

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

Social class is one of human life. It is one of the main important parts of the social issued nowadays and usually associated with a social and economic class. Based on approach of class analysis, social class indicates of socioeconomic status from income, occupation, and education. According to Marx, social class is relation between people mediated to the means of production. He classifies three things they are society, economy, and culture and also classify it into two kind of class. There are bourgeois and proletariat (Tyson, 2014). Upper-class people are people who are rich and have a lot of money, so they have power or political power. The upper-class people are referred to as the bourgeoisie, which is the capitalists who have the power to own and control the means of production. The lower class is people who work and poorly paid, the work they do to get money is not comparable with what they have sacrificed, and usually refers to the proletariat or working-class person (Collyer, 2016). Therefore, the social class can affect authority. The highest of social class, the greater of authority and power they gain. Bourgeois and proletariat are social class that indicates on social relation of production and define by their marker capacity.

Also, the difference of class can be seen from the consumption of daily product. such as the consumption based on the product's brand and fashion (Negrin 2008). This concerning to the consumption and individual ability to buy a certain product with a certain price which can determine their class status. Baudrillard stated that the act of consuming a product is a tool to determine the class of the society, along with internal categorization in it (Baudrillard 2006). People who consume famous brand and expensive things will be considered as wealthy people and called as upper class. Besides, people who consume the cheaper product are regarded as lower class. It is bringing up the idea of consumerism to sue the bourgeois to buy a thing which have famous brand with the highest price sometimes the things that they have bought is useless.

The term consumerism can lead to a positive thing, namely that the high demand for goods and services will lead to the consumer having a say in what goods and services should be developed. However, it still has negative impact, namely the individual will continue to buy goods and services without considering their economic status. According to Jean Baudrillard, society is now surrounded by consumption and they will never be satisfied with what they have (Baudrillard 1998). Doing consumption is no longer only for one's need but also because of one wants to fulfil his desire, which is lifting their own social class.

Social class is one of the main important parts of a social issue nowadays. According to Marx and Frederich, there are three levels of classes based on income and wealth namely upper class, middle class and lower class (Collyer 2016). The lower class

is people who work and poorly paid, the work they do to get money is not comparable with what they have sacrificed, and usually refers to the proletariat or working-class person. The middle class is a society that has a social and economy that is between the lower class and upper class, and usually, people in the middle-class workers in the field of managerial, administrative, and other professional jobs and they are often referred to as “White-collar workers” (Carter 2015). Upper-class people are people who are rich and have a lot of money, so they have power or political power. The upper-class people are referred to as the bourgeoisie, which is the capitalists who have the power to own and control the means of production (Collyer 2016). Therefore, the social class can affect authority and power. The higher the social class of the individual or group, the greater the authority and power they gain. The upper class itself is the highest class between middle and lower class.

Humans are always never satisfied with what they have (Abraham, 1943). They always dig, seek, and strive for freedom and also high social status (Green 2000). Behavioral consumerism, which was rather broad one, underlining variation in values, lifestyles, and general consumption objectives. Many of the findings presented were based on the syntheses of propriety studies and therefore rarely included actual quantitative evidence. According to Gusti bagus said that Lifestyle studies share all about how the people do activities, how their attitudes to get values, how they become as unique individual and as a group, how their reflect experiences, how they interact in their group, where they are living, how they used their freedom to choice. These characteristics can influence consumer behavior. Power of consumer behavior can be

explained by social class studies, these powers can be come from occupation, education and qualifications, income, wealth or net worth, ownership of land, property, and means of production, economical factor, political factor, and cultural factor. (Bagus, 2015).

Consumerism is the promotion of a good for the increasing demand of consumers (merriam-webster 1828). The term consumerism actually leads to a positive thing, namely for promotion but the individual who makes the issue becomes negative because they run the process of consumption and overuse and continue unknowingly. Doing consumption is no longer only because of the need but also because of the desire to be fulfilled. This also makes the meaning of consumerism turned into negative. It also happens because they have more income so they consume something excessively. As stated by Stigler and Becker, for standard consumer theory, the desire for high consumption is located in preferences: because “more is better,” people naturally consume more when their incomes rise, with the composition of consumption reflecting underlying tastes and preferences (Starr 2007).

The upper class is one of the goals among all people because by being an upper class, they will be seen as someone who has more power and not demeaned (Cohen-marks and Stout 2017). For some upper-class people, being an upper-class person is a matter of pride. This makes them want to show their class to others so that other people recognize their identity as an upper-class. They use their wealth as a tool to elevate their social status to others. Clothing and fashion can be some items that are used as a tool to elevate social status. This is because fashion is always changing in every season, various types of brands and also prices can be a benchmark for social class. The more

expensive the brand and price of the goods they use, the greater the chance to be recognized as an upper-class. Since the wealthy upper class has grown so large, or the contact of the upper-class individual with members of his own class has grown so wide, as to constitute a human environment sufficient for the honorific purpose, there arises a tendency to exclude the baser elements of the population from the scheme even as spectators whose applause or mortification should be sought (Veblen 2016). Upper-class sets the pace in all matters of decency, the result for the rest of society also is a gradual amelioration of the scheme of dress. As the community advances in wealth and culture, the ability to pay is put in evidence by means which require a progressively nicer discrimination in the beholder. Upper class acts to make the lower classes conservative by withdrawing from them as much as it may of the means of sustenance, and so reducing their consumption, and consequently their available energy, to such a point as to make them incapable of the effort required for the learning and adoption of new habits of thought. The accumulation of wealth at the upper end of the pecuniary scale implies privation at the lower end of the scale. It is a commonplace that, wherever it occurs, a considerable degree of privation among the body of the people is a serious obstacle to any innovation (Veblen 2016). This direct inhibitory effect of the unequal distribution of wealth is seconded by an indirect effect tending to the same result. As has already been seen, the imperative example set by the upper class in fixing the canons of reputability fosters the practice of conspicuous consumption. The prevalence of conspicuous consumption as one of the main elements in the standard of decency among all classes is of course not traceable wholly to the example of the wealthy leisure

class, but the practice and the insistence on it are no doubt strengthened by the example of the leisure class.

It is related to the culture industry that movie, music video, magazine, radio, television and the other media inculcated values consistent with the needs of consumer-oriented capitalism; they order and condition consumers' wants and needs to match companies' needs to sell products, subordinating people's "authentic" thoughts and feelings while channeling their desires into predictable rhythms of work, leisure, and consumption (Dainow 2014). Consumption is no longer just because of the need, but also because of the desire to be fulfilled. It is also happening because they have more income so that they consume something excessively. For standard consumer theory, the desire for high consumption is located in preferences: because "more is better," people naturally consume more when their incomes rise, with the composition of consumption reflecting underlying tastes and preferences (Starr 2007). But many people are still discriminating against every individual's freedom. Furthermore, with the discrimination obtained by some people, it may lead to diminished effort or performance in their education or working place, which itself gives rise to negative perception (Steele 1997).

Discrimination is always associated with stereotypes. Stereotypes are built by those who judge without a clear foundation and are rarely accurate. Almost everyone today still creates its own stereotypes and stereotypes can bring changes to the perspective of everyone (Franzoi 2008). Discrimination also affects the social class. Many people want to be perceived belonging to high social status. Some people believe that they can reach their social class by conducting consumerism, or excessive

consumption. Usually consumer people do something that is unusual for normal people, for instance throwing parties and spending a lot of money. Money is vital in consumerist culture. Therefore, this excessive consumption is usually occurred in rich area. The habit of consuming is vital for wealthy people, because by doing so, the wealthy can make the goods and services that they are able to get to be visible by other's people (Veblen 2016).

Metaphor of cultural capital is typical. By this he means that a society's culture is as unequally distributed as its material wealth and that, like material wealth, it serves to identify class interests and to promote and naturalize class differences (Bourdieu 1980). Thus, those cultural forms which a society considers to be "high" for example, classical music, fine art, literature, or ballet, coincide with the tastes of those with social power, whereas lowbrow or mass cultural forms appeal to those ranked low on the social structure. The point of this is that culture and class are closely interrelated but the discourse of culture disguises its connection with class. By using words like "taste" and "discrimination" and by appealing to apparently universal values such as those of aesthetics, the discourse of culture grounds cultural differences in universal human nature or in universal value systems. It pretends that culture is equally available to all, as democratic capitalism pretends that wealth is equally available to all. The fact that few acquire either culture or wealth is explained by reference to natural differences between individuals, which are expressed as differences in their natural talents or taste, this explanation hides the role of social class (Bourdieu 1980).

Furthermore, social class becomes important because it can reflect what others see in individuals or groups. The higher the social class of the individual or group, the greater the authority and power they gain. With their high social status, the point of view of individuals or groups towards them become different. Social classes can be classified by how wealthy they are to achieve the American dream". American Dream is in essence, freedom of democracy, rights, equality, opportunity, and liberty. American Dream relates with the American ethos, that people should work hard because they believe by working hard, they will get a better life regardless of social class or circumstances of birth (Adams, 1931). The basic idea of American Dream is that hard work will always contribute to a good result. Therefore, sometimes people do not think about their own wellbeing, and instead, focus merely on the achievements they will get. They are forced to achieve certain desired goals. According to Merton, individuals are exposed to their goals in order to reach their goals (Merton, 1938). In achieving a goal, people would strive to achieve the common goals of a particular society. However, sometimes there are some who are unable to achieve these goals, as there are limits regarding their lower social status. As a result, these individuals will show strain behavior to satisfy themselves in order to achieve their goal without thinking about the social consequences (Durkheim, 1897).

This phenomenon has been portrayed from one of famous music video from Gucci Mane entitled *I Get the Bag*. It is representing people who behave upper class lifestyle from what they show in this music video like clothes, accessories, other properties and



also, they enjoying their leisure. The social class issued through consumerism depicted from the habit and properties that used in this music video.

People are never enough about something. They consume something not for their basic interests, but to achieve a certain goal. Abraham Maslow in his book *A Theory of Human Motivation* (1943) stated that humans are always never satisfied with what they have. They always dig, seek, and strive for freedom and also high social status (Green 2000).

The music video combined with the accompaniment song was included on Mr. Davis, an album by Gucci Mane. The music video was directed by Gucci Mane and Migos, and released on September 5, 2017 with the official publication in Gucci Mane official Youtube account on August 18, 2017. In the process of gathering the data, Gucci Mane's music video clip entitled "I Get the Bag" itself has reached more than 300 million viewers. The song has peaked at number 11 on *Billboard* Hot 100 (US), number 5 on *Billboard* Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs (US), number 1 on *Billboard* Rhythmic (US), number 28 on Canadian Hot 100 (Canada), number 89 on AFP (Portugal), number 89 on Singles Digital Top 100 (Slovakia), number 12 on Sverigetopplistan (Sweden Heatseeker), and number 100 on Schweizer Hitparade (Switzerland). This song also peaked at number 93 on year-end charts *Billboard* Hot 100 (US). Not only that, the song also earned three times Platinum Certification from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) because it has been sold in the excess of 3 million from CD and streaming services. The awards that the song has and its chart positions in various

countries contribute to the argument that this song has huge popularity and is acceptable by the public.

This music video was chosen as the object of the study since the music video represents the consumerism and self-identity. It is important to illustrate what happens to individual or group in upper class. Also, this video clip is emphasizing luxury, starting from the item and the place where the video clip was shot. From the beginning of the music video to the end, the properties used in the video clip reflect consumerism. Gucci Mane shows that he is an upper-class person with luxury home, costumes, and various supporting properties used as a symbol of consumerism because only rich people can enjoy it.

In order to support this study, there is one previous study that is related to the consumerism. The previous study comes from Amalia with the titled “The Representation of Upper Class That Portrayed Through Consumerism in Bruno Mars’s *24K Magic* Music Video” that talks about the lifestyle from the upper class. The writer found the aspect that has not been discussed in the previous studies, which is the consumerism in the music video as self-identity and achieving the American dream.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

How Social class portrayed in Gucci Mane’s *I Get the Bag* Music Video?

## **1.3 The objective of the study**

This research aims to examine how Gucci Mane’s *I Get the Bag* Music Video represented consumerism that can be related to social class. This result will indicate

the phenomena in society how people are being consumerism to make their social class rise.

#### **1.4 Significance of the study**

This research was conducted to analyze the social class which is also related to the consumerism issue. The focus of this research is the portrayal of the consumerism issue in Gucci Mane's *I Get the Bag* Music Video. The writer will examine how consumerism becomes one of the key elements to make social class rise. The writer hopes this research can influence people not to over-consume something. At least, the writer hopes that this research can give more contribution to English Department of Airlangga University in Cultural Studies program that can become a reference for social class and consumerism issues.

### 1.5 Definition of key term

**Upper Class:** a social class occupying a position above the middle class and having the highest status in a society (Merriam-webster 1828).

**Hip-Hop Culture:** a cultural movement that attained widespread popularity. The backing music for rap, the musical style incorporating rhythmic and/or rhyming speech that became the movement's most lasting and influential art form.

**Consumerism:** an activity for the promotion of goods for increased demand or preoccupation or the tendency to buy goods (Merriam-webster 1828).

**Social class:** social groups that lead to differences between individuals or other groups. Individual usually have a social class but not in the same social group. The social group is determined by wealth, education, income, nationality, and also gender (Collyer 2016).

**American Dream:** the set of ideals (democracy, rights, liberty, opportunity and equality) in which freedom includes the opportunity for prosperity and success that achieve through hardwork (Adams, 1931).