Media Convergence-Deconvergence-Coexistence Triad in Indonesia: The Case of Liputan6.com

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Abstract

Media convergence, the dominant perspective to understanding the recent intertwining development of media and digital technologies, has been criticized for not reflecting the phenomenon of the current media landscape. The convergence-deconvergence-coexistence triad is proposed as the better framework to understand such phenomenon. Therefore, this article implements this triadic interaction to analyze the evolution of Liputan6.com, one of the most prominent online news media in Indonesia. This study employs in-depth interviews, observation, and document/archive analysis. This study identifies three periods of development of Liputan6.com since its establishment in 2000, and each period has different relation dynamics of the three aspects within the triad framework. By applying the convergence-deconvergence-coexistence triadic perspective, this article offers a multifaceted and multilayer analysis of the evolution of online news media such as Liputan6.com.
Keywords*: Media Convergence; Media Deconvergence; Media Coexistence; Online News Media; Media Conglomeration*

Abstrak

Konvergensi media, perspektif dominan untuk memahami jalinan perkembangan media dan teknologi digital belakangan ini, telah dikritik karena tidak sepenuhnya mencerminkan fenomena media saat ini. Triad konvergensi-dekonvergensi-koeksistensi diusulkan sebagai kerangka kerja yang lebih baik untuk memahami fenomena tersebut. Oleh karena itu, artikel ini mengimplementasikan interaksi triadik ini untuk menganalisis evolusi Liputan6.com, salah satu media berita online terkemuka di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan analisis dokumen/arsip. Studi ini mengidentifikasi tiga periode perkembangan Liputan6.com sejak didirikan pada tahun 2000. Setiap periode memiliki dinamika relasi yang berbeda dari ketiga aspek dalam kerangka triad. Dengan menerapkan perspektif triadik konvergensi-dekonvergensi-koeksistensi, artikel ini menawarkan analisis yang lebih lengkap mengenai evolusi media berita online seperti Liputan6.com.
Kata Kunci*: Konvergensi Media; Dekonvergensi Media; Koeksistensi Media; Media Berita Online; Konglomerasi Media*

Introduction

As a terminology, media convergence has become a buzzword (Appelgren, 2004; Balbi, 2017) widely used by scholars, policymakers, investors, people in the media industry, and the general public alike to describe the recent development of media and communication technologies. Convergence envisages the integration of media and communication landscape, spearheaded by digital technology, in which the earlier boundaries between content, audience, society, information technology, and media become blurring (Jenkins, 2006). As a symbol of technological advancement, media convergence is seen as inevitable linear progress that will improve people's quality of life, including providing a better channel for creating a more democratic and just society. Indeed, in this context, media convergence has become the dominant perspective in understanding the dynamic development of the media landscape at this time (Balbi, 2017; Dal Zotto & Lugmayr, 2016; Fagerjord & Storsul, 2007; Infotendencias Group, 2012; Jin, 2017; Storsul & Stuedahl, 2007; Vukanovic, 2016).

However, emphasizing the convergence aspect overlooks the more complex dynamic of current media development. Media convergence should also be considered with countervailing and parallel media divergence processes (Appelgren, 2004; Arango-Forero et al., 2016; Hess & Matt, 2013; Vukanovic, 2018). Deconvergence as terminology is also proposed to describe the spin-off or split-off of the previously converged media or companies to create a new type of content or companies (Jin, 2017; Peil & Sparviero, 2017). Peil and Sparviero (2017) even suggest that deconvergence and complexity, not integration, are the central characteristics of recent media development. Furthermore, media convergence and media divergence are part of a broader phenomenon of the convergence-divergence-coexistence triad of media development. The coexistence is part of the equation because, in many cases, types of media and different companies could develop side by side without too much convergence (Lugmayr & Dal Zotto, 2016).

Indeed, there have been some studies as well on the line of divergence examination. Those studies, nevertheless, mainly only focus on the obstacles on, even the failure of conducting one aspect of convergence, such as newsroom convergence in several countries and regions (e.g., García-Avilés et al., 2014; Li, 2018; Menke et al., 2018; Sehl et al., 2019; Tameling & Broersma, 2013). Similar studies on the failure of newsroom convergence have been done on Indonesian media, such as on Tempo.co (Diana, 2017) and Kedaulatan Rakyat (Fadilla & Sukmono, 2021). Most previous online media analyses emphasize convergence aspects and overlook divergence or deconvergence (Deepak et al., 2020; Pradana & Haidar, 2015; Pradsmadji & Irwansyah, 2020; Tapsell, 2014, 2017; Zulkafli et al., 2014). In Indonesia, the research emphasizing convergence has been conducted in national media (Briandana et al., 2020; Geni et al., 2021; Sumartias & Hafizni, 2017; Yoedtadi et al., 2021), public television (Koswara et al., 2017; Setiadarma & Rizkiansyah, 2021), regional media (Hadi, 2011; Prayogi et al., 2020), and local radio (Ningrum & Adiprasetio, 2021) to name a few. Media convergence is also analyzed on the level of regulation and state policy, and its tendency to strengthen media consolidation and conglomeration (Akalili, 2020; Souisa, 2017; Tapsell, 2017)

In order to more fully understand the dynamic interaction between new technologies, audience, content, and media industry, a broader perspective is needed beyond convergence. Therefore, this article examines Liputan6.com in the framework of the convergence-deconvergence-coexistence triad. By putting in the convergence-

deconvergence-coexistence triadic perspective, this article offers a multifaceted and multilayer analysis of the evolution of online news media such as Liputan6.com. Liputan6.com is an online news media owned by EMTEK Group, one of the biggest media conglomerates in Indonesia (Alyatalatthaf, 2018; Lim, 2012; Nugroho et al., 2013; Tapsell, 2017), through its sub-holding company KLY Group. Initially, Liputan6.com was merely the online version of *Liputan6,* the news program on SCTV television station, also owned by EMTEK Group. Later on, Liputan6.com was split off from SCTV, evolved on its course, and coexisted with *the Liputan6* television news program. Currently, in terms of website traffic, Liputan6.com is ranked 8th on the top online media sites list in Indonesia (Alexa.com, 2021). Liputan6.com is the most significant visitor traffic contributor among all online media under the umbrella of EMTEK Group. Furthermore, with around 63 million unique visitors, all EMTEK online media ranks second among other online media conglomerates in Indonesia (Comscore.com, 2021). In Indonesia, 202.6 million internet users are about 74 percent of the population. The average daily time spent by internet users aged 16 to 64 for reading press media is one hour thirty-eight minutes, and for social media is three hours fourteen minutes (Kemp, 2021).

Indeed, in the last three decades, media convergence concept has become the dominant point of view in comprehending the dynamic relationship between content, audience, society, information technology, and the media industry (Balbi, 2017; Dal Zotto & Lugmayr, 2016; Fagerjord & Storsul, 2007; Infotendencias Group, 2012; Jin, 2017; Storsul & Stuedahl, 2007; Vukanovic, 2016). Media convergence is regarded as one of the symbols of technological progress. The unification of media has been in the mind of many visionaries—including utopian technologists and writers—even before the digital era. In their ways, great writers such as Edward Bellamy, H.G. Wells, and George Orwell envisioned a media convergence in their novels. In 1888, for example, Bellamy described the music-telephone convergence far before the existence of radio technology. While in 1949, Orwell envisioned what we know now as telescreen and videophone in his novel (Storsul & Stuedahl, 2007).

However, the idea of convergence is increasingly more perceivable with the development of digital technology and the communication network. Scholars offer various taxonomies or categorizations to discuss media convergence. For example, Balbi (2017) asserts that there are four historical stages of convergence, in which each stage has its own predominant discourse of convergence. It does not mean, however, that a predominant discourse of one stage completely disappears in another stage. Also, although those four dimensions seem to appear in more or less chronological order, they overlap each other within each era. First, in the early 1980s, the idea of convergence emphasized technological convergence, as reflected primarily by the works de Sola Pool (1983) and then followed by Negroponte (1995) and Fidler (1997). It is imagined that all media content is translated into a single format that can be decoded by a single special device. This dimension of convergence as a technological phenomenon has become the main perspective for examining convergence and is the most popular approach to convergence even until today (Balbi, 2017). Second, the idea of economic/market convergence was predominant from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. This period was characterized by telecommunication and media corporate strategic actions involving mergers between companies or the acquisition of smaller and growing companies by bigger companies. The growing internet penetration for the wider public has also complicated the media and telecommunication landscape in this period. Then it

is followed by the third dimension of convergence, i.e., political/regulatory convergence for the rest of the 1990s. During this time, governments and public institutions, both national and multilateral, started to implement some measures to regulate the increasingly more complex media and telecommunication landscape. The fourth dimension, i.e., cultural convergence, appears in the 2000s, especially when the users or audience are put into the convergence dynamics (Balbi, 2017).

Meanwhile, Jenkins (2006) categorizes convergence into five areas—i.e., technological, economic, social, cultural, and global—without relating it to chronological order. Technological convergence deals with the digitalization of media content, and economic convergence relates to corporate integration and acquisition. Moreover, social convergence happens in the audience when they use several media simultaneously. Cultural convergence relates to how content can be conveyed to the audience in many ways and how the audience participates in the media by sharing, altering, remixing, or otherwise. Finally, global convergence occurs when cultures from different places influence each other through media content circulation, producing certain cultural hybridity in each culture. Therefore, in Jenkins' (2006) view, supported by Balbi (2017), convergence is a continuous interaction process involving technologies, corporations, industries, content, and audiences.

Another way to dissect the complex process of media convergence is to see it on macro, *meso (*medium*)*, and micro levels (Peil & Sparviero, 2017). The macro-level is related to market liberalization, globalization, commercialization, etc. In the corporation context, the macro-level discusses mergers and acquisitions, conglomeration, business integration, and value chain consolidation. On the *meso*-level, media convergence deals with how media text could be produced and distributed across platforms and channels. Meanwhile, the audience's media repertoires and activities on their daily life in the converging media landscape are examined on the micro-level of convergence.

Indeed, media convergence is generally seen as linear progress and an unavoidable process along with advancing communication technologies, albeit an evolutionary process (Dal Zotto & Lugmayr, 2016). The terminology of media convergence is widely used by scholars, politicians, regulators, investors, and the general public alike. Furthermore, it even has become a "buzzword" (Appelgren, 2004; Balbi, 2017), an "ambiguous concept" (Storsul & Stuedahl, 2007), a "rhetorical tool" (Fagerjord & Storsul, 2007), or even a "myth" (Noll, 2003) to simplify the complex and significant changes on the media landscape and communication technology. Such a perspective overlooks another process parallel to the much-talked media convergence concept. Indeed, due to digital technologies, the boundaries between media are blurring, but it does not mean these boundaries vanish entirely. There are also elements from previously separate media that could amalgamate into new kinds of media, creating new boundaries. Therefore, the contemporary media developments are diverse, and the landscape has become more complex.

Fidler (1997) has coined the term mediamorphosis to describe the transformation of media communication catalyzed by "the complex interplay of perceived needs, competitive and political pressures, and social and technological innovations" (p. 23). There are three interrelated concepts in the mediamorphosis process, i.e., coevolution-coexistence, convergence, and complexity. He asserts that coevolution and coexistence are the nature of media development along with the history of humankind. The presence of new media technologies does not bring the immediate demise of an older medium. Most forms of media, both new and old, coevolve and coexist, redefining their roles in

society. Furthermore, convergence happens because different forms are coming together to make new forms of media or transformation of each converging entity. However, there is a common misinterpretation that convergence is primarily seen in mergers and acquisitions of media and telecommunication companies. Such large-scale convergences occasionally happen, while in fact, all forms of media result from more frequent and numerous small-scale convergences transformations throughout time. Again, the newer or transformed media will enrich the media landscape instead of replacing older forms. Transformational change, such as the one brought about by digital technology, both large-scales, and small-scales, brings chaotic and unpredictable situations. In a complex system, such as a human communication system, chaos leads to adaptation and self-organizing within the system. This mediamorphosis process will result in an increasingly complex communication and media universe, with new audience configurations, market, regulations, and network technologies (Fidler, 1997).

Similarly, Lugmar and Dal Zotto (2016) argue that the evolution of media has resulted from the dynamic process of what they call the convergence-divergence-coexistence triad. This triadic interaction occurs on different levels, from macro to micro levels. Convergence happens when features of previously separated media amalgamate to create a new form of media. Divergence is related to how a kind of media develops into two or more kinds of media. The features of the early media are transformed into new features on each new media. In comparison, coexistence describes the possibility of two or more media that evolve separately, although the features of those media develop accordingly with the development of communication technology. However, Lugmar and Dal Zotto (2016) show that many of the media studies disproportionately emphasize the convergence phenomenon. Therefore, considering the convergence-divergence-coexistence triad is the key to understanding the complexity of future media development.

While Fidler (1997), Jenkins (2006), and Lugmar and Dal Zotto (2016) describe a broader view on media and communication development, others look at more specific to the interplay between convergence and divergence. Appelgren (2004) and Vukanovic (2016), for example, assert that media convergence should be regarded as continuous interaction with both complementary and countervailing processes of media divergence. In his context, Jin (2017) shows how some global media companies—such as AOL-Time Warner, CBS-Viacom, News Corporation, and AT&T—conduct a process he calls "deconvergence," which is corporate actions retreating from previous or existing convergence efforts. The deconvergence process is carried out through de-merger, spin-off, or split-off to create new performing companies more effectively respond to the pressure from the market, audience behavior, and technological development (Peil & Sparviero, 2017). It is important to note that the deconvergence is not caused by criticism towards media convergence, such as the concentration of ownership, the concerns of lack of diversity, and the threat to democracy. Deconvergence is embraced by companies primarily because its convergence lacks a synergy effect leading to decreasing profits and value-added to the consumers (Jin, 2017). Accordingly, both globally and nationally, deconvergence and convergence business strategies will interrelate in the media industry.

The dynamic relationship of the convergence-deconvergence process can also be seen at the meso-level, such as in newsroom management (Li, 2018; Menke et al., 2018; Tameling & Broersma, 2013). Multimedia technology development allows media companies to integrate the newsroom to accommodate multimedia journalism they

could offer to the audience. However, in studies from different countries, e.g., the Netherlands (Tameling & Broersma, 2013), and China (Li, 2018), the previously established culture is one of the most important things to hinder newsroom convergence. A comparative study from six European countries shows that print culture is still central in the newsroom. However, there is a shift toward convergence in the strategic implementation of newsroom management (Menke et al., 2018). Another study on public service media newsrooms in six European countries also describes convergence as a crucial step for the future of the institutions. However, the responses vary depending on historical, political, and economic factors as well (Sehl et al., 2019).

Heavily influenced by digital technology development and the global economy, there is also a process of media conglomeration in Indonesia in the current digital era (Tapsell, 2017). However, research on recent developments in this regard emphasizes a lot on the convergence perspective of media (Briandana et al., 2020; Diana, 2017; Fadilla & Sukmono, 2021; Geni et al., 2021; Koswara et al., 2017; Ningrum & Adiprasetio, 2021; Prayogi et al. al., 2020; Setiadarma & Rizkiansyah, 2021; Sumartias & Hafizni, 2017; Yoedtadi et al., 2021). More complex analyses using the triad convergence-deconvergence-coexistence framework are needed so that this phenomenon is better understood by media researchers, the industry as a whole, and the regulators in Indonesia.

As such, this research employs the dynamic of the triad analysis on Liputan6.com, one of the most prominent online news portals in Indonesia. Before describing Liputan6.com in a more detailed way, the historical background of the development of the online news portal in Indonesia is in order. The development of the online news portal in Indonesia goes hand in hand with the development of internet penetration in Indonesia. The first commercial Internet Service Provider (ISP) was launched in 1994, and soon after that, Republika Daily launched its online website. Then several other large print media (newspapers and magazines) launched their respective online versions, such as Kompas Group and Tempo Group. In this early era, the content of the online news portal was simply the transfer of printed news to online media. In addition, this online media has not been considered commercially viable and only serves as a complement to the printed version (Margianto & Syaefullah, 2012; Nugroho et al., 2013).

The fundamental shift in online journalism in Indonesia happened in 1998. The fall of the authoritarian regime of President Suharto, who had been in power for more than three decades, was soon followed by more democratic media as a result. During the political and economic turmoil that led to the regime change, an online portal news media called detik.com was launched by some independent journalists. Unlike the previous online news portals, detik.com is not part of existing mainstream media. Therefore, detik.com could update its news much more frequently, and in many cases, it uploads news while the reported events are happening and unfolding. In the time of political crises involving mass demonstrations in many cities in Indonesia, including the occupation of the House of Representative compound by thousands of student activists that bring President Suharto down, the continuous and frequent updates make many Indonesian audiences keep checking detik.com and bring the traffic of its website (Anggoro, 2012; Margianto & Syaefullah, 2012; Nugroho et al., 2013).

The success of detik.com in attracting people to visit the website inspired many online portal initiatives in the early 2000s, called dot-com booming in Indonesia, including the launching of Liputan6.com. However, many initiatives (i.e., astaga.com,

satunet.com, and lippostar.com) also backed up venture capitalists and conglomerates whose existing business is unrelated to the media business. When the boom bursts in the mid of 2000s, these me-too portals went bankrupt. In 2003, however, kapanlagi.com, a portal focusing on entertainment news unrelated to the existing mainstream media, was launched to survive the burst and continue to expand its operations. The television-based media conglomerates, MNC Groups, and Bakrie & Brothers Group entered the market by launching their own news and entertainment portals, i.e., okezone.com in 2006 and vivanews.com in 2008, respectively. In 2011, another media giant CT Group acquired detik.com to enhance its presence in media industries in Indonesia (Margianto & Syaefullah, 2012; Nugroho et al., 2013; Tapsell, 2017).

All these news portals available in the market compete with each other with their specific conditions to attract the audience and, in the end, reap the growing digital advertising expenditure in Indonesia. The challenge of these portals is how to conduct convergence processes within their own contexts to fit best in the competition. Media companies try their best to converge their multiple platforms and consolidate media content and business. The increasing consolidation of these media companies leads to a more concentrated media landscape in Indonesia, in which the big companies get bigger and narrow the space for independent and citizen-centered media (Lim, 2012; Nugroho et al., 2013; Tapsell, 2017).

The increasing consolidation of media companies also happens in EMTEK Group, the parent company of Liputan6.com. This expansion could be traced back to even the 1990s when the government liberalized the broadcasting industry in Indonesia (Ishadi SK, 2014; Tapsell, 2017). Indeed, the new era of television in Indonesia started in the 1990s, when the government granted permission for the existence of private televisions, although all the permits went to companies owned by President Suharto's children and his close associates. In order to control the information to the public, however, these private televisions were not allowed to produce their own news program. RCTI, the first private television, tried to go around this limitation by producing news-like feature programs that do not fall into the "hard-news" category. Such a program attracted the audience, hence the advertisers, so finally, RCTI had its own news program. The success of this news program made SCTV, the second private television, follow suit to have its own, called *Liputan6*. All the private television then had their news program, although under the existing regulation at that time, no television station was allowed to have its news program. However, since the programs got considerable audience ratings and money from the advertiser, and with the protection of the owners, the government did not impose the regulation (Ishadi SK, 2014).

Interestingly enough, during the tumultuous political upheaval in 1998, these television news programs, including *Liputan6* from SCTV, showed some independence from the ruling power. They slanted to support the Reformasi movement that brought President Suharto's rules to an end. *Liputan6*, for example, aired a live interview with a former minister who suggested that the President needed to step down--something considered controversial on television at that time. In fact, some rebellion in the newsroom created high tension between the journalists and news anchors with the station management, which is naturally closer to the owners (Ishadi SK, 2014; Tim Redaksi, 2016).

After President Suharto's fall, many companies owned by the first families and its associates, including the SCTV television station, were on sale. Brothers Eddy and Fofo Sariaatmadja, through their EMTEK holding company, acquired SCTV in 2002. Since

then, EMTEK has continued to expand its media business by, among others, buying other national television stations Indosiar and Jakarta local television O-Channel. Its business covers not only media but also communication infrastructure. Unarguably, EMTEK has become one of the biggest media conglomerates in Indonesia (Alyatalatthaf, 2018; Lim, 2012; Nugroho et al., 2013; Tapsell, 2017).

Method
This research describes the dynamics of triad convergence-deconvergence-coexistence since Liputan6.com was founded in 2000. As such, this research approach is a longitudinal single-case because it deals with the triad phenomenon, which happens during different points in time (Yin, 2018). Furthermore, this research is more inclined toward a descriptive rather than an exploratory approach, which is often associated with case study research (Yin, 2018). Although not many studies still use the triad framework, there have been plenty of studies on the convergence phenomenon, both its success and failure. Indeed, based on those studies, research on the dynamic of the triad could embark on the descriptive area. With the time span of Liputan6.com in more than two decades (2000-the 2020s), some of the data regarding the dynamics of the triad, especially in the first decade, is based on the reconstruction of informants as well as archive analysis.

Hence, this research employs participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document/archive review to gather the data. One of the researchers of this study has been working with Liputan6.com for fifteen years. She has been involved in several convergence initiatives and multiplatform collaboration within the company. According to DeWalt & DeWalt's (2011) categorization of the researcher's role in participant observation, she takes the role of an active membership observer. In this position, she observes and participates actively in some activities, and for other activities, she just observes without being involved in those activities.

Meanwhile, in-depth open-ended interviews are conducted with four managers/senior journalists within Liputan.com: the Chief Editor, the Multimedia Managing Editor, the Regional Managing Editor, and the Executive Producer of the Multimedia Division. In in-depth open-ended interviews, the researcher is prepared with some main questions to probe the interviewees' experiences and perspectives further along the interview process (Bhattacharya, 2017). Archived/document materials are also gathered as part of data collection. These are website pages resulting from convergence initiatives, relevant internal press releases, documents, etc.

Results and Discussion
First Period (2000-2012): The Online Television
As already mentioned, Liputan6.com was launched in 2000, when dot-com boomed in Indonesia. *Liputan6* has established itself as one of the most-watched news shows on television in Indonesia and has become the flagship program for SCTV. According to Gustuawati, the chief editor of Liputan6.com:

"The brand of Liputan6 as a news program is already solid. So, the purpose of the operation of Liputan.com was, indeed, to make the brand of Liputan6 even stronger. Therefore Liputan6.com will function as the storefront for news programs aired by SCTV. Liputan6.com provides the channel to the audience who missed watching Liputan6 on television so that they can catch up on the news. That is why we call

Liputan6.com televisi online (online television) or televisi website (website television)." (Gustuwati, personal communication, November 29, 2019).

Liputan6 has broadcasting time slots in the morning, noon, afternoon, and evening. Liputan6.com was basically the text version of the news that had already aired on the *Liputan6* news program. Later on, some other programs were added to Liputan6.com, such as *Buser* (daily crime-news program) and *Potret* (weekly documentary program)*, Sigi* (weekly investigative reporting program)*,* and *Derap Hukum* (weekly docudrama program on law and crime)*.*

The editors of Liputan6.com were in the same newsroom (newsroom convergence) of *the Liputan6* news program and therefore reported to the same head of the newsroom. The tasks of the editors of Liputan6.com are to curate and then convert the sound on tape of the television programs into a news article. They rewrite the short television news script and add some more information to make the article more suitable for the readers. Then they upload the articles on the two channels available in Liputan6.com: News Channel and Sports Channel. In the early days of Liputan6.com, the editors could only produce more or less thirty news articles per day. This number is much fewer than the more established news portal Detik.com, which uploaded more or less four hundred daily articles. Moreover, Liputan6.com did not have its own reporters on the field to produce original content.

Second Period (2012-2018): Multimedia, Social Media, and News Aggregator

In 2012, Liputan6.com entered a new significant development when the holding company Emtek founded a sub-holding company called Kreatif Media Karya (KMK) to manage Liputan6.com separately from SCTV. This deconvergence corporate action was taken one year after Detik.com, the most well-established news portal, was acquired by another media conglomerate, Trans Corp. Trans Corp has had television stations under its umbrella, and therefore this corporate action of convergence enthuses the media industry. The monetary value involved in the acquisition, reportedly USD 60 million (Kevin, 2011), could have been the biggest one in the start-up scene in Indonesia until then, demonstrating the high expectation for the internet-based media industry.

EMTEK then developed KMK as the sub-holding company for its internet-based business. KMK, for example, set up the video platform Video.com in 2014 and new online media Bola.com (focusing on sports news) and Bintang.com (focusing on entertainment news) in 2015. KMK expanded the digital business by acquiring companies (e.g., Rumah.com, a marketplace website for housing and apartments, Karir.com, a website related to job search and personal development), and by investment chipping in in potential companies (e.g., Bukalapak.com, one of the biggest general marketplace websites, and HijUp.com, a market place for Muslim clothing).

Indeed, it had been for twelve years, from 2000 to 2012, that Liputan6.com had stayed in its function as the "online television" of SCTV. Liputan.com had the broader opportunity to expand its features beyond SCTV's *Liputan6* television news show with the spin-off. However, the challenge was how to separate the branding image of Liputa6.com from SCTV, and even more challenging with *Liputan6* news show since they both have the same name. That was why the internal management called this the process of "… *Liputan6.com rebranding, although we do not announce as such to the public*" (Gustiawati, personal communication, November 29, 2019).

The first steps of the rebranding were to add more features to the websites, such as channels for news on health, showbiz, football, and citizen6 (user-generated content

channel). The goal was to increase the number of daily articles uploaded from thirty to two hundred. This target was gradually increased to three hundred articles so that in the first year of the rebranding process, Liputan6.com newsroom was capable of producing four hundred articles per day. Liputan6.com kept adding its channels from there on, and as of June 2021, it has twelve channels. The exponential growth of new content per day should improve Liputan6.com's branding.

To support its large number of original contents, Liputan6.com expanded its newsroom and recruited its own videographers and field reporters. In 2013 Liputan6.com created the Multimedia Division to produce content that combines text, video, audio, and infographic. Responding to the increasing popularity of social media platforms, Liputan6.com formed a task force to monitor the trending topics of each platform. In turn, the newsroom can produce content related to those trending topics. The task force also distributed Liputan6.com content to social media platforms by considering the characteristic of the platform (audience, platform limitation, etc.). In other words, Liputan6.com extended its features by converging the social media platforms. According to Nugraha, the Chief of the Multimedia Division, this effort was "… *very useful to increase the netizens' awareness towards Liputan6.com*" (personal communication, January 7, 2020).

Another challenge to the online news portal came in 2016 when news aggregator platforms increasingly became the Indonesian audience media repertoire. These news aggregators obtain their content by pulling it from different news portals and putting it into one page. It makes it easy for the readers to attain new and updated news without having to visit each news portal. The personalization feature of the news aggregator enabled the readers to have some kind of personal newspaper/magazine. It created a challenge for the media industry since it is costly for a media organization to produce its content (by having a newsroom, field reporters, etc.). In contrast, the news aggregator can have their content without such a cost. Some prominent aggregators are LINE Today, Kurio, and Babe—the first is a part of the popular LINE messenger service, owned by NHN, Japan, and the latter two are both local start-ups.

Responding to this challenge, starting in 2017, Liputan6.com organized and led what they called "media syndication or content syndication" with twenty-nine local online media from across Indonesia. In this syndication, Liputan6.com can choose and then feature the news from the syndicate members and vice versa. To support the syndication operation, Liputan6.com used a shared CSM (content management system) application with the members. Compared to the news aggregator practice, according to Harun Mahbub (personal communication, February 6, 2020), the Regional Desk Managing Editor, Liputan6.com offered more mutually beneficial collaboration in the syndication. First, in the articles chosen to be featured in Liputan6.com, the logo of the online news portals is included at the bottom of the article. The readers, therefore, will still be aware of the origin of those articles. For the local online news portal, this is beneficial for their branding and their exposure to the broader national audience. Second, Liputan6.com shares the audience traffic by putting three backlinks on the article toward the origin local news portal. In other words, the local news portal will have more audience traffic the more its articles are shared with Liputan6.com. Third, the syndication shares equally (fifty percent each) the advertising revenue placed on the shared articles. Indeed, the local online news portals open the possibility of tapping the national advertising expenditure.

Liputan6.com reaped benefits from this media syndication with local news portals. For example, Liputan6.com can have additional content from the local online portals without having field reporters in those areas. The syndication provided Liputan6.com with a converging newsroom with a more extensive and more diverse newsroom supplied by the local news portals. According to the Managing Editor,

"*The number of content and visitor traffic [to Liputan6.com] increased sharply. With the additional thirty to forty contents from the syndication members, the traffic jumped thirty percent as well*" (Mahbub, personal communication, March 2, 2020)

After being deconverged from *Liputan6* and SCTV, Liputan6.com grew bigger by converging with social media platforms and other online news portals by semi-converging its newsroom.

Third Period (2018-Current): The Digital Expansion
In 2018, the holding company EMTEK acquired Kapan Lagi Network, a company consisting of nine online media, mainly in entertainment, sport, and lifestyles. EMTEK established a new sub-holding company called Kapan Lagi Youniverse (KLY) as the new umbrella of its online news media companies. Three online media previously under sub-holding KMK—i.e., Liputan6.com, Bola.com, and Bintang.com)—are placed under KLY, together with all news media online previously under Kapan Lagi Network. However, one year later, some online media converged in the consolidation process. Bintang.com and Vemale.com, both entertainment news media, were merged with the better-performed entertainment news media Fimela.com. However, the similarity of news media does not necessarily lead to merging those media since they serve different target audiences. Liputan6.com is still a separate entity from the general online news media Merdeka.com previously under Kapan Lagi Network. The same happens to sports news media Bola.com (KMK) and Bola.net (Kapan Lagi Network). Therefore, the sub-holding corporate level convergence between KMK and Kapan Lagi Network brought deconvergence to the lower level and resulted in a new sub-holding KLY with nine online media strengths (see Figure 1). According to Gustiawati, this "*has expanded the market share and audience share of EMTEK's digital business*" (personal communication, March 2, 2020). In the consolidation process, however, KLY laid off many employees across the board, including thirty people from Liputan6.com.
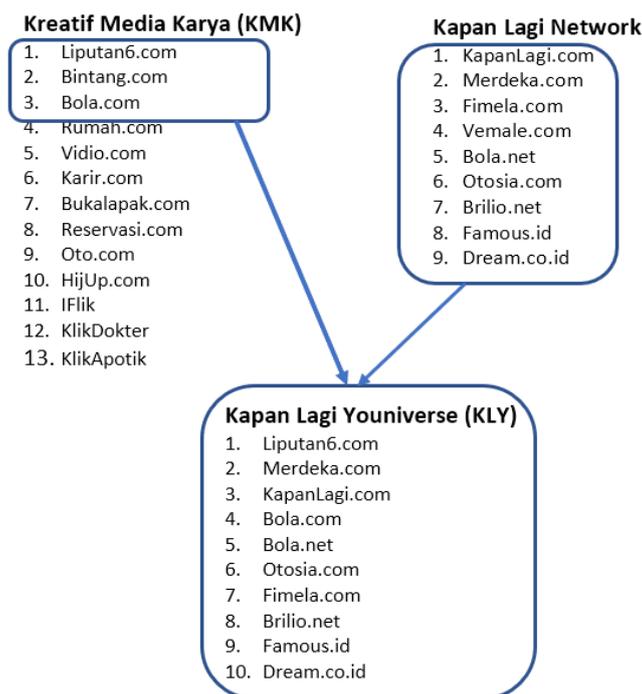
Figure 1. Kapan Lagi Youniverse Sub-Holding Company

On the business side, KLY formed a sales and marketing team that handles all media except Brillio.net because its targeted client needed a different approach. Because of more media on the portfolio, the sales and marketing team can offer product bundling to the advertisers (Gustafsson & Schwarz, 2013), and, in turn, the advertising revenue was expected to increase. Nevertheless, since it is the most prominent media in the group, Liputan6.com was used as the marketing spearhead by the sales and marketing team. According to Gustiawati, "*the clients are happy because their advertisement can be placed in some other media, in addition to Liputan6.com*" (personal communication, March 2, 2020).

Concerning content production, KLY does not have a converged newsroom. Instead, each news media has its own newsrooms and journalist, and each media is allowed to rewrite or quote the content produced by another media within KLY. There is coordination between the reporter coordinators to avoid overlapping in sending the field reporters to cover the same news. In this sense, newsgathering becomes more efficient because other media in the group can use one reportage resource. However, this practice is a downside because it leads to less diversity of content among media within KLY. Again, according to Gustiawati, this practice "*may blur the unique characteristics of each media, because they have easily taken the content from the sister companies*" (personal communication, March 2, 2020).

Liputan6.com also continued to expand its media syndication program. Instead of shying away from the news aggregator competitors, Liputan6.com arranged a collaboration with them. Liputan6.com agreed to share its content to be featured in the news aggregators apps (such as LINE Today, UN News, and Babe), and the news aggregator will put a referral link on those articles towards the Liputan6.com website. Readers interested in reading the article will click the link and then be directed to

Liputan6.com. Therefore, Liputan6.com has another source of visitor traffic to increase its pageview, which is an essential metric for the advertising space sale.

In 2019, Liputan6.com converged two increasingly popular platforms, i.e., podcast and TikTok, into its content portfolio. Initially, the podcast was placed on the Spotify platform, separated from the Liputan6.com website. Later on, the podcast was embedded in the Liputan.com website so the readers could listen to the content on the website without going to access Spotify. According to Rubiyanto, the Manager of the Multimedia Division, "*although the podcast content is based on the what is trending issues at the time, the presentation of the news is framed as timeless topics," so that the content can be relevant whenever the audience listen to them* (personal communication, January 15, 2019). Therefore, most of the podcast content is not a heavy topic such as politics or economics, but rather content on health, lifestyle, automotive, and even zodiac horoscope.

TikTok video platform presented different challenges for online news media. Its dominant users are teenagers between 14-20 years old, who are not the characteristic target audience aimed by Liputan6.com. Furthermore, since this is a short video social media platform, the majority of TikTok content is trivial matters. However, since it has become very popular, TikTok can be regarded as the source of new visitor traffic who hopefully will become regular readers of Liputan6.com. Nugraha, the editor of the Multimedia Division, states that "… *we are experimenting to use TikTok to attract a new generation of readers, and how to make receh [trivial] content while trying to keep the content newsy*" (personal communication, November 26, 2019). Indeed, Liputan6.com was the first online media in Indonesia which include TikTok in its content portfolio.

Conclusion

The explanation above shows that the convergence-deconvergence-coexistence triad perspective is very beneficial in analyzing the evolution of online media development today. The triad perspective provides a more complete interpretation than the currently more dominant framework, namely the media convergence framework. The triadic phenomenon can occur at technological, organizational, and social levels. Led by digital technology, media evolves with a tug of war and yet complementary interactions between convergence, deconvergence, and coexistence at various levels to build features, forms, and media structures. These developments are primarily driven by financial imperatives to produce optimal value-added for the market and audience (Lugmayr & Dal Zotto, 2016).

Liputan6.com also evolves in such a triad interaction under the umbrella of a larger media conglomerate company, namely EMTEK Group. Starting with the convergence of platforms between online news and news programs on broadcasting platforms for up to ten years, Liputan6.com was deconverged from its original institution. After that, Liputan6.com, and later with other online media under the same holding company, coexists with the SCTV television station broadcasting platform. Liputan6.com continues to develop by converging with other platforms such as news aggregators and other social media. At the holding company level, EMTEK converges by acquiring the online media group Kapan Lagi Network and forming the sub-holding company Kapanlagi Youniverse (KLY). In the horizontal consolidation process in KLY, the deconvergence process occurs when several online media previously existing in each group are liquidated.

Moreover, the online media under KLY's umbrella only perform convergence in selling its advertising space. KLY does limited convergence in newsgathering coordination, but it does not set up a converged newsroom. Each of these media coexists with each other with, in some cases, more or less the same characteristic and psychographics of the target audience.

However, this article does not discuss in more detail how the audience's role in the convergence-deconvergence-coexistence triad dynamic process. Indeed, the change in media needs and habits of the audience is one of the leading causes of the triadic phenomenon. The presence of social media and other forms of new media have led to a more fragmented audience. Furthermore, the characteristics of participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006) are made possible by these new media; the audience is not only content consumers but also content producers. The audience has become the "prosumer" of the media, and each "prosumer" develops their personalized media repertoire in their daily lives. Therefore, studies at the audience level, referred to as the micro-level in this triad perspective, become essential to understanding the media landscape in the future.

Acknowledgments

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