

The Construction of Media and Cultural Studies Theories

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Abstract—Theoretically media studies and cultural studies are a study conducted to observe the patterns of cultural change in society that is influenced by the media in which the media takes an important role in the new forms of culture construction. There are two theories that are used to analyze the study, Plural theory and Marxist theory. Those theories give the difference roles of media in the class structure context. Plural theory prioritizes media independence in providing information. Contrary to Marxist theory that is more dependent on providing the information in accordance with the desires and interests of the elite. For Marxist, media as a tool to fulfill the needs and interests of the bourgeois.

Keyword : Media, Cultural Studies

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Media and Cultural Studies

Media study is one of the disciplines that focus on the implementation of media studies concept and the usage of theory. There are two types of criteria in media studies, liberal-pluralist media studies and critical-marxist media studies. Pluralist media study becomes a scientific study in which the concepts and theoretical are important. According to Rusadi (2015)¹ on the theoretical level of mass media affect that liberal-pluralist perspective more focuses on the individual effects of changes occurring at the cognitive, effective, and individual behavior.

Other side, according to the pluralist perspective, media study holds the general view that in groups being equal, no dominance and diversity are important in social equilibrium. In the power system is also like that, there is no dominance to each other. A pluralist perspective assumes that the government is seen as an impartial (neutral) party to a fair jury within a diverse group. It also has some assumptions that media gives the same opportunity in it. Audience plays an active role in consuming media in accordance with the required.

In addition to a plural perspective, there is a Marxist perspective on which this cannot be separated from the production of mental and material. Marxist perspective assumes when a person has a production material, that person also has a mental production. Conversely, a person who has mental production will only become the object of person or group that has material production and mental production. Marxist focuses on two groups

between bourgeoisie and proletariat. It considers the assumptions of Economic Determinism that the economic system affects on other systems. There are two structures in Economic Determinism, namely basic structure and super structure. Basic structure is economic, while super structure is religion, politics, culture, language and etc. So, the basic structure determines the super structure.

Marxist also has some assumptions about media. One of them is, the mass media is owned by the bourgeoisie and the media operates in accordance with the common interests of the bourgeoisie. In addition, Marxist also assumed that the media promotes the false consciousness to the workers (the worker thinks that he becomes a bourgeois). Another, the media becomes the tool of class struggle for the bourgeoisie.

Media is divided into three approaches in a Marxist perspective:

- The Structuralist approach examines the signs in the media to show that the media is inclined to serve one of the dominant groups.
- The Political-economic approach sees that economic factor influences the politics.
- The Culturalist Approach sees that the media has a powerful impact in constructing public awareness.

There are several differences in the study of Plural Vs Marxist media:

Pluralist	Marxist
Media professional: Independent and autonomous.	Media professional: autonomy in workers in an illusion.
Audience: Fragmented, reactive, and active.	Audience: fragmented, dependent, passive organized on a large scale, and little access.

Society: diverse and divided into groups.	Society: workers and the elite.
Media: many and independent.	Media: concentrated on ownership.
Production: creative, free, and original.	Production: standardized and controlled.
Content: diverse and responsive.	Content: selective and specified by owner.
Effect: often no effect occurs.	Effect: very strong to keep the Quo status.
Keywords: democracy and liberalism.	Keywords: domination.

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In everyday life, audiences are constantly in connection with the media, both conventional media and electronic media. Continuous exposure to media consumption that will continuously construct the variety mindset and behavior of society, as well as to culture (according to Hall (1996), culture includes: cultural practices, representations, languages, and the customs of a particular society). Although media shows the same information or impression, the perception or feedback that is given will be different.

Stuart Hall (1972)² explained that media and cultural studies are basically trying to criticize the thinking about "reality" and what is called "real" in our daily cultural life. Thus Hall tries to explain that culture can be formed by anyone who wants it. Marxist theory in media studies, the media is owned by a bourgeoisie (entrepreneurs or owners of mass media) who have interests in the ideological, political, social, and cultural realm and tend to monopolize information in order to fulfill their ideological interests.

According to Hall, there are interpretations that differ from media text effects during the reception process. At least, there are three different interpretations introduced by Hall, among others: First, the dominant-hegemonic position which the audience who receives the complete television program accepts the dominant ideology of the program without any disapproval or disagreement. The audience also describes their own lives, behaviors, and social experiences in this ideology. Such audience is categorized as "Operating inside the dominant code" (Hall:1980:136)³.

Many audience studies conducted by researchers of media studies and culture are an ethnographic approach that borrows from anthropological tradition. Ethnography is one of the field research in which researchers try to understand the culture that becomes a part of the daily lives of media audiences (Thwaites, et al, 2002:213)⁴.

Second, the Negotiated code explains the audience who mixes his interpretation with their particular social experience. Audience who categorizes acted between adaptive and opposition to message interpretation.

Third, the oppositional code is when the audience opposes the representation offered in a television show in a way different from the text that has been offered (Hall: 138).

B. *Studies of Media Structuralism, economic-political Media, and Media Culture.*

In a study of media structuralism, Ferdinand de Saussure became a major contributor in this study that focused on language studies. At least, in the media studies book (2015), Rusadi gives the exposure that there are four concepts in language, "language-parole", syntagmatic-paradigmatic, synchronic-diachronic, and significant-signify.

Language is a part of social life, so that the function of language is determined by agreement on the rules that built by a society called "parole". While the language that used in practice as a form of parole is called language. Language system has elements where the relationships among elements in the system is a "syntagmatic structure", while the interconnected relationships outside the system is a "paradigmatic structure". The synchronic-diachronic concept is a study of language according to the dimension of time. If a period is called "synchronic", then the intermediate is called a "diachronic". The structure of a language consists of a signifier and a signified.

Vincent Mosco (2009)⁵ defines the economics-political communication as the study of social relations especially power relations that construct the interconnection between production, distribution, and consumption of communication resources such as newspapers, books, films, videos, and audiences. Difference from Golding and Murdock (1991)⁶ who formulate the political-media economy from a critical perspective as an interplay study in the economic dimensions with the symbolic dimension.

The critical political-economy study has three variants: instrumentalist, structuralist, and constructivist (Golding dan Murdock, 1991; Sudibyo, 2000; Hidayat; 2001, Rusadi, 2015)⁷. Instrumentalist political economy views that the media is an instrument of the ruling class of media owners to the content of the media in accordance with their interests. Whereas in structuralist, it considers the structural power that controls the media and the structure in Giddens's opinion, the rules and resources inherent and owned by the media. Constructivist sees that media owners exist in structures that provide facilitation and a variety of boundaries. However, the

structure is not a solid, rigid, and immutable building. Constructivist also sees that the media being controlled not only by its structural strength, but also by agents, the social and cultural factors that exist in its environment.

There are three critical economic-political frameworks according to Golding Murdock (1991), the study of production, text, and consumption. Production aspect studies are directed to production process research of media content as a cultural product that will affect the consumption of culture. The main question in this study is how the pressures that occur in the content production processes limit or give freedom to the "public sphere". There are two aspects to be discussed, first concerning the relationship between media ownership and its consequences in controlling the media. Second, examining the relationship between state regulation and certain media institutions.

The cultural perspective is at the center between the structuralist and the political-economy. This study refers to the thought of British studies that proposed by Raymon William, Edward P. Thompson, and Richard Hoggart who opposed that economy as the determinant of ideology or economic determinism proposed by Marx before (Curran, 1982).

Those argue that the culture criticizes the excesses and bad industrial development in urban areas and also see that it has a potential power that can enhance and elevate people's lives.

William argues that the classification of work in culture is a collective notion as reflected in class position in society or the existence of different positions in occupations in employment. According to him, communication plays an important role in representing the basic condition and culture of society.

While Thomson defines the class is not understood as a tool of structure or objects which is consisting of several categories, but in reality of human relationships context. Thomson is contributed to cultural studies that culture is a process of experience from those who involved in the conflict and from those who win and lose. Therefore, he argues pop culture is not a new creation, but is the result of experience and history process. Hoggart understands the changes that occurred because of the masification of the culture spread through the media and accepted by society.

C. Concepts of cultural studies

There are three concepts of cultural studies that proposed by Stuart Hall (1996)⁸:

- a. Cultural practices (signifying practices) in a society that produces meaning. The intended culture is the shared social meaning, i.e. how the world (and life) is understood. For cultural studies, language is not a neutral medium for the formation of meaning and

knowledge of an independent world of "out here".

Language is generated through the signs that are formed and produced in the social system.

- b. Representation is how the world is socially constructed and presented to and by us in meaningful ways. Cultural representations and meanings have certain materialists, attached to sounds, writings or messages or symbols, objects, pictures, books, magazines, and television programs (Barker, 2012: 8).

Materialism and Non-reductionism, cultural studies that have been focused on modern industrialist economics and media culture organized in the capitalist line. Whereas Non-reductionism is a cultural study that has traditionally seen cultures have their own specific meanings, rules, and practices that cannot be reduced or unexplained in terms of other categories or social formation levels. Non-reductionism in cultural studies, questioned the class, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, and age that have certain peculiarities that cannot be reduced either by political economy.

- d. Articulation is the concept in order to theorize the relationships in components of social formation. This concept is an attempt to represent and put together. This concept also includes the meaning of discussing cultural and political economic relations.
- e. Power in which the power is always at the every level of social relationships.
- f. Pop culture that is often being the subject of study, such as pop culture is produced a lot of diverse production process practices.
- g. Text and reader. Cultural studies also take into account the medium elements such as texts, especially the hegemonic text practices. Text is not only a form of writing, but also in the form of pictures, sounds, objects, activities, etc.
- h. Subjectivity and identity, the text consumption that done by the reader is a process formed by the subjectivity and identity then became a central issue for cultural studies in the 1990s.

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