

# Antonio Gramsci's Perspective on Dominant Culture and Social Media's Impact in the Era of Globalization in Indonesia

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Globalization driven by the development of information and communication technology has led to a new pattern in the life of the world society, which is an open society with the widening of the territorial boundaries of each country. Information and communication media in this case are not only a means to obtain information, but also as a driver of global social change. This condition shows that the existence of globalization not only influences economic and political development, but also influences cultural changes that occur in the world society, especially society in under-developing countries like Indonesia. The author in this case seeks to use Antonio Gramsci's perspective with a Neo-Marxism approach to understanding the broader scope, which is the influence of social media in cultural change of Indonesian people. From the discussions conducted, it was found that social media is one of the means of hegemony that has disrupted the cultural spiritual values into consumer goods that are a condition of business value. With social media, a dominant culture is formed and legitimized by market tastes and disrupts cultural plurality as a driver of consumption. In this case, social media not only encourages changes in people's lives, but also the cultural supra-structure that based on consciousness.

*Keywords:* Gramsci, hegemony, dominant culture, social media

## Introduction

The issues of cultural studies are always related with development of human being. Actually, culture emerges as a result of human cultivation. Human have a major role as creators of culture, where human also act as actors of the culture itself. The position of man in culture is central, not human as an individual but as a personal (Bakker, 1984). Man as a personal is seen as being who has active role and different characteristics in ways to living. Culture is the embodiment of self-expression in interactions between humans, human relations with nature, as well as in transcendent spiritual matters.

The formal aspect of culture lies in the work of intellect to transform data, facts, situations and natural events it faces into values for humans (Bakker, 1984). This explains that the formation of culture in community groups is influenced by the place, time, and conditions in which these humans live. This leads to an understanding that in general culture can be interpreted as a phenomenal order or visible symptoms and as an ideational order, namely the area of ideas (Hasan, 2011). The reality faced by society is a challenge in living

and influencing the values held by a community group, not only manifested in practice or behavior but also in the perspective that affects the order of community life.

The development of culture in all corners of the world basically has an influence, not only because of the situations faced by humans when dealing with natural realities, but also often influenced by various factors related to power and efforts to control one another. With power, humans are considered can form and direct the culture of a particular society development. In this case that ideological control over society is based on power. Gramsci is one of Neo-Marxist thinker that understood culture issues with hegemonic approach, where the cultural hegemony is growing in relation approval by using political and ideological leadership (Simon, 1991). It is not just limited to the layout of governance of a country, but also occurs in the form of cultural domination by the emergence of the dominant culture in a particular region.

Changes of society in the matter of cultural domination, with the existence of globalization, are not only taking impacts to the territorial areas of certain countries, but have expanded on the global community area, namely the world community. The world community is under the control of a certain power. The certain power is transnational, cross the territorial boundaries of the country with the power of persuasive social media. This condition is the point of departure for the author: the development of global culture which is influenced by the dominant culture that is formed on the basis of cultural domination and social hegemony. The concept of social hegemony was taken by the author from the thought of Antonio Gramsci, who criticized state power by showing the power of domination and social hegemony. The author in this case tries to use the perspective of Antonio Gramsci in a broader scope, the influence of social media in the formation of a global cultural change. The author hopes that using Gramsci's perspective can deepen the analysis of the existence of a dominant culture by linking the practice of social hegemony against lifestyle changes, social interaction patterns, and how to view of life that occurs in the world community.

### **A Brief Biography of Antonio Gramsci**

Antonio Gramsci is one of Neo-Marxist thinker, who is popular in the various social criticisms he did to criticize the Italian Fascist regime in his life time. What is very visible in the development of Gramsci's thought is the change in his thinking that is philosophical socialist idealism which then leads to a more concrete Marxism. To track the Gramsci's thoughts, we can begin by knowing his history and things that influenced the development of his thought.

Gramsci was born in 1891 in a very poor family in Sardani, Italy. He lived there for 20 years (Hendarto & Hendar, 1993). At that time Gramsci experienced various life pressures, in addition to his poor family economy, he also had to accept the fact that his father was sent to prison on accusation of embezzlement. Gramsci's experiences in childhood to his youth provide considerable influence in the foundation of his beginning thought.

Gramsci in 1911 succeeded to get a scholarship and continued studying at the University of Turin. In Turin, Gramsci faced the realities of life in a modern industrial city for the first time that is so different from his home village. While taken this lecture, Gramsci became acquainted with various academic and political figures, especially from militant socialist organizations who opened his eyes to the world. It continued as Gramsci started his career at 1913 in the field of journalism as an editor for the weekly *Il Grido del Papolo* (Cry of the People) of the Socialist Party (Pramono, 2009). Gramsci's political and intellectual insights were gradually formed and this strengthened his identity as a revolutionary socialist.

Gramsci's career development as a socialist then culminated in his dealing with the formation of the Factory Council as a branch of the resistance movement by the socialist party. Gramsci in this period then considered various matters related to revolution, and Gramsci's political ideas through the journal *L'Ordine Nuovo* were launched as a driving force for the spirit of the masses towards revolution (Hendarto & Hendar, 1993). Gramsci's thinking in this phase has been transformed into a more practical aspect. In preparation for the revolution, there was a split from the Socialist party, and the Italian Communist Party (PCI) was founded and Gramsci was appointed general secretary of the party.

The fascists who were in power of Italy, in 1926 tried to eliminate all the publications of the "left" forces, and it had an impact to Gramsci. Gramsci was arrested and thrown in prison on November 8, 1926 (Pramono, 2009). But Gramsci's left movement cannot be stopped even though he was in prison. This is evident because Gramsci's *Quaderni* masterpiece was actually written by him while he was in prison. In this work, Gramsci tries to use the critical weapon of Marxism that based on his spirit of revolution into the conditions of Italian fascism. This monumental work by Gramsci later gave a new perspective in the body of Marxism and was influential in creating a socialist revolution in Italy.

### **Hegemony as an Applied Concept of Neo-Marxism Analysis**

The development of Gramsci's thought was basically influenced by the process of his life, which took place gradually from life in a poor family, as a student, as a member of socialist and communist organizations and to the end of his life history as a prisoner of fascism. Various things that he experiences and encounters in life cause a variety of upheavals and big booms in his mind which leads to the ideal of the formation of revolution as is the case with Marxist thought in general. Gramsci tries to emphasize the subjective dimension of Marxism to review the condition of Italy which is controlled by the forces of capitalism and fascism.

Joseph V. Femia explained in *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and The Revolutionary Process* that there were three of Gramsci's concerns contained in the *Quaderni*, namely the issue of hegemony, moral legitimacy, and cultural legitimacy (Femia, 1987). The three themes of this issue are reading and further Gramsci's criticism of the conditions of social reality occurred in Italy at that time. Gramsci showed problems that cannot be able to reap significant results from the familiar Marxist after death of Marx and Engels. This suggests that the classical Marxism developed by Marx and Angels did not provide adequate political theory formulation. Political institutions were more tended to be seen as a reflection of the economic structure, than economic independence is seen as a determinant of state (Simon, 1991). The flaws with this classical Marxist theory are then considered by Gramsci as a gap that needs to be used as the core of his thought about understanding the character of political domination.

Gramsci is often said to be influenced by Hegel's philosophy of idealism (Femia, 1987). Hegel saw that the state should provide the human being to feel free, respect human dignity, and free from pressure or coercion. In this case, it can be explained that Gramsci views the leader as having full power over those being led, not only by physical action but more inclined towards an approach that leads to certain dogmas which will become an ideological weapon to control the motion being led. The main element of the philosophy of Gramsci is the role of consciousness in determining human action and the importance of ideological hegemony in maintaining social relationships (Bellamy & Cox, 1990). Awareness formed will facilitate the hegemony not only penetrated into the field of the economic and political, but also non-material field that are thoughts and dreams, without any pressure or coercion.

In his thought, Gramsci views that there are two strengths of a country, namely domination and hegemony. Hegemony in Gramsci's thinking has a position opposite to domination (*dominazione*) (Simon, 1991). The issue of hegemony is the most important thing highlighted by Gramsci's point of view. Understanding hegemony in the beginning as at the time of the Ancient Greeks used the position claimed by the city-states (*polis*) with individual ways, for example by Athens or Sparta, against other countries that are parallel (Hendarto & Hendar, 1993). In ancient Greece, hegemony can be said to put the state's position against other relevant countries strictly or loosely into to unity with state leaders. This is extended in Gramsci's view, Gramsci's hegemony is described by Femia (1987) as follows:

"First, Gramsci applies this concept to the supremacy of one group or more over another in every social relationship, whereas the previous use of the term hegemony only refers to the relationship between the proletariat and other groups. Second, Gramsci also characterizes hegemony in terms of cultural influence, not only political leadership in an alliance system as understood by Marxists previous generations."

The shift in the meaning of hegemony was allegedly because Gramsci departed from the typical Italian dichotomy, namely the power of consensus, the use of intellectual and moral leadership. In this case, it makes hegemony in view of Gramsci more focused on the issues that emphasize the cultural aspect as an ideological control, and this is contained in the various domains that are not only relations between states but can also happen in all social relations between different social classes.

### **Civil Society and Political Society**

Gramsci understands that in order to achieve the sustainability of a country, at least two working instruments must be used, that are dictatorship and hegemony. Gramsci distinguishes between political society as a means of suppression or dictator, and civil society as the hegemony of a social community (Hendarto & Hendar, 1993). Gramsci shows that the state cannot only use the power of domination based on the dictatorial leadership system to achieve the permanence of the state. Civil society is a device to reinforce a political hegemony of power, there is a structure with a variety of social classes. Roger Simon (1991) explains that as a hegemonic device, there is a social class that is in a certain position and power over the social classes below it. The use of this social class is working to persuade the public to arrive at a conviction or confidence to a certain power, in this case the existence of social classes to be important in supporting the process of power legitimacy of it.

The social community, as well as the political society each occupy the most important role as the basis for Gramsci's analysis. Gramsci explained that the two instruments were in a supra-structural order carried out by dominant groups throughout society, and also the direct domination expressed through the state and juridical government (Gramsci & Hoare, 1971). For Gramsci, this is the power of ideological hegemony, capitalism can survive and last because it is based on these two supra-structural bases. The domination by the bourgeoisie against the workers is an example of this, when oppression by direct violence does not need to be reused, because of domination already carried out in depth on the basis of consciousness. This view has become characteristic of Gramsci compared to previous Marxist thinkers who believed that there would be a natural collapse of capitalism over socialism (Patria & Arief, 1999). This concept becomes one of the spaces in the thought of Neo-Marxism entered into by Gramsci to clarify the departure of his thinking.

Gramsci with his views about the existence of these supra-structures contributed to the spirit of new analysis in the study of Marxism. It appears that after classical Marxism, a new trend of political philosophy

has emerged which emphasizes an approach based on the ideological supra-structure as a key variable in analyzing problems of the state and society (Pramono, 2009). The existence of civil society with all its social class structures is considered to provide a pervasive cultural charm as a form of certain cultural legitimacy to provide reality and values based on an ideology that is convinced of the people they lead.

### **The Impact of Globalization in Politics of Under Developing Countries**

Globalization is often interpreted as the loss of territorial boundaries between countries that facilitate access to information. This is supported by technology that is developing very rapidly and spreading throughout the world. Globalization can be interpreted as a process to globalize something, or on the other side of globalization, can also be seen as his clear geographical boundaries of the virtual state (Saksono, 2009). Often a debate that the advent of globalization is an opportunity, or as disastrous for a particular country. This debate often arises in discourses involving various discussions about its influence on under developing countries, one of which is Indonesia.

A country in facing the development of globalization, especially in the formation of free market sovereignty, must have its own economic concept capital. Darsono on Seminar Globalisasi Ditinjau dari Aspek Ideologi dan Moral dan Hukum (2003) said if a state does not base its economic activity in the real conditions of life of its people, the country will be easier trapped on globalization. This problem is very apparent in the political life and the economy of under-developing countries that have not yet reached maturity of basic ideological foundation for managing the associated sovereign people's lives in politics and the economy. These two aspects are then also very influential on cultural change, both social behaviour and life perspective.

Soros (Soros & Solahudin, 2001) said that in the global economy there is a global capitalism system consisting of various sovereign countries, each of which has policies, but each of which is faced with international competition not only for trade but also for capital. It is understandable that in global capitalist system, obtaining foreign investment to each state is an objective that takes precedence over social objectives. Globalization basically gives dreams of prosperity by means of international cooperation. Injecting foreign capital from transnational companies or from developed countries is considered to provide a hope for progress for the common welfare of each country. With this understanding, it can then facilitate the entry of foreign capital into the country, and affect the policies of a country.

### **Dominant Culture in Indonesia**

The impact of globalization in Indonesia has touched various aspects of life, and has fundamentally influenced the lifestyle of society in relation to cultural dimensions. Culture is no longer associated with a fixed locality, such as a city or country, but gets a new meaning that reflects the dominant themes that emerge in a global context (Steger, 2017). It is a deeper look at fanaticism community against foreign products and all things foreign. People through various information technologies (such as television and the internet) are forced to swallow all the charms of developed countries and create cultural uniformity. The mass media has an enormous influence in the emergence of cultural standardization and its impact on identity crisis in society.

In Indonesia, mass culture as a global product is increasingly developing in the era of globalization which provides a variety of new meanings in life. The mass culture denies thinking and creates its own emotional and sensitive responses, there is a tendency to simplify the real world and ignore its problems (Suryosumunar,

2019). The absorption of mass culture takes the form of raw adoption, poor intellectual response, and silences opposites. This condition mainly affects to local culture, which eroded and marginalized by the presence of mass culture that has penetrated as a measure of life. The mass culture that was formed was a bridge to uniform global cultural conditions, in order to facilitate ideological control by global rulers.

Ease of control culture of the society under the rule of the giants of transnational companies supported by the opinion Steger that the cultural crisis which occurred due to the flow of cultural globally which has been controlled by a media company that is international, uses variety of new communications technologies to shape society and identity (Steger, 2017). With the mass media and distribution of various foreign commodities managed to form new classes in society, the classes divided between the society were able to follow the global trend that is placed in the upper classes, while people who are not able to follow the flow of globalization will be eroded by age. Everything is patterned to achieve maximum profit.

Today's society thinks that self-esteem depends on the ability to show that it has bought the latest commodity, that commodity must be bought directly (Magnis-Suseno, 2007). Media companies have managed to deceive the public to continue consuming products from global companies and continue to make updates to the product. Furthermore, credit cards also have a big impact in consumptive habits. Because of the credit offered, consumption capacity continues to increase while pushing consumers into a bigger debt trap and a certain mentality of "eat first, work later" (Saksono, 2009).

The consumptive culture in fact helps explain the decay of the Indonesian elite who are involved in the problem of corruption. Corruption that is conducted by elites is considered as a solution to meet the growing consumption needs (Magnis-Suseno, 2007). It can be said in other words that corruption appears to mark the development of an individualistic nature as a result of the role of the capitalist mindset that permeates the paradigm of Indonesian society today. This reminds us that consumptive action is not just a lifestyle, but based on a view of individualism (Saksono, 2009). This individualistic pattern is a characteristic of contemporary Indonesian society. This marks the pervasive capitalist culture in the mindset of society.

### **Gramsci's Perspective on Multinational Power**

Gramsci believes that a power of domination will sustainable if there are two working instruments, namely dictatorship and hegemony (Gramsci & Hoare, 1971). Dictatorship is a principle based on coercion and violence by the dominating classes. The principle of dictatorship globally has occurred during the colonial era. During the colonialization period of the 19th century, colonized nations, like Indonesia were accustomed to regard their own culture as inferior, more despicable, and less valuable than the culture of the colonial nation (Soebadio, 1986). This view resided for a very long time in this nation, as a result of coercion by the colonialist at that time.

The colonial era, which used the power of violence to dominate one country over another, was no longer used to expand power. The emergence of a new colonial system in economic, political, and even cultural aspects was dangerous no less than the colonial system. In modern life in the context of globalization, which is adorned by very rapid technological developments, it is capable of spreading various things, one of which is issue related to ideological aspects. In this case, the center will continue to reap profits at the expense of the edge, this will not stop as long as there is still a market or resource that has not been annexed (Soros & Solahudin, 2001). The center in this case acts as a regulator through investment or foreign capital to various

developing countries, which is a means to direct the uniform movement of world society through the existence of free markets.

Gramsci in his view as stated in the previous chapter, places the role of consciousness as the most important point in the formation of hegemony. This view can clarify the existence of hegemony theory of Gramsci happened in the era of globalization. On the basis of states of consciousness, adherents of globalization are hoping for the welfare and prosperity, foreign capital became a stranglehold of global giants taking over the sovereignty of a country into a political force that is multinational. In this case, these countries into the power devices can exert its dominance strength to defend legitimacy and preserve the power of the center, which in the view of Gramsci called a political society. It can be said that the influence of this power does not only occur in the relationship between social classes, but extends in the global region between the center (multinational economic power) with developing countries as producers of resources and as markets. The entry of foreign capital into the country gives each spacious room for foreign interests and touch to every government policy and all aspects of his public life, this is what is referred to as the global hegemony through economic aspects.

### **Social Media as a Means of Cultural Hegemony in The Era of Globalization**

Gramsci divides power into two working instruments, namely civil society and political society, both of which have a special role in forming the permanence of power. Civil society using persuasive power or a specific inducement that is done in an association of social class in the social community and that hegemony. Hegemony provides ways to power a certain party's leadership domination, which is carried out without using violence and without forming pressure on the party being led. The globalization which is closely related to the modernization and development of science and technology, brings new influences in the life of the world community. Social media in this regard is a tool that can be said at the same time as an important actor in motion cultural development of world society.

Internet and television are the most popular media in people's lives. The mass media is able to form social classes by making a gradation with popular culture or dominant culture. Social media has a very big role in the development of this dominant culture. Identity crisis which occurred due to the global cultural currents that are controlled by multinational media, utilize various communication technologies to shape society and their identities, bringing up classes with a new identity in society, where in this case the highest class or the dominant class will have power over the views of the class below.

The existence of mass media has a very big role in the emergence of cultural uniformity, both in lifestyle and the perspective of the community. Culture in this case becomes a production item which is aimed at making a profit. Various spectacles made without considering the quality but how can be accepted easily by the public, with the basis of profit goals. Social media in this case is useful for disseminating knowledge to form consensus about the direction of life and people's perspectives.

Cultural hegemony by the power tools of the mass media has succeeded in forming coercion indirectly or utilizing the volunteerism of society in forming a paradigm homogeneity. The common perception is that effectiveness and efficiency are the most important things. Media through advertising, then has the power to dictate the wishes of the people compared to the other way around. In this case, the consumptive lifestyle offered through advertisements and promotions is considered to promise meaning for a life that feels empty (Magnis-Suseno, 2007). People are put to sleep with dreams that are offered through a variety of spectacle

about the success and glory of various dominant classes to encourage consumption. As stated by Gramsci, hegemony emerges and grows in the most essential realm, namely the human idea, the starting point is the consciousness of the people who are led to follow the direction of the goals of the dominating power that leads. In the era of globalization, this happened between the media as a means of disseminating information to society as consumers. In Gramsci's view, liberation from cultural hegemony is the release of people's fascination with pseudo-reality.

### Conclusions

The discussion that has been done, found several conclusions related to the influence of social media in shaping the dominant culture in Gramsci's perspective. Social media, on the discussion conducted, can be said to constitute a form of global hegemony through the development of information and communication technologies are sophisticated and shifted spiritual values of culture into a spectacle and production goods. Nowadays in Indonesia and also in other country, culture no longer contains a solution of reconciliation between humans and nature, but by the media, culture is shaped in such a way as a consumer good which is a requirement for business value. Popular culture is developed as a result of the historical process from the colonialization period and continued again in the era of globalization. The rebirth of colonialization carried out by the power of the media with its persuasive power to ground the local cultural plural identity. This is the real power of hegemony in Gramsci's view, a form of bringing together awareness of a certain point of view that aims to legitimize power.

Social media has succeeded in manipulating people's interests, desire, and ways of thinking, no longer like in the colonial era with the power of violence or dictatorship as the saying from Gramsci, but has been at the level of lifestyle and the way of thinking in cultural life in which there is a consciousness or volunteerism, it was the hegemony and social media has shaped picture of social classes embraced by the community, where the dominant culture in this case a measure of truth. Mass culture was deliberately created as a means of forming cultural homogeneity globally because it was adopted raw without any intellectual response.

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