



Multiethnic Audiences Interpretation of National Identity in Malaysia through Alternative Film of Nasi Lemak 2.0

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Abstract

This research examines the construction of national identity among young multiethnic audience through their reception of ethnic relation in Nasi Lemak 2.0. Nasi Lemak 2.0 film have difference in terms of language that become on this film root, and that film use Nasi Lemak as a symbolism to symbolize of multi-ethnic in Malaysia. Malaysia is a multi-ethnic nation that forms their respective ethnic identity. This study outlined several research questions: 1) How does society conceive national identity; 2) What is the concept of national identity represented through Nasi Lemak 2.0. Drawing on Stuart Hall's (1997) representation theory, this study sought to answer its research question. It uses a focus group discussion involving 56 informant who have watched the film. Using Braun Clarke (2006)-Thematic Analysis, it is found that Nasi Lemak 2.0 served theme a national cultural. National Culture' determined by state ideology which shaped national identity. This study found that national culture determined through government media and ideology. Film is a tools used to deliver orders message to audience. This study also found that young Malaysian ethnic and national identity to be fluid.

Keywords: National Identity; Alternative Film; Ideology

Introduction

The emergence of alternative films around the 1980s led to a different phenomenon and perspective in the production of national film films and industries (Ngo Sheau Shi, 2015 in Azman Azwan et al. 2015). The development of alternative films grew in 2000, with the emergence of film directors like Yasmin Ahmad who fought for racial and ethnic issues and criticisms of the failure of the Malaysian community. The emergence of Yasmin Ahmad's films has also had a significant impact on cinema and Malaysian society (Lee, 2015). This study focuses on the reception of teenage audiences in Malaysia's alternative film which focuses on the concept of national identity perceived by the community and represented by the Nasi Lemak 2.0 (NL2.0) film. In addition, this study looks at the representation of the national identity highlighted in the NL 2.0 film. This study uses a thematic analysis method to look at the concept of national identity in Malaysia that is perceived and represented among the community through the Nasi Lemak 2.0 film.

In addition, the meaning of Malaysia cinema, according to Asiah Sarji (2006), is a Malay film categorized as Malaysian cinema, as Malay is a national or national language. Malaysia has recognized Malay as the official language of the country as set out in the Malaysian Constitution (Shamsul Amri, 2012: 176). However, the government provides space to other ethnics in using their ethnic language. For films that are used instead of Malay are considered as ethnic films (Asiah Sarji, 2006). Locally-produced film using Malay language and not a local film in Chinese or Tamil (Haryati, 2013: 132). According to Badrul Redzuan and Faridah Ibrahim (2011), national cinema is a country-wide film and showcases the culture and identity of the community itself. The purpose of the Malaysian National Cinema is to mean the film produced with the characteristics of the country itself, but it must also reflect itself as a community culture, daily spoken language and the economic situation of the society (Khairulzainizah Khairudin, 2007: 2). According to Hatta Azad Khan, the Malaysian film should be Malaysia's background, made in this country by Malaysians and also financed by a registered company here (Hafizah Iszahandi, 2016). The question is, does this also lead to the demographic exposure of the multi-racial Malaysian society as a social reality of Malaysians? Is Malaysia cinema able to bring sense of belonging among the various ethnic groups who regard Malaysian films as national products?

In fact, through the meaning of Malaysia cinema, it still has not been able to describe the true 'Malaysia' in the social interaction of the multi-racial Malaysian society. The issues brought by movie producers too 'vagabond' are not national issues. The question is what is meant by Malaysian cinema? Does Malaysian cinema have to use only Malay language? or the backdrop of Malaysia? However, at the 28th Malaysia Film Festival (FFM28), it was announced that the movie was not in the Malay language, forming two new categories, film director not in the best Malay language and the best non-Malay movie screenplay (Madiha Abdullah, 2016). The national identity of Malaysia is very static when it is seen that only 70 percent of the entire film in the national language can be categorized as Malaysian film. Shortly afterwards, the Namewee films tried to break the distortion using a language other than the national language in the NL 2.0 script. The NL 2.0 film produced by Namewee, is a social comedy concept in displaying ethnic diversity in Malaysia using various languages such as Mandarin, Malay, English, and Tamil (Al Qayum, 2011). The selection of NL 2.0 films was due to the fact that the film highlighted the diversity of cultures and dialects that became the cornerstone of the film (Al Qayum, 2011). The film is totally different from other local alternative films such as *Sepet*, *Estet*, *Gubra*, and *Mukhsin*, where the film is capable of attracting viewers to watch this movie. The NL 2.0 film uses *nasi lemak* to symbolize ethnic diversity in Malaysia. This is due to the fact that the *nasi lemak* itself is diverse, such as *nasi lemak*, nuts, cucumbers, eggs and anchovy sambal as a representation of the NL 2.0 film on ethnic diversity. As a *nasi lemak* is a mixture of rice (the majority) with the sausage, cucumbers, eggs and nuts (minorities) that are united in one appetizing dish, as well as it can unite the multiracial Malaysians, so they can live together harmony (Sinar Harian, 2016).

The film was directed by Fred Chong under the publication of Prodigee Media Sendirian Berhad in collaboration with UB Prodigee Entertainment. According to Fred Chong, this film brings the theme of the 1 Malaysia spirit, and how to recognize itself as a Malaysian (Lee Chin et al., 2011). Wee Meng Chee or better known as Namewee and Ryon Lek is the scriptwriter of this movie which features the look of Malaysian people's identity on the backdrop of multiracial, religious and cultural backgrounds. In addition, according to Namewee, this film tells a chef to make *nasi lemak* as a journey of life's metaphor for self-identity, because *nasi lemak* is a popular breakfast meal and is one of the favourite Malaysian multi-racial favourites. The film also starred Namewee, Adibah Noor, Afdlin Shauki, Nur Fathia, Reshmonu, Dato 'David Arumugam, Pete Teo, Ho Yuhang, Felixia Yeap, Nadine Ann, Thomas, Dennis Lau, Dian Sharlin and many more (Al Qayum, 2011).

Research Questions

The research question of the study to be presented is as follows:

1. How is the concept of national identity in Malaysia represented in the movie NL 2.0?
2. What is the concept of national identity represented in the movie NL 2.0?

Research Objectives

This study is aimed at:

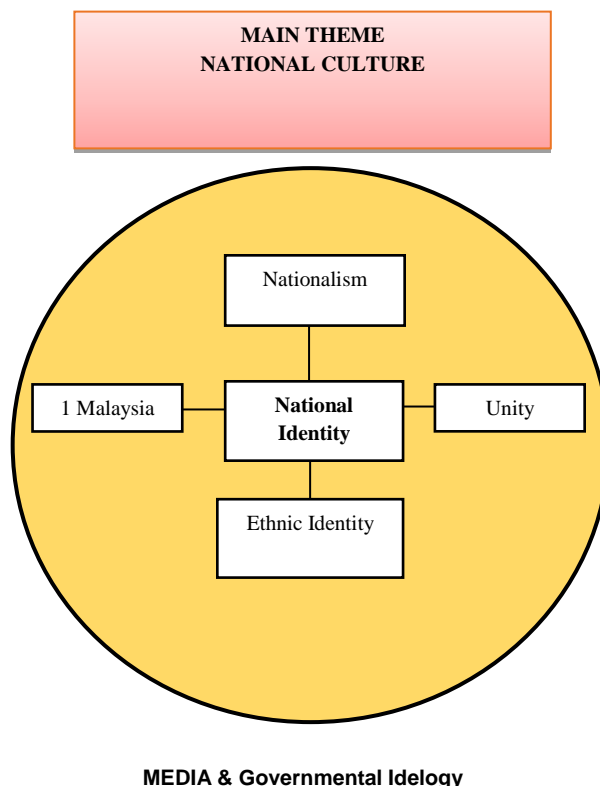
1. Understand the concept of an alternative national identity in Malaysia represented in the movie NL 2.0.
2. Identify the concept of national identity represented in the movie NL 2.0

Methodology

This study uses a focus group discussion method aimed at obtaining feedback, perception, perception and criticism from students on the concept and reality of national identity and alternative culture of NL 2.0. These focus group discussions were conducted at their informant school, in their classroom, face-to-face with informants. The procedures for this study were initiated with briefing and filling in the certification form, informant demographic information and the findings of this study were confidential and used only for study. After that, the first suction show from movie NL2.0 and some questions were raised after the suction was played. Then, followed by the second and the third suction followed by the questions that were framed. A replay was made to remind the informants to the film, so that they could easily give a view in the group discussion. This focus group discussion takes approximately 1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes. The location of the study was three states namely the Federal Territory (WP) of Kuala Lumpur (SMK Sri Sentosa and SMK Maxwell) of Johor (Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK) Bandar Putra) and Sabah (SMK Bandaraya and SMK Sancang) school. The population of this study consists of six-year-old students aged 18-19 and a total of 56 students. All informants were selected to study at national high schools and the occurrence of ethnic mixing in classes such as ethnic Malays, Chinese, Indians, Dusun and Bajau as well as neighbourhoods in residential areas. Additionally, the result of this focus group discussion method has been transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis techniques. This analysis is done by identifying the themes in this study.

Results

National culture or national culture is a desire to make Malaysia a developed nation and able to develop the people through the mastery of knowledge, efficiency and morals (Sulaiman, Siti Razmah & Fatimah Azzahra, 1997: 14). In addition, this national culture is actually demanding society to look at equations rather than differences. The NL 2.0 film represents the cultural diversity. Through this representation every informant interpreted the meaning behind the film and found that informants were very proud of their own ethnic (ethnic identity), covering language, food, clothing, culture and celebration. This is evidenced by the interviews conducted and the findings have been analysed through alternative films NL 2.0.



MEDIA & Governmental Ideology

For national culture is a culture created by the government. This is to form the concept of a nation with a meaning and a sovereign state whose people cannot be identified through race, offspring or skin colour (Sulaiman; Siti Razmah & Fatimah Azzahra, 1997: 16). This national culture was created following the black events of May 13, 1969 which took place in Malaysia, various attempts were made by the government to preserve ethnic relations in Malaysia and also to create a national identity within the people. The NL 2.0 film represents the meaning of national culture can be formed through the spirit of nationalism, 1 Malaysia, the unity and ethnic identity within the informant during the interview.

Nationalism

For the word nationalism it means the love of nation (Mahdi Shuid et al., 2008). The feeling of nationalism arises with the attitude of the people who have the same cultural and equality in developing the country by taking into account local culture. The spirit of nationalism highlighted in this study is more than to exclude the feeling of splendor of culture from outside the country, so feel that Malaysia is the best country. Indian women informs that wherever he goes to Malaysia, the best is not necessarily to exaggerate the country as Malaysia is the best. This was also agreed upon by other informants:

"I think for Malaysia is the best, because weather is good and food, although other countries have technology but I still love Malaysia," (LC2).

"We sit near the country where we are proud of our own country, even though we look at the outside world, we have to make our country better," (LM2).

It can be seen that today's younger generation does not embrace culture from outside the country, it also proves the spirit of nationalism that is thickened in every ethnic group in Malaysia thus denying the existence of ethnic polarization among pluralistic societies.

Unity

One of the ideologies applied by the government is unity. Unity is the nature of mutual cooperation or collaboration to form a prosperous country. To strengthen national integration and establish national identity in Malaysia unity must be nurtured through various mediums. This Sabah informant saw the movie NL 2.0 bringing a shared message of unity message stating that as Malaysians, we should work together, work together and help each other regardless of race (LSS2). In addition, the value of unity can be seen through social relationships and loving affection, this is also agreed upon by other informants:

"The second part from that frame (other race helping each other), we always help other people," (LC1)

"The people need to cooperate in solving a problem and the boy we need to help," (PM2). "We should be 1 Malaysia, everybody should support each other and we should love each other," (PI4)

This proves that sharing of messages by today's young generation can maintain harmony in the life of society through a sense of high unity despite different ethnicities.

Ethnic Identity

For this ethnic identity sub-theme shows that every ethnic is represented by their ethnic identity as Indian female informants, she states that her ethnic identity can be identified through language, food, culture and celebration, (PI4). This was also agreed upon by other informants:

"I think different from other races, the first is language. Another things is food. Others than that those cultures," (LC1).

"In my language, music, traditional clothes, food and customs," (LSS1)

"If I'm in terms of traditional music, language and food," (PSS1)

"Look at him having a conversation with clothes (cover aurat to not)," (PM2)

This sub-theme proves that today's younger generation still knows their ethnic identity as shown in the NNL 2.0 movie.

1 Malaysia

The concept of 1 Malaysia was inspired by the 6th Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato 'Sri Najib Bin Tun Hj Abd Razak in 2009. The concept of 1 Malaysia is an idea to foster unity among the multiracial Malaysians. This concept encompasses two aspects, namely the core of unity and noble values (www.penerangan.gov.my/index.php/1malaysia.html). For male informants from Sabah states that they live in a multi-racial and cultural 1 Malaysia environment and must support all races. This theme is inspired because the informant linked the concept of 1 Malaysia in his daily life by associating with different racial peers. This was also agreed upon by other informants:

"... we sit in this 1 Malaysia, we have to socialize, as we all have to unite with China and India, we have got to be committed, respecting all 100 percent," (MX2).

"Let's say PM has made 1 Malaysia so it's united to maintain racial unity," (LM1).

"We should live together 3 in 1 as 1 Malaysia, and we should understand each other," (LC4).

This proves that message sharing through the concept of 1 Malaysia includes the principle of acceptance and tolerance in the present generation to support the ideology expressed by Dato 'Sri Najib Bin Tun Hj Abd Razak. This clearly shows that 1 Malaysia ideology brought by the government is accepted by informants in their lives. Today's young generation accepts the consensus of ethnic relations on the uniqueness of the racial race with mutual respect and tolerance.

Discussion

Overall, through thematic analysis with focus group discussions with young students in the city found that the concept of national identity formed the similarity between the film and the focus group discussion with informants. This partnership forms four themes: Nationalism, Unity, Ethnic Identity and 1 Malaysia. Message sharing by today's younger generation by maintaining harmony in the life of society through a sense of high unity despite different ethnicities. The unity of the races is closely related to the establishment of a national identity that can be seen through the concept of localization, in which this concept emphasizes locational culture rather than ethnic culture. This unity includes unification with the practice and way of life in everyday life. Unity is the nature of mutual cooperation or collaboration to form a prosperous country. To strengthen national integration and establish national identity in Malaysia unity must be nurtured through various mediums. In addition, it is evident that today's younger generation is abandoning the culture of exaggeration from outside the country, as well as proving the spirit of nationalism that is thickened in every ethnic group in Malaysia thus denying the existence of ethnic polarization among pluralistic societies. The feeling of nationalism must be seeded in the younger generation as early as possible from home. This view is agreed upon by Sivamurugan (2017: 12) which is to build a sense of love and love of the nation must start from home.

The film also outlines ethnic-ethnic mixtures in forming a society in Malaysia (unity). This text highlighted the largest ethnic groups in Malaysia, namely Malay, Chinese and Indians, and the use of their respective ethnic languages. The openness and other ethnic acceptance in terms of culture transformed the pattern of thought and life that shaped the Malaysian society based on the concept of 1 Malaysia, whose ethnicities practiced independently of their own culture but felt they were united in one region. This proves that the sharing of movie messages through the concept of 1 Malaysia covers the principle of acceptance and tolerance in the present generation who support the government's ideology.

This clearly shows that 1 Malaysia ideology brought by the government is accepted by informants in their lives. This view was also endorsed by Mahyuddin Ahmad (2011) in his study "Between Desire and Hope: Ethnic Relations and The Notion of the Malaysian People in Gadoh" which found that the concept of 'Malaysian Malays' in the Gadoh film was part formed or created from a political ideology in Malaysia. This clearly shows that 1 Malaysia ideology is also partially formed or created by the government accepted by the open. The results of the focus group discussion found that today's younger generation received the consensus of ethnic relations on the uniqueness of multiracial races through the 1 Malaysia concept with mutual respect and tolerance.

National identity representation through the NL 2.0 film can be seen through the presentation of social background and racial background in Malaysia. The national identity that is represented in the film is not much different from the reality of the audience. In addition, national identity can be seen through the expression of local culture that apply the concept of 1 Malaysia in life. The adoption of this local culture constitutes a national identity, in which all ethnicities feel united. The adoption of this local culture constitutes a national identity, in which all ethnicities feel united. The interpretation of national identity messages also creates an entity that can adapt the culture of another race in everyday life. This openness and other ethnic acceptance in terms of culture transforms the pattern of thought and life that forms a Malaysian society that has a Malaysian spirit. The application of national culture in informants

leads to the liquidity of ethnic identity and forms the identity of ethnic-national identities in informal life. The establishment of ethnic identity-the identity of this nationality and ethnicity is also influenced by self-reflection, the social world (environment) and the informant family. This view also coincides with the study by Rosmawati Mohamad Rasit et al. (2013) found that the environment, personal factors and behaviours are closely related to each other and contribute to the decisions and actions taken by adolescents. This shows that informants are also influenced by their environment and personal factors.

Recommendations

The production of this movie is trying to bring Malaysia's diverse ethnicity naturally. Malaysia is a country of diverse races, religions and races where the majority of its population practices its own way of life (Lydiana Thessin, 2017). This suggests that the film is trying to imagine the ethnically naturally and ethnic expressions that are fabricated or stereotyped by force. This can be seen through the findings of this study, although the Malaysian community consists of various races, but the informant's views on Malaysian society are the same as the united society through the concept of 1 Malaysia, unity and nationalism. According to Mohd Ayop (2017), Malaysians are 'heterogeneous' with ethnicity, ethnicity, religion and origin, but high sense of togetherness and unity can raise national consciousness in one territory. In addition, the concept of Malaysian film (Malaysian Cinema) which still has not been able to describe 'Malaysia' is actually in the social interaction of the multi-racial Malaysian society. The meaning of Malaysia cinema, according to Asiah Sarji (2006) is a Malay film categorized as Malaysian cinema, as Malay is the national or national language.

Conclusion

The media used is the NL 2.0 film, using *nasi lemak* as a symbol of the multi-racial society in Malaysia. NL 2.0 is a movie that represents the reality of the Malaysian life. The social reality presented in the film has similarities from the point of ethnic relations to the realities of informant life, through national identity. The formation of national identity-national identities can be seen through this film that leads to the formation of national culture. In addition, informants agree with the dominant value expressed in the text of the film which is through the representation of the concept of 1 Malaysia, the unity and spirit of nationalism introduced by the government. Informants agree with the text of the film that brings ideology by the government (1 Malaysia) and ensures the formation of national identity exists in the younger generation. Informants' acceptance of the concept of 1 Malaysia is also associated with the reality of their lives by adopting the principle of acceptance and tolerance in daily life. As for national unity and spirit, this acceptance clearly demonstrates that national identity in the younger generation is never faded.

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