



AFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND CREATIVE LABOUR IN INDONESIA'S EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Purpose: This article examines affective technology to understand the significance of creative labour in Indonesia multinational oil and gas companies in the city of Balikpapan, East Kalimantan.

Methodology: The data is gathered from desk studies by reviewing policies, monographs, and printed documents, and ethnographic observations to understand the social and cultural context.

Main findings: We identified two types of affective technologies created by creative labours: the visual simulation to create new subjects and visual efforts to forge corporate reputation. They are important in helping in the production of subjects and the value of corporate branding.

Practical Implications: This study shows the need for extractive industries to pay more detail in providing safety instructions for their employees. Creative workers can be the right agents to compose effective messages with their ability to touch the affective side of employees through the works they produce.

Social Implications: The creative workers are increasing in number; however, their nature of work which is mainly based on gigs is somewhat vulnerable in developing countries like Indonesia. Closer cooperation with the big industries will be favorable for them with the hope that in return they will come up with some products to strengthen the companies' social responsibility.

The novelty of study: While previous studies have rarely underlined the interplay between creative work and extractive industries, this article provides insight into affective technology within the context of extractive industries.

Keywords: *Affective Technology, Creative Work, Culture, Kalimantan, Labour.*

INTRODUCTION

Since being declared as part of a new economic strategy by the British government through the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport (1998), the creative industry has begun to enter the academic debate. In principle, four criteria are used to analyse the creative industry. The first is the policy evaluation approach in terms of analysing policy translation, the globalisation process of bringing creative industries to various countries, art commercialisation, convergence into industry services or knowledge economies, and information society (Caves, 2000; Garnham, 2005; Prince, 2010; Avis, 2013). This approach assumes that the creative industry is a new industry or a new part of the economic sector. Second, creative economics is examined as a type of work, and its relation to creative workers or classes is assessed (Florida, 2002; Gill and Pratt, 2008; Neilson and Rossiter, 2008; Baker and Hesmondhalgh, 2013; De Peuter, 2011; Bulut, 2015), which entails an analysis of the utilisation of human capital, exploitation of leisure time, worker vulnerability, self-autonomy and the contribution of the creative class to regional development. The third approach looks at the relationship between the creative economy and urban area transformation (Lange, 2011; Scott, 2014; Gu, 2014), which problematises the formation of new clusters in urban areas, gentrification, place branding, and agglomeration. The fourth approach involves understanding the creative industry and its relation to the broader economy (Cunningham and Higgs, 2009; Hearn, et al., 2014; Huws, 2010; Carey, 2015; Pitts, 2015).

This article will investigate the intersection between creative labour and broader industries to what Cunningham and Higgs, (2009) call as embedded mode, categorised by people employed within the defined creative occupations who are working outside the defined creative industries and paying attention to a certain commodity which constituted relation between creative work and whole economic.

In the first section of this article, we address the problem of affective economy or economies of affect (Richard and Rudnycky, 2009) that have emerged as a consequence of the debate to understand the complexity of emotion, affective economy, and governmentality. The second section addresses the demand for corporate moral regulation and how corporations respond to global demand with creative employment. The final part of this article discusses two small case studies: a visual safety booklet and a logo in relation to corporate brand management. We argue that safety booklets and logos are technologically affective and constitute a corporate effort to create self-safety subjects and manage corporate reputation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Affective Technology in the context of extractive industries.

Our analysis stems from several questions: Who is an affective producer in the economy? Through which technologies has affection been maintained? To what extent do these affective technologies influence subjects and economic institutions? To investigate these questions, we began by exploring the relationship between emotions and work, which is widely discussed as a way to manipulate cognitive and bodily outcomes as well as expression to sustain job satisfaction, reduce stress, improve performance and cultivate a sense of community in the corporation ([Hochschild, 1983](#); [Grandey, 2000](#)). Previous explanations of the emotional aspect of labour studies have been insufficient because they have only involved the problem of job satisfaction, preventing organisational rule violations, work dissatisfaction, or minimising worker resistance to corporations. [Richard and Rudnykycj \(2009\)](#) note that the emotional role in organisations proposed by [Hochschild \(1983\)](#) exists within the context of feeling commodification, which has implications for worker alienation. This understanding leads to the idea of economies of affect ([Richard and Rudnykycj, 2009](#)) in comprehending the role of affection in creating and producing economic subjects and becoming the antidote to worker estrangement. Affect ([Richard and Rudnykycj, 2009: 60](#)) is a crucial element in producing subjects who create global economic shifts through cultural labour.

Subjectification is a governmental objective that refuses ‘extreme’ forms of power, such as violence and absolute power and force. Rather, power can be distributed through individuals, particularly in how individuals manage themselves or through self-regulation ([Foucault, 1991](#)). [Rose \(1999\)](#) expands upon the idea of governmentality as having the capability to make subjects responsible and to bring about autonomation, which opens up free space for individuals to be included as autonomous actors in more sophisticated control. This means that the governmentalisation process should be deployed through media as the technology of affect ([Pereira, 2019](#)), not only to spread culture symbolically and expressively through informational communication ([Baker and Hesmondhalgh, 2013](#)) but also through mobilisation or manipulation affect to elicit new subject dispositions and align individuals with communities ([Ahmed, 2004](#), [Rudnykycj, 2011](#)).

We take a different angle than Foucauldian scholar that emphasises the role of affection in economic subjectification ([Richard and Rudnykycj, 2009](#); [Rudnykycj, 2011](#); [Pereira, 2019](#)). Rather, we open up possibilities to recognise biopower from below through the role of affective workers and their visual commodities in creating new economic subjects ([Hardt, 1999](#)). Through this framework, we argue that creative workers—not as a social class category in a Marxian sense nor as cultural intermediaries who provide symbolic goods and services (Negus, 2002: 60)—are experts who produce visual media commodities to create subjects that are aware, understanding and responsive to work safety and that maintain company reputations. Our argument echoes [Miller and Rose’s \(1990:10\)](#) analysis of experts who translate social problems into expertise language. Work safety problems and corporate reputation issues will be translated by experts (in this case, creative labourer) as design and visual appearance problems.

We classify two crucial elements of affective technology. The first is affective technology as a visual simulation to create new subjects. A safety booklet will demonstrate the visualisation and simulation of how to maintain safety in a marine area. This booklet plays a crucial role because it allows for *the government at distance* as part of calculation efforts to minimise direct political intervention ([Miller and Rose, 1990](#)). Finally, the technology of the self is a model proposed to establish and develop relationships with the self, such as through self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, and self-translation efforts to become someone, as well as the transformation that seeks for people to become objects ([Rose, 1999: 245](#)).

The second crucial element in affective technology is as a visual effort to forge corporate reputation. Within an economic context, perhaps the more appropriate term is company brand management. [Arvidsson \(2006\)](#) argues that brand value is able to enter people’s social lives and become a crucial aspect of relationships, identity, desire, and hope. Visual images, such as logos, websites, illustrations, taglines, and packaging designs, exist not merely as concrete manifestations but also as symbolic and social relations mobilised by brands to mutate into informational capital that manifests in experience, emotion, and a sense of community ([Arvidsson, 2006](#)). This informational capital is constituted with corporation social capital, better known as ‘social reputation’, to measure institutional competitiveness, business assets and consumer loyalty ([Chun, 2005](#); [De Castro et al., 2006](#))

Freelance Graphic Designer in an Extractive Industry

The problem of organising creative work in non-creative industries invites several implications at the management level, for example, between specialists and embedded creative workers. They are facilitated through social networks. The freelancer interviewee collaborated with a creative agency, called a production house, named KT Multimedia. They were designated as the person in charge of one particular project, in this case, a work safety booklet and the corporate logos for cultural programs. The creative agencies serve as brokers to external networks or creative service providers.

The freelance worker was deployed as a visual media content creator for anti-corruption campaigns, not employing child workers, work safety standards, corporate website maintenance, family gatherings, visualising codes of conduct in employee ethics, and e-learning applications to upgrade employee capabilities. This affection aspect is demanded by multinational extractive companies not only to bond their workers emotionally and fulfil global audit demands but also

to encourage workers to practice self-discipline, self-management, and self-safety. Extractive company workers are forged as subjects who actively supervise their co-workers to discipline them and maintain their own safety. Furthermore, creative workers actively promote corporate goodness in the local culture that implies how the corporate reputation is received in wider society.

The interviewee said that being employed by multinational companies was an opportunity to educate people on professional ethics, deadline discipline (*taat deadline*), payment in dollars (*dibayar dollar*), and recognizing Borneo culture through CSR programs. Meanwhile, for multinational companies, employing local creative workers is part of 'local people involvement' (*keterlibatan warga lokal*) in the global economic arena, improving extractive companies' image, as such companies can often be sued for neglecting local culture or environmental issues or for employing local designers considered better than the overpriced capital city designers (*desainer Jakarta*).

The content multimedia project deployed from the corporate division contacted the production house. This multimedia content is needed by the company to facilitate the communication process between co-workers or from leaders to workers. Creative workers are contacted by the department of health, safety, and environment (HSE) of multinational companies. When the project is finished, they often obtain contacts from other divisions that need visual media content. For example, informants who only work for a few weeks after working for the HSE division may be contacted by the geological department to make a storyboard about the exploration history in Mahakam Delta or are even stationed as officers (*orang Kantor*), although there are only 3-month contracts in the IT (Information and Technology) department.

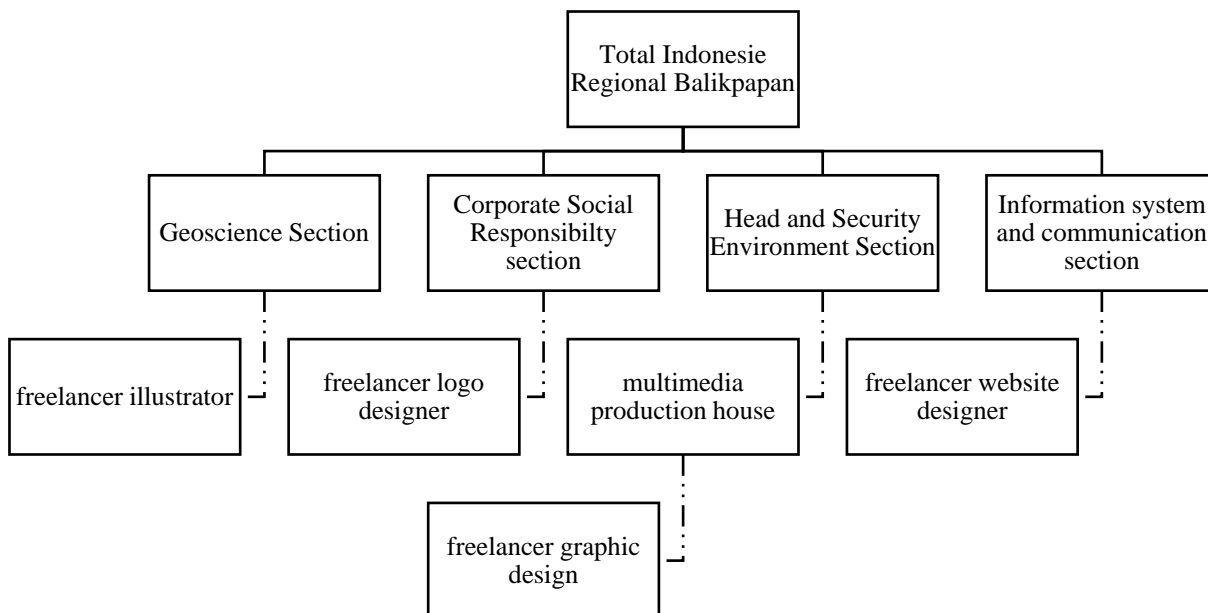


Figure 1: Organisational hierarchy between corporation and graphic design freelancer.

Source: Author fieldnotes. (March 27, 2017)

Although placed at the bottom of the organisational chart, creative workers can establish direct contact with company employers, such as the HSE division. This model, according to creative workers, is very flexible and manageable for them because they work on the project within a certain period of time. This means they are free to look for other projects outside the company and to work from home. For project owners or companies, the division concerned does not need to add permanent employees to the organisation and can freely contact creative workers. After a division establishes contact with some freelance creative workers, an ad hoc small team will be established. In our example, when the safety booklet project was initiated by the HSE Division, the creative workers recruited with some specific requirements such as photographic skills, graphic design, and layout. However, some creative workers sometimes complain about client contact when the creative worker is not working or is not online.

METHODOLOGY

This article is based on an ethnographic study of creative workers in Balikpapan City, East Kalimantan, from 2017–2018, and several regular visits for 1–2 months. Balikpapan is a large industrial city in Kalimantan Island where several official branches of multinational extractive companies are located, including Total Indonesia, Chevron, Schlumberger, Baker and Hughes. This research employed a qualitative procedure, used in-depth interview and observation techniques, and focus on small scale cases to be studied. The interview data and observations consisting of narratives and testimonies from freelance graphic designers were not only used to understand the relationships between creative



workers and non-creative industries but also to explain commodities produced by creative workers to support economies of affect in extractive industries. This narrative is also supported by analysis on booklet and logo as a part of affective technology.

CASE STUDIES AND DISCUSSIONS

Total Company in East Kalimantan: Global Ethic Agency

After much globalisation criticism—particularly regarding multinational corporate operation conduct, including operating beyond ethical business limitations, philanthropy and business strategy—social responsibility and universal values set by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Labour Organisations, Fundamental Principles on Rights at Work and Rio Principles on Environment and Development have been embraced (Ruggie, 2002; Rowe, 2006). This responsibility has been deployed through accountability, corporate audits and social welfare distribution (Strathern, 2000; Renouard, 2011; Kemp et al., 2012). Several anthropologists have studied corporate responsibility, including moral conduct, charitable donations and empowerment programs (Rajak, 2009). However, there is an implication of the relationship between corporations and society being a ‘public face’ (Benson, 2008; Shever, 2010).

Transnational companies represented as global value agencies operate through corporate ethics and cultural norms (Ong and Collier, 2005; Schoenberger, 2000; Welker, 2014). One of these values is work safety, which is applied as an international standard and polishes the brand as a company that is responsible for Borneo local culture. Practically, the Total Company also plays a crucial role as the producer of global discourse to explore areas such as sustainable environmental programs, campaign corruption eradication, company transparency, respect of local cultures, compliance with labour regulations and company performance audits. This article will investigate how multinational companies recognise Borneo local culture through creative worker commodities.

The origin of the Total Oil Company comes from the French government exercising control of the national oil supply. Total expanded branches in more than 13 countries and involved in all areas of the petroleum industry from exploration production of oil, gas and liquid petroleum gas (LPG), refinement and distribution, trading and shipment of crude oil and mineral oil products (Buckermann, 2012). In Indonesia, Total Company was represented by a head office in Jakarta and the regional district located in Balikpapan. The district is in charge of several divisions, including drilling, well services and logistics, field operations, information systems and telecommunications, supply chain, engineering (ENG), health, safety and environment (HSE), geosciences and reservoir (GSR), security (SEC) and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

The Total Company ethical code contains three main business principles: 1) Total strives to ensure the highest standards for safety, health and environment in the place of operation; 2) Total has a strong compliance program based on the principle of ‘no tolerance’, which is designed to prevent and detect violations of anti-monopoly, anti-fraud, anti-bribery and anti-corruption laws that apply worldwide; and 3) Total is committed to respecting internationally recognised human rights standards in the area of operation.

The work safety culture of Total Companies is much supported by the golden rules that carry the mission to protect work accidents, including 1) Share the basic rules that everyone should know and apply; 2) Strength of prevention by encouraging people to step in whenever they see something being done unsafely; 3) Stop working if the risk is not properly managed, and 4) Report anomalies.

Safety Booklet as Affective Technology Visualisation

In the case we describe below, the affective process is intertwined with mediation, visualisation and ideal work simulation that contribute to health and safety culture. Mas Lintang, a photographer and graphic designer, said that oil workers in the offshore drilling section must spend months at sea, where they cannot meet with their families, have improper entertainment and are always checked for the appropriateness of their clothing, from safety shoes to project helmets. The offshore drilling workers were impacted by extreme boredom and were mostly silent. According to Mas Lintang, photographer and booklet designer, they were like machines.

“Drilling people only know two kinds of joyful. First, during the drilling process, the oil comes out, so they shout happily. Secondly, when they ‘go downshift’, the time will come to meet the family on land, from the bridge, their face was happy, they have planned to use whatever the money is, for vacation, delicious food, or whatever, as long for happiness. This condition contrast with the offshore worker that prepare to next shift, their face was sullen and sad.” (March 24, 2017)

Mas Lintang worked on the layout, fonts and photos of a safety booklet. This booklet resulted from his collaboration with the HSE division. He was contacted about whether he could work on the safety booklet, and he agreed. Safety in multinational companies is very strict, and there is no tolerance for the slightest violation. Mas Lintang argued that the safety brochure was very important for workers because they need to work safely. Occupational health and safety, or K3 (*Kesehatan dan Keselamatan dan Kerja*), is designed to provide a sense of security, safety and comfort for workers and, more importantly, for workers to be careful and become an important part ‘of the company’. Mas Lintang had indeed received a K3 brochure from a national company engaged in coal mining, but he said that the company was ‘unfair’

when asking for his services. Even though he has full responsibility for the results of his work, he did not want to produce his brochures when they operated non-optimally or just ceremonially.



Figure 2: Example of a safety booklet, a reminder to employees not to work in drowsy conditions.

Source: Authors' documentation.

In the introductory section, the guidebook written by the marine HSE lists guidelines for carrying out accident-prone shipping. He said when the project began, he accepted a thick book containing safety procedures that must be visualised in the form of a booklet (Richard and Rudnyckij (2009), Rudnyckij (2011), Pereira (2019)). Visualisation in guidebooks makes it easier for company leaders to manage their workers. An illustration was created that visualised more specific activities. This illustration was worked on by a local painter named Bang Peter who was inspired by *Beni* and *Mice*, two popular cartoon characters that appear in the weekend edition on *Kompas*, one of the largest newspapers in Indonesia. According to him, these characters contain unique symbols, funny impression and communicative (Miller and Rose's 1990). So the reader would be interested while reading the suggested sentences and commands on the right side of the book column. Bang Peter worked on the sketch of this booklet manually, and he later scanned the illustration.

Through guidebooks, creative workers attempt to mediate the ineffectiveness of the process of socialising work safety (Rose, 1999). This 10 cm x 15 cm book can be carried anywhere and is designed to fit the mine worker clothes pocket. This handbook is divided into several important points, such as preparation for work, starting a voyage, important information, operational boundaries (when on a boat), prohibited items, shipping hazards and hidden hazards onboard, rights and the responsibilities of the ship's captain. At the back end, there was the statement: 'That I will carry out everything stated in this book, in carrying out daily work. I understand that what is stated in this book is essential for my own safety'.

The regulatory model in this book begins with an opening section, namely on work preparation, and there is an illustration of a picture of workers who say that work preparation ensures the proper physical conditions and health of mining workers; that medical check-up certificates are still valid, and workers are fit to work; and that they are wearing work clothes and using the correct personal protective equipment, such as work shoes and life jackets. Mas Lintang told us that when taking photos at any location, he must abide by the same protocol as the work guidelines. The guidelines are standard for anyone who works at the mining site.

This booklet not only shows how the company functions to safeguard its workers but also how it integrates disciplinary simulations and how to work safely is ideally illustrated. The state of affection of this manual is reflected through the simulation illustrations from the process of working in the mine, allowing workers or even common readers to imagine what it is like to work in an offshore mining area. Oil workers are directed not only to fulfil the demands of the work safety culture to avoid workplace accidents but also to manage themselves independently in the workplace.

Redesigning Logos as Managing Affective Technology

Corporations will communicate their values to the public as well as how they connect to everyday life through their logos. The choice of colours, lines, or curves, icons, symbols, and illustrations reflect how the corporation will be received. The interviewee said that if the logo is *norak* (ugly) or *warna yang tidak nyambung* (the colour is not synchronous), it will reflect poorly on the corporate reputation and their *track record*, particularly how the corporate image is received by the public (Arvidsson 2006, Chun, 2005; De Castro et al., 2006).

The *Rumah Budaya* is a cultural center designated as part of CSR located in the centre of Balikpapan. In 2008, creative workers began collaborating with *Rumah Budaya* on logo projects or were invited to Borneo's remote areas to document weaving crafts in Krayan on the Indonesia-Malaysia border. The *Rumah Budaya* director said he wanted to preserve the culture and elevate Dayak culture to global and national levels as in exhibitions. He stated that the Dayak should not be stigmatised as primitive or backward. He considered that through handicrafts, art can be consumed by all people and not limited to certain ethnic groups, particularly the Dayak people. To make this happen, he once invited an indigenous basket craftsman to visit Balikpapan to create prototype baskets that would later become models and could be learned by people interested in making baskets. The conservation program carried out by Total Corporation does not intend to change the daily lives of members of ethnic groups that used to weave, rather than introducing newer, more marketable values, so the *Rumah Budaya* selects which areas still use baskets, which are considered 'cultural values', such as for traditional ceremonies and marriages.

As a part of the *Rumah Budaya* logo project, Bang Edo was briefed to redesign the *Rumah Budaya* logo to highlight local elements. When compared to previous Total Corporate logos that have reflected dynamic, energetic and modern elements, this *Rumah Budaya* logo included tattoo elements as representatives of craft conservation programs. Bang Edo took the themes of dragons and sunrises as his logo inspirations because he felt these symbols matched the Dayak, rather than the hornbills or Dayak shields, which were too common and circulated throughout the city. He absorbed this knowledge about the dragon symbol when he saw the symbol in Dayak tattoos pictures while visiting *Rumah Budaya*.



Figure 3: Logo of Total Company and Rumah Budaya.

Source: Author documentation

He said his logos were on display in France, and he was invited to go to dinner with foreign multinational officials, who greatly appreciated his work. Bang Edo stated that a logo is a form of indirect interaction between a company and a wider audience, and therefore a good logo is one that is easy to remember, different from the others, and immediately understood as part of the corporate identity.

“A good logo is a logo that when people look at it, people don't comment too much or just saying 'yes!'. Working on the logo is to translate abstract things into abstracts again. In the process of making logos according to the interviewee, there is no standard, because it all depends on the client and the assessment is sometimes only a matter of colour. The main objective of logo design to not make people cynicism or even said ugly. While the logo looks simpler, it means the logo is very difficult.” (March 25, 2017)

Total Companies' contribution to Dayak culture preservation was significant to Balikpapan, especially for local education. One elementary school student told us that there was local content that taught crafting techniques. In addition,



Rumah Budaya Total was designated as a tourist destination by the city apparatus because this place is the most representative of introducing Dayak culture in Kalimantan. At the Balikpapan international airport, handicrafts and corporate logos are displayed in special mirrored boxes to show visitors that they are in Borneo and will enjoy a variety of things from Dayak culture. This implies that Total Corporation is known for its excellent socio-cultural reputation (Chun, 2005; De Castro et al., 2006) by Balikpapan citizens. Residents often compare international corporations with local mining companies in the matter of protecting the environment and cultural conservation. For them, local mining companies have been ignorant of the Dayak people and merely honour them ceremonially to preserve the local culture.

CONCLUSION

This article's objective was to develop a way to understand creative work within the broader industrial sector. The cases of Mas Lintang and Bang Edo provide insight into understanding creative work as embedded in other industries (Cunningham and Higgs, 2009; Hearn et al., 2014; Pitts, 2015). Their experiences delve into various immaterial aspects of the extractive industry. Creative workers produce affective technology that is useful as disciplinary techniques for workers for the sake of worker safety and health. In addition, this affective commodity is an important element in corporate branding that maintains a company's reputation as a responsible institution for local culture conservation. These cases imply how to understand the public face of a company. Rather than establishing subordinate relationships between the community and corporations (Benson, 2008) or territorial dominion (Shever, 2010), we argue that corporations build affective relationships with communities.

A different angle to understanding affection and control in industry by investigating how affective technology is represented in safety booklets and logos. We emphasize the role of visual media as a form of affective technology to influence the audience through colour, graphic, illustration and narration. The audience—in this case, the company worker and citizen—will attract to behave and absorb the message as visual media delivered. As a form of indirect communication, visual media mediated interest from certain institution towards a person, as Miller and Rose (1990) calls government at distance. The governmental mode through affect mobilisation also supports Rudnyckyj (2011) argument as a process of subjectification. However, we emphasise certain affective as technologies of government rather than ritual form (Richard and Rudnyckyj, 2009; Pereira, 2019).

We interpret affective technology as expanding biopower in a Foucauldian sense, particularly for understanding how visual media include oil workers and citizens as new subjects and part of corporations. Visual media as affective technology visualises and simulates economies of affect to produce reputation, loyalty and new economy subjects (Richard and Rudnyckyj, 2009)—in this case, meaning more self-discipline. Without intending to exaggerate, the absence of creative workers will perhaps result in oil workers being unaware of their safety or at least ignoring safety standards. Thus, corporate competitiveness will be threatened, corporate culture standards will not be fulfilled and companies' branding will be exclusively consumed by certain groups.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This study engages in affective technology as a form of commodity and technique subjectification that constituted a relationship between the creative worker and the broader industry. However, this study undermined how affective technology negotiated and contested by subject—in this context—oil and gas workers as a target of subjectification. Further research may be considered to explore this problem.

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AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

This article was written with an anthropological study in line with the research interest of each author. Haryo Kunto Wibisono focuses on creative labour and affective technology. Semiarto Aji Purwanto analyses on brand image, business anthropology, and corporate reputation.

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