Rethinking national identity construction through independent films in the Indonesia creative industry

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ABSTRACT

Background: The creative industry in Yogyakarta, since the post-reformation era, specifically the independent film industry, has been producing films that challenge the meaning and interpretation of national identity in its society. Yogyakarta independent films offer different discourses concerning the constructions of national identity. Thus, within this current context of the post-reformation era, the notion of national identity needs proper scrutiny. **Purpose:** The main purpose of this study is to define and understand the manifestations of Indonesian national identity as depicted in independent films during the post-reformation era within Yogyakarta's creative city, utilizing Benedict Anderson's (2006) imagined community concept. **Methods:** This study conducted a qualitative research methodology using the text analysis of four selected independent films and in-depth interviews with 27 informants located in Yogyakarta. The primary source of the data collected in this study were the textual analyses and the in-depth interviews. **Results:** The results of this study indicate that within the horizontal comradeship dimension, the notion of multiple interpretations of national identity was highlighted through the issues on the diversity of ethnic identity, modernization, Islamic fundamentalist organization, the promotion of local language, and community attachment to the nation's symbols. Meanwhile, in the context of the geographical boundaries dimension, the regional attachment within the territory where the communities live implied the important role of the Yogyakarta Monarchy system and as a sovereign power of a Special Region in influencing the diverse interpretations of national identity. **Implications:** The findings indicated that the past historical meaning of *Pancasila,* which underscored a requirement for homogeneous identities within the society, contrasted with the evidence found, which demonstrated the evidence of diversity or heterogeneous identity.

Keywords: Independent film; creative city; imagined communities; collective memory; geographical boundaries

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INTRODUCTION

The issues of national identity are important to most countries, particularly from the point of view of strengthening national unity and stability. Creative industry development is linked to economic development issues and national identity formed in the context of globalization (Higgs & Cunningham, 2008). Creativity is defined as the feature of the nation's national identity; thus, creative industries are important for the nation's prosperity and the nation's ability to put culture and creativity at the center of the communities' national life (Huang et al., 2009). The film industry, one of the creative industry sub-sectors, contributes significantly to creating economic growth (Putri et al., 2019) and strengthening the national identity of many nations that are driving the creative industry to compete in the global world. The film industry provides a platform for promoting symbolic representations of national unity, leading to the formation of national identity. The existence of a strong national identity, in the end, can elevate the nation's economic development.

Based on Anderson's (2006) perspective, community sameness built nationality; Anderson explains that the sense of national identity is imagined through the community members, which they achieve. Thus, it is also shaped by political agenda rather than only by history and kinship (Anderson, 2006). Related to the national identity, a film strategically contributes to deploying collective ideas about how to be a nation. In order to maintain the cultural/

local identity, films can be used as a medium to communicate ideas with a new subjectivity that is apart from the influence of colonialism ideology, globalization, or even Westernization (Wurgaft, 1995). The existence of ideological precipitates to the modernity captivation, either the orientation of thinking and everyday life practices, the desire to maintain its traditional culture is a form of cultural multiplicity that characterizes Indonesia's community, especially among the urban youths and professionals (Heryanto, 2015). Thus, the condition became an advantage to the formation of the national identity concept.

This paper has two research questions to present research findings: First, what is the extent of the existence of multiple notions of national identity, which are produced within the independent film texts, since the post-reformation era? What are the perceptions of the independent film community vis-à-vis national identity in Indonesia? And second, what are the explanations for the imagined communities of national identity, as depicted in the film texts and as rationalized by the independent film community?

In understanding the notion of national identity, this article proposes that the imagined community discourses on (multiple) national identity would/not be space/geographically bound in such a special region as Yogyakarta and that the multiple interpretations of national identity, which would be reflected through the concept of imagined communities, could

portray the extant of alignment towards/away from *Pancasila*. In many varied contexts, this article would investigate the intersections between the need to uphold social justice/ humanitarian values and the unique ethnic/ religion/cultural traditions of ethnic Javanese and non-Javanese migrants (as hypothesized to be evident from the findings on 'imagined communities'), against the influences from the independent film community.

Hence, the main purpose of this article is to define and understand the manifestations of Indonesia's (multiple) national identities as depicted in independent films during the post-reformation era within Yogyakarta's creative city. The manifestations of national identity are investigated through the concept of imagined communities: communities that may have similar interests and experiences and which hold in their minds a mental image of their affinity and identify themselves as part of the same nation.

National identity in Indonesia is an issue of uniting people from different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world, with an estimated population of over 270 million. There are approximately 17,500 islands divided into 34 provinces, around 1,340 distinct ethnic groups, and an estimated 718 languages and dialects. National identity is very important as it functions as an integrative symbol and unifies the nation, becoming a large nation with a plural society and heterogeneous background. National identity is measured through the elements of national symbols, which are language (Hansen, 2015), landscape, national flag, music and art, and sporting elements (Bechhofer & McCrone, 2013).

The concept of Indonesian national identity in juridical approach regulated in 1945 Indonesian Constitution chapter XV about the Indonesian flag, language, state emblem, and national anthem clause 35, 36A, 36B, and 36C (Utomo, 2009). The constitution clauses above explain Indonesia's flag, language, national emblem, and national anthem. It's said that Indonesia's flag is red and white, Indonesia's language is *Bahasa Indonesia*, Indonesia's national emblem is *Garuda Pancasila* with *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* as the national motto, and Indonesia's national anthem is Indonesia Raya.

However, there is still a potential danger of dividing the national unity in post-independence from the ethnic diversity and diverse nation of Indonesia. To avoid conflicts, the government shared a sense of nationhood, such as the form of the Indonesian language and the state philosophy of *Pancasila*. Soekarno proposed the concept of the five principles of *Pancasila*. The five principles, in other words, discuss monotheism, humanism, nationalism, democracy, and social justice.

Pancasila was born as a concept to unite the common share between the peoples. *Pancasila* acts as the symbol of monotheism in the notion of Indonesia's national identity. *Pancasila* is

used to promote the unity concept of national identity in Indonesia's multicultural society.

However, in the post-reformation era, the notion of multiple (national) identities in Indonesia needed an examination for proper understanding. The creative city, especially through its film independence, can be used as a medium to share ideas about the nation, thus defining the concept of national identity within a heterogeneous society. Yogyakarta is a multicultural and multiethnic community, which draws its uniqueness as a dynamic community (Putri et al., 2018). Yogyakarta is one of the most creative cities in Indonesia, and through the city, we can identify the process of ideas of national identity notion (.ibid).

With regard to its importance for understanding the notion of multiple (national) identities, Yogyakarta presents an important cultural/historical background. It is a special region led by a monarchy system with autonomous governance from the Indonesian government. Its 'more positive' alignment with *Pancasila* today could be traced back to its heritage as a patriot city of Indonesia, and since the tenets of *Pancasila* uphold the notion of a pluralistic nation, Yogyakarta, also known as mini Indonesia, offers a prime setting for understanding the notion of national identity, with the existence of the largest number of Javanese ethnics, and with it being a homeland for the fusion of cultures (Hindu, Budha and Islam) and a large number of migrant communities and organizations.

Anderson's perspective regarding imagined community explained that the experience shared amongst the community members can be achieved through the role of mass media. Mass media made society experience the same idea. Moreover, due to society's changes and development, Anderson argued that people who consume the same media would begin to perceive something in common (Anderson, 2006). This commonness leads to the idea of national identity. Mass media shares the idea among the members of the community and provides narratives that unfold specific issues. The common experience is built between the people in the society and, in the end, forms the notion of national identity.

Therefore, through the explanation above, a certain context helps us understand an imagined community. First, the notion of national identity is constructed in people's minds, forming a collective memory by sharing history and common experiences. These same experiences build a horizontal comradeship even though they never meet. Second, the community's imagination about the notion of national identity is strictly delimited. This delimitation describes the boundaries of the nation, which are limited within its geographic territory, and the existence of partition by culture, ethnicity, and social structure amongst the community. Thus, the concept of imagined communities within the study will elaborate through the dimensions of collective memory and geographical boundaries.

The context of collective memory includes historical memory and horizontal comradeship. The context of historical memory underlines the communities' thoughts towards the past memory in experiencing a certain event, often in relation to the political (official) national identity (A. Maxwell, 2005). Indonesia is a post-colonial nation, where this condition added the history or memory of their imagination to the notion of national identity (Martin-Jones, 2006). The context of horizontal comradeship refers to an agreement or sense of communion between people who often do not know each other towards their imagination of the notion of national identity. Further, this form of imagination is then accepted as a strong sense of togetherness, which attaches them to the nation. The context of geographical boundaries is defined as the community's thoughts towards their territory. This context, related to the territory within the community, takes place (Phillips, 2002). It discusses the surroundings or an environment that impacts the imagination.

To understand the concept of imagined community within the context mentioned above, unfortunately, the works of literature that are available mostly look at only one context or are related to one certain identity lens. The concept of the imagined community looked at national identity as society's construct of national identity since the communities imagined it. Furthermore, it also said that communities need a catalyst to form the 'sameness' towards the notion of national identity. Thus, it is important

to study the manifestation of national identity through the concept of imagined community by looking at the various identity lenses and all the contexts of imagined community. Therefore, this study analyzed the concept of imagined community through the analysis of the film's element, a catalyst for building 'sameness' amongst the film community members. The explanation of the film's elements, as well as the identity lenses and the conceptual framework, assisted the understanding of the concept of imagined community.

In this study context, the national identity lenses included ethnicity, culture, religion, language, and community kinship lenses. Community kinship lenses include the nation's symbols, the presence of social issues regarding the territory, or geographic and political (government construct) national identity. The film's elements, as presented in the previous section, show the portrayal of the identity lenses.

Furthermore, independent film is considered as the catalyst in sharing the 'sameness' within the community. In understanding the films, we can analyze the extent of the existence of multiple notions of national identity and the perception of the film community. Baumgartel (2011) argues that independent films in Southeast Asia portray the idea of national identity within the film community. He proposed future research to investigate the film's narrative, such as character, dialogue, issues, etc., to analyze the local conditions (Baumgärtel, 2011). However, his recommendations do not directly address

the type of narrative of the film, which is able to explain the manifestation of national identity portrayed in independent films.

The Yogyakarta filmmakers still own their idealism in making the films (Hoesterey & Clark, 2012), not merely depend on the rotation of commercial and industrialization. Indonesia produces various film genres ranging from dramas, romances, and comedies, some of them with patriotic or Islamic themes or new-wave horror and festival-friendly art-house fare (David et al., 2013). The variety of film genres and stories developed after the film industry was reborn, after the strict regulations era in the New Order era government (Kitley, 2014).

Therefore, this study analyzes four film elements, consisting of the film's themes/ issues (Khatib, 2006 and Harman, 2016), the film's character and characterization (Holland, 2012; R. Maxwell, 2006), the film's setting (Raju, 2015; Berry, 2016; Semikhat, 2010) and film's symbols (Holland, 2012). Each of these elements portrayed a diverse discourse of national identities, such as religion, culture, ethnicity, historical memory, nation's symbols, and language. The manifestation of national identity is defined as the multiple interpretations of the notion of national identity since we are living in a post-modern society (Sidorenko, 2013). These multiple interpretations are the result of community perception and thoughts about certain identity lenses, such as ethnic identity, cultural identity, and so on. Therefore, the film's element, as presented above, would analyze certain identity lenses to assist the understanding of the manifestation of national identity in independent films.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study has conducted a qualitative research methodology with a constructivist paradigm for the framework of the study. The study was conducted in Yogyakarta Creative City, within the study of four selected independent films. The data generation will be conducted through text analysis through the binary opposition analysis, equipped with in-depth interviews. In the films, the audience reads the story in the form of visual (Crane, 2014), audio, and symbol texts, whereas on the other hand, the interviews result in the perspective of textual analysis, enacting their role in social interaction. The methods were selected in order to fulfill the research purpose of understanding the manifestation of Indonesian national identity as depicted in Yogyakarta independent films during the post-reformation era, in the year 2009 until 2017.

There are several steps involved in this study. First, the researcher narrows the research questions that will shape the research design, research methods, and data generation techniques. Second, evidence was collected from film text analysis and in-depth interviews. Lastly, the researcher identifies and explains patterns found in the film texts and equips the findings with the in-depth interview results. Furthermore, this study applied a textual

analysis of the chosen film's texts within the narrative analysis through the binary opposition analysis.

Meanwhile, in order to understand the film community's thoughts on their imagination of how national identity ought to be portrayed in films, this research conducted in-depth interviews. The informants were selected based on their attachment to the four selected independent films, which consist of the producers, directors, actresses, distributors, and government. In the in-depth interview method, the process starts with the translation of speech (interview results) into writing. The stages of in-depth interviews used in this research consist of organizing the data, verbatim writing, and finding and organizing ideas and concepts.

In regard to the selected independent films, the number of films has been limited to 4 films in order to provide a detailed textual analysis of each work. The selected films are *Mata Tertutup* (2011), *Siti* (2014), *Kitorang Bersaudara* (2015) and *Incang Inceng* (2017). In relation to the in-depth interviews, this research has

Table 1 In-depth Interviews Informants Description

No.	Informants Code	Job Position
1.	FC12, FC5, FC2, FC4	International Award-Winning Film Director (4 person)
2.	FC25	Publicist / Film Distributor
3.	FC15, FC16	Actress / Non-Javanese (2 person)
4.	FC3	The Advisory Board of Study Center / Film Director
5.	FC22	Yogyakarta Culture Department
6.	FC26	Actress / Javanese Culture Communities
7.	FC7	Owner of Production House
8.	FC8	Small business owners/traders organizations, Production Manager
9.	FC6	Yogyakarta City Tourism Service
10.	FC17	Non-Javanese / JAFF Volunteer
11.	FC9	Distributor and Exhibitor
12.	FC1	Production House Owner, Film Director and Producer
13.	FC21	Lecturer / Film Director
14.	FC10	Actress / Javanese Culture Communities
15.	FC18	Producer
16.	FC24	Director
17.	FC19	Senior Journalist, Film Critiques, Non- Javanese
18.	FC20	Film Curator / Film Critiques
19.	FC11	Short Film Director / JAFF Volunteer
20.	FC27	Founder of Film Community, Director
21.	FC23	Production House Owner, Filmmaker Community / Independent film community
22.	FC13	International Award-Winning Film Director / Founder of Film Festival
23.	FC14	Film Festival Manager/Director, Chief of Publicist Film Festival

Source: Self-Developed by Researcher

interviewed 27 relevant informants. The 27 informants were the film community, which relates to the four selected independent films. The informants came from a wide range of professions, consisting of the director, producer, distributor, actress, film curator, journalist, film festival organizer, film researcher, and the representatives of the Yogyakarta Department of Culture. The description of the in-depth interview informants can be seen in Table 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of selected independent films reveals both similarities and differences within the film text's components, which include themes/ideas, main character/characterization, setting, and symbols. These similarities stem from the use of binary opposition aspects, while differences arise from the film's unique discourses and portrayals. In addition to the binary opposition, these findings also identify the film's discourses towards *Pancasila* within its five principles, which discuss monotheism, humanism, nationalism, democracy, and social justice. This film's discourses towards *Pancasila* investigated the meaning of selected independent film texts against the elite-politic agenda and the (official) national identity.

There are two parts in the following section: first, the description of binary opposition meaning followed through by the film's elements analysis. These findings, conducted within each identity lens, recited the entire film simultaneously. The second part is the description of the film's discourses towards *Pancasila*. These findings explained the film text's meaning regarding issues of *Pancasila*, which often arises from the understanding and implementation of *Pancasila* as the nation's ideology in society's daily lives. In understanding these discourses, we could observe the extant multiple interpretations, which show an alignment towards/away from *Pancasila.*

On the other hand, in-depth interviews present the perceptions of the independent film community toward national identity. The descriptive findings follow through from the five national identities (with binary oppositions) lens findings of the four independent film texts. The findings proceeded with contextualizing these lenses into a broader realm (in relation to varied issues experienced by the society) through the descriptions of the perceptions of the informants on (national) identity vis-à-vis ethnicity, culture, religion, language, and community kinship. The descriptive findings below, alluding to the conflicts in the mental/emotional construction of national identity, will demonstrate that the national identity discourse, as actively being demonstrated through the independent film texts, is concomitantly taken up as a media agenda for the independent film community.

The binary opposition has investigated the meaning of film elements and how these meanings are associated with them, either positive or negative. The binary opposition

explained the meaning over the five identity lenses (ethnicity, culture, religion, language, and community kinship) to understand the multiple interpretations of national identity, which are produced within the selected independent film texts. The binary opposition within the selected independent films towards five identity lenses is mentioned as follows. The selected independent film texts on binary opposition can be seen in Table 2.

Third, in religious identity lenses, the texts portrayed radical vs. moderate, acceptance vs. decline, humanity vs. capitalism, and traditional belief vs. religion. The binary opposition meaning describes issues of radicalism through the presence of fundamentalist organizations, the decrease of society's acceptance of different religious practices, the depiction of capitalist religious institutions, and the portrayal of traditional belief practices.

Fourth, the language identity lenses, as described by binary oppositions, encompass 'official vs. unofficial' and 'unity vs. diversity.' These language identity lenses not only depict the usage of the Indonesian language but also extend to local languages such as Javanese,

Table 2 Films Texts Similarity and Differences Binary Opposition

National Identity Lenses Within the Imagined Concept	Binary Opposition	The Selected Independent Films			
		Mata Tertutup	*Siti*	*Kitorang Basudara*	*Incang-Inceng*
Ethnic Identity	Majority vs. Minority	-	-	✓	-
	Heterogeneous vs. Homogenous	✓	-	✓	✓
	Diverse vs. Mono	-	-	✓	✓
Cultural Identity	Modern vs. Traditional	✓	✓	-	-
	Eastern vs. Western	-	✓	-	-
	Tolerance vs. Intolerance	-	-	✓	✓
Religion Identity	Radical vs. Moderate	✓	-	-	-
	Acceptance vs. Decline	-	-	-	✓
	Humanity vs. Capitalism	✓	-	-	-
	Traditional Belief vs. religion	-	✓	-	-
Language	Official vs. Unofficial	✓	✓	-	-
	Unity vs. Diverse	-	-	✓	✓
Community Kinship Nation Symbols (*Pancasila*, Uniform, ID Card, Flag, and National Song)	Power vs. Subservience	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Sense of Belonging vs. Ignorant	✓	✓	-	-
	Loyalty vs. Betrayal	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Self-Developed by Researcher

Papuan, and *Minangkabau*, further enriched by the inclusion of local accents.

Fifth, in the community kinship identity lenses, the binary oppositions are power vs. subservience, sense of belonging vs. ignorance, and loyalty vs. betrayal. The community kinship identity lenses discussed in regards to the community attachment towards the nation's symbols, which in this study context includes *Pancasila*, uniform, ID card, national flag, and national song. This kinship in the nation's symbols portrays the society's attachment to their nation.

This finding discussed the point of view of informants, which contextualized the binary opposition findings of the text analyses. These points of view explained the societal, real-life, day-to-day issues underlying the five national identity lenses. While the film texts depicted the binary oppositions, henceforth, the multiple notions of national identity from five national identity lenses, this particular finding described the comments of the independent film community on national identity, comments which supplement (and complement) the binary opposition descriptions on national identity, giving insights into the multiple interpretations of national identity, as depicted within the four film texts.

In (re)questioning the *Pancasila* values, the finding on film texts shows that the selected independent films portray the issues of socio-economy rather than political issues. The issues are touching on internal conflicts that always occur in Indonesia, which can arise not only because of ethnic, cultural, and religious conflicts but also because of tendencies in certain sports groups. In brief, even though the selected films describe the questions through issues that implicitly relate to the values in the five principles of *Pancasila*, they portray the society winning against the issues.

The films describe the attachment to the national symbols in order to unite the differences amongst the society (Vedina & Baumane, 2009) and develop a sense of nationalism and patriotism with the binary meaning of loyalty to the nation and struggle to defend the nation or even a certain community or group.

In the in-depth interview findings, the main point reiterated on ethnic identity was on discrimination and societal judgment towards the minority ethnic group and, subsequently, on the sensitive need for more representation of certain ethnic identities within the creative product. Interestingly, within the cultural identity context, the informants highlighted the aptitude towards multicultural (modern) values, which, facilitated by the *Sultan* and (the role of) *Keraton,* have allowed for the proliferation of various interpretations of national identity to surface.

In addition, the comments on religion and identity demonstrated the thorny issue surrounding national identity: what is considered as freedom of religious life in Indonesia (as prescribed in the *Pancasila*), hence, freedom in portrayal and interpretation

of one's religious (ethnic) identity, and thus, multiple interpretations of (national) identity, is a major source of conflict. Yet, when it comes to language and identity, it was seen as a unifying force that brings together the diverse (cultural/ religious/ethnic) societies within Indonesia. Finally, what perhaps brings out the unique characteristics of the

Formulation of national identity in Yogyakarta city is the comments in relation to community kinship where past experiences of the national identity narratives were seen as important and significant in light of how the Monarchy system influences directly (and indirectly) the interpretation of national identity today.

The in-depth interview results can be seen in Table 3. The study findings on the notion of national identity within the imagined communities' concept in Yogyakarta are elaborated into the dimensions of collective memory and geographical boundaries. First, the context of collective memory, and second, the context of geographical boundaries, which described the context of the dynastic realm and sovereign of Yogyakarta's creative city.

The collective memory dimension consists of historical memory, which discusses the community memory within the past memory and horizontal comradeship. We will explore horizontal comradeship through the lens of identity, encompassing ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic, and communal aspects. The geographical boundaries dimension discussed Yogyakarta as a creative city and its impact on the independent film community.

Table 3 In-depth Interview Results

Key-Question to Be Addressed	Answers
Historical memory	FC3, FC22, FC23: Agreement on nation's declaration on the political formulation of national identity: *Pancasila*
	FC25, FC3, FC10: Society issues of fundamentalism, poverty, patriarchy, gender roles, racism and discrimination, society judgment and tolerance, and patriotism**.**
	FC7, FC8, FC26: Presentation of the diversity of heterogeneous identity through the representation of minority ethnic and language.
Horizontal comradeship	FC25, FC15, FC16: Indonesian identity lenses represented through ethnicity, culture, religion, language, and community kinship.
	FC17, FC1, FC24: A discourse on heterogeneous and diverse society, modernization towards the values of traditional culture, freedom of expression through religion and political identity, and promotion of the local language and attachment to nation's symbols.
Geographical boundaries	FC20, FC19: Yogyakarta encouraged the formation of the national identity.
	FC12, FC5, FC2, FC4, FC6: The creative environment of the people that ensures openness to express opinions and works of art.
	FC11, FC14, FC27, FC23, FC13: Yogyakarta's creative city offers its own style of (re)creating the notion of national identity.
	FC21, FC18, FC17, FC9: Imagined communities are recreated through their cultural products, specifically independent film.

Source: Self-Developed by Researcher

Collective memory, in this study, is described as a memory that has been taken on by a group as their memory, whether they have experienced it directly or not. The collective memory includes historical memory and horizontal comradeship. The past memory within the binary opposition towards the identity lenses shows memory differences in responding to the construction of the notion of national identity. The findings show that the members of the film community in Yogyakarta shared their thoughts on agreeing that the notion of national identity should oppose the formation of homogeneous identities promoted by the New Order government and support the diversity of heterogeneous identity, as according to them, Indonesia should be described. In relation to heterogeneous identity, it shows that the diverse ethnic identity portrayed within the representation of the film's main characters promotes the Javanese, Papuan, Chinese, and *Minangkabau* ethnic groups. These ethnic groups constitute a minority in Indonesia (Hoon, 2006) and have increasingly emerged as central elements in cultural identity narratives in films since the 2010s (Hidayat et al., 2021). Notably, the inclusion of diverse content, such as the portrayal of *Minangkabau* culture in the history of Indonesian cinema, indirectly reflects the wealth of local perspectives as sources of cinematic creativity.

The context of heterogeneous identity is also supported through the utilization of the local languages, such as Javanese, Papua,

and *Minangkabau* language, as the main language used in the films. This local language presentation in the film responds to the past government prohibition to display other languages than the Indonesian language.

In the Indonesian context, the big idea of Indonesian national identity is the presence of *Pancasila* as the nation's ideology as well as the other nation's symbols such as the Indonesian language, national song, uniform, and flag. Nevertheless, the promotion of *Pancasila* and other nation's symbols under the New Order government era became a symbol of government political ideas on national identity, complete with all the sacred sites, public holidays, parades, ceremonies, and textbooks. The discussion on the notion of Indonesian national identity, within this study, is conducted along with the nation's declaration on the political formulation of national identity, which is *Pancasila.* However, the findings in the film texts described that the informants were criticizing the failure of *Pancasila* implementation through the societal issues of fundamentalism, poverty, patriarchy, gender roles, racism and discrimination, society judgment and tolerance, and patriotism, which are told in the films.

The horizontal comradeship in this context of the study is defined within the term of sense of 'sameness,' or sense of communion amongst the community members. This term shows the film community agreement within a certain context of identity lenses. In this study, it refers to identity lenses of ethnicity, culture,

religion, language, and community kinship. The horizontal comradeship demonstrated these key highlights on the binary oppositions, with contextual explanations coming from the perceptions of the independent film community: a discourse on heterogeneous and diverse society portrayal in the films (ethnic identity lenses), a discourse on the influences of modernization towards the values of traditional culture (culture identity lenses); a discourse on the freedom of expression through religion and identity (religion identity lenses), where, political interests and extremism are tolerated; a discourse on the promotion of the local language (in addition to the national Indonesian language) in independent films (language identity lenses); and a discourse on the attachment to nation's symbols (community kinship lenses).

The geographical boundaries, in this study, refer to the territory, time, and situations where the films were made. The films are the creative products of Yogyakarta Creative City, which promotes and encourages freedom of expression through creative and unique approaches to narrations in filmmaking. The findings indicated that both the film texts and perception of the independent film community demonstrated tendencies toward (re)creating multiple interpretations of national identity, and as such, there is/are sufficient space(s) for imagined communities of national identity to be recreated through their cultural products, specifically independent films.

Moreover, the results indicated that Yogyakarta, with its monarchy system, directly and indirectly, encouraged the formation of the national identity (and its multiple interpretations) within the community through special regulations of *Keraton*, which forms part of a long history of the development of the city. The city is the center of Javanese culture and presents a commitment to the creative environment of the people that ensures openness to express opinions and works of art. Yogyakarta's film industry grew out of the existence of communities that have their roots penetrating the young generation, which offer a contrasting experience of national identity when compared to the past experiences of the older generations. The atmosphere of the city develops the best environment for the growth of the creative community, hence leading to the rapid growth of the community of independent film in Yogyakarta. The perceptions regarding the creative city environment of Yogyakarta demonstrated that the communities in Yogyakarta continue to be productive and produce the best works of art, showcasing the ecosystem of the alternative film industry. In Yogyakarta, the government supports the industry by providing financial help. The government supports and encourages a fluid discourse on the idea of national identity.

Hence, the dominant constructions of national identity have led to discourses on diversity and, subsequently, on the concept of banal nationalism (Bechhofer & McCrone, 2013). The analysis showed how diversity was

portrayed through language, as an example, and how the day-to-day living (of banal nationalism) was being reflected within the multiple interpretations of national identity, while symbols of national unity and attachment towards the nations are continuously invoked.

In this study context, Yogyakarta Creative City offers its own style of (re)creating the nations and notion of national identity, and in the same way, these are spaces where imagined national communities are recreated through their cultural products (Raju, 2015), specifically independent film. This characterization of Yogyakarta as a meeting place, a space where society members build friendship and community ties, and a place where social networks and the economy sector strengthen emphasizes its role in the spread of national identity discourses.

Therefore, Yogyakarta is considered to be a space or site containing a diverse population of people that enables communication and the exchange of information in formulating the notion of national identity. Moreover, Yogyakarta's creative city not only provides the spaces and the attachment to the cultural roots, which includes the diverse community but the Monarchy system itself also connects the community's attachment to the city's political ideology.

Thus, within the context of this study, the monarchy system, with all the consequences, such as the strong embedded values of cultural roots, the availability of creative space, and the commitment of the local government to

protecting the community, made the community amongst Yogyakarta creative city have a large tendency in the region as compared to the state. Therefore, these study findings offer the notion of multiple interpretations of national identity, as portrayed through the selected films and the ideas amongst the informants. The notion of national identity demonstrated the society's memory of issues surrounding fundamentalism, poverty, patriarchy, gender roles, racism and discrimination, society judgment and tolerance, and patriotism in society.

These issues are seen as the crux of the problem of the continuing debate on the discourse of national identity and encourage society to accept alternative narratives as compared to the government's set of narration on the notion of national identity. The condition is in accordance with Harman (2016), who described that the historical elements portrayed in the new form of media, such as film, develop a new notion of national identity, which is against the elite political agenda on the notion of national identity (Harman, 2016). Moreover, independent films offer different narratives of national identity, simultaneously addressing societal issues and providing social criticism through unique/unlikely stories, according to Baumgärtel (2011), different from mainstream cinema that played its part in shaping nations into 'imagined communities' by focusing on shared spaces and times, the contemporary independent films of South East Asia present the issues that unresolved, proscribed or taboo

in their countries. South East Asia nations have issues in terms of democracy, political freedom, distribution of wealth, the colonial past and the forging of a stable national identity, gender issues, ecology, and the rights of minorities (Baumgärtel, 2011).

Despite the themes and issues raised through the different identity lenses, the selected films showed the attachment to national (official) memory through the presence of the nation's symbols, such as the national song, flag, identity card, uniform, and national language indicated an effort to form a discourse on the importance of nationalism and banal nationalism, which unites the diverse notion of interpretations of national identity. This strong connection to the nation's symbols indicates the alignment of film directors in the formulation of national identity vis-a-vis *Pancasila*, henceforth giving due prominence to its role as the philosophy that guides how day-to-day living should manifest in Indonesia's society, especially in uniting the diverse population in Indonesia. Accordingly, the national symbols not only act as a reminder of a sense of nationalism but also as the identification in bonding the nation (Ortmann, 2009). Interestingly, the findings of this research indicate that despite increasing government support for freedom of expression, the perceived alignment with *Pancasila* values and the national (official) identity suggests that independent filmmakers were less critical of the government.

Thus, this alignment towards the *Pancasila*

ideology reflects an important contribution to the concept of imagined communities, as investigated within the context of this Post-Reformation era, where the creative industry in Yogyakarta offers alternative narratives to the meaning of national identity. Through the film texts, the independent film community, residing within a creative city that promotes diversity, imagines a socially constructed notion of national identity as juxtaposing a negotiation of multiple meanings of national identity through the variety of 'sameness' against, the symbols which represent one united feeling about the nation- -that there is a continuous need to harmonize the implementation of *Pancasila* ideology, to respond to the different identity experiences both positive and negative, as depicted through the film text analyses.

More so, the ideal notion of national identity, imagined and aspired by the independent film community, revolves around a vision of cultural diversity to encourage society to accept diversity without 'homogenizing' their identity and, thus, cast aside a dominant view of one ethnic origin or culture identity, in the negotiating space of the meaning of national identity. Hence, while alignment towards *Pancasila* values is evident, attention needs to be given to the issues of fundamentalism, discrimination, gender roles, patriarchy, poverty, and social judgment.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study addresses two research questions. The first research question

was to investigate the extent of the existence of multiple notions of national identity, which have been produced within independent film texts since the post-reformation era. The study found that this existence was portrayed through multiple interpretations within the five identity lenses (ethnicity, culture, religion, language, and community kinship. The multiple interpretations are the results of binary opposition, meaning analysis of the film's elements. In the term of five identity lenses, the agreement within the film community members on this binary opposition meaning is developed through various discourses, including the heterogeneous and diverse society portrayal in the films, the influence of modernization towards the values of traditional culture, the presence of Islam fundamentalist organization and the political interest amongst the leader of Islamic organization; and the community attachment to nation's symbols.

The second research question was to investigate the perceptions of the independent film community vis-à-vis national identity in Indonesia, specifically on ethnicity, culture, religion, language, and community kinship. The findings underline the potential of the formulation of a nation's unique characteristics through various ethnicities, cultures, religions, and languages and the possibility of promoting certain identities within the creative product.

In the end, this study defined the notion of national identity, as depicted in the film texts and as rationalized by the independent film community, within the exploration of collective memory and geographical dimensions. In the concept of historical memory, the study has shown that the historical memory of the Yogyakarta independent film community is the identification of the communities experienced in relations with the past Government era and their perceptions towards the concept of *Pancasila* and national (official) memory. The horizontal comradeship in the context of this study is defined within the term sense of 'sameness,' or sense of communion amongst the community members, which is defined through the issues surrounding the identity lenses. Meanwhile, the geographical boundary dimensions are described through the Monarchy system and special regions. These dimensions opened the door to the basic question of the notion of Indonesian national identity.

Moreover, this study offers information on the manifestation of the societal construct of national identity. This study shows that the independent film community developed the discourses on national identity within multiple interpretations towards several highlighted issues on five identity lenses (ethnicity, culture, religion, language, and community kinship). In relation to *Pancasila*, this study shows an alignment towards *Pancasila* values. However, there were also issues regarding the *Pancasila* implementation, such as fundamentalism, discrimination, gender-related issues, patriarchy, poverty, and societal biases. Accordingly, the film texts have the potential

to arouse new discourses on national identity, which this industry should leverage as they help educate and develop society's understanding of what national identity is and/or is supposed to be. In addition, the independent film industry's distinctive ability to excel in producing niche films that explore themes of patriotism and nationalism, comparable to international counterparts, plays a pivotal role in enhancing Indonesia's entertainment and creative sectors, consequently contributing to the nation's economic growth.

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