

The Construction of Ethnic Discrimination in the Pengepungan Di Bukit Duri Film

Aureno Putra Wicaksono ^{1*}, Ade Kusuma ²

¹ Universitas Pembangunan Nasional “Veteran” Jawa Timur, Indonesia. aurenoputrawicaksono53@gmail.com

² Universitas Pembangunan Nasional “Veteran” Jawa Timur, Indonesia. ade_kusuma.ilkom@upnjatim.ac.id

Corresponding Author Email: 22043010176@student.upnjatim.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Received : 9 April 2026
Accepted : 25 April 2026
Published : 30 April 2026

Keywords:

Pengepungan di Bukit Duri, Ethnic Discrimination, Roland Barthes' Semiotics, Otherness.

Set in a dystopian future in 2027, the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* portrays a bleak reality in which the Chinese ethnic group is trapped in a vortex of systemic racism and social exclusion. Film is a form of mass media that not only serves to convey information but also shapes social reality through audio and visual elements that can influence viewers' perceptions. It also becomes a medium for constructing ethnic discrimination, where ethnic identity becomes a determinant of an individual's social position and security. This study aims to examine the representation of ethnic discrimination in the film through the analysis of narratives of othering, scapegoating, and the rejection of minority authority, using a descriptive qualitative method with Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis approach. The results show that *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* depicts the Chinese ethnic group as foreigners or the other, despite having been settled for generations, positioning this minority group as vulnerable targets or scapegoats for the outpouring of social frustration amid a national crisis. This research also explains that the film serves as a sharp social critique of the fragility of an inclusive society, and provides a space for critical reflection to challenge racial prejudices that are passed down to younger generations.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of ethnic discrimination in Indonesia is a colonial legacy rooted in divide-and-rule politics, where negative stereotypes and prejudices from the past persist to this day (Murdianto, 2018). Such subjective attitudes often lead to discriminatory actions that threaten harmony and justice within a diverse society. Given its destructive impact on national unity, the role of media such as film becomes crucial in either shaping or eroding ethnic perceptions in the public sphere.

Film possesses a unique capability as a mass communication medium, blending visual and emotional narratives to deeply influence public opinion. Through its cinematic power and visual language, film can penetrate audience logic and embed certain values into the collective consciousness of

society (Aldo et al., 2023). More than just a transmitter of information, film acts as a tool of cultural persuasion that creates psychological bonds, enabling viewers to identify with and experience the stories presented as authentic realities. Film serves not only as entertainment, but also as a space for critical reflection that can interpret and challenge social realities through cinematic symbols (Maharani et al., 2025). As a medium that communicates meaning through images, dialogue, and visual symbols, film can also construct particular representations of ethnic identity and discrimination. These representations are not always conveyed explicitly but are often embedded within symbolic signs that require interpretation. Therefore, Roland Barthes' semiotic approach is relevant because it enables researchers to examine how denotative, connotative, and

mythological meanings are used to construct narratives of ethnic discrimination in film.

Although the Indonesian constitution guarantees protection for minority groups, in practice there are often disparities in the implementation of policies and law enforcement (Musaddad et al., 2024). This creates an irony in which the principle of justice for all citizens has yet to be consistently realized. Discriminatory incidents suffered by Papuan students in various regions, such as the case in Surabaya, are clear evidence that systemic racism remains a major unresolved issue in the country (Ghozali et al., 2024). These recurring events underscore the failure to provide a sense of security and equality for Papuans in their own homeland. Negative sentiments and discriminatory acts against the Chinese ethnic community also persist in the collective memory of society due to deep historical roots (Hidayat et al., 2023). This phenomenon indicates ongoing social obstacles in efforts toward historical reconciliation and full acceptance of differences within society.

Analysis of the reality of ethnic discrimination becomes increasingly crucial when linked to the role of film as a primary medium for representing or reshaping these social experiences (Audrey et al., 2018). Through its unique capabilities, film absorbs complex social issues and transforms them into universal narratives that are easier for the public to understand. The symptoms of ethnic discrimination manifest tangibly in various aspects of life, ranging from verbal and non-verbal interactions to broader structural practices. This phenomenon is rooted in the simplification of identity through group stereotypes, the emergence of unfounded negative prejudices, and the existence of systematic injustices against certain groups (Ikasari, 2017). Film serves as a vital instrument for social advocacy by visually depicting the profound impact of ethnic discrimination to provoke critical public awareness (Sisiana, 2025). By presenting narratives from the perspective of victims, film can evoke empathy across identities and foster collective dialogue on the importance of achieving justice and an inclusive society.

Pengepungan di Bukit Duri is a feature-length action-thriller directed by renowned filmmaker Joko Anwar, produced through a collaboration between Come and See Pictures and the global studio Amazon MGM Studios. Released in 2024, this film is set in a dystopian future of 2027, when Indonesia is shaken by severe social crisis and injustice. Its main narrative

focuses on the struggle of a teacher named Edwin and his students at Duri High School, who become trapped in a tense situation as their school is surrounded by a violent mob amidst widespread riots. Through its suspenseful storyline, the film boldly tackles central themes of ethnic discrimination, systemic racism, and deeply rooted intolerance. Joko Anwar uses this film as a medium of social critique, illustrating how hatred and prejudice are passed down to younger generations, while questioning whether human dignity can survive amid the collapse of an inclusive social order.

Pengepungan di Bukit Duri stands out as a cinematic work that bluntly dissects ethnic conflict and historical trauma in Indonesia, transforming discrimination and stereotypes into a narrative of destructive social reality. By using a school setting as the battleground, the film symbolically challenges the effectiveness of educational institutions and authorities in safeguarding diversity. The film presents a portrait of Indonesia trapped in a profound social crisis, where violence and inter-ethnic hatred have spread so widely that they undermine the stability and order of society (Setiabudi & Santoso, 2020)

The narrative focus on the Chinese ethnic group in this film is not merely a supplementary element, but a crucial representation of the “otherness” that continues to be produced within the public imagination. By setting the story in a dystopian future, the film serves as a stark warning that without efforts to deconstruct today’s racial prejudices, horizontal conflicts in the future will become a terrifying inevitability. This demonstrates that cinema is no longer just a mirror of reality, but also a tool of social projection capable of dissecting hidden layers of hatred that have long been overlooked in formal academic and governmental discussions.

Previous studies have examined ethnic discrimination in Indonesian films, particularly regarding the representation of Chinese identity and racism (Audrey et al., 2018; Ikasari, 2017). Other studies have also discussed ethnic discrimination from historical and sociological perspectives (Murdianto, 2018; Hidayat et al., 2023). However, these studies mainly focus on the representation of ethnicity or social discrimination without specifically examining how ethnic discrimination is constructed through visual signs, dialogue, and symbolic meanings in a

dystopian film. Moreover, research using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach to analyze the construction of ethnic discrimination in *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* is still limited. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing how the film constructs meanings of ethnic discrimination through Barthes' semiotic framework.

Based on the research gap identified above, this study aims to analyze how ethnic discrimination against the Chinese ethnic group is constructed in *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. The study focuses on revealing the meanings embedded in visual signs, dialogues, and symbolic representations that portray narratives of othering, scapegoating, and the rejection of minority authority. Through an appropriate analytical approach, this research seeks to reveal the mechanisms of visual language in *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* that represent the vulnerability of ethnic minorities amid national turmoil. Understanding the construction of these messages is essential to assess the extent to which mass media can contribute to breaking the chain of intergenerational hatred, or conversely, become trapped in perpetuating destructive old stereotypes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Roland Barthes' Semiotics

Roland Barthes' semiotics is a significant development of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theory, which examines the relationship between the signifier and the signified in generating meaning. Barthes moves beyond the limits of literal language by introducing two levels of meaning: denotation and connotation. At the denotative level, a sign is understood explicitly through social codes that are immediately apparent, where meaning can be clearly grasped based on the relationship between the signifier and the signified. However, in Barthes' view, the denotative sign does not end there; instead, it becomes the material for constructing a more complex second-level signification system (Nasirin & Pithaloka, 2022).

At the connotative level, each word or sign begins to involve symbolic, historical, and emotional aspects. Here, meaning expands beyond the literal to become a subjective cultural meaning, formed from associations that develop within society. Barthes sees connotation as the bridge for certain values to enter a

sign, so that an image or dialogue is no longer just visual or auditory information, but also carries the ideological weight intended by the creator for the audience.

This second level of signification culminates in the formation of myth a semiological system in which connotative meaning is regarded as natural truth or universal reality. Myth works by embedding certain ideologies or social values into the minds of the public, so that what is actually a cultural construction appears normal and unquestionable. Through this approach, research can uncover hidden meanings and reveal how a media work such as film uses myth to shape the audience's worldview of social reality.

In film studies, Barthes' semiotic theory provides a useful framework for understanding how visual and verbal signs communicate social meanings beyond their literal representation. Every cinematic element, including dialogue, facial expressions, camera angles, costumes, lighting, and settings, can function as signs that convey ideological messages. In this study, Barthes' concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth are used to examine how the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* constructs meanings related to ethnic discrimination against the Chinese ethnic group. Through this approach, the analysis focuses not only on what is shown in the film but also on how these visual representations reproduce broader social values and beliefs regarding ethnicity and discrimination (Barthes, 1977; Chandler, 2017).

Ethnic Discrimination

Ethnicity is understood as a dynamic and complex social identity, formed through shared culture, values, norms, language, and common historical origins. Unlike race, which is often based on physical or biological features, ethnicity is more subjective and self-selected by groups through the social transmission process from generation to generation to build a strong sense of belonging (Suyemoto et al., 2020). This identity is interdependent, where ethnic membership is determined not only by self-ascription but also by external labeling through mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion. Therefore, ethnic membership often requires unifying elements such as shared religion, language, and ancestral heritage to reinforce the boundaries of group identity in intercultural interactions.

Discrimination arises as a behavioral manifestation of prejudice or “prejudice in action,” involving unequal treatment of individuals based on their group membership (Hasyim, 2019). In the context of ethnicity, discrimination is a form of systemic oppression that is often institutionalized within social, legal, and economic structures, benefitting dominant groups while marginalizing minorities. Such actions include various forms of restriction, exclusion, and harassment that result in the loss of recognition for human rights in different aspects of life. Although racial discrimination is rooted in physical differences and ethnic discrimination in cultural aspects, both often operate within the same framework of injustice, where bias and excessive loyalty to one’s own culture can trigger hostility and neglect of the rights of groups outside that community.

In cinematic narratives, ethnic discrimination is often represented through symbolic interactions rather than explicit statements. These representations may appear in the form of verbal insults, unequal treatment, exclusion, physical violence, or the positioning of minority characters as outsiders. Such portrayals reflect broader social ideologies and power relations within society. Therefore, understanding ethnic discrimination requires not only identifying discriminatory actions but also interpreting how films construct and normalize these meanings through visual and narrative elements (Hall, 1997; Jandt, 2018).

Conceptual Framework

This study integrates Barthes' semiotic theory with the concept of ethnic discrimination to analyze how discrimination is represented in the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*. Barthes' semiotic model is employed to identify the denotative meanings of visual and verbal signs, interpret their connotative meanings, and reveal the myths or ideologies embedded within the film. Meanwhile, the theory of ethnic discrimination provides the conceptual basis for identifying forms of exclusion, othering, scapegoating, and unequal power relations experienced by the Chinese ethnic group. By combining these two perspectives, this study examines how cinematic representations construct and reinforce social understandings of ethnic discrimination.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach that focuses on in-depth interpretation of a phenomenon or system of thought (Nita Khairani Amanda & Sriwartini, 2020). Through this method, the researcher not only describes what appears on the screen’s surface, but also seeks to dissect the hidden layers of meaning behind the cinematic symbols that represent ethnic discrimination. The descriptive approach enables the researcher to present in detail how narratives of otherness and scapegoating practices are constructed through the interplay of scenes, dialogues, and visual expressions in the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*.

Data Collection

The data analysis in this study applies the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three systematic stages (Jati, 2021) : data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The process begins with data reduction, which involves selecting and focusing on scenes in the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* that are relevant to the representation of ethnic discrimination. Next, the data are presented in the form of structured narratives supported by screenshots to clarify the patterns of discrimination identified. The final stage is conclusion drawing, where the researcher conducts an in-depth interpretation of the findings and continuously verifies them to ensure that the conclusions regarding the representation of discrimination in the film are valid and objective.

The data sources in this study were collected through two main techniques: documentation and literature review. Documentation data were obtained by taking screenshots of relevant scenes in the film "*Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*" that represent ethnic discrimination to be used as material for visual analysis. Meanwhile, the literature review was conducted by gathering references from books, scientific journals, and online articles to strengthen the theoretical foundation and support the in-depth interpretation of the research findings.

The primary data of this study consist of selected scenes from the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*. The researchers repeatedly watched the entire film to identify scenes that explicitly or implicitly represent ethnic discrimination. The selection was based on three criteria: the scene contains

representations of ethnic discrimination against the Chinese ethnic group, the scene includes visual or verbal signs that can be analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, and the scene contributes to the development of the film's narrative concerning discrimination, othering, scapegoating, or rejection of minority authority.

RESULT

Through in-depth observation of each scene and dialogue in the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*, several crucial points were identified that illustrate how ethnic discrimination is systematically constructed. Various signs and symbols that appear throughout the narrative not only depict physical conflict, but also represent deeper structures of prejudice. These findings reveal that discrimination in the film does not occur in isolation, but emerges through layered narratives that marginalize certain identities. The film visually demonstrates how the Chinese ethnic identity is transformed into a target of collective hatred through stigmatization and exclusion amid social chaos. More specifically, this study categorizes these findings into several main points as follows:

The Chinese Ethnic Group is Portrayed as the "Other"

Discrimination against the Chinese ethnic group in Indonesia often stems from the narrative of "othering," which positions them as a "foreign" group despite having settled in the country for centuries. This stigmatization is perpetuated through prejudices that separate national identity from ethnic origins, where Chinese-Indonesians are viewed as having dual loyalties or stronger ties to their ancestors than to their own homeland. This misguided social construct creates barriers of exclusion that hinder full recognition of their contributions to Indonesia's history and development, so that in certain socio-political situations, they are frequently scapegoated simply because they are not considered an "authentic" part of the national identity. The postcolonial relationship between the Chinese and indigenous populations has always been marked by prejudice, stigmatization, stereotyping, socio-economic segregation, and ethnic polarization (Wijayanti, 2022).

In the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*, the main character is born and raised in Indonesia, yet he is still seen as an "outsider" who does not have the same rights as the "indigenous" population. This prejudice is not limited to discriminatory dialogues such as when Gerry mocks Edwin's original name, "Tan Jung Ho" but also manifests in acts of violence. This bias is vividly depicted in several tense scenes, where a group of attackers angrily shouts, "Hey, there's a Chinese! There's a Chinese!" This illustrates how ethnic identity is used as a pretext to harm and discriminate against someone. The use of the word "Cina" in posters and verbal interactions carries a pejorative meaning, reinforcing the notion that the Chinese ethnic group is not part of the Indonesian nation.

Gerry's insistence on using Edwin's original name, "Tan Jung Ho," is a form of negation of citizenship identity intended to forcibly strip Edwin of his equal status as an Indonesian citizen. This act of "unveiling" demonstrates that, within a systemically racist society, the assimilation of names is still regarded as a thin layer that can be peeled away at any time by the dominant group to reassert the social hierarchy and the label of "foreigner." This clarifies that ethnic identity is used as a tool of control to reconstruct someone's position within the power structure, regardless of how deeply the individual has culturally integrated.

The dialogue "Hey, there's a Chinese!" represents a process of othering in which Edwin is no longer recognized as an individual but is reduced to his ethnic identity. Using Barthes' semiotic perspective, this expression functions as a symbolic marker that legitimizes discrimination and positions the Chinese ethnic group as outsiders within their own society. This scene demonstrates how ethnic identity becomes the basis for exclusion and unequal treatment.

The Chinese Ethnic Group as Scapegoats in Social and Economic Crises

In Indonesia's historical dynamics, the Chinese ethnic group has often been positioned as a scapegoat amid periods of social and economic turmoil. This phenomenon stems from the legacy of Dutch colonialism, which imposed a rigid social stratification whereby the Chinese were placed as an intermediary class dominating the trade sector, thus

creating psychological distance and structural jealousy with the indigenous population. When national stability falters such as during the 1965 transition or the 1998 monetary crisis these economic disparities are exploited as political narratives to divert public anger from government failures toward racial sentiment. Discrimination and human rights violations against the Chinese in Indonesia are often triggered by gaps in achievement within the trade sector, where their economic success is perceived as far exceeding that of the indigenous population (Ekawati & Purwaningsih, 2015).

As a result, stereotypes about their exclusivity and economic dominance fuel a collective stigma that makes this group an easy target for discrimination, looting, and even physical violence whenever social tensions escalate. The Chinese ethnic group is constructed as a scapegoat for channeling social frustration resulting from extreme economic and political crises. This minority group is depicted as the most vulnerable target, with their economic success dehumanized through cruel stereotypes, as portrayed in the film with the “Babi Ngepet” (Pig Demon) poster. The process of labeling and demeaning a group as ‘not like us’ serves to justify discrimination or exclusion (Jandt, 2018). This metaphor associates the wealth of the Chinese with deceitful and dirty means, thereby generating deep social envy. The use of labels such as “wealth usurper” and the term “Pig” is intended to strip away the humanity of the victims, so that acts of violence and looting are seen by the mob as legitimate forms of “revenge.” This narrative sharply illustrates how politicized racial prejudice creates irrational justification for attacking minority groups in order to “take back” what is perceived to have been lost during times of crisis.

Rejection of Chinese Ethnic Authority

Socio-economic tensions and political sentiments often trigger destructive collective actions, in which the indigenous population engages in unorganized or anarchic acts of violence against the Chinese community. This phenomenon is usually rooted in social jealousy arising from perceived economic disparities, as well as political provocations that make the Chinese ethnic group a scapegoat for crises at the national level. Such anarchic actions including looting, property destruction, and physical

violence reflect a vulnerability in social integration that easily erupts when state stability falters, leaving deep historical wounds. The Chinese community is frequently targeted by mob violence as a result of public frustration with government policies (Rafhael et al., 2022).

In the plot of *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*, set in the future year of 2027, the majority group particularly the students at Duri High School are depicted as quick-tempered and highly reactive toward the existence of the Chinese ethnic group, such as the Jefri Gang, who abduct a Chinese student to beat and detain him. Through this brutal portrayal of anarchy, the film sharply criticizes how systemic poverty and educational failure can transform the majority into a mob that prioritizes brute force and anger over intellectual dialogue, ultimately undermining their own social order and future.

The portrayal of Jefri’s gang as a representation of the aggressive majority group illustrates how educational institutions which should serve as spaces for nurturing tolerance actually fail to stem the penetration of racial hatred at the grassroots level. The acts of kidnapping and detaining Chinese students indicate a process of deindividuation, where students lose their personal moral compass as they merge into a group driven by collective anger. Symbolically, the film challenges the effectiveness of an education system that focuses solely on cognitive aspects while neglecting emotional intelligence and diversity literacy.

In the dystopian context of 2027, “muscle” becomes a tool for validating power among those who feel economically marginalized, so that violence against the Chinese is no longer merely an outlet for anger, but a manipulative attempt to regain a sense of control and superiority amid the collapse of national stability. From this perspective, *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* warns that when a society’s critical reasoning is dulled by life’s pressures, humanity is sacrificed for the gratification of destructive identity-based sentiments.

The Indigenous Ethnic Group as the Anarchist Collective

Within school environments, the rejection by indigenous students of the influence or leadership of individuals from the Chinese ethnic group often reflects the more complex social dynamics present in society. This reluctance to obey or follow direction is usually triggered by perceptions of cultural background differences and economic status, which have long been sensitive issues. Social inequalities in the wider community often culminate in acts of violence and discrimination against the Chinese group as an expression of rejection of their presence (Atmaja & Sodik, 2017). When students feel that the values or leadership styles being implemented do not align with their own identity, there is a tendency to keep their distance or to protest as a form of self-defense.

This phenomenon shows that inter-ethnic relations within educational spaces are still heavily influenced by long-standing sentiments, so that authority is no longer viewed solely through formal rules, but also through the lens of group identity. The rejection of Chinese ethnic authority is depicted through the fierce resistance of Duri High School students toward Edwin, representing the stereotype that minority groups are unfit to hold command or teaching positions within the majority community. In this narrative, Edwin's authority as a teacher is challenged not only because of his strictness, but also due to the deeply rooted racial sentiment that a Chinese person is unworthy of managing, disciplining, let alone punishing those who see themselves as the "hosts" or indigenous population. Some forms of this rejection are illustrated when Jefri tears up a paper with a pig's head in front of Edwin. This rejection manifests as brutal mass defiance, in which Edwin's status as an educator is dehumanized into a mere target of hatred, as if his presence in a position of authority is an affront to their sense of identity and sovereignty.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study both support and expand upon previous research on the representation of ethnicity and the construction of discrimination in mass media. In line with earlier studies on media and culture, the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* reflects contemporary social realities regarding racial tensions, the normalization of violence against minority groups, and the unequal power relations between the majority and those considered "the other." These findings are

consistent with past research asserting that film texts often function as instruments that perpetuate or challenge ethnic stereotypes rooted in colonial history. However, this study broadens the discussion by showing that ethnic discrimination is not only presented narratively, but is also discursively constructed as a dehumanizing threat through pejorative labeling and systematic physical violence within the film's text.

Unlike previous studies that may have focused only on surface-level visual analysis, this study reveals how the dystopian narrative of 2027 systematically depicts the process of marginalizing the Chinese ethnic group as a "scapegoat" to gain social legitimacy amid a national crisis. Therefore, these findings offer a new perspective by demonstrating that, in modern Indonesian filmmaking, social critique can operate sharply within the action-thriller genre, making its ideological message highly dependent on media literacy and the critical awareness of the audience (Azmi & Wibowo, 2025). For some viewers, this film may function merely as genre-based entertainment; for others, it serves as a reflective cultural text that frames racism as a structural condition that is inherited, not merely a matter of individual conflict.

These findings suggest that ethnic discrimination in *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* is not merely represented as interpersonal hostility but as a reflection of structural inequalities that have historically shaped relations between majority and minority groups in Indonesia. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of semiotic analysis by applying Roland Barthes' model to the Indonesian feature film format, demonstrating how denotative signs, connotative meanings, and myths interact in constructing discourses of hatred and dehumanization. For communication studies, this research affirms the role of film as a site for negotiating contemporary ideologies, where entertainment and social critique coexist. For cultural and ethnic studies, this research adds a communicative dimension, emphasizing that public understanding of diversity is shaped by strong narrative framing and symbolic representation capable of evoking empathy across identities. The construction of discrimination is understood not merely as a matter of morality, but as a condition mediated discursively through the interaction between media representation,

historical trauma, and the broader socio-political context.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research on film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* film, this work explicitly represents the reality of ethnic discrimination and systemic racism that remains deeply rooted in Indonesia's social structure through the construction of signs that position the Chinese ethnic group as "foreigners" or the "other." The narrative reveals how the Chinese community continues to be positioned as scapegoats amid escalating social and economic crises, where their existence and achievements are dehumanized through the use of hate symbols. This deliberately exploits the sensitivity of social jealousy to incite destructive and anarchic mass aggression. The film dissects how such prejudice is not merely an individual sentiment, but a discursive construct maintained to divert collective frustration onto minority groups.

Through its depiction of aggressive resistance to minority authority and the palpable threat of persecution, the film serves as a sharp social critique of the fragility of Indonesia's inclusive societal foundations. *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* demonstrates that without fair law enforcement and mature sociological awareness, social harmony can easily be destroyed by racial provocation. Furthermore, this film serves as a space for critical reflection, challenging the way the cycles of prejudice and ethnic hatred are still systematically passed down to younger generations, even within educational institutions. By presenting the fatal consequences of racism, the film encourages the audience to deeply evaluate historical trauma and recognize the importance of rebuilding a social contract that prioritizes human dignity above differences in ethnic identity.

This study contributes to the literature on media representation and ethnic discrimination by demonstrating how Roland Barthes' semiotic framework can be applied to reveal the ideological construction of ethnic discrimination in contemporary Indonesian cinema. By integrating the concepts of othering, scapegoating, and rejection of minority authority, this research extends previous studies on ethnic representation and offers a more comprehensive

understanding of how discrimination is symbolically communicated through cinematic texts.

The findings also have practical implications for several stakeholders. For media practitioners, this study highlights the importance of producing film narratives that promote diversity and avoid reinforcing ethnic stereotypes. For educators, the film may serve as a learning resource to encourage critical media literacy, multicultural awareness, and discussions about discrimination in educational settings. For policymakers, the findings emphasize the importance of supporting inclusive media policies and educational initiatives that foster tolerance, equality, and social cohesion within multicultural societies. Despite these contributions, this study is limited by its reliance on a single film and the interpretative nature of semiotic analysis, which may produce alternative readings depending on the researcher's perspective. Therefore, the findings should be understood within the context of this particular film rather than generalized to all forms of media representation.

Future research is encouraged to examine representations of ethnic discrimination across different Indonesian films, television series, or digital media platforms using comparative or interdisciplinary approaches. Combining semiotic analysis with audience reception studies or discourse analysis may also provide a broader understanding of how media representations influence public perceptions of ethnicity and discrimination.

References

- Aldo, A. S. H., Nafsika, S. S., & Salman, S. (2023). Film Sebagai Media dalam Mengubah Cara Pandang Manusia dalam Prinsip Kemanusiaan. *Irama: Jurnal Seni, Desain Dan Pembelajarannya*, 5(1), 9–14. <https://doi.org/10.17509/irama.v5i1.50149>
- Atmaja, H. T., & Sodik, I. (2017). *Konflik Rasial Antara Etnis Tionghoa Dengan Pribumi Jawa di Surakarta Tahun 1972-1998*. 6(1), 66–74.
- Audrey, Y., Rahardjo, T., & Lukmantoro, T. (2018). *Representasi Identitas Etnis Cina dalam Film Dimsum Martabak (2018)*.

- Azmi, M. A. N., & Wibowo, A. A. (2025). Representasi Konflik Ekonomi dalam Film Agak Laen: Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes. *Jurnal Dinamika Ilmu Komunikasi*, 11(2), 338–356.
- Ekawati, D., & Purwaningsih, S. M. (2015). Hak Asasi Manusia Etnis Tionghoa dalam karya Pramoedya Hoakiau Indonesia. 3(1), 58–68.
- Ghozali, M., Liana, N., Afra, C., & Siregar, Z. (2024). Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Kelompok Minoritas : Studi Kasus Diskriminasi Terhadap Mahasiswa Asal Papua di Surabaya. 2(3), 727–736.
- Hidayat, M., Putra, M., Saputro, M. R., & Husna, R. N. (2023). Analisis Prasangka dan Diskriminasi pada Etnis Tionghoa di Indonesia. *Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, 3(2), 228. <https://doi.org/10.22373/arj.v3i2.19550>
- Ikasari, P. N. (2017). Perempuan dalam Diskriminasi Etnis Di Indonesia (Analisis Film Sapu Tangan Fang Yin). *Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Kajian Media*, 1(1), 57–68.
- Jandt, F. E. (2018). *Intercultural Communication*.
- Jati, R. P. (2021). Film dokumenter sebagai metode alternatif penelitian komunikasi. *Avant Garde*, 9(02), 141–155.
- Maharani, N., Elisabeth, B., & Pesulima, L. (2025). *Multikultura REPRESENTASI STRATIFIKASI SOSIAL DALAM FILM ZOETE DROMEN (2023) KARYA ENA SENDIJAREVIC*. 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.7454/multikultura.v4i3.1169>
- Murdianto. (2018). Stereotipe , Prasangka dan Resistensinya (Studi Kasus pada Etnis Madura dan Tionghoa di Indonesia). *Qalamuna*, 10(2), 137–160.
- Musaddad, M. R., Muslim, A., Mutawalli, H., Adam, M., Rahman, A., Hidayat, L., Raya, J., Km, P., Sari, S., Pabuaran, K., & Serang, K. (2024). Penegakkan Hukum terhadap Pelanggaran HAM di Papua : Diskriminasi Etnis Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa. 2(3).
- Nita Khairani Amanda, & Sriwartini, Y. (2020). PESAN MORAL PERNIKAHAN PADA FILM WEDDING AGREEMENT (ANALISIS SEMIOTIKA ROLAND BARTHES). 5, 111–129.
- Rafhael, M., Musa, P., & Pratama, P. A. (2022). *Human Rights and Pancasila : A Case of Tionghoa Ethnic Discrimination in Indonesia*. 1(1), 119–170.
- Sisiana, G. M. (2025). Kritik Sosial dalam Film Berjudul Wicked : Sebuah Pendekatan Analisis Semiotik. 1, 176–187.
- Setiabudi, M. A., & Santoso, D. A. (2020). Tingkat kecemasan (anxiety) dalam olahraga berbasis perbedaan etnis (Suku Osing, Jawa, dan Madura). *Jurnal Altius: Jurnal Ilmu Olahraga Dan Kesehatan*, 9(1), 1–8.
- Wijayanti, Y. (2022). Kedudukan etnis tionghoa dalam multikulturalisme indonesia: antara harapan dan kenyataan. 9(2), 139–148.