

Negotiating Social Reproduction: Access to Menstrual Leave for Female Journalists in Indonesia

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Abstract

Although menstrual leave has been legally recognized in Indonesia, women journalists continue to face barriers to exercising this right within the media industry. Existing studies primarily examine menstrual leave from legal, health, or policy perspectives, while its relationship with gendered labor and media production remains underexplored. This article addresses this gap by examining menstrual leave through a Feminist Political Economy perspective. Employing a qualitative literature review, the study synthesizes scholarly works on women journalists, menstrual stigma, labor rights, reproductive health, and media labor in Indonesia. The analysis reveals that limited access to menstrual leave is shaped not only by inadequate policy implementation but also by the intersection of patriarchal workplace culture and the productivity-driven logic of media capitalism. Women journalists are expected to conform to the ideal of the always-available worker, rendering menstruation and menstrual pain largely invisible in professional settings. Consequently, many hesitate to exercise their legal rights due to fears of being perceived as less committed, less productive, or burdensome to colleagues. This article argues that menstrual leave should be understood as a feminist labor issue reflecting the tension between productive labor and social reproduction. It contributes to feminist media studies by positioning menstrual leave as a site where gender, labor, and bodily autonomy intersect within contemporary journalism.

INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a biological experience experienced by most women and individuals with reproductive cycles (Alvergne & Tabor, 2018; Brantelid et al., 2014; Jarrell, 2018; Sundström Poromaa & Gingnell, 2014). However, various feminist studies show that menstruation is never interpreted solely as a biological event but also as a social construct situated at the intersection of the body, culture, economy, and politics (Bobel & Fahs, 2020; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015). In many societies, menstruation remains associated with stigma, taboos, and assumptions that menstruating bodies are unclean, unstable, and less productive. As a result, the experience of menstruation is often positioned as a private matter that must be concealed, including in the workplace, causing women's reproductive needs to remain unrecognized in employment policies and practices.

In the modern world of work, productivity is generally constructed around the assumption that workers are always available and capable of working without considering biological changes in the body (Bonzini et al., 2023; Hong, 2022; Piro et al., 2023; Rosslenbroich, 2023). The ideal worker model has historically been rooted in male experiences, resulting in women's reproductive needs, such as menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and

breastfeeding, often being treated as individual matters rather than workplace concerns. Consequently, menstruation becomes invisible within work organizations, even though some women experience menstrual pain (dysmenorrhea), fatigue, migraines, or other health conditions that affect their ability to work.

This condition is increasingly evident in the media industry, which operates through a fast-paced, competitive, and productivity-oriented logic of news production. Journalists are required to remain available to report, work around the clock, and meet news deadlines. In such circumstances, workers' bodies are treated as instruments of production that must remain continuously available, while women's biological needs are often perceived as barriers to professionalism.

Gender inequality in the Indonesian press industry reinforces this condition. A survey by the Indonesian Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) shows that 76.7% of journalists are men, while only 23.2% are women. Male dominance is also evident among newsroom decision-makers, with women occupying only around 15–25% of managerial positions (Luviana, 2012; Masduki et al., 2025). The limited representation of women affects the extent to which women workers' needs receive attention, ranging from promotion opportunities and division of labor to the protection of maternity rights and reproductive health. Several studies have also shown that increased representation of women in media leadership is associated with reduced practices of gender discrimination in newsrooms (Assmann & Eckert, 2024; Cunha & Lúcio Martins, 2023; Geertsema-Sligh & Vos, 2022; Urbániková & Čaladi, 2024).

One form of reproductive health protection for female workers is the right to menstrual leave, as stipulated in Article 81 of Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower. This provision grants female workers the right not to work on the first and second days of menstruation when they experience menstrual pain, representing recognition of biological needs and an effort to promote gender equality in the workplace. However, the existence of regulations does not necessarily guarantee the fulfillment of these rights. A survey conducted by AJI Indonesia together with the Media Regulation Monitoring Network (PR2Media) showed that 68% of female journalists did not receive the right to menstrual leave as stipulated by existing laws and regulations (Wendratama et al., 2023, p. 7). Many journalists choose to continue working because they fear being perceived as unprofessional, disrupting editorial workflows, or jeopardizing their employment security. Meanwhile, some media companies prefer to provide medication, remote work arrangements, or half-day work options so that workers can continue meeting production targets without taking menstrual leave.

The findings indicate that the issue of menstrual leave cannot be understood solely as a problem of labor regulation implementation. Studies on female journalists, gender discrimination in the media industry, and menstruation have largely developed as separate areas of inquiry. Research on female journalists generally focuses on professionalism, gender-based violence, and positional inequality within media organizations, whereas studies on menstruation tend to emphasize stigma, reproductive health, or menstrual leave policy implementation. Triana Puspita Sari's (2016) research, for example, examined the fulfillment of menstrual leave rights among female journalists in Yogyakarta, while other studies have positioned menstrual leave as part of broader issues of gender discrimination. Therefore, limited research has connected women journalists' menstrual experiences and the recognition of workers' reproductive needs with the organizational structure of the media industry through

the perspective of Feminist Political Economy.

Departing from this research gap, this article views limited access to menstrual leave as a consequence of the intersection between media capitalism and patriarchal workplace cultures that shape work organizations. The Feminist Political Economy perspective was selected because it explains that the issue of menstrual leave extends beyond the implementation of labor regulations or individual workers' choices; rather, it is rooted in the relationship between economic production and social reproduction. Within this framework, women's biological needs—including menstruation—are understood as part of social reproduction that sustains the continuity of productive work but often receives insufficient recognition within work organizations. Consequently, women's bodies are expected to conform to ideal worker standards based on the assumption of continuous labor availability, without adequately considering the reproductive needs inherent in women's lived experiences.

Recognition of reproductive needs, such as access to menstrual leave, workplace menstrual accommodations, and policies that are responsive to reproductive health, is not merely a form of normative protection for women workers. Furthermore, such recognition represents an effort to address gender bias within work organizations that have historically positioned productivity as the primary measure of professionalism. From Nancy Fraser's perspective, this contradiction reflects the tension between production processes that continuously demand efficiency and social reproduction that enables the sustainability of production itself. When workers' reproductive needs are disregarded, work organizations ultimately depend on unrecognized reproductive labor, while the biological and social costs are disproportionately borne by female workers.

This condition is becoming increasingly relevant in the media industry, which operates through a fast-paced, competitive, and nearly continuous news production cycle. An editorial work culture that emphasizes speed, flexibility, and preparedness shapes the political economy of women journalists' bodies, referring to the ways in which their bodies are regulated, disciplined, and evaluated according to their capacity to fulfill the demands of news production. In such circumstances, menstruation is more often perceived as an obstacle to productivity rather than as part of workers' social reproductive realities. Consequently, many female journalists choose to remain at work while experiencing menstrual pain or refrain from exercising their right to menstrual leave in order to maintain their professional image and fulfill organizational expectations.

Based on this background, this article aims to examine access to menstrual leave among women journalists in Indonesia through the perspective of Feminist Political Economy using a qualitative method based on a literature review. This article argues that limited access to menstrual leave not only reflects weak implementation of labor policies but also demonstrates how the logic of media capitalism reproduces workplace standards that disregard social reproduction and women's bodily needs. The novelty of this article lies in its application of the Feminist Political Economy framework to examine menstrual leave within the Indonesian media context, extending the discussion beyond legal implementation to explore the structural and cultural factors that shape access. The contribution of this research is to expand the theoretical application of Feminist Political Economy within media studies, provide empirical insights into the barriers faced by women journalists in accessing menstrual leave, and offer practical recommendations for policy and organizational transformation. The objective of this

research is to examine how the tension between productive labor and social reproduction is manifested in the media industry and to identify pathways toward more equitable workplace practices. The benefits of this research include contributing to academic knowledge on gender and media labor, providing evidence-based recommendations for policy reform, and supporting advocacy efforts for gender equality within the Indonesian media industry. Therefore, the struggle for access to menstrual leave represents part of a broader effort to renegotiate the relationship between productivity, social reproduction, and gender justice in the media industry.

METHOD

This article used a qualitative approach through a literature review. The study utilized secondary data obtained from journal articles, books, research reports, and relevant institutional publications. Data processing involved editing, organizing, analyzing, and classifying literature based on key themes, including menstrual leave in Indonesia, menstrual leave for women journalists, gender bias in journalism, and Feminist Political Economy. The study also incorporated data references from the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Indonesia and the Media Regulation and Regulator Monitor (PR2Media) published over the past 10 years to support data validation. The analysis was conducted through thematic classification, thematic coding, and interpretive synthesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Menstruation cannot be seen only as a biological issue and menstrual leave is not just a matter of rights and obligations regulated in state law products. Menstruation, especially in the context of menstrual leave for female journalists, is a social reproductive issue that clashes with the logic of media capitalism's productivity. Menstruation is used as a significant factor to assess the capacity of women journalists to do their work in the press industry, is considered as an economic exchange rate with the accumulation of employer capital, and actually makes it difficult for women journalists to use their menstrual leave rights to prove that they are able to work as well as or more than other journalists who do not experience menstruation or use menstrual leave.

From the literature synthesis for this article, data from various journal articles are processed and analyzed through a coding process. There are four themes found from the literature review after coding; namely 1) the neglect of social reproduction in the media work organization; 2) rights that do not necessarily mean access; 3) professionalism built on the masculine body; and 4) the reproduction of gender bias by media capitalism. The synthesis findings are specified through the following matrix.

Table 1. Synthesis findings matrix

Theme Synthesis	Explanation	Implications for access to menstrual leave
Social reproductive neglect	Menstruation is positioned as a private issue	Biological needs are not included in the work organization
Productivity as the norm	The ideal worker is assumed to be always available	Journalist refuses to take menstrual leave
Contradiction of rights and access	Regulations exist, access is limited	Rights depend on the culture of the organization

Theme Synthesis	Explanation	Implications for access to menstrual leave
Professionalism	Professional standards are built on the basis of the male body	Menstruation is considered to reduce professionalism
Capitalism media	News production prioritized	Efficiency beats social reproductive accommodation

Neglect of Social Reproduction in Media Work Organization

The literature synthesis shows that the main problem of access to menstrual leave for women journalists does not lie in the absence of regulations, but in the non-recognition of women's reproductive needs as part of the media work organization. Various studies show that menstruation is still seen as a private issue that must be managed individually by female workers. As a result, despite experiencing menstrual pain (dysmenorrhea), fatigue, or other menstrual health disorders, many female journalists still choose to work and not use their menstrual leave rights for fear of being considered unprofessional or hindering the rhythm of editorial work. These findings show that women's biological experiences have not been fully integrated into media policies and work cultures, so reproductive needs remain positioned as a personal issue, rather than as part of institutional responsibility.

In the perspective of Feminist Political Economy, this condition shows that the organization of media work is still built on the separation between productive work and social reproduction. Nancy Fraser explained that social reproduction includes various activities that support human survival and enable economic production, from body care, health recovery, to biological reproduction. However, capitalism relies on these activities without providing adequate recognition or support because social reproduction is considered to be outside the realm of profit-producing economies (Berik & Kongar, 2021; Fraser, 2017). In this context, menstruation is part of social reproduction that allows workers to maintain their health and work capacity, but these needs are not seen as part of the news production process.

The findings of the literature synthesis show that the logic also works in the media industry. The journalistic work culture is shaped by the demands of speed, flexibility, high mobility, and the ability to meet deadlines continuously. These standards of professionalism construct the ideal worker as an individual who is always available to work without biological interference. As a result, the body of menstruating female journalists is positioned as a body that must adjust to the rhythm of media production, not the other way around. While media organizations prefer to provide pain relievers, work from home, or work half-days rather than make room for the use of menstrual leave, the real solution is still based on efforts to maintain workers' productivity, rather than on recognizing their reproductive needs.

In Fraser's framework, the situation reflects the fundamental contradictions of contemporary capitalism. On the one hand, the media industry relies on female labor as part of the information production process. On the other hand, reproductive needs that allow women to continue to work are treated as individual burdens that should not interfere with the continuity of production. Thus, social reproduction becomes invisible in the work organization even though it is the main prerequisite for the sustainability of productive work. This contradiction explains why the existence of regulations on menstrual leave does not automatically result in equal access for female journalists.

The neglect of social reproduction also shows how the female body becomes an arena

for power relations in media organizations. Menstruation is not only understood as a biological condition, but it is also constructed through norms of professionalism that require workers to remain present, resilient, and productive. As a result, many female journalists negotiate their own bodies by staying at work despite menstrual pain in order to maintain a professional image or avoid negative judgments from their superiors and colleagues. In such a situation, the decision not to use menstrual leave is not purely an individual choice, but rather a response to a work structure that has not yet accommodated women's biological experiences equally.

These findings show that the problem of access to menstrual leave cannot be explained only through an employment law approach. The existence of formal rights is indeed important as an instrument for the protection of women workers, but these rights are only meaningful if labor organizations also recognize social reproduction as an integral part of the production process. Therefore, the limited access to menstrual leave for women journalists needs to be understood as a manifestation of the relationship between media capitalism, patriarchal culture, and neglect of reproductive work. The Feminist Political Economy perspective allows for a more comprehensive reading of this problem because it places the female worker body as an integral part of the production system, rather than as an external factor that must constantly adjust to the demands of productivity.

The first findings of this article also show that barriers to access to menstrual leave are rooted in the neglect of social reproduction in media work organizations. Thus, the main problem is not the absence of rights, but the failure of media organizations to recognize women's reproductive needs as part of the news production process.

Contradiction between Formal Rights and Real Access to Menstrual Leave

A synthesis of literature shows that the existence of menstrual leave rights in Indonesian labor regulations has not automatically resulted in equal access for women journalists. Although Article 81 of Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower has provided a legal basis for female workers not to work on the first and second days of menstruation if they are sick, various studies show that this right is still difficult to use in practice. These obstacles come not only from the weak implementation of company policies, but also from the organizational culture, editorial work mechanisms, and power relations that shape workers' decisions to use or ignore their rights.

These findings show the importance of distinguishing between rights and access. Ribot and Peluso (2003) explain that access is a person's real ability to benefit from a resource, not just the legal ownership of rights. Thus, the existence of regulations cannot be understood as an indicator that workers have access to menstrual leave. On the contrary, access is influenced by various social, economic, political, and institutional mechanisms that determine whether a right can truly be exercised without barriers. For female journalists, formal rights to menstrual leave are still limited by norms of professionalism, media organizational structure, and unequal relations between workers and employers.

The research synthesis also shows that many female journalists choose to stay on the job despite experiencing menstrual pain because they are worried about being perceived as unprofessional, burdening colleagues, or influencing their assessment of their performance. In workers with contract, freelance, or more vulnerable employment status, these concerns are even greater because the use of leave is often perceived to affect job security and career development opportunities. Thus, the decision not to use menstrual leave is not solely an

individual choice, but a form of negotiation of the power relations that work in media organizations. In such situations, formal rights lose their usefulness because workers do not have the equal capacity to access them.

The Feminist Political Economy Perspective helps explain why the contradiction persists. Nancy Fraser argues that modern capitalism depends not only on the exploitation of productive labor, but also on the social reproduction that sustains the sustainability of labor. However, social reproduction is systematically positioned as a private realm that does not receive recognition or institutional support. As a result, biological needs such as menstruation are seen as personal matters that must be solved by female workers without interfering with the production process. In the context of the media industry, this contradiction appears when organizations recognize the existence of the right to menstrual leave administratively, but still maintain a work system that makes it difficult for workers to actually exercise that right.

These findings suggest that access to menstrual leave is determined by the relationship between the law, work organization, and the logic of media production. Regulations do provide a basis for protection, but their effectiveness depends on the extent to which organizations change their work culture and workforce management systems to accommodate women's reproductive needs. Without these changes, the existence of rights will only be a form of formal recognition that is not followed by the redistribution of resources or changes in power relations in the workplace. In Fraser's terms, this condition reflects the inequality between recognition and redistribution: female workers are recognized as legal subjects who have the right to menstrual leave, but have not yet acquired the material and institutional conditions that allow these rights to be used equally (Knijn et al., 2019, p. 3).

Furthermore, the contradiction between rights and access shows that the body of female workers is still placed in a subordinate position to the needs of media production. The logic of the press industry that prioritizes news continuity, speed, and efficiency encourages organizations to maintain a relatively uniform work rhythm for all workers. In such situations, the body that experiences menstruation is treated as an exception that must adjust to the system, rather than as part of the diversity of workers' experiences that need to be accommodated. As a result, access to menstrual leave is no longer solely a matter of labor law, but an indicator of the extent to which media organizations are willing to recognize social reproduction as an integral part of the news production process.

The findings of these two articles suggest that barriers to access to menstrual leave are rooted in the gap between normative recognition and workers' actual ability to exercise the right. Thus, the main problem lies not in the absence of regulations, but in the organizational structure and work culture that still prioritizes productivity over the reproductive needs of female workers. The Feminist Political Economy perspective shows that as long as these relations do not change, formal rights will remain at the normative level without being fully transformed into real access.

Professionalism, Gendered Bodies, and Media Capitalism

The findings of the literature synthesis show that barriers to access to menstrual leave are influenced not only by the existence of organizational policies, but also by the construction of professionalism that develops in the media's work culture. Studies have shown that many female journalists stay at work when experiencing menstrual pain because they are worried about being perceived as unprofessional, unable to meet the demands of their work, or

burdening their colleagues. The findings suggest that the decision not to use menstrual leave cannot be understood as a mere individual choice, but rather as a consequence of the norms of professionalism that shape the behavior of workers in the newsroom.

In the media industry, professionalism is generally associated with the ability to work under pressure, meet deadlines, be willing to report at any time, and maintain productivity in any situation. These values appear to be neutral, but they are actually built on the assumption that the worker's body is always ready to work and does not undergo biological changes that affect his or her work capacity. As a result, women's body experiences—including menstruation, pregnancy, and other reproductive needs—are often positioned as an exception to the ideal worker standard. In such conditions, professionalism is a category that is not free of values, but contains gender bias because it is closer to the experience of the male body which has historically been a reference in modern work organizations.

The Feminist Political Economy Perspective helps explain that such standards of professionalism are part of the way capitalism organizes labor. Nancy Fraser explains that modern capitalism relies on social reproduction to maintain the sustainability of labor, but at the same time builds the institution of work as if workers have no reproductive needs. Work organizations then assume a workforce that is always available, flexible, and able to maintain productivity in a sustainable manner. In the context of the media industry, that logic translates into a work culture that places speed, mobility, and preparedness as the primary measures of professional success. As a result, biological needs that require recovery or adjustment of working time are seen as interference with the efficiency of news production.

This condition shows that the body of women journalists is not only the object of organizational management, but also an arena where the logic of media capitalism and patriarchal culture intertwine. Media capitalism needs workers who are able to maintain the continuity of news production, while patriarchal culture establishes the norm that good workers are those who do not show their biological needs in the workplace. In these situations, menstruation is pushed into an experience that must be hidden so that it is not considered to reduce professional commitment. As a result, many female journalists carry out various adaptation strategies, such as taking pain medications, continuing to report when experiencing dysmenorrhea, or choosing to work while enduring pain rather than using menstrual leave. The adaptation shows that women's bodies are forced to adapt to the rhythm of media production, not work organizations that adapt to the diversity of their workers' body experiences.

This analysis also shows that gender bias in the press industry is not solely reflected in the low number of women in leadership positions, but also in the definition of the ideal worker that organizations use. The dominance of men in the editorial decision-making structure contributes to the lack of attention to women's reproductive needs in the formulation of labor policies. As a result, the experience of menstruation is more often understood as a personal issue than as part of occupational health that should be institutionally accommodated. In other words, the media's work culture reproduces gender bias not only through the distribution of position and power, but also through standards of professionalism that ignore women's biological experiences.

These findings reinforce the argument that access to menstrual leave is part of the struggle to redefine the meaning of professionalism in the media industry. Professionalism that is solely oriented towards productivity has the potential to reproduce gender inequality because

it presupposes uniformity of workers' body experiences. Rather, the Feminist Political Economy perspective encourages the understanding that equitable professionalism must recognize the diversity of workers' biological and reproductive conditions as part of the reality of the organization. The recognition is not intended to give preferential treatment to women, but rather to create working conditions that allow all workers to carry out their profession without having to sacrifice their reproductive health in order to meet the demands of productivity.

Thus, the findings of these three articles show that limited access to menstrual leave is a consequence of the construction of professionalism that is still centered on the logic of media capitalism and the experience of the masculine body. As long as professionalism continues to be measured through employability without considering reproductive needs, women's bodies will remain in a position to constantly adapt to the work system, while media organizations are relieved of the responsibility to transform their work culture to be more equal and inclusive.

Access to Menstrual Leave as an Arena for Social Reproductive Negotiation

The synthesis findings show that access to menstrual leave for female journalists cannot be understood as a mere administrative issue, but rather as an arena for negotiation between the reproductive needs of women workers and the logic of production in the media industry. The negotiations took place at various levels, ranging from state regulations, organizational policies, to individual workers' decisions in responding to the demands of professionalism. Thus, access to menstrual leave does not only reflect the existence or absence of legal protection, but also shows how women's bodies are negotiated in the power relations that shape the world of media work.

The Feminist Political Economy perspective shows that the relationship is rooted in the contradiction between social production and reproduction as Nancy Fraser explains. Capitalism needs a healthy, productive workforce, and able to maintain the sustainability of the production process. However, this condition can only be realized through social reproduction which includes maintaining health, recovering the body, and fulfilling the biological needs of workers. Ironically, social reproductive activities are positioned as a private responsibility that does not receive adequate recognition or institutional support. In the context of female journalists, menstruation is a vivid example of how reproductive needs are biologically recognized, but not yet fully recognized as a legitimate part of the organization of work.

The findings of this article show that the work culture of the media is still dominated by the logic of capitalism which measures professionalism through the continuity of productivity, speed, and flexibility of work. The standard results in the assumption that the ideal worker is one who is always available to meet the rhythm of news production without experiencing biological interference. As a result, menstruating women's bodies are positioned as bodies that must continue to adapt to the work system, while media organizations are relatively not required to adjust their work structure to the reproductive needs of workers. This situation shows that the relationship between media capitalism and patriarchy not only shapes the distribution of jobs, but also determines which bodies are used as a reference in defining productivity and professionalism.

In the framework of Nancy Fraser's social justice, this condition shows that the problem of access to menstrual leave is not enough to be solved through the recognition of the rights of women workers. Normative recognition through regulation is important, but it will not result

in meaningful change without being followed by a redistribution of resources and institutional changes that allow workers to truly exercise these rights. Redistribution in this context is not only concerned with the provision of menstrual leave as an administrative right, but also includes more flexible workload arrangements, work mechanisms that are responsive to reproductive health, as well as an organizational culture that does not stigmatize workers who exercise their rights. In addition, change also requires greater representation of women in the decision-making process in the newsroom so that women's biological experiences and reproductive needs become part of the organization's policy formulation, not just seen as an individual issue.

Thus, access to menstrual leave is an indicator of the extent to which media organizations recognize social reproduction as an integral part of the news production process. When the right to menstrual leave is difficult to access even though it has been guaranteed by law, the problem shows that work organizations still prioritize production efficiency over the sustainability of the social reproduction of their workforce. On the contrary, organizations that are able to accommodate the reproductive needs of female workers are actually building a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable work system because it recognizes that productivity is inseparable from the body conditions that sustain it.

Therefore, this article argues that the struggle to gain access to menstrual leave should not be understood as a demand for only one type of employment right. More than that, access to menstrual leave is part of a broader struggle to transform the media's work organization so that it no longer separates production from social reproduction. The Feminist Political Economy Perspective shows that recognition of women's reproductive needs is not a form of special treatment, but a prerequisite for the creation of gender justice in the world of work. As long as media organizations are still building productivity based on worker standards that ignore women's biological experiences, the inequality of access to menstrual leave will continue to be reproduced even though legal protections are available.

The issue of menstrual leave is a manifestation of the tension between reproductive work and productive work in the press industry. Therefore, the struggle for access to menstrual leave is not only related to the fulfillment of the normative rights of women workers, but also to the recognition of social reproduction as a foundation that allows the media industry to continue operating. This perspective expands the study of women journalists by placing the experience of menstruation as part of the analysis of the political economy of media and social reproduction, thus offering a new conceptual contribution to the study of feminism, employment, and journalism in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The limited access to menstrual leave among women journalists is not solely caused by weak policy implementation but also represents a structural consequence of the contradiction between the production logic of media capitalism and the social reproductive needs of women workers. Through Nancy Fraser's Feminist Political Economy perspective, this article shows that menstruation is not merely a biological issue or a matter of workers' normative rights but is also part of social reproduction that sustains the continuity of media production. However, these reproductive needs have not received equal recognition within work organizations, making access to menstrual leave an arena for negotiation between women's reproductive

rights, productivity demands, and power relations within the press industry.

These findings shift the discussion of menstrual leave from a legalistic approach toward an analysis of how organizational culture and professional standards shape access to reproductive rights. Seemingly neutral standards of professionalism are often constructed around male experiences, positioning women's bodies as exceptions that must adapt to the demands of news production. Therefore, creating a more equitable media work environment requires not only the provision of regulations but also a transformation of organizational culture that recognizes social reproduction as an integral part of the journalistic labor process.

This article also provides a theoretical contribution to the development of Feminist Political Economy by demonstrating that the concept of social reproduction is not limited to discussions of care work but also encompasses everyday biological experiences, such as menstruation, that influence women's working conditions and capacities. In this context, access to menstrual leave can be understood as an indicator of the extent to which media organizations recognize social reproduction as a foundation of sustainable production. Thus, this article extends Fraser's perspective within media studies by demonstrating that the contradiction between production and social reproduction also operates through the regulation and management of women workers' bodies in newsrooms.

However, this article has limitations because it employed a literature review method that relied on previous research findings and did not directly capture the lived experiences of women journalists. Further research may employ empirical qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews or organizational ethnography, to examine how women journalists experience and negotiate menstruation within media work cultures. Future studies may also incorporate an intersectional perspective by considering employment status, career trajectories, media ownership structures, and cross-media or cross-country comparisons. Therefore, the discussion of menstrual leave not only enriches studies of feminism and the political economy of media but also contributes to the development of labor policies that are more responsive to the social reproductive needs of female workers.

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