

## **Subtheme 5 *Cultural Engagement and the Hybridization of Identity***

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### **POWER RELATIONS IN SOCIAL CLASS (Dissecting Workers' Resistance at "Best Internet for Families" Advertisement)**

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The culture of power ideology and hybrid identity mutates in a variety of dynamic relations whose representation is reflected through advertising as a reflection of the reality of social life according to its time. The pandemic has created a WFH (work from home) trend as an alternative for workers to avoid direct contact but still carry out their obligations as an effort to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Long before the current pandemic, in 2015 there was a television commercial entitled "The Best Internet for Families". The ad described how a boss ordered his employees to work in the office on the weekends. The employee, supported by the reliable internet, tried to – to use Marxian terms – "to build false consciousness", making video calls with her employer as if working from the office. In fact, she is at home. It is interesting to find the ideological culture contained in the advertisement as a representation of social class and the reality of her time and, of course, in the current context. In particular, related to the power relations of the people, capitalist and hegemony at the level of workers. The main purpose of this research is to find out how an advertisement represents social class so that people can be more selective in seeing the value contained in it.

For this reason, this study uses three layers of analysis. The first layer uses John Fiske's semiotics. From Fiske, it can be stated that the way people watch television shows or perceive reality is similar, because both are determined by conventions or codes. For this reason, the researcher dissects this advertisement with Fiske's semiotics which is analyzed in two codes, namely reality and ideology.

In the second layer, with the existence of the working class and the owners of capital in the advertisement, Marx's social class analysis is carried out which states that the main actors in society are social classes. In this second layer, the

researcher critically analyzes how the main actors are depicted in television advertisements considering that social class will always go hand in hand with power relations.

In the third layer, the researcher goes deeper into how social class power relations are based on Foucault's theory which states that power can also be understood through repressive, coercive, and suppressive actions from an institution that has power.

Methodologically, the paradigm used in this research is critical. Researchers try to pay attention to the dismantling of hidden aspects behind reality in order to carry out criticism and change. This study sees that media reality is a pseudo reality formed by social, cultural, economic, and political forces. In other words, the ontological of this research is based on historical realism, transactional epistemology, and dialectical methodological. So, it is hoped that it can encourage worker empowerment.

Data were collected purposively from advertisements that were studied with Fiske's Semiotics. The research findings show that with the knowledge and technology culture they have, workers can present a hybrid identity in simulacra in order to form false awareness of employers as an effort of resistance. *The Good Internet Advertisements for Families* studied contain many verbal, non-verbal, and ideological signs that describe power relations in social class. Marx explained, social is the existence of economic conditions that distinguish the way of life, interests and culture of these social classes.

In order for advertisements to give the same feeling when watching them, advertisements present a reality that reflects the reality of people's lives. *It's the same with Good For Families Internet* advertisement, which narratively, characters, conflicts, actions, dialogues and settings describe exactly how often social classes are forced to work in the pattern of the employer's will. The analysis found that there was a working class concept when faced with employers who abused power, forcing them to work on weekends.

In order to find the representation of social class contained in the advertisement, Fiske's semiotics is used on the level of reality, the level of representation, and the level of ideology. At the level of reality, the concept of social class which is depicted from the character of employers and workers is shown through the setting of the place on the weekends. The employer is on the golf course, while the worker has to work in the office on the employer's orders. With a polite dialogue strategy, the two characters have a dialogue like what happens in society. Until then, the background screen created by workers to deceive the employer as if he was working from the office collapsed.

The representation level includes shooting techniques and viewpoints. When these two characters communicate using technological tools, namely laptops and smart phones, the two characters use an eye level point of view. This point of view technique has become commonplace in society when communicating audio video. The difference in the close-up shooting technique for the employer and the close-up medium for the employee shows how the power relation is clearly represented in the advertisement.

In the final stage, the ideological level, it can be seen from the narrative of the advertisement. Shown when the employer uses his domination of power to exploit workers. However, with the resistance carried out by workers, the power of knowledge of the use of technology can also be the right thing to use to fight against such exploitation.

Considering that the paradigm used is critical, the ideology used is Marx's theory of social class which is considered very relevant to the phenomenon of social class, so that it can provide better analysis results.

This study found that there is a lot of knowledge about the depiction of social class in everyday life, especially the world of work in advertising representations like this, and should be a learning material and a warning about power relations. In the end, the analysis of social class that is close to power relations as Marx will continue to be important to be the material for analyzing every event that is happening today. Meanwhile, while Foucault believed that while power could be productive, hierarchy and oppression would always accompany it. We are bound to be in the historical context in which we exist, framed as subjects of the social order of which we are a part. While some forms of resistance are possible and even admirable, we must look at them carefully and recognize that they may be hiding a deeper impetus towards new types of oppression.

This pessimism is nowhere to be found in Marx, who could be cynical but never relented about humanity and its longing for freedom. In our current postmodern world, researchers find Marx's approach to be more refreshing than Foucault's. In the end, technology is able to change the pattern of power relations and power relations will change the culture of using technology in today's hybrid world of work. However, capitalist hegemony still marginalizes the workers and re-perpetuates power relations in social classes.

**Keywords\):** power relations, Fiske's semiotics, Marx's social theory, Foucault's social class

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