

## THE COMMODIFICATION OF 'JATANRAS' TELE-TABLOID PROGRAM ON NET-TV

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### ABSTRACT

At present crime content is one of the most explored material by NET, one of them is through the 'JATANRAS' (Crime and Violence) program. This study intends to discuss the forms of commodification that occur in the JATANRAS program. The research methodology used is qualitative, with a political economy approach that is in the realm of critical tradition. Data was collected through interviews with 'JATANRAS' Producers. The results showed that there was a commodification process in the JATANRAS program, namely the commodification of content, the commodification of audiences, and the commodification of media workers. This research also shows that this program has characteristics as teletabloids in which the dramatization of police actions and criminal acts is made as the main commodity.

**Keywords:** Commodification, Tele-Tabloid, Net-TV

### INTRODUCTION

In 2013, NET was present as a television media with content about news and infotainment. NET prioritizes the visual aspect with the touch of high-tech full HD. NET is serious about building an image as A-B class media that offers premium content, not a mockery of content that only pursues share and rating. NET CEO, Wishnutama, at that time always emphasized that NET as a television today would not provide random content. According to him, educating and entertaining the audience must be with educational and quality content.

However, the magnitude of the cost of producing programs on the NET business is apparently not healthy, advertising revenue with expenditure is not comparable. As a result, in the fourth and fifth years up to now, NET is not much different from other Indonesian television. NET is working to increase share and rating, and further tighten 'belts'. Some documentary and news programs were removed, replaced with impressions that seemed to be more favored by the market and advertisers, one of which, through the display of crime content.

After the success of the '86' program, NET recently presented the 'JATANRAS' (Crime and Violence) program. Similar to 86, through JATANRAS we can also take part in Indonesian police action in raids and investigations. JATANRAS also has another uniqueness, namely there is an active police host whose personal branding is quite interesting. Host named Aiptu Jakaria aka Jacklyn Choppers has the opportunity to become an iconic figure with his quirky style and

personality. In addition, JATANRAS also has a dubber (narrator) who delivers narration with a style of communication that is not rigid.

This study intends to discuss the form of commodification that occurs in the JATANRAS program. This program is interesting because it is categorized as news by NET, but basically it is quite prioritizing the element of drama, especially when police action is raiding or arresting criminals. This study will dissect how the commodification of content, the commodification of audiences, and the commodification of media workers occur; and whether the JATANRAS program is suitable as news (journalism product).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Media Commodification

Mosco (2009, p. 130) describes that there are two general dimensions that indicate a significant relationship between commodification and communication. First, technology and communication processes contribute to the general process of commodification in the economy as a whole. Second, the process of commodification in the work system of society as a whole penetrates the institution and the process of communication, so that improvements and contradictions that occur in the process of commodification related to society will affect communication as a social practice.

There are three main products of the commodification process in communication, namely (1) Content commodification. Content commodification refers to the process of transforming communication messages (data, meanings, thoughts, ideas) into products of market value (Mosco, 2009, p. 133). The process of commodification in communication occurs through the process of transforming a message that was originally simple into something that is full of meaning and interesting to the public. Communication is a very influential commodity because what happens is not only the commodification to get "surplus value", but also because the message conveyed contains symbols and images. , the commodification of audiences, and the commodification of workers, (2) In the commodification of audiences it is stated that the public is not only treated as the recipient of the message, but also part of the means for capital accumulation. Audience is formed as a commodity.

Dallas Smythe (in Mosco, 2009, p. 136) states that the audience is the primary commodity of the mass media. According to him, mass media companies produce audiences and then the audiences are sold to advertisers, and (3) Regarding the commodification of workers, Braverman (in Mosco, 2009, pp. 138-139) mentions that workers are basically a unity of concepts, ideas, ideas, as well as implementing to realize the idea. But in the process of commodification, there is a separation between ideas / ideas and their implementation. The ideas / ideas are only controlled by the managerial level (which is part of the financiers or represents the interests of the financiers), while the worker is the executor who produces the output according to the target of the investor as efficiently as possible.

**Television Tabloid (Teletabloid)**

Clements (in Langer, 2001, p. 2), says that we have been 'swayed by entertainment values that often replace news values' and 'are left confused with pleasure'. This statement refers to how television journalism is generally interleaved with elements of entertainment (drama). Journalism in the broadcasting world also often puts forward sadness, or what is referred to as 'the lament'. Television is also very often 'caught red-handed' more interested in bombastic and dramatic news. This happens because there is a goal to pursue rating and share for profit. This is also explained by Bennett, "The use of the formula 'dramatic script' is especially evident in television news where the pressure to win ratings has caused the distinction between news and entertainment to become alarmingly hazy" (in Langer, 2001, p. 3).

The blurring of the distinction between news and entertainment can be clearly seen in a separate program genre, often referred to as 'reality programming'. However, critics prefer to call it the term 'tabloid television'. Why is it called a tabloid? Because such programs are more focused on stories about moral disorder / deviations which are packaged in a more subjective manner, rather than being objective / neutral as journalism is high (Knight, in Sholle, 1993, p. 56).

This type of program such as coverage of police action against criminals, criminal scenes, crime stories / celebrities, about violence, and video footage (home video). Sholle (1993, p. 56) calls it a television-shaped tabloid which is a strange mixture of news, entertainment, and advertising reports. In this case, tabloid television is clearly a form of commodification.

**METHOD**

The methodology of this research is descriptive qualitative. This research uses a political economy approach, which is in the realm of critical tradition. Political economy is a study of social relations, specifically power relations, which form the production, distribution and consumption of available resources, including communication resources (Mosco, 2009, p. 2). Power (power) in the sense of this definition does not only involve politics in the narrow sense, but also the power of capital owners, stake holders, competitors, and so on.

Political economics pays attention, explains, and analyzes the capitalism system that converts resources such as workers, raw materials, land and information into marketable commodities which will later generate profits for those who invest capital in the system. The political economy of communication itself focuses on the media, information, and audiences as resources where the political economy of communication seeks to map and explain how communication resources are transformed into products that are sold (Mosco, 2009, pp. 119-120).

This research only focuses on the commodification that occurs in the production of JATANRAS television programs on NET, namely the commodification of content, the commodification of audiences, and the commodification of media workers. The researcher

conducted an interview with one of JATANRAS Producers, Adam Surya Nagara, to obtain the required data.

## DISCUSSION

### Content Commodification

#### Curiosity and adrenaline rush

The actions of the police in carrying out investigations, chasing, and prosecution of criminals will always have an appeal, because these actions are not ordinary events that are easily encountered everyday. This is what is then exploited by NET. NET turns unusual events that people want to know about into television show products. NET capitalizes the audience's curiosity about the work of the police.

The process of transforming communication messages into products of selling value is what is called the commodification of content. Criminal events that occur in everyday life can be transformed into a source of content for NET to be used as a show of sale value.

Not only is the curiosity of the audience capitalized by NET, but also the tendency of the audience to educate the tense actions. Adam Surya Nagara added, "It is from the side of the content so we choose what is really exciting, the pictures are good, stimulating adrenaline, well anyway makes people curious to want to keep watching" (personal communication, December 30, 2019).

Adrenaline is often also referred to as 'action hormone' (action hormone). This hormone is triggered by fear, both physical and psychological. Fear triggers our amygdala, then the amygdala responds like an alarm bell to the body that warns the hypothalamus, which then sends a message to the adrenal glands to give us an instant adrenaline explosion. Adrenaline causes our heart to race and pump more blood to our muscles. We breathe faster, and the small airways in our lungs open, allowing more oxygen to flow into our bloodstream. This additional oxygen enters our brain and makes our senses sharper. When our adrenaline subsides, the hypothalamus releases cortisol, the hormone that makes us 'literate' and ready for action (Penn Medicine, 2017, "Fight or Flight: The Science of Fear ... And Why We Like Scary Movies").

Physical sensations like the one above can also be triggered by tense and / or horrible shows. That physical sensation may also indirectly make many people like action films or horror films. The JATANRAS program was deliberately created with the theme of action, namely violence and crime. Adam Surya Nagara said, "If JATANRAS focuses on violence and crime, so there is no question of traffic ticketing, driving people drunk" (personal communication, 30 December 2019).

#### The more dramatic and more interesting

The tendency of viewers to like tense shows is also exploited by NET by building spooky atmosphere. If in the film, the elements mentioned by JATANRAS Producer above are often referred to as *mise-en-scène*. Amy Villarejo (2006, pp. 29-36) describes the elements of *mise-en-scène*, namely the setting (set and property), lighting, costumes, hair, make up, and the behavior of figures (ie movements, expressions, or actions of other actors or figures).

Mise-en-scène is a French term, which refers to elements in each frame in the film outside of actors and dialogues. All of these elements support one another in giving meaning. In addition to mise-en-scène in the JATANRAS program, the elements of music / sound are also arranged in such a way as to support the content: "Well the music that plays drama and beat music is rather fast so the people watch it so that it builds its mood, and is carried away like that" (Adam Surya Nagara, personal communication, 30 December 2019).

Tense scenes, coupled with mise-en-scenarios and supportive music / sound, proved to be shows that had good share graphics.

The producer of JATANRAS stated that the selection of good images and dramatic content played a major role in scooping the audience's attention, "Well, for the viewers, of course I chose a good picture to be curious" (Adam Surya Nagara, personal communication, 30 December 2019).

In addition to coverage by the NET team, the content of the show was also obtained from videos contributed by NET contributors in the regions. Adam Surya Nagara (personal communication, December 30, 2019) said: "Well, choose the material, so it involves regional contributors to stick to the police, follow the arrest, from the contributor's submissions, we will also select them, not all criminal news can originate from JATANRAS" .

Another thing which is a form of commodification of content is the work of the police which (should) naturally be transformed into commercial television products. This commodification often leads us to assume that something that is natural is no longer natural due to glorification or the construction of a dramatized image.

## **Commodification of Audiences**

### **Trade rating and share**

Population commodification refers to the process of transforming audiences into means of capital accumulation. Mass media companies, in this case NET, produce JATANRAS program audiences, and then the audiences are sold to advertisers.

So far, there have not been any special blocking / spot / built ads in the JATANRAS program. However, JATANRAS gets an abundance of advertisements from advertisers who promote in prime time hours. While JATANRAS itself at 22:30 WIB.

Efforts to hook advertisers of course continue to be carried out by NET, especially for the target audience JATANRAS who are male workers aged 15-35 years. Maintaining share and rating performance has also become an important goal for NET. The overall duration of the JATANRAS program is 30 minutes, divided into 3 segments. Each segment lasts around 6-8 minutes and commercial breaks for advertisements are 3 minutes. Even though there are no special blocking / spot / built in ads, the overflow of prime time hours advertisements to JATANRAS is quite good in terms of percentage. Of the 3 minutes commercial break, 70% of advertisements were able to be filled, and the remaining 30% was promoted to the NET program. This percentage is very good in the NET standard. Not only that, JATANRAS was also considered successful in contributing viewers to the NET program afterwards.

The success of JATANRAS in donating this audience also caused JATANRAS to change its broadcasting time from 23:30 WIB to 22:30 WIB. Adam Surya Nagara said: "Initially at 23:30 it was only a week, then it was moved to 22.30. 23.30, the first trial turned out to be sharply jumping, starting at 3.1 and then at 22.30 it turned out to be better at 4, then 3.9 and the highest was so far 5.1 "(personal communication, 30 December 2019).

From the data it appears that the NET team is quite skilled at playing action content that can maintain and even increase audience attention. The JATANRAS program also initially only aired once a week, but now it has become two times, namely Saturday and Sunday. This is due to the audience's good and unexpected response.

Share and rating are not only managed through broadcast content, but also through quizzes on Instagram social media. To be involved in the quiz, the audience must watch the entire show (segments 1, 2, 3) because the quiz will be present at the end of the show with unexpected questions. The prizes that will be obtained by the winners are souvenirs from NET and from the host. NET appears to be actively managing the community of fans of the program via social media.

### **Commodification of Workers**

#### **Capitalization of human resources**

The JATANRAS NET team is arguably a versatile individual. The team consists of 3 producers and 2 video journalists. The task of the producer is also not playing because he took to the field for coverage. The producer also makes the script, does the editing, and becomes the narrator. In addition to the five core team members, NET also maximizes NET contributors in each region to cover police actions. In addition, the police can also contribute footage if it has the potential to be aired.

Maximization and / or efficiency of human resources in the production of television programs is a form of the commodification of workers. Workers are considered as one of the factors of production so they must be regulated as efficiently as possible with as many outputs as possible, of course, in order to bring optimal profit to the capital owner.

Another form of commodification of workers in the JATANRAS program is how NET is able to maximize the role of the host and capitalize all capabilities and originality possessed by the host. Aiptu Jakaria aka Jacklyn Choppers was deliberately chosen as a host because it is an active police officer and has good personal branding on social media. Host police certainly becomes a plus compared to non-police hosts, because it will provide credibility in narrating criminal cases.

Jacklyn's status as an active policeman, Jacklyn's history as a survivor of 11 bullets, and his quirky personality and style are an originality inherent in Jacklyn Choppers. This originality was later made into a commodity by NET. Jacklyn's straightforward, assertive, and frightening style of speech did not become homework for NET because it was natural from Jacklyn's person. The NET team simply acts as a 'reminder' only and reinforces the character if something is missing. In fact, even in the matter of hosting the program, Jacklyn already has the ability to greatly facilitate NET team work.



## CONCLUSION

The process of commodification in the JATANRAS program not only occurs in television broadcast content, but also audiences and media workers (crew and host). When talking about the commodification of content, dramatization of police actions and criminal acts are the main commodities of the JATANRAS program to hook the attention of the audience. When television journalism is inserted with elements of entertainment (drama), then it is no longer high journalism but critics call it television tabloid (teletabloid). This drama element becomes a television station maneuver in its efforts to reap the share and rating.

There are at least two characteristics of tabloids inherent in the JATANRAS program, namely: (1) 'reality' appearance / 'reality' appearance. In this case, the dramatization of content has obscured the distinction between reality and image: whether the parts in the police action series are pure, or are efforts to form a good image of the police. This blurring is due to the loosening of the meaning of news in a television program production. News that is pure should not be inserted by 'orders' to make the show more selling / interesting, (2) Postmodern viewing that applies voyeurism and gimmick. Voyeurism that presents 'pictures as images' (no longer representational textuality) in the JATANRAS program is the use of footage from the police or contributors. The footage is usually in the form of coverage of an investigation or arrest. This kind of footage can be directly 'enjoyed' by the audience without the need for interpretation structure. Whereas in terms of gimmicks, the frightening impression that arises through the property of big motorbikes, 'skulls' helmets, and the dark workshop atmosphere, is a form of gimmick. Apart from that, the narrator style that carries the humorous narration is also a gimmick of entertainment elements in the JATANRAS program.

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