method in this paper uses a descriptive approach. The analysis is based on the political economy of media theory developed by Vincent Mosco. The theoretical approach used is more specific to structuration theory. The conclusion is that there is a conflict of interest and political interest between Hary Tanoe, the leader of the MNC Group, and his media. Since the MNC Group and the Perindo Party have the same power structure, producing news content through MNC Media is nothing but a political publication of the Perindo Party itself.

Keywords: Hary Tanoe, MNC Media, MNC Group, The Political Economy Theory Of Communications, Structuration Theory

How to cite: Ainani, M. (2022). MNC Media Group: Political Economics Analysis In Communication And Structuration Theory. MetaCommunication; Journal of Communication Studies, 8(1), 20-32
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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini berusaha untuk mendiskusikan bagaimana konstruksi pemberitaan media di bawah naungan MNC Media. Metode dalam tulisan ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif. Analisis didasarkan pada teori ekonomi politik media yang dikembangkan oleh Vincent Mosco. Pendekatan teori lebih spesifik pada teori strukturasi. Kesimpulan yang didapat bahwa terdapat konflik kepentingan dan kepentingan politik Hary Tanoe selaku pimpinan MNC Group terhadap media-media miliknya. Struktur kekuasaan yang menaungi MNC Group dan Partai Perindo adalah sama, sehingga produksi konten berita dari MNC Media tidak lain merupakan publikasi politik dari Partai Perindo itu sendiri.

Kata Kunci: Hary Tanoe, MNC Media, Ekonomi Politik Komunikasi, Teori Strukturasi

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, Hary Tanoesoedibjo or who is commonly known as Hary Tanoe became the media spotlight when he was caught in a case of alleged threats via SMS to Junior Attorney General for Special Crimes Yulianto. On January 5, 7 and 9 2016, Hary Tanoe sent the following short messages:

“Mas Yulianto, kita buktikan siapa yang salah dan siapa yang benar. Siapa yang profesional dan siapa yang preman. Anda harus ingat kekuasaan itu tidak akan langgeng. Saya masuk ke politik antara lain salah satu penyebabnya mau memberantas oknum-oknum penegak hukum yang semena-

mena, yang transaksional yang suka abuse of power. Catat kata-kata saya di sini, saya pasti jadi pimpinan negeri ini. Di situlah saatnya Indonesia dibersihkan” (Mr. Yulianto, we will prove who is wrong and who is right. Who is a professional and who is a thug. You have to remember that power will not last. One of the reasons why I entered the politics was to eradicate arbitrary, transactional law enforcers who like to abuse power. Notes my words, I will definitely be the leader of this country. That's the time for Indonesia to be cleaned).

Hary Tanoe became a suspect in the case of allegedly threatening SMS to prosecutor Yulianto. The suspect's status was determined after 1.5 years, and prosecutor Yulianto reported Hary Tanoe to the National Police Headquarters. Hary Tanoe was charged with Article 29 of the Law on Information and Electronic Transactions (UU ITE) as per the article included in prosecutor Yulianto's report to the National Police Headquarters.

Since 2016, Hary Tanoe has been critical of the Jokowi government. The case that ensnared Hary Tanoe became a turning point. Hary Tanoe abruptly declared that the Perindo Party would back Jokowi in the 2019 presidential election (even now). The decision was stipulated at Perindo's National Working Meeting. HT officially announced the decision on March 21, 2018, during the Perindo Party Rapimnas II in Jakarta. Since then, the direction of media coverage under the auspices of the MNC Group has wholly changed; before announcing his support for Jokowi, Hary Tanoe and his media seemed to be ferocious in criticizing Jokowi's government. Hary Tanoe and the media, under the auspices of the MNC Group, appeared to have lost their strength after expressing their support.

The development of communication technology, globalization, liberalization, and commercialization have brought about a shift. The mass media has grown to become a power-controlling force and a political, economic, and cultural force. The media has become a new "power," which, if allowed to run wild uncontrollably, can threaten democratization because it loses its social responsibility (Acemoglu, 2008). Herman & Chomsky (in Engstrom, 2008) analyze the existence of a conspiracy by elites who control news and information. By using the term "manufacturing consent, this figure sees the media as a tool for the entire class's political, economic, and cultural interests. According to him, the gatekeepers became pawns of politicians and industry players to make a profit. In other words, on behalf of the nation's interests, officials regulate the news according to their wishes. Meanwhile, in the name of economic growth, business people or traders do the same, following their economic interests.

In this paper, the authors use secondary data analysis with a descriptive approach. The theory used in this paper is the political economy theory of communication from Vincent Mosco. The political economy of communication is generally used to combine the theoretical framework of communication with the theoretical frameworks of politics and economics. Attachment to economic and political studies makes communication an area that is vulnerable to the influence of both. As an entity constructed by

the media, what is referred to as communication often represents particular economic and political interests

In other words, this approach is based on political economy as a study of social relations, especially those concerning power relations, both in the production, distribution, and consumption of resources in the political economy of communication. In order to understand this relationship, it is necessary to understand how far the media goes in terms of interests and ideology, ownership (economic), and power (political).

The author also discusses structuration theory to improve understanding and thinking framework. The structuration theory refers more to the structuration theory of Anthony Giddens. So in the next section, this paper will discuss the analysis of structuration theory in the media industry.

A political economy approach is taken on MNC Media to elaborate on the conflicts of interest and political interests of Hary Tanoë as the leader and owner of the MNC Group. As well as how the structuration theory explains the power structure's role in the MNC Group in MNC Media's reporting.

METHOD

As a research, the method used in this paper is descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative descriptive research is research that is included in the type of qualitative research. Sugiyono (2019: 18) says that the qualitative research method is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism which is used to examine objects in natural conditions (real conditions, not set or in experimental conditions) where the researcher is the key instrument. This research was made with the limits of the researcher's subjectivity in explaining events and facts in the field, but they are still presented in real terms as they are.

This study uses a social criticism approach that focuses on the relationship between economic structure, the dynamics of the media industry, and the ideological content of the media in the discussion. This is in line with Wuryanta (2018) said that critical theory sees that the media cannot be separated from their interests, especially those that are full of the interests of the owners of capital, the state or other oppressive groups. Wuryanta (2018) assesses that the media is a tool of domination and hegemony of society which will produce a logical consequence, namely the reality produced by the media is biased or distorted. This assumption forms the basis for writing that will relate interests to the main goal of media institutions in controlling the process of public communication based on the political economy paradigm.

This research will explain further about the construction of media coverage in the MNC Media Group network owned by Hary Tanoë through observation. According to Hasanah (2016) Observation is one of the empirical scientific activities that bases field and text facts, through sensory experience

without using any manipulation. In this case, the observations made were unstructured observations (Unstructured Observations), namely direct observations that were not structured by directly observing all the news coverage in the MNC Media Group. Researchers only act as observers (observers). Reporting analysis and secondary data come from various literature related to structuration theory in the political economy of the media.

DISCUSSION

Political Economy Approach in Communications Studies

At its inception, the political economy approach borrowed more from the study tradition of sociology (Winseck, 2017). S. Sarwoprasodjo Agung (2008) in his publication in, reveals that Mosco argues, the use of the political economy approach in studying communication is grouped according to the countries conducting the research, namely North America, Europe, and the Third World, namely Asia and Africa.

Agung (2008) explained that Dallas Smythe and Herbert Schiller heavily influenced research in North America. Its approach is based on the Marxian tradition and institutions and needs to be more theoretical. The sense of injustice caused by the communications industry is an integral part of the more comprehensive corporate order, which is exploitative and undemocratic and is the primary motivation for this research. Developing public awareness of government regulations and policies is its primary goal.

Furthermore, Agung (2008) explains Mosco's perspective on European research related to movements for social change, especially resistance to the public service media system. This group is more based on the Neo-Marxian theoretical tradition. Included in this category are the Garnham, Golding, and Murdock groups that emphasize class power, the integration of communication institutions with policy authorities and businesses in the broader capitalist economy, the resistance of social classes, and movements against neo-conservative state practices that promote the liberalization, commercialization, and privatization of the communications industry. Another group is Armand Mattelart's work, which uses dependency theory, Western Marxism, and world experience from the liberalization movement to understand communication as one of the primary sources of power resistance.

In his publication on third-world research, Agung (2008) said that Mosco assesses that research in many third-world countries summarizes various approaches, with the main emphasis being a response to modernization and developmental paradigms originating from the West, especially the USA. This group incorporates communication into a sympathetic explanatory paradigm to provoke political and intellectual attention. Media growth is seen as part of the development index. The approaches used are

various: dependency theory, world systems, and Neo-Marxian political economy. Third-world political economists question the model's fundamental assumptions, particularly technological determinism and the disengagement of practical interest in the power relations that shape the terms of economic and social exchange between First and Third World nations, as well as class relations between strata.

The science of welfare concerned with human efforts to fulfill and satisfy their desires is known as political economy. Meanwhile, Mosco understood political economy as a study of social relations, especially power relations, which jointly underlie the production, distribution, and consumption of resources (Mosco, 1996).

Mosco has given several guidelines for understanding the characteristics of the political economy approach. Some of the main characteristics of the political economy approach are as follows (Mosco, 1996):

First, it is historical, as it seeks to comprehend social change and historical transformation concerning economic, political, cultural, and ideological moments in social life, with dynamics rooted in socioeconomic conflict. The expansion of the media, the reach of corporations, commodification, the changing roles of the state, and government intervention are all essential historical processes for the political economy of culture.

Second, analysis of social totality, or holistically, means that political economy discusses problems with other disciplines (sociology, politics, economics). Therefore, the whole social arena is the field of political economy analysis. Regarding Marxian, totality means understanding political and economic relations and broader social and cultural fields, for example, by studying the impact of economic dynamics on the diversity of public cultural expressions and their availability for particular social groups.

Third, morally oriented. The term refers to the conception of social values and appropriate social practices. The fundamental moral issues are justice, equality, and public goods (public good). The study of the political economy of the media is not value-free in the sense that the study is based on the interests of fighting for justice, equality, and the public interest.

Fourth, a practical orientation toward action with practical implications. The study of the political economy of the media serves practical purposes, which are reflected in class struggle actions.

There are three concepts for applying the political economy approach in the communications industry offered by Mosco.

First is commodification. This concept refers to the utilization of goods and services seen from their use and then transformed into commodities with market selling value. There are three forms of commodification in communication: intrinsic commodification, extrinsic commodification, and cybernetics commodification.

Second, spatialization is a process of overcoming space and time barriers in social life by media companies in the form of business expansion such as integration processes: horizontal, vertical, and internationalization.

Third is structuration, namely the process of merging human agency with the process of social change in the structural analysis. An essential characteristic of structuration theory is its power to affect social change. It describes how a structure is produced and reproduced by human agents acting through the medium of structures.

The political economy of the media is a study that arises from the consideration that the presence of the media is based on various factors such as ownership, media diversity and content, media management, media consumption, and others have an integral relationship with politics and the economy (Alfani, 2014). Basically, what we will discuss so far regarding the MNC Group is the phenomenon of media conglomeration as a result of a liberal-based economic construction that is highlighted in a country (Haryanto, 2014). The interests of political economy can easily be channeled into conditions like this school of economics.

The Government of Indonesia has never explicitly acknowledged that the country adheres to a liberal economic ideology. But in reality, in accordance with the reality of today's society. The Indonesian state has gone far towards a liberal economy (Kadir, 2017). Kadir (2017) reveals that liberalism that occurs in Indonesia is not created through regulatory mechanisms within the free market itself, but within the state there are various interests which then produce market processes. In other words, liberalism is produced through political construction.

This can explain why during The Soeharto Era, the phenomenon of media conglomeration was not very visible. This is because the state's control over the economy and politics at that time was very tight so that it also had an impact on the growth and development of the press and media industry. However, after the New Order era was replaced by the Reformation Order, changes in Indonesia's political and economic structure which were freer made media owners gain momentum. It is in such a social structure that media owners are present and have a role, and express their interests which are built on a discursive consciousness to defend their economic and political interests (Haryanto, 2014).

In the current political economy perspective, the media is often used as a tool to achieve desires through power relations. The Indonesian press system has experienced dynamics along with the movement of the nation's political life. During the nationalist movement, the media was seen as a means of struggle. At the time of independence, the press had become a means of struggle for political parties. After political stability and development work, the media plays a role in the context of development communication and capitalist press commodities (Hutagalung, 2013). In fact, according to Schechter (2007) in Hasibuan and Ardianto (2021), the phenomenon that is happening now in society facing the

media in a democracy is that there is a relationship between media news and public opinion. That is, when something (event) does not appear on television, then the state does not consider that matter to exist, especially to those who insinuate state activities that raise the pretext that the news that is happening is not interesting.

A Political Economy Perspective on MNC Media Reporting

Hary Tanoe is one of the few successful conglomerates to become a media tycoon. He is the owner of the MNC Group. A business conglomerate active in various industries, including media, real estate, finance, and transportation. One of Hary Tanoe's most significant sources of business income is from MNC Media, a subsidiary of the MNC group specializing in the media sector. MNC Media oversees dozens of media companies, whether television, radio, online, or print. RCTI, MNC TV, and Global TV are the three most well-known television stations under MNC Media.

Based on the data that the author obtained from the site mojok.co, advertising revenue from only three television stations owned by Hary Tanoe in one year can reach Rp. 5.92 trillion. One of the highest numbers among all other television station networks.

Not only focusing on the economy but also on politics. Before establishing the Perindo Party, Hary Tanoe had been in and out of political parties several times. On October 9, 2011, Hary Tanoe first decided to join a political party. He chose NasDem as the anchor. After less than two years at NasDem, Hary Tanoe decided to leave. Hary Tanoe resigned on January 21, 2013.

Less than a month later, Hary Tanoe immediately joined Hanura, which former TNI Commander Wiranto had just founded. On February 17, 2013, he officially became a Hanura cadre. In the same month, Hary Tanoe set up the Perindo mass organization, which increased his bargaining power. A year before the 2014 election, he had declared himself, along with Wiranto, to run as a candidate for president and vice president. However, halfway through, Wiranto made a turn to support Joko Widodo. Hary Tanoe was the other way around: he supported Prabowo Subianto. Furthermore, Hary Tanoe's choice needed to be recovered.

That experience finally made Hary Tanoe decide to start his party. He declared the Perindo mass organization a party on February 7, 2015. Since founding the Perindo party, Hary Tanoe has been critical of the Jokowi-JK government. This decision must be independent of the Perindo Party's political choice, which decided to join the opposition. Since then, all media under the auspices of the MNC Group have become political mouthpieces for HT and the Perindo Party to criticize government policies.

Hary Tanoe appeared to start reasoning after being held hostage in the SMS case and becoming a suspect: "If you continue to criticize the government and become part of the opposition, it will not be

suitable for Perindo's existence." Hary Tanoe has been named as a suspect in the case of threatening prosecutor Yulianto via SMS. Hary Tanoe was charged with Article 29 of the Law on Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE), as per the article in prosecutor Yulianto's report to the National Police Headquarters.

Shortly after determining the suspect status, Hary Tanoe stated that the Perindo party would support Jokowi in the 2019 presidential election. The decision was made at the Perindo National Working Meeting. The decision was officially announced on March 21, 2018, during the Second Rapimnas of the Perindo Party in Jakarta. Since then, the direction of media coverage under the auspices of the MNC Group has wholly changed. If Hary Tanoe and his media appeared ferocious in criticizing Jokowi's government before announcing his support for Jokowi, then after expressing their support, Hary Tanoe and the media under the auspices of the MNC Group appeared to have lost their strength.

The author used Vincent Mosco's political economy approach to communication to comprehend this reality. Communication politics and economics are commonly used to combine communication with politics and economics. Attachment to economic and political studies makes communication an area that is vulnerable to the influence of both. As an entity constructed by the media, what is referred to as communication often represents particular economic and political interests. According to Mosco (1996), political economy is "the study of relations, particularly power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources."

This approach is based on political economy as a study of social relations, especially those concerning power relations, both in the production, distribution, and consumption of resources in the political economy of communication. Resources (in the media context) can be newspapers, magazines, books, tapes, or films. Understanding is needed of how far the media goes in terms of interests and ideology in terms of ownership (economic) and power (political). Similarities are always found with regard to research involving large media corporations, namely conglomeration, even in developed countries such as China and the US (Hearns-Branaman, 2017). Vincent Mosco offers three critical concepts to approach it: commodification, spatialization, and structuration.

Through this approach, the authors see the relationship between conflict of interest and structuration theory in the political economy of the media as a factor influencing changes in the direction of media coverage under the auspices of the MNC Group. The results of research by Harymawan, et al (2017) show that the bigger the company, the higher the political connections. This is the main concern that frames the flow of thought in this paper.

Conflict of Interests and Political Interests Hary Tanoe

According to journalistic rules, conflicts of interest often trigger news bias. This bias can manifest in the news that favors certain conflicting groups (imbalance), stigmatizes (prejudice), and gains personal or group advantage for the news it makes. Conflicts of interest among media owners sometimes cause them to intervene in editorial policies and undermine editor independence (Wilson, 1996, p. 166). The Press Council's Code of Journalistic Ethics explicitly states the prohibition of conflicts of interest. This prohibition is contained in Article 1, which states that "Indonesian journalists act independently and produce news that is accurate, balanced, and not in bad faith." According to the Press Council's interpretation, "independence" means "reporting events or facts according to conscience without interference, coercion, or intervention from other parties, including press company owners."

The dilemma that arises from the practice of conflict of interest is that it ignores the public's right to know correct information (neglecting the public interest) and harms diversity (Croteau & Hoynes, 2006: 156). If the information received by the public is wrong, then the public opinion that arises is also wrong.

Hary Tanoe, as general chairman of the Perindo Political Party and owner of the MNC Group, has a political interest in managing his media that impacts the media reporting policy under the MNC Group. Media affiliated with the MNC Group, both print and electronic, have become the political mouthpiece of the Perindo Party, specifically Hary Tanoe's political mouthpiece.

As in Italy, Mediaset desperately defended former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, who was involved in corruption and sex scandals. Daily Sabah has never bothered the AKP Party or Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey.

There is a narrative that the media is often used as a shield to defend themselves from their owners. Similarly, the MNC Group acted in the case of Hary Tanoe's threatening SMS.

Based on the data the author obtained from tirto.id dated July 4, 2017, Sindo, Okezone, and Sindonews reported that the determination of Hary Tanoe as a new suspect was carried out on June 23. However, Koran Sindo has raised this issue on the front page since June 17. From June 17 to July 4, news about Hary Tanoe's threatening SMS always graced the front page, whether it was the headline or the second story. From June 17 to July 4, Koran Sindo was published 14 times. During the 14 editions, eight editions made the issue of threatening SMS the main title.

President Joko Widodo, Attorney General M Agung Prasetyo, and SMS threat reporter Attorney Yulianto were the three targets of this headline. "The attempt to criminalize Perindo Party DPP Chairman Hary Tanoesoedibjo (HT) will undermine public trust in Joko Widodo's (Jokowi) government."

Moreover, the SMS case, considered a threat to Prosecutor Yulianto, became "political acrobatics."

As written by tirto.id, MNC Media also has two well-known online media, okezone.com and [Sindonews](http://sindonews.com)—media convergence from [Koran Sindo](http://koran.sindo.com). Based on Tirto's research data, starting on June 23, when HT was named a suspect, Okezone and Sindonews increased the number of reports defending Hary Tanoë. As of July 3, the number of Hary Tanoë's news items has reached 544, with details of 429 on Okezone and 115 on Sindonews. On Monday, July 3, 2017, news about Hary Tanoë dominated Okezone by up to 25 percent, or 95 stories. This figure is lame compared to other media that are not interested in pursuing this issue. It was recorded that from June 23 to July 3, this issue was only reported eight times on [Kompas.com](http://kompas.com), and six stories on [Tempo.co](http://tempo.co), ten news items on merdeka.com, and one on [Republika](http://republika.com).

Hary Tanoë admits his political ideas consist of three things, namely economic politics, social politics, and cultural politics. This was obtained because of his background as an entrepreneur who focuses on improving the lower class economy and alleviating poverty (Maylasari & Sardini, 2019). Thus, his work in the world of politics cannot be separated from economic projects. So of course the use of media with political motives, moreover his own media is something natural.

Analysis of Structuration Theory in MNC Media Reporting

Structuration is explained as a process where social agents mutually enforce social structures, and even each part of the structure can act to serve other parts. The relationship of ideas among community agents, social processes, and social practices is explained by structuration. The result of structuration is a set of social relations and power processes organized around classes, gender, race, and social movements, all of which are interconnected. Anthony Giddens initially developed the idea of structuration. Structuration is one of the critical characteristics of structural theory, which describes social change as a process that describes how a structure is produced and reproduced by humans who act as actors in the structure itself (Giddens & Murdock, 1998).

Structuring in social life consists of constitutional structure and agency. This structuration theory's essential characteristic is its power over social change. The process of social change is a process that describes how structures are produced and reproduced by human agents acting through the medium of these structures. This structuration balances the tendency in political economy analysis to describe structures such as business and government institutions by demonstrating and describing ideas of agency, social relations, and social processes and practices.

Hary Tanoë is one of the few conglomerates that has succeeded in the media industry. He is the owner of the MNC Group. A business group engaged in many fields, from media, property, and finance to transportation. One of Hary Tanoë's most significant sources of business income is from MNC Media, a subsidiary of the MNC group specializing in the media sector. MNC Media oversees dozens of media

companies, whether television, radio, online, or print. Hary Tanoe also founded the Perindo Party as a platform for him to enter the world of practical politics.

The power structure that houses the MNC Group and the Perindo Party has the same goal. Namely, Hari Tanoe was the holder of absolute power in the two institutions. MNC Media's news content production is an extension of the Perindo Party. Even at the beginning of the establishment of this party, many important positions and party officials were filled by MNC people. At the time of the party committee announcement, the total number of central committee members was 33 people, 14 of whom were MNC employees. The United Council and the Party Court are also mostly filled with MNC people. It is no exaggeration if at the beginning of its emergence, the Perindo Party was called the MNC-flavored Party (Kresna, 2018).

The MNC Group denied that the Perindo Party was under the MNC Group but acknowledged that the group could help the party. This analogy is common for companies engaged in other fields. However, for the media, especially television, which uses public frequencies that should be used for the public interest, media owners can also use them as a means of popularity for their political interests, which have nothing to do with the public interest and even prioritize the interests of the public—specific political individuals and groups.

News broadcasts on all TV stations owned by MNC often feature coverage of the PERINDO National Party since Hary Tanoe is the owner of MNC. The media is used as a political tool by its owners. The media is used for political or political publicity to introduce figures or parties from various sides, their vision, and their mission, although abstractly expressed in pictures, to party activities. MNC TV is often used to cover and report on the political activities of media owners and the activities of their parties. Even things that do not have mandatory news values are still reported because the owner of the media is present at or appears at certain events.

CONCLUSION

MNC Media and all the mass media companies run into conflicts of interest and the political interests of the owner, namely Hary Tanoe. With structuration theory, it can be explained that the power structure that houses MNC Media and the Perindo Party has the same goal. Namely, Hari Tanoe, as the holder of power. MNC Media's production of news content is the Perindo Party's political publicity. The public must be wiser in receiving and processing information from many sources and from various perspectives so it is not trapped in the paradigm of the political interests of media owners..

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