



Popular Cultural Resistance of Makassar Students

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ABSTRAK

Budaya populer kerap diartikan sebagai praksis pasifisme atas superioritas budaya massa yang bersifat instan dan komersil. Mahasiswa sebagai eksponen masyarakat tidak dapat dipisahkan dari realitas sosial yang sehari-hari beririsan dengan budaya populer. Budaya populer yang hegemonik dapat menjadi ajang kontestasi praktik pemaknaan ulang mahasiswa untuk menyatakan resistensinya terhadap nilai-nilai yang berada di balik kehadiran suatu trend budaya. Tujuan penelitian ini ingin mengungkap pertama, praktik budaya populer mahasiswa dalam hubungannya dengan perubahan orientasi sebagai seorang agen pembelajar yang berorientasi keilmuan, objektif, dan kritis, dan kedua bagaimana mahasiswa melakukan upaya resistensi dari dalam budaya populer untuk menciptakan ulang praktik pemaknaan agar dapat terhindar dari dominasi hegemonik kapitalisme budaya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tiga tahap yaitu reduksi data, sajian data dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menemukan dua hal pokok, pertama, budaya populer merupakan konstruksi sosial media massa yang menjadi bagian penting dari kelahiran budaya massa. Kedua, budaya populer merupakan ajang kontestasi dari praktik pemaknaan ulang sehingga dapat mengubah nilai-nilai kapitalisme budaya menjadi nilai resistensi.

Keywords: *budaya populer, resistensi*

ABSTRACT

Popular culture is often interpreted as the practice of pacifism over the instant and commercial superiority of mass culture. Students, as community members, cannot be separated from social reality, which intersects with popular culture on a daily basis. Hegemonic popular culture can become an arena for contesting students' reinterpretation practices to express their resistance to the values that are behind the presence of a cultural trend. The purpose of this study is to reveal first, students' popular cultural practices in relation to changes in orientation as a scientifically oriented, objective, and critical learning agent, and second, how students make resistance efforts from within popular culture to re-create meaning practices in order to avoid domination. cultural hegemony in capitalism. This research uses a descriptive-qualitative approach. Data analysis was carried out through three stages: data reduction,

data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study found two main things. First, popular culture is a social construction of mass media, which is an important part of the birth of mass culture. Second, popular culture is an arena for contestation of the practice of redefining so that it can change the values of cultural capitalism into values of resistance.

Keywords: *popular culture, resistance*

INTRODUCTION

There is no empty space for cultural contestation, especially in the more commercial and massive Kinian culture. That's popular culture. Conceptually, popular culture becomes a parallel to the canonical culture, better known as the adulterous culture. Storey (2009) proposed that the culture of the elite is more identical to the ideals of the elite, aesthetics, and limited values because its existence is derived from the elite social class.

Popular culture states Barker (2000:62) is a reproduction of commercial culture that emerged in sinetron, celebrity lifestyle, model life, or even hairstyle, whose emergence became a mass commodity for certain social reasons. This understanding indicates the alignment of the popular word itself, which assumes a social experience that becomes a mass practice. Like, for example, the cultural practice of young people who suffer from draconian fever through cinematic interaction in a big stream of Korean drama. Korean films, culturally speaking, are representations of symbols and images of a certain meaning.

As a rule, popular culture, according to Tanudjajaja (2007:96), indicates the presence of meaning struggles that can contaminate and produce impacts that can affect society. In other words, as part of the digestive practice, popular culture gives rise to two forms of digestion, positive and negative, as described by Dennis McQuail in Hapsari (2009). Popular culture in a particular context will give rise to solidarity, strength, and integration when interpreted into the social practices of the working class. Like the meaning of "jeans," which is identical to the

strength and solidity of the workers' class, or how the social practice of a group of young people in a punk community uses slogans, clothes, and music to represent the significance of their group.

Fertilization is more negatively related to crowds, irregularity, bullshit, and having no rationality, efficiency, or consumerism. (Apriliani & Setiawan, 2019). On this side, negative judgments of popular culture often make certain social groups get subodivative treatment of digestive practices that emphasize more harmony, stability, and security.

Popular culture is heard by the media, which implies imagery. This is an alternative to a life based not only on necessities but, moreover, on dual standards. In this case, when advertising shapes people's tastes, at the same time it can also show the meaning of other cultures as symbolic values, which transform functional values into the symbolic value of a product. (Wardana & Demartoto, 2017).

At the moment, students are also positioned as cultural beneficiaries. On the other hand, students are also a social class that has the potential for change to give resistance to what makes them experience cultural alienation. For that, this study will reveal, firstly, how popular cultural controversy affects the orientation of students as scientifically oriented, objective, and critical learners, and secondly, how students make resistance efforts from within popular culture to re-create reproductive practices in order to avoid the hegemonic domination of cultural capitalism.

Students are a segment of society that experiences the tension of idealism and

pragmatism between the ideal order of intellectualism, freedom, and criticism, while living in the representation of pragmatic values of instance, mass, and passive. Notabene students are young boys, who potentially have transformative powers when they get stuck in college. As part of the youth group, students are a community that is closer to the modern cultural life because it is more open and easy to absorb new values, including in this case are the values of pop culture. Between these positions, students are constantly challenged to reproduce the order of their lives from what is their cultural environment to what is the idea of youth idealism. In other words, when it comes to popular, massive, superficial, and consumer pop culture, students have the opportunity to re-articulate cultural experiences associated with pop culture.

METHOD

Through a qualitative approach, it is expected to provide a more natural and accurate explanation of lifestyle resistance through popular cultural digestion practices, especially among the younger generation who profess as students. The data collection technique used in this research was obtained through primary data obtained by conducting in-depth interviews with groups of students on two Makassar campuses that have entered the category of informants. Secondary data was obtained through the search of documents such as journals, books, and images related to the focus of research.

Data analysis is carried out through three stages, namely: first, a data reduction process that focuses on the selection, simplification, abstraction, and transformation of raw data from field records. In this process, data that are relevant to the focus of research and data that do not meet the exclusion-inclusion criteria are selected. The second stage is the presentation of data, i.e., the compilation

of information into statements that enable conclusions to be drawn.

Data is presented in the form of narrative text, initially scattered and separated from various sources of information, then classified according to the themes and needs of analysis. The third phase is the drawing of conclusions based on data reduction and presentation. The drawing takes place gradually, starting with the general conclusion at the reduction phase of the data, then becoming more specific at the data presentation phase, and more specifically at the actual conclusion drawing phase. This set of processes suggests that the qualitative data analysis in this study is characterized by combining stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing repeatedly and cyclically. (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The validity of data is also tested in four ways, namely: credibility; transferability; dependability; and confirmability. (Cypress, 2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a) Contestation of student popular culture

Popular cultural practices in the college arena are often not counted as a cultural contest, although everyday students are more likely to show the same interests as society in general, which is associated with the practice of digesting values, symbols, and images in order to give birth to a social identity. Through the mass media, popular culture is more likely to represent the lifestyles of popular characters such as movie stars, artists, or singers that are identical to their glamorous, vulgar, and fashionable appearances.

Unconsciously, popular imagery like the above becomes an inevitable part of the process of social construction that forms social practice. Two important dimensions of popular culture, mass and commercial, are inevitably an essential part of socialization. In this case, there has been a consistent practice of mixing what is

represented by popular cultural symbols, images, and signs with the ability to embrace the meaning of society itself in order to shape its objective world. Regarding the campus as an open arena, the contestation practiced by students cannot be said to be completely free from popular cultural digestion practices. In the arena, students can connect with the outside world to consume songs through exercise devices, appear attractive using brand-branded trends, or even watch a series of movies loaded with certain cultural values.

From a critical perspective, the cultural practices of a community cannot be separated from the ideological interests that become the worldview. In this case, popular culture can be assumed to be part of the application of market-oriented importance. In other words, as a cultural commodity, pop culture becomes the arena of hegemony to infuse capital-oriented influence.

Popular culture, or mass culture, influenced far enough to change the academic orientation of students. One of the influences that appears quite clearly is how students lose their learning, objective, and critical identity in responding to social facts that are part of their lives. The popular culture that was born instantly and massively changed the student mentality to become more careless, pragmatic, and preferential to hedonist life practices. They're more inclined to immerse themselves in a massive lifestyle like entertainment, malls, and kongkow-kongkow in coffeeshops.

The kind of living practice done above is not a problem as long as it is done within the framework of consciousness, especially practice awareness, which gives sensitivity to what is worth doing. In this case, it is very important to have a critical point of view that has shaped the attitude of rejection in dealing with the cultural turmoil born by the mass media. This time, what is the problem with social practices? Students have been dragged into the wave of mass culture due to the disappearance of the impetus to

evaluate the negative impact of popular culture itself. Popular culture can be seen in the changes in the way students view their social identity, especially in relation to their relationship to what they use and consume. For example, in the pattern of consumption of goods, popular culture has influence to the extent that it can change the orientation of value by using goods based on symbolic values rather than usage values. Students show a more consumptive nature by prioritizing symbolic value over things they have to indicate a particular social value. In this case, it is the use of a means of communication to promote a particular brand, even though it has the same function as a brand that is considered ordinary. In the social world, popular culture can mark the honor of a particular social identity with the meaning of an image that connotes luxury, elite, and class. To some extent, this kind of phenomenon can give birth to a new social class that has the same degree, orientation, and tendency to see what constitutes their collective identity.

Through the mass media, popular culture, as stated by Fiske (2011), spreads instantly, as it is very easy to find in most people. The correlation of student life with popular culture in this case cannot and immediately gain obstacles because there is no fundamental difference between the atmosphere of academic life within the college and the wider society. In this respect, culture as an order of values, attitudes, and habits embodied in everyday behavior and things can fluidly experience such a mixture even in academic life. In other words, although academic nuances in the college arena are still more dominant when compared to other social spaces, they still cannot escape the influence of mass culture.

One of the findings, as described above, is the consumer activity of students who can easily conduct sales transactions through practice. Compared to conventional models, instant culture is changing the way students

interact when they want to do sales. The presence of the virtual market in this case contributes to shaping an instant attitude when conducting sales activities.

The mass media is the epicenter of information that, for now, not only provides information to the audience but can also create interaction among its readers. With its increasingly interactive nature, the mass media era is no longer the only party that has a role to play in creating order in social life. Nowadays, the messages delivered by the mass media, especially the new media, are more diverse, complex, and uncontrolled. In such an atmosphere, the responsibilities of knowledge, critical awareness, and information, which are the roles of the mass media, cannot be fully accomplished.

That's why, in the context of this study, other findings also show the changes students showed in behavior, association tendencies, and consumer practices after living with the mass media experience. Without any critical caution, mass media gives quite significant influence that is characterized by how students show their interests by acting like what they witness in the media.

Popular culture cannot have a major impact without the presence of popular idols. A figure like this is an outstanding and striking person because of his hedonistic and consumer lifestyle. (Pilliang, 2005). Figures such as artists, film actors, models, or even influencers are not uncommon to influence many people because of their intense presence through the mass media. The context of the life of the popular idol, in a certain sense, gives the digestive framework for his fans to behave like them. As trendsetters, popular idols become kiblat in terms of appearance, behavior, and mindset.

Popular cultural qualities, as described by Barker (2000), as an art of cultural expression, whether or not derived from high art, are the result of human creations born along

with social transformation. Related to the era of advanced capitalism, popular culture is an industry that has a complete network of employees. Through this understanding, popular culture becomes instantaneous, so that it often changes shape and content as trends change. For students, this model of influence is demonstrated using terms and clothes that follow current trends.

b) Lifestyle resistance in popular culture

Borrowing the understanding of Mukerji and Schudson in Darajat (2023) regarding popular culture, there is a tendency for ordinary people to live differently from the behavior of the elite community. Although often considered insignificant and shallow, it does not mean a tendency related to faith; the practice of cultural objects is not through an organized organization. In this case, what forms part of a community's cultural practice are shared beliefs within the community.

In his research, such popular music (dangdut) is a tendency that is not only but also interpreted as a means of organizing meaning to differentiate class positions in society. In other words, as stated by Adorno (Darajat, 2023), popular music is more of a representation of the tendencies of a class of society. That means, like high-taste music, popular music is a taste born in the context of lower society.

The day-to-day life of the community, or in this case, the life that is wasted inside the college, is a place of controversy over various contradictory interests. Fiske (2011) stated that the arena of life as experienced on a daily basis is a place of negotiation of values. Even at a certain point in the same arena, negotiations can give rise to conflicts involving strategies and tactics, like in a war to defeat each other.

The rulers constitute their ideological interests in the social order by marking places where they can exercise their power. Whether it's a city, a mall, a school, a house, or a market, In those places, with strategies and tactics of hegemony, the rulers seek to instill a mechanism

of values and behavior to give birth to a culture that matches their worldview. Meanwhile, through conflict, the lower society creates the previous space as its own arena by passing, occupying, marking, or simply passing it, even if only for a certain time. In other words, the space belongs to the elite; although it is the property of the ruling people, it cannot and cannot immediately subdue the lower people to determine what practices they can do in it. That's what we call resistance.

The practice of resistance is also manifested in the form of the practice of digestion of texts, signs, symbols, and images freely carried out through self-made readings. In this case, the keywords in resistance, in the sense of De Certau, are the art of managing, which assumes the process of adaptation, manipulation, and deception as long as it is derived from creativity rather than born from such pessimism as the inevitable excesses of popular culture.

Although it has been known that in the end consumer society, nothing is independent of commodification and makes everyone a consumer, popular culture in its form of resistance becomes a room of resistance that students carry out to digest, not as it is accepted based on popular meanings themselves. In the field, resistance is demonstrated by modifying the products used and adapting them to their own tastes. In this case, popular culture is not merely confirmed raw, as described at the beginning of this writing, but rather confirmed by using creativity to shape the meaning of the products themselves.

The product meant in this case is jeans that every day become a piece of student's underwear. Jeans, according to Fiske (2011), can mean community and individuality, masculinity or femininity, elite or inferiority, and rich or poor. The semiotic wealth of these jeans means that jeans can't have a single meaning. Jeans, when used daily for the younger generation, have no exception because

students are part of the exploration to give them other meanings, unlike the meanings emphasized in the advertisement. Those forms of exploration are displayed by letting them fold, crack, pale, and turbid to mark the meaning of anti-perpetuity as opposed to the values that represent the rich class that is stable, harmonious, and orderly. Genas is also understood as freedom because, in its use, it can be contextualized in a variety of situations and conditions. This is more in line with the spirit of students, who are a generation that is entering a transition with freedom as a false identity of youth.

In the field of art, resistance also emerged when students used songs to express their resistance to ideas that they thought reflected established culture. In addition to using the song to convey his resistance, the most striking is the use of an oblong shirt as a symbol of flexibility and informality. It's like it's been a matching culture, that students on the opposite side are trying to create their own different lifestyle of young people with patterns of sustainability that are bureaucratically oriented, rigid, and formal.

Heryanto (2015) states that historically there is no real element of a product or social practice that indicates whether it is an element of popular culture or not. That means what could once be called popular culture in historical and social contexts can be very different in the future. Realities like this, found in the social practice of students who in the sense of consumption are frequently immersed in elements of popular culture where they enjoy songs, films, or messages produced massively and commercially. But, on the other hand, students also show resistance by adapting their lives so as not to completely sink into mass culture. In this case, like self-producing clothes that can be filled with messages or pictures according to students' ideas or critical ideas.

CONCLUSION

The difference between popular culture and other cultural values is that popular culture has no universal appeal. In the sense that most of those who consume it are the middle class living in urban and industrialized areas. They're not part of an elite group that has high appetites due to economic and educational factors. Popular culture is considered more representative of manipulative, lowly, false, and superficial lives. There is no philosophical, educational, or even spiritual significance to popular culture.

In the above sense, students are open to the opportunity to experience exposure to popular culture that transforms their orientation, identity, and social tendencies into studying students rather than apprentices, becoming hedonists like idols and consumers. This change is due to mass media culture, idol presence, and excessive consumption activities, which are important elements of popular culture.

Nevertheless, students are in the process of adapting to resistance by reinterpreting the social practices of popular culture itself. In other words, popular culture at this point is not just a challenge to their identity but is used to give birth to a parity culture in order to resist what was formerly popular culture. The way it's done is by wearing jeans, using lyrics, and producing their own oblong shirts in the framework of recreating the cultural meaning of what they're wearing.

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