

## **Representation of Green Issue in Indonesia Advertising: Middle Class as Green Hero**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Advertising is part of a social phenomenon of contemporary consumer society. Objects in the ad does not stand alone but is formed by a system of language. Through language, the ad shows people's daily practice in the relationship in which power relations including lifestyle supported by consumptive life. Currently, when environmental issues became popular, the ad was taking shape of it into a green advertising. Construction of meaning "green" in the ad shows a paradox .This article found that green with the tagline "energy saving " and "environmentally friendly" is just mask of reality. Existing green ads actually build a new type of consumption that make environmental issues a new class marker. A class that builds their superiority by creating an upper middle-class subjects as environmental heroes.

This article takes a case on ads household electronic appliance be energy saving so that it can be used by the lower classes that would basically eliminate the distinctive nature of the upper class. However, through the construction of the myth of the upper middle class as environmental heroes then this distinctive trait can be maintained simultaneously keep open the possibility of lifestyling. Through this green advertising, capital is able to expand its market reach lower class consumers while keeping the upscale market.

This article looks at the construction of the imaginary subject position creates a distinctive imaginary relationship that is able to maintain the hierarchy between the lower class and upper class, although both consume the same thing

**Keywords: Representation, identity, consumption**

## **Introduction**

Currently green discourse is popular in Indonesia. The indicators, green issues into the larger rubric of mass media such as kompas.com. Even educational institutions are promoting green campus programs and green school. Various environmental discourse continues to be reproduced in various media. Green issues also used in the ad. Green issues are used in a wide range of variants. There are just being ad background, there is indeed market a product that claimed to green, some are just adding green images on the product and some are selling green issues as a form of environmental advocacy (Corbett, 2006, 149-154).

One of the ads that very interesting is an electronic advertising tool that claims to eco-friendly and energy saving. I think this ad is very unique. Paradox consists of various conflicting meanings but can form a unity. Like for example, on the one hand claim energy saving but on the other hand it promotes consumption and consumer lifestyle through the relationships between characters and scene selection. The word "saving (hemat)" itself is something that is very problematic. Because, energy saving means such electronic devices can be used in homes with low power. Thus, products which formerly could only be used to upper middle class such as air conditioners, refrigerators and washing machines can now be used by the lower classes.

Thorstein Veblen said, the upscale using consumption to differentiate themselves from the classes below it in the social hierarchy, while the lower classes seek to emulate them (in Ritzer & Smart, 2012.825). See Veblen's theory, the phrase "energy saving" would eliminate the distinction between upper class and lower class in terms of consumption. This could be dangerous for capital because it loss the distinctive characteristics of upscale. But apparently not stopping capital to continue to throw similar but not the same ad to the market. This raises the suspicion that there is a way to use advertising to keep the hierarchy between the upper middle class and lower class. This paper seeks to examine it using Stuart Hall's theory of representation. Trying to see the shape representation green green issues in advertising / environment of electronic products in Indonesia.

## **Advertising as Representation**

Barker said representation is one of the major studies in cultural Studies. That is about how socially constructed and presented to and by us (Barker, 2005, 10). One of the important reference in representation theory is the writing of Stuart Hall, Representation through language is therefore central to the processes by the which meaning is produced (1997, 01). Representation is the process of production of meaning by used language as the main means. Language is used to bring back or replace the presence of the subject / object.

Then Hall went on, there are two systems of representation that are involved in the process of the mental representation of meaning is meaning depend on the system of concept and image formed in our thought which can stand for or represent the world, enabling us to refer to things both inside and outside our heads. System in which all subjects / objects either event, the human is associated with the concept of mental representation. Without these concepts in our heads, we can not interpret everything that exists in the world. Second is the language, because the language we use construct meaning of the world. This can take place when we have access to a particular language. As we see, although separate in his explanation, but both are a mutual building unity with one another and can not be separated (1997, 17-18).

Language can be tangible word, writing or visual images such as advertising. Advertising is a cultural text based on stereotypes and shared belief (Frith and Mueller 2003, 119). Advertising is a significant window to see the process of production and reproduction of ideologies (Noviani, 2009). Ideologies that shape power relations are constructed of top grade construction, identity and lifestyle through language.

## Advertising List

All advertising is social text that responds important changes in their day appear (Kellner 2010, 340). The study object of study menggunakan two ads were deemed to represent this social change, namely:

1. Panasonic Econavi - Atikah Hasiholan version of "precious moments, dad version"
2. Toshiba Glacio - Save Electricity version of "Untuk Semua"

Furthermore, both the ad will be referred to as ad 1 and ad 2.

### Advertising 1. Green Individual Saving (Account)

This ad tells a father with a happy family according to government standards with two children who consider the home and family as the most valuable thing. At the beginning of the scene the appearance of a father figure, he was on the highway.



Picture 1.1



Picture 1.2

The depiction of the night hiding dark atmosphere of exhaust fumes. Flickering lights on the road as a variety show atmosphere of romantic beauty of the night. Making jam look good while concealing social anxiety over the growth of uncontrolled motor vehicle. This image seemed to cover up the reality of the uncontrolled growth of automotive capitalism Indonesian that dominated by imported products.

Import Capitalism continues to marginalized the of mass transportation that is seen in figure 1.1, a beleaguered bus Kopaja by dozens of personal cars and

motorcycles in a atmosphere can be regarded as a "war for space". As Massey said, space is a social construction in which sociality is always constructed spatially, dynamically, created by the ever-changing social relations and space is always related to the question of power and symbolism (in the Keys, in March 2001, 06).

Congestion conditions on the highway is full of pollution seem contrary to the theme of "green" are brought. The streets which jammed in a variety of vehicles trying fighting over for space can drive precedes the other and free themselves from congestion. Personal car looks more dominating. Motorcycle was oppressed and forced to pass through narrow spaces remaining from the "war" of the seizure. The dominance of personal car which is so clearly indicates that they are the rulers of the largest highway space at the same parties taking road space with quotas at most. Bus, although large but it is filled by many people. So that on average, consumption per person is very small space. So also with the motorcycle. But unlike the personal car. Because the shape of a larger car, then they consume a lot more road space than others. The larger the personal car, the greater the consumption of road space that is "spent". Personal vehicle owners are the winners in the "war" grab space on the highway.

The ability to consume is a key element in distinguishing between class lifestyle. The greater the consumption is done, the higher the class. In consuming highway, the same thing happens. In many films, for example, we are told that the conglomerate is he who has a limousine, a long personal car. Beside the car represent the power to buying of the conglomerate, it also signifies his ability to consume the space highway.

This the ability of consumption again demonstrated when the father has arrived home.



Picture 1.3

The family room is likely to have a dual function as a living room looks very beautiful, neatly arranged, white, clean and bright. The portrayal of this family room can be regarded as indexical signs. Indicates the state of the overall home office has the same beauty with the family room. It is an ideal home base middle-class family. You could say this house is what Walter Benjamin called as phantasmagorias,

The emergence of new places of consumption is by Benjamin connected with other places, private residence, which for the first time seemed different from the workspace. Here the residents are trying to create fantasy spaces of their own, 'phantasmagorias-phantasmagorias indoors'. To that end, as consumers they are redirected to new places of consumption in order to obtain what they need to change their dwelling into a dream world (in Ritzer & Smart, 2012, 841)

AC econavi is an important part of the phantasmagorias room. That became an important message that is trying to be built by Panasonic

Dad: precious moment for me .... At home with a comfortable room

**(Ayah : Momen berharga buat aku....Di rumah dengan ruangan yang nyaman)**

Here, Atiqah Hasiholan as commercials stars and as the brand ambassador of Panasonic greet father and viewers.



Picture 1.4

Atikah: Through econavi, panasonic always accompanies every moment of your precious. For the convenience of living environment and your future.

**(Atikah : Melalui econavi, panasonic selalu menyertai setiap momen berharga anda. Demi kenyamanan hidup lingkungan dan masa depan anda)**

Panasonic did a interpellation. He called the father, a character in the ad, and calling us (viewers) at the same time and put us on the subject of the father's position. We (viewers) became a subject of panasonic. Panasonic calls viewers as individuals rather than groups and offer solutions comforts of life which is actually a call to buy. In addition to the call, he also seduced once threatened by saying, panasonic econavi purchase solely for the convenience of living environment and future. If you do not buy then there is no guarantee of anything in your life.

These ads also form / offer categorization imaginary position on the subject as a form of subjectivity. Offers / formation of these options further establish the imaginary hierarchy because the "you" that respond to interpellations and offer comfort provided subject position that is a great and powerful father which has the ideal home, ideal family and most importantly, the ability to consume and winning big in the "war "compete for space on the road. As for not "you", which does not respond to the interpellation, not at all had available options and subject positions. Instead of "you" did not exist, nobody.

Then, assurance of the future and environmental comfort associated with one of the claimed advantages panasonic econavi the energy-saving technologies. Hemat

/ saving means, not excessive in consuming energy and store it for the future. In the simplest form possible as the old adage says, saving the base of the rich (hemat pangkal kaya). The goal is the preservation of energy and save the earth from destruction. But before we accept these claims at face value, there is something which must be realized, the environment and future comfort offered only directed at "you" as an individual alone. Thus, conservation of energy produced is not to save the environment but to ensure that energy can still be used by "you" in the future. The principle is similar to the savings where to get it you have to create an account with econavi buy panasonic. The phrase energy efficient and save the environment just masked of reality.

## Advertising 2. Green Consumption and Green Lifestyle

Tells the story of the actions undertaken middle-class consumption to work together, forming a chain of consumption and ends in the fridge. Advertising begins with a scene of a woman buying a commodity at a mall / hypermarket.



Picture 2.1



Picture 2.2



Picture 2.3



Picture 2.4





Picture 2.5



Picture 2.6



Picture 2.7



Picture 2.8

In Figure 2.1 seen a woman being paid at the cashier with a smile. Signifies joy and satisfaction in the can from the moment of consumption. She was shopping at the fruit and vegetables, signifies freshness and natural health. A part of the face of nature. She is part of the middle class which is implementing a shopping ritual. Selection a mall as opening the advertising as if to tell us that all started from the mall and without it, the consumption chain is not going to happen. Mall is the center of the ritual consumption, instead of the traditional market or grocery store.

Then the woman gave goods bought to the unknown men behind and the goods are passed on to the next person, and so on. Forming a moment of togetherness of middle class urban dwellers which do not know each other previously. Moment of consumption bring together individuals into groups that work together. That is a consumption society. The end of the moments of togetherness in an ideal family (according government standart) fridge which again indicates freezer capacity which

so large that it can load the entire contents of the hypermart and also shows the enormous consumption ability possessed by the group.

This ad depicts the current state in which life has been so deeply integrated with capitalism is driven by consumption. When consumption is low, and economic growth / profit will decrease and can create a crisis which usually solved by the government poured so much money into the market (bail out) and lowered interest rates to continue to create consumer.

The selection of a place in the ad is not just random. It was designed to bring a specific meaning. Almost the whole place indicates the freshness of green trees, grass and blue sky which said activity is the consumption of natural activities, healthy and refreshing. It is also fun because everyone is smiling. Consumption becomes a source of satisfaction and happiness. In addition, in Figure 2.3, is shown lineup personal car that give the impression of prosperity symbols middle-class lifestyle but without presence of other types of vehicles. It can also be interpreted to support a form of capitalism which dominated by imported automotive products and it makes sense, considering toshiba glacio itself is an imported products.

In figure 2.3 also seen a phone booth that is quite unique. Contrary to the real condition of Indonesia today which no longer have a public phone. Indicates the existence of a public facility which functioning properly, which means, the presence of an active role of government in providing services to the middle class. Picture of public space also appears in Figure 2.5, a neat gardens. Both public space is in fact very difficult to find in Indonesia. Thus, these ads provide an imaginative picture will form the middle class prosperous, united, help each other, are able to enjoy the consumption of free time in the park and have an ideal government that takes into account their interests. Contrary to the current conditions in which the population of the city is very individualized with less satisfactory government bureaucratic machine.

At these places are also not found any other group, in addition to the middle class. In the park (Figure 2.5), in the shop complex (figure 2.3) there is no visible line of small traders (pedagang kaki lima) which usually seen in the park. There was absolutely no sign of the presence of the lower classes there. This situation is an

overview of the current social conditions, when the government evicted the small traders (pedagang kaki lima) are disturbing sights, destructive urban planning, making highways jammed even become a source of illness due to food sold often campaigned containing borax. This is the social condition of the coveted middle class, lower class face removal. This ad is a form of categorization, the group that appear (middle class) and the group removed / considered absent (lower class).

Environmental issues which also taken into problematic, especially when associated with glacio toshiba slogan, "Toshiba Glacio, besar kapasitasnya, bukan listriknya" (large capacity, not its electricity). This slogan has the opposite meaning. Glacio has a large capacity which means it allows to do excessive consumption as described in the ad, however this action is far from saving which on one side of the strengths of the Glacio-power technology.

### **Green Hero**

Ad 1 and 2 above can be said to have the same pattern of meaning in constructing representations about green issues. Both use a variety of complementary paradox, opposite and framed with the subject position offered. On the one hand offers energy-saving technologies, but on the other hand it offers the position of the subject with exceptional ability consumption. In this case, the paradox that has shaped green advertising message content. First, high consumption is a very important element because it becomes imaginary distinctive element that distinguishes the middle class to lower class. From this side of the green advertisement offered different motives for the middle class to buy energy-efficient products. That's why in the both ad, the lower classes have always considered not exist, to build categorization in the imaginary subject position.

Lower-class buy-tech energy saving because it has a limited ability consumption. As for the middle class, the motive is not a lack of purchasing power. With the enormous consumption ability which even able to move all the contents in the fridge hypermart and build phantasmogaria dream, the middle class does not need to downsize. The act of buying energy efficient goods can be seen as a form of saving the environment. This can be seen from the invitation Atikah Hasiholan to save the environment and the future. The middle class became green hero.

Although this motif was later corrupted by advertising as a capitalist agent. Due to the nature of capitalism have to damage the environment. According to the Nobel Prize in economics holders Jan Tinbergen, environmental degradation is a result of the growth of production and saving the environment is certainly going to debase the growth of production and profit (Rich, 1999, 361). This opinion is strengthened by Hira Djamtani which considers the environmental crisis and the destruction of natural resources which we face today stems from which destructive ways of production and excessive consumption (2001, 161). Then it is clear, there is no such thing as "green profit". Environmental damage that occurs in the earth most of it is caused by capitalism.

## **Conclusion**

This distinctive nature then very profitable for panasonic and toshiba. Where to widen the market through energy saving technologies by targeting lower-class groups (no need to install large electric power to consume energy saving electronics devices). Lower class opportunity to have the same stuff as the middle class is wide open. But on the other hand panasonic and toshiba consumers can maintain the previous upper middle class through imaginative depiction of the nature distinctive as a class with the ability to consume very large. Here we can look back on Veblen's theory that had previously questioned that upper class consumer use to distinguish themselves from the classes below it in the social hierarchy, while the lower classes seek to emulate them (in Ritzer & Smart, 2012.825).

Veblen's theory seems no longer sufficient to be used to analyze the consumption and lifestyle, because the paper is to find different things. Not commodity consumption in the form of goods / material that distinguishes the hierarchy, but rather the ability to be shown through the development of imaginative subject positions through advertising. Only, what is shown is not the obvious signs, but it is hidden behind the meaning and build viewers subconscious, relieve anxiety middle class - a typical task of contemporary advertising (Kellner 2010, 346).

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