THE COMPLEX PROCESS OF CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING SOCIETY: TELEVISION DRAMA RECEPTION AMONG THE MALAYS

By

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk memahami bagaimana proses globalisasi budaya mempengaruhi industri televisyen Malaysia dan mempengaruhi budaya Melayu. Penswastaan televisyen dan peningkatan kecenderungan mengimport drama luar negara serta kesannya terhadap audien telah menghidupkan minat minat para penyelidik industri komunikasi di peringkat antarabangsa. Kajian ini tertumpu kepada Malaysia yang mempunyai banyak ciri-ciri keadaan negara yang membangun pesat. Dalam hal ini, kajian bertujuan memberi bukti kepada debat ini melalui lima proses "lingkaran budaya": pengeluaran, penggunaan, identiti, gambaran dan pengawalan (du Gay et al., 1997). Proses-proses ini dikaji bagaimana ia dimanifestasi oleh industri televisyen Malaysia, bagaimana globalisasi budaya mempengaruhi proses ini, dan dalam masa yang sama bagaimana globalisasi budaya berlaku melalui proses ini. Untuk pengumpulan data, dua metod yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah analisis kandungan dan temuramah mendalam. Metod pertama, melihat kepada nilai-nilai dan gaya hidup yang dipaparkan oleh drama tempatan dan luar Negara yang dimain stesen televisyen diwaktu Malaysia diwaktu prima. Pendekatan kedua digunakan untuk mengkaji penggunaan drama televisyen tempatan dan luar Negara yang ditayangkan televisyen Malaysia dengan memperincikan penggunaan televisyen yang berubah dalam berbagai jenis keluarga dan daripada kedudukan sosial berlainan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa akibat proses globalisasi budaya yang deras, drama waktu prima televisyen Malaysia menunjukkan lebih banyak nuilai-nilai dan cara hidup barat. Dikalangan orang Melayu, terutamanya remaja, terdapat juga bukti yang menunjukkan penerimaan lain-lain nilai barat seperti individualisme dan kepenggunaan. Melalui lingkaran budaya, adalah didapati bahawa bahawa penswastaan dan konvergen telekomunikasi bersama-sama dengan kempen penswastaan yang dijalankan kerajaan membawa perubahan mendadak kepada sernario penyiaran Malaysia. Kesemua perkembangan ini telah membawa kepada tuduhan globalisasi budaya melalui drama televisyen barat yang juga kian dituduh mempunyai pengaruh negatif terhadap moral masyarakat. Bagaimanapun, sebagaimana yang ditunjukkan dapatan kajian, penggunaan televisyen dan persepsi audien sebenarnya adalah suatu proses yang komplek dan berbagai. Hasil kajian menunjukkan terdapat ambivalen dimana berbagai family yang ditemuramah mempunyai persepsi berbeza mengenai program televisyen yang sama. Kajian ini merumuskan bahawa, apa juga penyelidikan globalisasi kebudayaan serta penggunaan televisyen dalam sesebuah keluarga hanya boleh difahami melalui konteks menyeluruh kehidupan keluarga dan lingkaran budaya.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand how the rapid process of cultural globalization affects the Malaysian television industry and the Malays culturally. The privatization of television and the increasing tendency to import foreign dramas as well as its impact on the audience has renewed the interest of researchers in the communication industry at the international level. This study focuses on Malaysia which represents most of the characteristics of the situation in many rapidly changing societies. In light of this, the study will attempt to provide evidence to the cultural globalization debate through the five processes of the "circuit of culture": production, consumption, identity, representation and regulation (du Gay et al., 1997). These processes were examined for the ways they manifested in the television industry in Malaysia, how cultural globalization is influencing the process, and at the same time how cultural globalization is being produced through the processes. To collect data, two methods used for this study are content analysis and, in-depth interviews. The first, look at the values and life-styles portrayed in local as well as foreign dramas shown on prime-time Malaysian television. The second approach will explore the Malay viewers' consumption of foreign as well as local dramas portrayed on Malaysian television detailing the changing uses of television in different types of families from different social positions. Results of the study showed that with rapid process of cultural globalization, Malaysian prime-time television dramas portrayed more Western values and lifestyles. Amongst the Malays, especially the youngsters, there were also evidences of the adoption of other Western values like individualism and consumerism. Through the circuit of culture, it was also shown that the deregulation and the convergence of telecommunications together with the privatization drive by the government brought about drastic changes to the Malaysian broadcasting scene. Together, this has brought about accusations of cultural globalization through Western television dramas that have also been increasingly accused of having negative influence on the morals of society. However, as shown by the findings of the study, television consumption and the audience perception is indeed a diverse and complex process. Research results showed that there are ambivalences whereby different families studied had surprisingly differing perceptions of the same television content. The study concluded that, any investigation into cultural globalization and the consumption of television within the family could only be understood in the overall context of family life and the circuit of culture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTERS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES
A. Drama Coding Guidelines
B. Drama Content Coding Schedule
C. Interview Guide
D. Respondents Profile
E. Distribution of Family Background (Urban)
F. Distribution of Family Background (Rural)

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
AT&T	American Telephone and Telegraph
CSO	Community Service Obligations
DBS	Direct Broadcasting Satellite
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FMS	Federated Malay States
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISA	Internal Security Act
ISDN	Integrated Services Digital Networks
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
KLSE	Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange
LDC	Less Developed Countries
LUT	Langkawi Universiti of Tomorrow
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MEASAT	Malaysia East-Asia Satellite
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
MSC	Multimedia Super Corridor
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NDP	New Development Policy

NEP	New Economic Policy
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSA	Official Secrets Act
PSB	Public Service Broadcasting
PTT	Post, Telephone and Telegraph Administrators
RTM	Radio Televisyen Malaysia
STM	Syarikat Telekom Malaysia
STMB	Sistem Televisyen Malaysia Berhad (TV3)
TNC	Trans National Corporations
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UMS	Universiti Malaysia Sabah
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIMAS	Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
UNITEL	Universiti Telekom
UNITEN	Universiti Tenaga Nasional
WTO	World Trade Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A.   Background of the Research

In tandem with the process taking place internationally, Malaysia embarked along the path of development through export oriented industrialisation, urbanisation, rural development, foreign trade, integration   with the world market, and participation in the globalization process (Abdul Rahman Embong, 2007:58).

Although temporarily hit by the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis, Malaysia did not go bust and can be regarded as progressing well towards achieving its goal of a developed nation status by 2020. Abdul Rahman Embong, a leading sociologist postulates that to date Malaysia is one of the most developed and industrialised nation among developing economies, one of the most industrialised among the Muslim countries and the 18th largest trading nation in the world (ibid:58).

As an active player in the globalization process, Malaysia's economy is highly open and integrated with the world economy. Malaysia benefited tremendously from foreign trade and investment, and sophisticated technology usage. In terms of social engineering, various plans have been launched. According to Zulkarnain Awang (in Abdul Rahman, 2007:50) the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010) showed that Malaysia has indeed made significant strides in nation building, developing its economy and improving the quality of life of her people.

As a nation with a strong commitment to her Vision 2020 of becoming a caring and fully developed nation, Malaysia has embarked on programmes to meet the challenges and issues faced by her population, especially those involving the

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