

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

In modern society, the media plays a fundamental role in giving relevant information regarding current and latest situations that happened in the world. Mass media provides people with information to make decisions. However, the news media is viewed widely as biased (Baron, 2004; Goldberg, 2002; Alterman, 2003). The meaning of a headlines and content of the news can be different if perceived in a different way. When a media portrays and involves a famous figure along with the captivating headlines, the news will become a top headlines and it will impact the image of the famous figure. Later, it will develop a better understanding of their identity including their social group categorization. Furthermore, the audiences can address them by race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other aspects of human differences. Media portrayals across a range of genres, including news and entertainment, tend to focus on stories about dominant group members. Being biased on one issue is to be beside oneself and get influenced by different factors for example if by any chance the figure has gone through scandals or their personal lives. The media bias occurs if there's indeed an influence of the presentation of facts and not created with harmful intention.

Throughout the common conceptions of Social Class, society has been divided into three class divisions including Upper Class, Middle Class, and Working Class. As stated by Giddens (2000), there is a four-fold classification

that exists in western societies. These include the upper class (the wealthy, employers, industrialists, and top executives); a middle class (which includes most white-collar workers and professionals); and working-class (those in blue-collar or manual jobs). For some industrialized countries, similarly France or Japan, there's a fourth class which is called peasants (people engaged in traditional types of agricultural production).

Each class has its own definition and features based on their economic and social status, the upper-class one controls the majority of wealth and power in the society, the middle class are those who are involved with the classic middle-class jobs as they often have higher levels of educational achievement more than the working class one, they are categorized as a working-class due to their background as a heavy worker with low levels of educational achievement.

Recent social psychological theories and findings suggest that the effects of social class can be understood by focusing on two central elements related to social class: power and status (Dubois et al. 2015; Magee and Galinsky 2008; Yu and Blader 2019). Throughout the elements of social class that existed, the media greatly influences our perceptions of social class. Many messages that we receive in the media about social class shape our beliefs, habits, and attitudes. In many cases, the media also depicts a distorted view of society. Not only developing countries, but also developed nations are subject to media bias, e.g., in the USA six corporations control 90% of the media (Insider, 2014), which results in a high chance of media manipulation (Esser, Reinemann, & Fan, 2001). Trust in media is at a historical low. Less than half of the readers in USA trust media and think it is objective (GALLUP, 2015).

In research from Petit (2021), the phenomenon of The Duke and Duchess of Sussex departure from the Royal Family didn't come all at once as spontaneously. First comes the hint that Meghan and Harry started to leave their working roles as the members of Royals by stepping back from the patronages to live an ordinary life. From their perspectives, it is well portrayed to figure out on how by living extraordinarily didn't always work well, as they came from different background, inequality still can be seen not only to ordinary people, but also the monarchs who are well-known and well-respected for their nobility alongside with their national duties in strengthening national unity and stability. Throughout the interview, it successfully portrays a representation of the social class based society which gives us a real picture of our society today. Thus far, there are still constant issues that have been a main concern for each era including the unequal treatment, distribution, and several issues regarding race, ethnicity and religion. Social Inequality is one of the necessary parts in society that happens in everyday life as a conflict which unexpectedly includes the Royal family. Its concept of inequality distributed an unequal treatment among the occupations of different classes in which wealth, power and prestige took a part in.

Manstead (2018) has found that in the traditional and modern era, both of the times are familiar with the inequality phenomenon that differs each social class and classifies them based on their socioeconomic status. We have learned on how high class level living as royals and have assistants to manage everything they do and having power to do anything and how they consider lower class cannot do anything. At some point, life can change and got easily affected due to socioeconomic factors including inequality and discrimination that become

people's concern since long time ago, we all agreed that inequality is one of the classic phenomenon and problems of the social sciences. According to structural-functionalists, stratification and inequality are inevitable and beneficial to society. When discussing various ways to sense inequality in society, we cannot miss Weber's theory of stratification in twenty odd pages of his mammoth *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Weber, 1922;1968). A study found that Max Weber as a class sociologist formulated a three-component theory of stratification that saw political power as an interplay between “class”, “status” and “group power.” (Pyakuryal, 2001).

Although the powerful people have a high integrity, there are things that don't qualify them to have power and when you are powerless, you will have to be ready to face an obstacle in dealing with problems from the major into the minor one. Having power is positively correlated with being rich, as evidenced by the domination of wealthy males in high-ranking government positions. Sociology also discussed how social stratification plays a role as the hierarchical arrangement of social classes, castes and strata within a society. The study has found that powerless individuals were less inclined to express their anger directly but more inclined to express it indirectly by sharing it with others (Petkanopoulou et al., 2018).

“Social orientation is defined in a broad sense to include the economic and the political dimension. The rationale for focusing on age as an independent variable is to obtain a sense of the extent of intergenerational changes, while class and ethnicity provide some indication of the kind of tension and variation in outlook that may have their source in social inequality.” (Tan Ern Ser 2004:30)

In Britain, there's a well-known system class that can be called a 'Kingdom' and 'Monarchy' which is based on the principle of inequality. This class or royal system has been well-known for its aristocratic system. Monarchy is the oldest form of government in the United Kingdom (The role of the Monarchy, 2022). In order to secure their longevity, contemporary monarchies have to negotiate their place between tradition and modernity, and, consequently, not only between past and present, but future as well (Jordan, 2019). Therefore, Queen Elizabeth II as the longest-reigning monarch in British history who has four children, eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren are expected to always receive great public engagements and avoid any controversy to maintain peace and good family relationship.

According to The Great British Mag (2019), up until now there are five categories of class system that consists of classes in order from lower to highest class in Britain. First, 'lower class' is known to be the basic level of a class and most of them came from no university or college educational background. They are described as unemployed, homeless or low level skilled workers. Second is the 'working class', they are the semi-level skilled workers that mostly came from ordinary backgrounds who work at the factory, or as laborers. The third one is the 'middle class'. In Britain they can be called "champagne socialists" who are financially stable by working as shop owners, office workers, teachers, journalists, and many more. Fourth one is the 'upper middle class', what makes them different from the middle class is they came from a higher status and financially stable and described as a broader term of middle class. The last one, is 'upper class', they have their own popular slang for their group as "toffs" which has both

negative and positive connotations. They are known to be a superior kind of person with a high status and well-known education, at the same time considered to be the person who is well-experienced. The upper class tend to think of them more highly than the others. The dominance habit of the upper class might be the main reason they controlled the lower class as if they are the one who only has power.

Britain is still a society deeply divided by class. There are still many clear strata in the society, each with different levels of social, cultural and economic capital. Karl Marx (1844) emphasized the idea of bourgeois democracy in which the upper class has much power than the lower or the middle one. Elizabeth II until now has become the longest reigning monarch in British history in which she held so much power. The royals also give strength to the idea of national unity and are exploited as national heritage. Their identity is their title, how they represent their class and they carry their duties as Royals. That means they can't easily do everything and follow all the rules given. According to Royal UK (2021), Members of the Royal Family also often represent The Queen and the nation in Commonwealth or other countries, at events such as State funerals or national festivities, or through longer visits to strengthen Britain's diplomatic and economic relations. This sums up a major reason why a Royals can't break any strict rules that have been implemented since they were born or when they married a Royals which eventually made them a part of the Royal family.

In recent years, it is seen that there's a change in the existence of Meghan Markle as a Duchess of Sussex and a member of the Royal Family, Meghan's symbolic ability is able to bridge tensions of progression and regression around

the royals. (Paule & Yelin, 2021). The main reason is that they seek a life of freedom and balanced their time in both North America and the United Kingdom. According to Royal.UK (2021), even though the Duke and Duchess of Sussex have decided to step down from the royal family, The Queen has confirmed in writing that her retirement from royal work makes it impossible to continue her responsibilities and obligations associated with her civil service life. Therefore, the Duchess and the prestigious military positions and royal patronage of the Duchess will be returned to His Majesty before being redistributed to active members of the royal family.

From how Meghan Markle's Oprah Interview is being conducted, which is based on the phenomena of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle as a Duke and Duchess of Sussex departure as a member from the royal family to become a financially independent family and the Duke will be entitled as an honorary Captain General of the Royal Marines. The researcher acknowledges that from her side, media and the society can judge that there's an inequality existing and can be seen in the family which was explained from what the media portrays and summarized judging from the interviews that have been conducted with the interviewee, Meghan Markle as a past member of the Royal Family.

The main concept that will be used in the study of this research is no other than social class and its inequality representation by using Stuart Hall's Circuit of Culture Theory whereas it will be divided into five elements including the representation of how the media convey meaning in the departure of Meghan and Harry, the identity of Meghan Markle who came from a middle class background who is not a part of the royals, the regulation of the media portrays the life of the

royals that creates a different perspectives on society show their response of the departure, the production of the socio-economic background of both of them, and the consumption of how the media integrate the news. Hall (1997) in his concept defines culture and discusses its relationships with language and society. At that time, he mentions and states about 'circuit culture', which is a circulation of how culture is regulated in society through language, which then he argues operates as a representation system.

In a previous study by Sihombing (2010), Circuit of Culture provides an analysis in the articulation of a number of distinct cultural processes of production, regulation, representation, consumption and identity which are carried out together and cannot be separated in the processes of analyzing a particular object. Indeed, in analyzing this phenomenon that rarely happened to the Royals, the media plays a fundamental role in building images to represent the identity of Social Inequality in the British Monarch Family or highly known as The Royal Family. According to Clancy (2021), the monarchy is moralized in media culture through representations of national identity, 'the family' and philanthropy, which circumvent questions of inequality, aristocratic state power and privilege.

Through this research, the researcher is interested in analyzing how the transcript dialogues in the interview can be an instrument in connecting language and communication, how it represents five different moments especially on how the public reacts through media publications both in two different countries US and UK as the country where the main characters of the interview belong to.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the author formulated the research questions as follows :

1. How does the media portray Meghan Markle and influence the public opinion towards the discourse?
2. How is social inequality towards the Meghan Markle discourse represented in the media?

1.3 Objective

Based on the background of the study, the author finds the objective to this research :

1. To describe how social inequality can be seen in the portrayals of the Royal Family's life and culture to their middle class in-law
2. To critically review the circuit of culture being implemented in the media.
3. To understand how the circuit of culture theory are implemented to represent social inequality of the Royal Family
4. To analyze the utilization of representation in the context of social inequality based on Meghan Markle's point of view
5. To identify how media perceive and publish the news regarding the context of inequality that happened in Monarch family

The objective of the study is to find out on how Social Inequality can be portrayed through the point of view from the media based on Meghan Markle's Interview with Oprah Winfrey that was conducted after the resignation of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex in the Royal

Family. Furthermore, the study will analyze on how Circuit of Culture Theory will be refined as a methodological tool that can identify each part of the interview and process the interlinked phenomenon of the resignation of Duke and Duchess of Sussex from how the interview is being implemented in the media, how the theory can be applied in assessing their expression to the royal family and how it is being evaluated by the society.

1.4 Scope of the Study

In this study, the researcher will be focused on how the media is being biased and pointed out the Royal Family's treatment towards Meghan Markle in the context of her who came from the middle-class background, not being noble and being a part of the royal family. The inequality is usually about systematic inequalities based on group membership, classes, and the like. Not only because of the difference whether they are rich or poor but throughout the behavioral they have that is not the same as the nobles are the one who will be the main focus on conducting this research.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

This study is discussing the portrayal of social inequalities in the Royal family and examines them by analyzing how their socioeconomic status is being portrayed in the media, how they represent the class they are living in aside from their nobility status.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Differences in social class do not die, they merely learn new ways of expressing themselves. In hope of becoming more aware on how we can analyze

what is right and what is wrong in treating people from different classes, the writer wants to expand her knowledge and believes that this case arises not only to the society but also to the Monarch family.. It can be acknowledged how the members who are merely ordinary people from ordinary backgrounds, outside from the kingdom are treated differently because they are middle class. By analyzing it through Stuart Hall's Circuit of Culture as the representation process of middle-class identity when they became a part of the Royal Family. The findings of this study will be undertaken to give the insight for the society on how social class inequality plays an important role by affecting one or more people's lives and how media characterize the shape of cultural phenomenon that involves the Royal Family and the people who joined to be a part of them.

