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# Politics Of Film Needed By National Film Industry In Indonesia

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**Abstract--** This paper discusses the politics of film needed by the national film industry. Indonesia has many periods marked by differing forms of state interference in films. In the Dutch Colonial era, the film was produced solely as entertainment, so the theme was taken from the saga or legend that had previously used as a "play" around the show (Stambul Comedy). In contrast, during the Japanese occupation, the film was used by the empire as a propaganda tool. After Indonesia gained independence until 1966, the film was interpreted as the tool of revolution and change, so its beauty (aesthetics) sacrificed. During the New Order era (1966-1998), the state was very strict in filtering themes, stories, and ideas that was laced with ideologies of Marxism and criticized the government. The reform period (1998-present) experienced the ups and downs of the film industry, competing with imported films and audience expectations without significant state interference. This study suggests that the politics of film is still needed to increase audience appreciation and economic value for the industry. Indonesian movies require the presence of the state to build an investment climate, protecting film creators from acts of piracy, facilitating the licensing of cinema screens, and participation in film marketing communications carried out by West Java Governor Ridwan Kamil using Dilan's figures and movie titles as the name of one corner in the Saparua park, Bandung City.

**Keywords:** *Film Genre, industry, intervention, screen, promotion*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The interference of the State in the world of the film includes many aspects, ranging from the contents of films, circulation, creating a conducive climate to regulating that which are prohibited or obligatory. In many eras, State interference colored the existence of cinema circulating in Indonesia, and this is what is meant by "politics of the film." In Indonesia, film history has been known by our society since the beginning of the 20th century, as suggested by the number of advertisements in the newspapers at that time. An ad from De Nederlandsche Bioscope Maatschappij posted in the *Bintang Betawi* newspaper, Friday, November 30, 1900, stated On December 5, 1900, at 7 a.m., the cinema which was still not named (later named The Roijal Bioscope) began operating

in the Tanah *Abang Kebonjae* at the price of ticket f 2 for class I; and 1 f for type II; while f 0.5 for class III. It was the first cinema in Indonesia [1]

The film had not been able to rival the popularity of the Stamboel Comedy, and it was only in the 1930s that cinemas were able to take over the traveling shows. That's because, with relation to themes, film production took myths or stories that had been popular previously such as saga. Many companies engaged in making films. Such as *Terang Boelan* which became a box office leading to many traveling performers migrating to become actors/actresses in the film.[1]

Film replaced the traveling show, becoming known as the 'mobile cinema' due to circulating through distribution. Erwantoro noted that mobile cinema is a powerful national film circulation machine in socializing national films into the midst of society [2]

Meanwhile, during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945), the film was used as a Japanese propaganda tool to win the war, as well as other works of art. As revealed by Kamiya (1984) cited by Fitriana Puspita Dewi, to achieve the goals of his imperialist ideals, besides using Japanese military power, he also used propaganda techniques. They control the mass media such as magazines, newspapers, radio and so on. In Indonesia, one of the mass media used as a venue for Japanese propaganda is the Djawa Baroe magazine which publishes from January 1, 1943, to August 1, 1945 . [3]

During the Old Order (1945-1966) and the New Order (1966-1998) according to Yoyon Mudjiono, there was a relationship between the theme of the film and the political conditions. Mudjiono gave an example of the film *Enam Jam di Jogja* where political situation full of ideological conflicts between civilians and the military illustrated. Likewise, the film *Janur Kuning* and *Serangan Fajar* produced during the New Order era highlighted a period marked by the dominant role of military groups supported by strong ideologies. *Janur Kuning* provided by PT Metro 77, a film company owned by senior police officers in Jakarta and PT Karya Mandiri, a film company owned by

Marsudi who was a colonel that had close relations with Suharto since the War of Independence. Marsudi was also responsible for.[4]

During the New Order, the film was used as an instrument to legitimize the role of the military in the struggle for independence and at the same time discredit opponents of the political body, especially groups involved in the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) movement. One study conducted by Panuju (2018) found the visualization of cigarette smoke to stigmatize the people who planned the PKI rebellion in 1965 [5].

Afterward, the New Order fell and replaced by the Reform Order (1998-present). According to Manurung (2016: 153), competition in the national film industry is quickly increasing, still dominated by imported films from America and other countries. Even though the new film law stipulates that 60% of Indonesian movies must screen on the big screen, in reality, this is not always the case. [6]

This paper discusses the relationship between Indonesian cinema politics and the characteristics of cinema during the Reformation Order. The reform period was a collapse of authoritarianism, and centralism replaced by the hope of the integration of artistic freedoms, where the state took distance from the film industry.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

This paper is based on a documentative approach with intertextuality analysis. The Documents are containing film phenomena in a certain period collected from various sources; books, journals, dissertations, secondary data from certain media and institutions that receive problems in films, mass media, and online news.

The term Intertextuality introduced by Julia Kristeva in the late 60s. The Intertextuality Theory is the result of her review of Bakhtin's concept of Dialogism, which gave birth to a decisive new accent. Kristeva no longer distinguishes between monological and polylogical texts but emphasizes the idea of intertextuality as the main feature, especially literary texts [6]

Allen explained that the text does not have a unity of meaning in itself, it always connected with sustainable social and cultural processes, i.e., the purpose is still at the same time inside and outside the text[7] . Documents in the form of text, images, and graphics converted ascertain meanings in a unit. Including film as a work of art contains a definition that can decipher through intertextuality.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to Jones, state control of film production and distribution follows a model that already exists in Japan. In Indonesia, Japan uses film production houses that were confiscated from the Netherlands to them and take over all existing cinemas. The choice of spectacle immediately changed a large number of films imported from Japan and stimulated local film production for news and movies for propaganda purposes[8] .

During the Old Order, Indonesian films were unable to rise significantly because the situation was not conducive. The elite was too busy debating the ideology of politics as an instrument of power. Soekarno included art as a tool for social revolution. American films and Rock music (often called *ngak ngik ngok music*)[9].

There is limited data to inform how the relationship between the political domination of art and the productivity of artists, but several studies suggest that the association seen in the film sector. Alkhajar ENS for example, found evidence of two periods of the bleak period of the Indonesian film industry, namely; (1) period 1957-1968 and (2) period 1992-2000 [10]

GR Mitalia in her study of the situation of cinema in Surabaya during 1970 illustrated the unfavorable economic conditions of 1950-1970, with an increase in prices of necessities that certainly made it difficult for the lower class of Surabaya to keep up with the trend of clothing. The cost of cloth in the 1950s ranged from Rp. 27, - up to Rp. 50, - much more expensive than the price of rice which ranges from Rp. 3, 30 to Rp. 4, 25 per kilo. Following trends is always synonymous with upper-class society who live on excellent economic conditions. Surabaya's upper-class community during this period usually came from officials, government officials and military officers [11].

After that, together with the spirit of the New Order spreading the ideology of development, the community began to get tired of the political hustle and bustle. According to Adi Wicaksono & Asyahdie, from 1973, Indonesian cinema competition between psychological horror and ghost horror films became very popular. The ghost horror film won as evidenced by the 20 horror film titles produced between 1973-1979, all featuring ghost horror mixed with occult, sadism, sex, and comedy. The victory of ghost horror films is not only proven by the number of spectators, but also the awards at the Indonesian Film Festival (FFI). [12].

The success of *Petualangan Cinta Nyi Blorong* in combining horror and exploitation of women's bodies became the next formula that ushered Indonesian cinema during the fall [13] At the same time, action genre films (*silat*) with traditional settings overshadowed horror. In 1970-1990, *silat* films from Hong Kong dominated the



cinema in the country. Stars of the Kung Fu genre such as Cien Kuan Tai, Fu-Sen, Tilung, Jacky Chan, and then Jet Lee became very popular. In the middle of the gallant martial arts film from Hong Kong, Indonesian silat films were able to compete to win the film market. Many Indonesian martial art films have managed to attract the attention of the audience, like stories about Si Buta Dari Gua Hantu, Si Pitung, Mandala, Brama Kumbara, and other legends. Silat stars such as Berry Prima, Ratno Toemoer, Advent Bangun, WD Moechtar and many more also appeared.

Based on previous data, the state's political intervention in film content did not lead to sluggish film production or a decline in people's appreciation of national films but on encouraged the emergence of non-political film genres. There are other factors beyond the problem of state intervention in film. According to Novi Kurnia, the cause of deterioration in the national movie is due to the state being less responsive to the development of world film. The existing regulations are not relevant to the development of the socio-political context, where almost all the film policies and institutions used are the products of the New Order. Besides, Kurnia also highlighted the country not trying to grow national film production while at the same time making efforts to resist the onslaught of imported films [14].

Cinema in Indonesia had experienced its peak in the 90s, where in that year, the number of cinemas in Indonesia reached the highest number, namely 2,600 with 2,853 screens, and the number of viewers reached 32 million. The 1991-2002 era deteriorated dramatically in the digital business. Of the 2,600 in 1990, there were only 264 cinemas with 676 screens in 2002. Then between 2003 and 2007, there was an increase in the number of cinemas in Indonesia. Compared to the 264 cinemas with 676 screens in 2002, there were 483 cinemas with 959 screens in mid-2007. Then when viewed from the number of screens in Indonesia today, this country only has around 700 screens controlled by two exhibitors. According to JB Kristanto, 82% of the screen dominated by the XXI cinema network, 10% by the Blitzmegaplex network, and alternative cinema networks fill the remaining 8%. The 700 screens left in Indonesia are an irony where national film infrastructure should increase, but it decreases. The causes of national films to lose the power of distribution in reaching the public.[15]

The development of the number of big screens is very much needed to support the prospect of increasingly good Indonesian cinema. The growth of the Indonesian film industry is increasing with domestic film production and the number of viewers. In 2018, the teenage romance genre, *Dilan*, was able to attract an audience of up to 6.3 million people and can survive on cinema screens for more than a

month. Previously in 2016, the film *Pengabdian Setan* by Joko Anwar was able to reach 4.2 million viewers, whereas the film *Warkop DKI Reborn: Jangkrik Bos! Part 1*, produced in 2016, which is still the most significant number of films in the history of Indonesian cinema, reached 6.5 million viewers. The increasing number of spectators who watch local movies is indeed a very encouraging thing for the national film industry. Meanwhile, at that time, the average creative industry sector was able to contribute 6.03% to Indonesia's GDP. The national film industry can thrive if it is market share increases, so increasing the number of local film viewers is undoubtedly a positive thing. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Culture estimates that national films will control 50% of the domestic film market this year [16].

Film makers don't want to take the risk of making strange things. He only reaffirmed what the people believed. Maybe the film does not always reflect reality but reaffirms the norms that have become dominant. [17] Some films that received public appreciation were not because of the theme, but because of good promotions. For example, *Dilan 1991* was able to draw an audience of 6.3 million viewers within three months, because the marketing and advertising for the film were right, in the sense of using a lot of media and activities.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The state intervention needed by the film industry is not in the form of regulations. That regulate film content, for example, ideas, themes, social settings, and stories, but rules that make it easier for national films to grow in their own country, namely building more cinema screens, protecting films in the country from global film competition, creates an investment climate in the domestic film industry, and protects film creators from piracy.

While state intervention in film content has caused a restraint on specific genres, it has not stimulated the emergence of thematic diversification in our films. Let the type of film and the theme of the story be the business of film artists to produce films based on aesthetic considerations, markets, and management of social psychology audiences. Films will be present in the community as needed. During the rise of romance, horror, and comedy films, it turns out there are also political-themed ones such as *Sang Penari* (The Dancer), or *Sumur Tanpa Dasar* and *Surat Dari Praha*, all of which are nuanced in the story of 1965. Also, who would have thought films that recycle old themes, can succeed and thrive in the market. It all proves that film themes do not need to be regulated by the state.

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Of the 2,600 in 1990, there were only 264 cinemas with 676 screens in 2002. Then between 2003 and 2007, there was an increase in the number of cinemas in Indonesia. Compared to the 264 cinemas with 676 screens in 2002, there were 483 cinemas with 959 screens in mid- 2007. Then when viewed from the number of screens in Indonesia today, this country only has around 700 screens controlled by two exhibitors.

According to JB Kristanto, 82% of the screen dominated by the XXI cinema network, 10% by the Blitzmegaplex network, and alternative cinema networks fill the remaining 8%. The 700 screens left in Indonesia are an irony where national film infrastructure should increase, but it decreases. The causes of national films to lose the power of distribution in reaching the public.[15] The development of the number of big screens is very much needed to support the prospect of increasingly good Indonesian cinema.

The growth of the Indonesian film industry is increasing with domestic film production and the number of viewers. In 2018, the teenage romance genre, *Dilan*, was able to attract an audience of up to 6.3 million people and can survive on cinema screens for more than a month. Previously in 2016, the film *Pengabdian Setan* by Joko Anwar was able to reach 4.2

million viewers, whereas the film *Warkop DKI Reborn: Jangkrik Bos! Part 1*, produced in 2016, which is still the most significant number of films in the history of Indonesian cinema, reached 6.5 million viewers. The increasing number of spectators who watch local movies is indeed a very encouraging thing for **the national film industry**.

Meanwhile, **at that time, the average creative industry sector was able to contribute 6.03%** to Indonesia's GDP. **The national film industry** can thrive if its market share increases, so increasing **the number of local film viewers** is undoubtedly a positive thing. Therefore, **the Ministry of Education and Culture** estimates that national films will control 50% of the domestic film market this year [16].

Film makers don't want to take the risk of making strange things. He only reaffirmed what the people believed. Maybe the film does not always reflect reality but reaffirms the norms that have become dominant. [17] Some films that received public appreciation were not because of the theme, but because of good promotions.

For example, *Dilan 1991* was able to draw an audience of 6.3 million viewers within three months, because the marketing and advertising for the film were right, in the sense of using a lot of media and activities. IV. CONCLUSION The state intervention needed by the film industry is not **in the form of** regulations.

That regulate film content, for example, ideas, themes, social settings, and stories, but rules that make it easier for national films to grow in their own country, namely building more cinema screens, protecting films in the country from global film competition, creates an investment climate in the domestic film industry, and protects film creators from piracy.

While state intervention in film content has caused a restraint on specific genres, it has not stimulated the emergence of thematic diversification in our films. Let the type of film and the theme of the story be the business of film artists to produce films based on aesthetic considerations, markets, and management of social psychology audiences. Films will be present in the community as needed.

During the rise of romance, horror, and comedy films, it turns out there are also



political- themed ones such as Sang Penari (The Dancer), or Sumur Tanpa Dasar and Surat Dari Praha, all of which are nuanced in the story of 1965. Also, who would have thought films that recycle old themes, can succeed and thrive in the market. It all proves that film themes do not need to be regulated by the state. REFERENCES [1] M. Y. (Misbach Y. Biran, Sejarah film, 1900- 10 bikin film di Jawa, Kedua.

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