

Cinema as a Political Propaganda Tool: New Order Strategies in Shaping Power Narratives Through Film

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Abstract: Cinema during the New Order era (1966–1998) served as an effective political tool to bolster regime legitimacy through anti-communist and pro-development discourses. This study analyzes three films, namely *Janur Kuning* (1979), *Serangan Fajar* (1982), and *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (1984), which consistently portray Soeharto as a narrative and historical hero in the events of the March 1, 1949 General Offensive and the 1965 Gestapu affair. The research aims to examine how New Order cinema produced dominant discourses through film narratives that glorified Soeharto and to evaluate the role of funding and distribution policies in disseminating propaganda. The study employs a historical research method, comprising 1) heuristics, 2) criticism, 3) interpretation, and 4) historiography. Findings reveal that the three films elevated Soeharto through scenes depicting his personal sacrifices, such as leaving his heavily pregnant wife, his military leadership against the Dutch, and his suppression of the PKI coup, portrayed as a greedy act. Selective funding policies ensured the production of propaganda films, while mass distribution, including mandatory screenings in schools and on TVRI, expanded the reach of anti-communist discourse. This cinema shaped public perceptions, particularly among the younger generation, that Soeharto was the nation's savior while demonizing the PKI as an ideological enemy. Discourse analysis demonstrates that film narratives were a New Order strategy to maintain hegemony, with cinema functioning as a coordinated political instrument to shape collective memory in support of regime legitimacy. This study affirms that New Order cinema was not merely entertainment but a deliberate political tool to consolidate Soeharto's power through militaristic nationalism.

Keywords : Cinema, New Order Political Policy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The New Order was the period of President Soeharto's government in Indonesia from 1966 to 1998. The initial momentum of the birth of the New Order was after the issuance of the March 11, 1966 Letter of Command. The New Order was essentially a system that aimed to create a social, political, economic, and cultural life inspired by the morals of Pancasila, especially the principle of Belief in the One Almighty God. (Dwipayama, 1989)

The New Order government succeeded in creating political stability through strong government power. This ability became the foundation of success in various sectors. The effective political power of the New Order was supported by four main pillars: physical and legal repression, economic clientelism, particularistic political discourse that strengthened authoritarianism, and the development of state corporatism (Pratikno, 1998)

The New Order government, in an effort to solidify political consolidation in the early 1970s, used violence as the main tool to achieve political stability. For this purpose, a number of intelligence agencies were formed to control society, such as BAIS (Strategic Intelligence Agency) whose members were military elements, and BAKIN (Intelligence Coordination Agency) which was largely filled by civilians (Tanter, 1991). Another repressive institution, the

Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Kopkamtib), had a role that was not limited to eradicating the remnants of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). This institution was also tasked with handling various threats to national security, including monitoring and controlling press activities and supervising individuals who were considered critical of government policies, in order to maintain the political stability of the New Order (Pratikno, 1998)

As a military-based regime that had difficulty gaining pure political support from the people, the New Order had developed a 'money politics' as an effort to gain the loyalty of the political elite. This strategy is implemented through several main ways. First, the process of state-ization of economic resource management is carried out. Second, the government centralizes the management of economic resources in the central government and places local governments merely as implementers and even spectators. Third, the resource allocation mechanism is carried out by placing the central government in an autonomous position without any significant influence from parliament and society. Fourth, the dependence of local communities and individuals on the state at the central level has been created (Pratikno, 1998).

Another source of power is discourse politics. If repressive politics and economic clientelism are the government's ways of controlling political behavior, then discourse politics is the New Order's way of controlling

people's perceptions and mindsets. In this context, the New Order government succeeded in building its legitimacy by socializing several new discourses, such as development, political stability, national integration, the failure of liberal democracy, and others. These discourses were constructed through various educational institutions, media, and culture, including cinema as an effective mass medium (Pratikno, 1998).

From the beginning of its rule, the military understood the power of film as a propaganda tool. On April 15, 1969, the Commander of the Operations Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Kopkamtib) issued a decree on the formation of the "Kopkamtib Film Project" to produce documentary films as "mediapsywar". (Heryanto, 2012)

Unlike other cultural and artistic activities that were under the department of education and culture, film during the New Order government was under the department of information. This situation further emphasized the great role of film as a propaganda tool in the New Order government considering that in 1978 the department of information was under the command of the coordinating minister for politics and security (Menko Polkam). This made film not just an artistic product, more than that, film for the New Order government had another role as a political propaganda tool (Sen, 2009)

The New Order utilized state institutions, mass media, and popular culture as tools to produce official discourses that supported the regime's ideology. In this context, cinema became one of the strategic media used to shape public perception and assert the hegemony of power. One of the New Order's efforts to maintain power through film was to produce and distribute propaganda films through institutions such as the State Film Production Center (PPFN). The film *Janur Kuning*, for example, was designed to depict the dominant role of the military in the *Serangan Umum 1 Maret*, while simultaneously positioning Soeharto as a narrative and historical hero (Irawanto, 2017)

Operating under the Ministry of Information, PPFN managed the funding, scripts, and distribution of films such as *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (1984), which portrayed the PKI as traitors to glorify the role of the military and Suharto (Sen, 2009) The PPFN structure, led by government officials and funded by the state, ensured tight control over the film's narrative, as seen in the PPFN report showing a large budget for G30S/PKI. The film's mandatory distribution in schools and on TVRI expanded the anti-communist discourse. PPFN thus became a political tool of the New Order to shape society's collective memory.

PPFN, as a state institution, regulated the funding, production, and distribution of the film, while the Film Censorship Board (BSF) ensured that its content was in

line with the official anti-communist and pro-development discourse through strict censorship policies.[11]The mandatory screening of G30S/PKI in schools and on TVRI shows how films were used as a tool to instill the New Order political narrative in the wider community.(Kompas, 2020).

Film as a strategy to maintain power becomes an important focus because of its effectiveness in reaching the masses. Unlike other media such as newspapers, films have strong visual and narrative appeal, capable of forming collective emotions and memories. The *Treason of G30S/PKI*, for example, used a dramatic narrative about the cruelty of the PKI to justify the power of the New Order, while strengthening the anti-communist discourse that became the basis of the regime's legitimacy (Alkhajar, 2013)]Mass distribution and mandatory screening made the film an efficient political tool, especially among the younger generation who were the target of indoctrination.

It is therefore important to understand how New Order cinema, as an institutional system, produced dominant discourses to maintain power. This study seeks to uncover the mechanisms of power behind the production of propaganda films, especially in the context of PPFN and BSF. In addition, this study contributes to media literacy, helping the public understand how films can be manipulated for political interests, an issue that remains relevant in the digital era.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review is a description containing previous research studies that are relevant and support the research to be conducted by the author on "Cinema as a Political Propaganda Tool: New Order Strategies in Shaping Power Narratives Through Film". This literature review is intended to direct the position and position of the research to be conducted. The literature review was conducted from sources obtained in the form of books, scientific journals, and theses.

The research is entitled "National Cinema in the New Order State" by Masyitoh Aulia in 2023. This study comprehensively examines the development of the Indonesian film industry during the New Order era (1966-1998) with a multidisciplinary approach that combines political, economic, and cultural analysis. Aulia highlights how the New Order regime made film a strategic tool to build a narrative of nationalism and political stability, as well as an economic commodity that was tightly controlled through various regulations. These control mechanisms include the Film Censorship Institute (LSF) which functions as the vanguard in filtering content, a strict production licensing system, and direct intervention through PPFN (State Film Production Center) as the sole producer of government films. This study reveals a paradox where on the one hand the state wants to advance

the national film industry, but on the other hand limits creativity through various control instruments.

Specifically, Aulia analyzes three main aspects of the New Order's film policy: politics of representation, creative economy, and cultural hegemony. In terms of representation, New Order films were dominated by themes of national development, military heroism, and social harmony that covered up actual conflicts in society. Real examples can be seen in films such as "Janur Kuning" (1979) which glorified the role of the military, or "Badai Pasti Berlalu" (1977) which displayed modernity without social criticism. The creative economy aspect is shown through fluctuating film production data, which in the 1980s reached a peak of 100 films per year, but was dominated by exploitation genres such as horror and sex films which actually made significant economic contributions despite being contrary to official government values.

The important finding of this research is the analysis of the dualism of the New Order film system - where the state officially supported "quality" and moral films, but indirectly allowed exploitation films to flourish because of their economic value. Aulia uses Antonio Gramsci's theoretical framework of hegemony to explain how the state built consensus through film, while Vincent Mosco's political economy of communication theory is used to analyze the centralized and oligarchic structure of the film industry. This research also reveals the important role of Djamiluddin Malik and PT. Parkit Film as an example of how film entrepreneurs adapted to the New Order system.

The research methodology includes analysis of policy documents, film censorship archives, interviews with industry players, and text analysis of 20 representative films of the period. The main conclusions show that New Order cinema was an arena for discursive struggles between state interests, the market, and artist creativity. The legacy of this system is still visible in the contemporary Indonesian film industry, both in the oligarchic structure of production and the tendency to avoid critical themes. This research makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the relationship between state power and popular culture in modern Indonesia.

Then, the research entitled "*Poster and Film Media as Instruments of Japanese Military Propaganda in Indonesia 1942-1945*" written by Gema Budiarto in 2021. This study examines in depth the Japanese propaganda strategy during the occupation of Indonesia (1942-1945) through posters and films. This study reveals how the Japanese military used both media as political tools to shape the perception of Indonesian society, instilling ideology. *Greater East Asia*, and consolidated support for the occupation policy. Using a historical approach and visual discourse analysis, the researcher explores the propaganda techniques used, including the use of local

cultural symbols, anti-Western rhetoric, and the depiction of Japan as an "older brother" who liberated Indonesia from Dutch colonialism.

Research findings show that Japanese propaganda posters and films were systematically designed to mobilize mass support, especially in terms of recruitment. *romusha* and formation *MAP* (Defenders of the Homeland). Posters often featured images of Japanese and Indonesian leaders united, while propaganda films—such as *Calling Australia* (1942) and *Defender of the Fatherland* (1944)—emphasizes the narrative of Japanese military heroism and the loyalty of the Indonesian people. Budiarto also identifies contradictions in the propaganda message, where Japan claimed to be the liberator but in practice implemented exploitative policies. In addition, this study highlights cultural adaptations in propaganda, such as the use of wayang and Malay language, to ensure that the message could be accepted by the local community.

This study provides a critical perspective on the role of visual media in the construction of power during the occupation period, while enriching the understanding of media history in Indonesia. The findings are relevant for research exploring the dynamics of colonial propaganda, the role of media in psychological warfare, or political communication strategies in the context of colonization. The multidisciplinary approach that combines history, media studies, and visual analysis in this study can be a model for examining propaganda instruments in different eras, including the adaptation of digital technology in contemporary propaganda practices. Thus, Budiarto's research not only fills the gap in media historiography in Indonesia, but also offers analytical tools to examine the relationship between media, power, and resistance.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A method is a systematic procedure, process or technique in investigating a scientific discipline to obtain the objects (materials) being studied (Sjamsuddin, 2012). The research method that will be used is the historical research method. The historical research method is the process of assessing, testing and critically analyzing data in the form of recordings or relics of the past (Gottschalk, 1985). The stages used in the historical research method consist of four stages, namely: (1) heuristics; (2) criticism; (3) interpretation and; (4) historiography.

Heuristic stage, related to the topic of Cinema as a Political Propaganda Tool: New Order Strategies in Shaping Power Narratives Through Film. The researcher sought sources in several government agencies such as the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, books, journals and articles. Several sources found by the researcher such as Ministry Instruction (SK. Menteri) Number 34 of 1968 concerning cinema policies.

Criticism stage. Based on existing sources, researchers conduct source criticism both externally and

internally. This is done with the aim of obtaining relevant and credible data to write it into a good historical writing. As was done in one of the sources, namely Ministry Instruction (SK. Menteri) Number 34 of 1968 concerning cinema policies.. So it can be said that the source whose authenticity is guaranteed. At the stage of internal criticism, the researcher criticizes the internal. This internal criticism is to test whether the source is trustworthy and can be held accountable for its truth. The author can do this by knowing and understanding the contents of the source that is credible and reliable.

Data interpretation stage. There are two stages of interpretation, namely analysis and synthesis which have the aim of making historical facts clearly revealed so that they become a series of historical stories. The analysis stage is carried out by analyzing facts based on previously criticized sources. Then it is carried out with the synthesis stage by the researcher interpreting and arranging the facts obtained chronologically in a structured, logical, rational and factual unity.

The historiography stage, namely this stage requires researchers to rewrite the data that has been previously obtained chronologically to get a clear picture of the beginning to the end of this research process.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Film Institutions as a Political Tool of the New Order Government

After the events of 1965, the New Order regime carried out a massive purge of elements considered affiliated with communism or left-wing groups in the cultural world, including film. Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (LEKRA), which had been actively producing films with popular and anti-imperialist narratives, was forcibly disbanded, while artists and filmmakers associated with this organization faced political repression. In such circumstances, the state took control of cultural production through new institutions designed to ensure harmony between cinema products and the New Order's political agenda. The Department of Information (Deppen) became the vanguard in overseeing the world of film, formalizing the space for artists' expression as a tool for producing official discourse that supported the stability and legitimacy of the regime (Sen. 2009).

Since its inception, the New Order understood the potential of cinema as a powerful propaganda tool to strengthen the regime's legitimacy and spread the dominant anti-communist and pro-development discourse. On April 15, 1969, the Commander of the Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Kopkamtib), a military institution under Soeharto's control, issued a decree establishing the "Kopkamtib Film Project" to produce documentary films as "psywar media" (psychological warfare). This decision marked the New Order's strategic step in utilizing cinema to shape public perception, especially in demonizing the

Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and glorifying the military as the nation's savior. Kopkamtib, which had broad authority to control security and ideology, not only produced documentaries but also directed the cinema narrative to align with the regime's political agenda. These institutions worked closely with state film institutions, such as the State Film Production Center (PFN)) to ensure that New Order-ordered films (Heryanto, 2012).

These institutions not only controlled production and distribution, but also shaped public perception through coordinated narratives. Films such as Janur Kuning, Serangan Fajar, and G30S/PKI were designed to form a collective memory, especially among the younger generation, that Soeharto was an irreplaceable hero. Scenes such as the denial of the Council of Generals issue in G30S/PKI or Soeharto's leadership in Janur Kuning strengthened the discourse of military nationalism, while mass distribution ensured that this discourse spread widely. With targeted funding, strict censorship, and military coordination, New Order cinema became a structured political instrument to strengthen Soeharto's power. This study confirms that New Order film institutions, through Kopkamtib, PFN, and BSF, played a central role in producing dominant discourses that supported the regime's hegemony, making cinema more than just entertainment, but a tool to shape society's ideology. (Irawanto, 2017)

Unlike other cultural and artistic activities that were under the Ministry of Education and Culture, film during the New Order was under the Ministry of Information. In 1975-1977, the Minister of Information was held by Mashuri who also issued a film policy: Decree of the Minister of Information No. 47/Kep/Menpen/76 concerning expanding the use of import funds, which were previously for the use of film production, film in general, and mass media, but were later also taken for the tactical funds of the Minister of Information (Aulia, 2023). With this, cinema in the New Order era was clearly used as a machine to produce New Order political discourse, such as anti-communism and the glorification of development, through institutions such as the State Film Production Center (PPFN) which in the New Order era was a central institution in producing propaganda films to support the regime's ideology. Operating under the Ministry of Information, PPFN managed the funding, scripts, and distribution of films such as Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI (1984), which depicted the PKI as traitors to glorify the role of the military and Suharto (Alkhajar, 2013) The PPFN structure, led by government officials and funded by the state, ensured tight control over the film's narrative, as seen in PPFN reports showing a large budget for G30S/PKI. The film's compulsory distribution in schools and on TVRI expanded the anti-communist discourse, in line with Foucault's idea that institutions produce "truth" to support power (Mills, 2004). PPFN thus became a political tool of the New Order to shape society's

collective memory.

Overall, PPFN and BSF made cinema a political tool of the New Order through production and control of discourse. Rooted in film institutions since 1950, such as PPFN and BSFI, the New Order reorganized PPFN and BSF to support the discourse of power of the New Order government.

4.2 Censorship Regulations as a Political Tool of the New Order Government

Various film regulations from the New Order government were manifested in various forms, from strengthening the role of censorship institutions to creating a multi-layered, strict, and very restrictive licensing system for film producers. Censorship issues at that time included cutting scenes or dialogue, even banning the distribution of films. The censorship institution became the clearest manifestation of the government's efforts to control the content and form of films. The existence of censorship institutions in Indonesia has begun since the Dutch colonial era.[1]Initially, censorship emerged as a film regulation in the Dutch East Indies issued by the colonial government to disguise the negative image of Europeans in the eyes of the native people. Since its implementation during the Dutch colonial period, the censorship system aimed to prevent "threats to morals and social problems" related to film screenings. The censorship criteria first established through the Film Ordinance of 1940 remained the main guideline for censorship until 1971 (Sen, 2009).

After the Dutch left Indonesia, the Film Ordinance rules were still inherited in the next film regulation, namely Presidential Decree Number 1 of 1964 concerning Film Development, which placed film policy under the authority of the Minister of Information. Film was seen as a very important mass publication tool. The rules made were almost similar, where permits to show films, both domestic and imported productions, had to receive direct approval from the Minister of Information. Films were considered necessary to be directed to be in line with the values of Indonesian socialist society in the spirit of Guided Democracy based on Pancasila.

The Film Censorship Board (BSF) was established in October 1965, consisting of 24 government representatives and nine from political parties. The majority of government representatives came from the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Education and Culture, with ten people each as representatives. While serving as Minister of Information in 1968, Budiarjo replaced a number of members of the Film Censorship Board from government circles.

Three years later, as the role of political parties in the Indonesian political system weakened, party membership in the Film Censorship Board (BSF) was abolished, and replaced by an emphasis on the interests of key government departments. The BSF was placed under the

supervision of the Directorate General of Radio, Television, and Film (Dirjen RTF), which also served as its ex-officio leader. The Executive Director who handled the day-to-day operations of the BSF was appointed from the Department of Information. In 1973–1974, the BSF consisted of 20 members: seven departments (Information, Home Affairs, Religion, Defense and Security, Foreign Affairs, Education and Culture, and the State Secretariat Office) each sent two representatives, while the other four members came from non-governmental groups, such as the Indonesian Journalists Association (PWI), women's organizations, and the nationalist group Angkatan '45.

In 1979, Ali Murtopo increased the number of representatives from government departments, especially intelligence, in the Film Censorship Board (BSF). The total number of BSF members was 37, including the director and executives. The remaining 35 members were divided into four groups, each handling Indonesian, European and American, Asian films, and videotapes. The leaders of these groups were referred to as the 'core group'. Indonesian, European, and American films were supervised by two representatives from the Department of Information, Asian films were under the control of BAKIN (Intelligence Coordination Agency), and videotapes under the Attorney General's Office. BAKIN had two additional representatives in the BSF, the Attorney General's Office three representatives, and the Police four representatives. Two-thirds of the BSF's members came from government departments, with more than a third from the security services (Said, 1982).

In 1977, the Censorship Guidelines were formalized through a Ministerial Decree. Subsequently, the Film Censorship Board (BSF) drafted the BSF Guidelines in 1980 and the National Film Production Code of Ethics in 1981. Encouragement from film industry players led to the issuance of this Code of Ethics so that they understood the official BSF rules, so as not to produce films that were wasted because they were cut completely or banned. The BSF began to be more open, providing access to information to the film industry. However, most of the rules in the BSF Guidelines and Code of Ethics focused more on the security of the state, nation, and ruling leaders, rather than just regulating scenes of sex or violence. The Guidelines and Code of Ethics stipulated that a film would be banned if it was deemed to be able to 'disturb religious harmony in Indonesia', threaten 'the development of national awareness', or 'exploit ethnic, religious, or racial sentiments, and trigger social tensions' (Said, 1982).

By 1980, censorship rules had become very detailed, comprehensive, and publicly announced. This led to increased self-censorship within the film industry, while government censorship became more structured, reducing the potential for abuse by officials. The boundaries were also more clearly defined, but filmmakers were still able

to exploit loopholes to convey opposing views. Ironically, as will be seen from the analysis of film texts later, censorship not only served to limit, but also to create space for filmmakers and audiences to experiment with form and meaning, in order to conform to the spirit of censorship without appearing to openly oppose the rules (Sen, 2009).

In 1980, the P4-N policy established nine basic principles as an ideal foundation. The essence of this policy emphasized that Indonesian films must function as a medium for national development with a cultural-educational role, not just a business commodity that has the potential to have a negative impact on society. To realize this role, Indonesian films are required to have strong roots in national culture, so that they can reflect the nation's identity authentically. This "cultural-educational" concept then became a fairly influential discourse in the world of film, especially in improving the quality of films since the 1980s. This positive climate was further strengthened by the establishment of the Film Council led by Asrul Sani, who paid serious attention to improving the quality of national film works.

4.3 Film Funding and Distribution Policies Supporting the Political Agenda of the New Order Government

During the New Order (1966–1998), the Indonesian film industry was controlled not only through strict censorship, but also through funding and distribution policies designed to reinforce the regime's political agenda. The government systematically allocated state funds to produce films that promoted official narratives of national development, political stability, and military superiority. One of the main instruments was the State Film Production Center (PPFN), established in 1968 as a production body under the Ministry of Information. PPFN was responsible for producing documentary and fictional films that affirmed the legitimacy of the New Order, such as *Janur Kuning* (1979), which depicts the role of the military in maintaining state sovereignty. These types of films are fully funded by the state and widely distributed to cinemas and through screenings in the regions, especially around elections or state events, as part of political campaigns.

The state maintained control over film production institutions. Perusahaan Pilem Negara (PPN) — the forerunner of PFN — had existed since the Dutch East Indies colonial government and continued in the era of independence. During the New Order government, PPN, which changed its name to Produksi Film Negara (PFN), acted as the state-owned film industry. This institution played a role in documenting state activities and socializing government programs. For example, official records state that PFN actively documented state events and disseminated development programs through APBN funding. Through this channel, PFN became a mouthpiece for New Order development.

In 1975, PFN changed its status to the State Film

Production Center (PPFN), although there were few substantial structural changes. Furthermore, on May 7, 1988, the government issued Government Regulation No. 5 of 1988 which gave the State Film Production Center the status of the State Film Production Public Company (Perum PFN). This institutional transformation required PFN to operate professionally and financially independently. In the provisions of PP 5/1988, it was stated that PFN was tasked with producing films that were oriented towards national interests and education. PFN's main mission included producing films about the nation's history, national resilience, and social issues that were screened in cinemas, television, and other platforms both internally and in collaboration with other parties (Sen, 2009). In this way, the New Order institutionalized the state film apparatus as a tool for political information and education, in line with the vision of developing the whole person.

The New Order government also built national film distribution channels. One of the most important was the traveling cinema (*mobile cinema* or outdoor cinema). The legacy program of the Dutch East Indies Colonial Government and the Japanese Military Government, namely traveling cinemas, was revived and promoted as cheap entertainment for the people as well as a means of propaganda. The New Order era saw traveling cinemas become the prima donna of village entertainment.[1] The government saw this media as effective in bringing entertainment to remote areas; Minister of Information Harmoko, for example, emphasized a program of "closeness to the people", so that village people could enjoy films through traveling cinema units. Serial images, white screens and 16 mm projectors became common sights in open fields (Safitri, 2017).

In 1978, the government legalized the formation of PERBIKI (Indonesian Association of Mobile Cinema Entrepreneurs) as the official forum for mobile cinema entrepreneurs. This organization later changed its name to PERFIKI in 1991. PERBIKI/PERFIKI supported the government-initiated "Film Masuk Desa" program. Through this program, mobile cinemas screened national films with development themes such as family planning, vaccination, elections, and transmigration. The involvement of development institutions such as the BKKBN and the Department of Education was clearly visible – for example, Vice President Adam Malik himself welcomed the concept of film masuk desa to achieve national development targets.

In addition to private mobile cinema units, the government also operated state-owned permanent cinemas that screened local films. However, for the general public, the most widespread media was TVRI. This state television station was greatly expanded in the 1980s: at that time TVRI had nine television stations and ten mobile transmitter units that reached villages, ensuring that almost every corner of the country could

enjoy TVRI broadcasts. Thus, national films and development messages could be widely disseminated. TVRI became the main channel for disseminating the New Order's message. For example, since September 1976 the Palapa satellite began broadcasting TVRI programs throughout the archipelago, strengthening the broadcast reach to remote areas (this was important for showing government-themed films evenly (Safitri, 2017).

In practice, the New Order utilized a combination of domestic cinema networks, traveling units, and TVRI to distribute films. Cinemas owned by government or military institutions (such as TNI cinemas) became special places for screening national films. On the other hand, state television showed specially commissioned films. One of the most famous examples is the film *Penumpasan Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (The Crushing of the Treason of G30S/PKI) produced by Perum PPFN. This film was first screened on the DKI Jakarta open-air cinema in 1984 and then began to be screened regularly on TVRI every September 30 since 1985. The Minister of Information even encouraged TVRI to broadcast these historical films themselves because in the mid-1980s the number of commercial historical films was still rare. (Safitri, 2017). By combining the big screen and television, the government ensured that all people had access to the official narrative of the New Order.

5. CONCLUSION

This study explores the role of New Order cinema (1966–1998) as a political tool to produce anti-communist and pro-development discourses, focusing on Janur Kuning (1979), *Serangan Fajar* (1982), and *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (1984). Employing an institutional approach and Michel Foucault's discourse analysis, the research demonstrates that cinema served not only as entertainment but also as a propaganda machine to glorify Soeharto as a hero in *Serangan Umum 1 Maret* and the 1965 Gestapu affair. Film institutions, such as the National Film Production Center and the Film Censorship Board, controlled production to align with Pancasila ideology and the regime's agenda. Structures led by military officials ensured narratives supported Soeharto's authority. Selective funding policies prioritized films like *G30S/PKI* that demonized the PKI, while mass distribution through mandatory screenings in schools and on TVRI expanded the reach of this discourse. Film narratives, such as Soeharto's personal sacrifices or the suppression of the PKI portrayed as a greedy act, shaped public perceptions of him as the nation's savior. In other words New Order cinema produced "truth" to sustain hegemony, forming a collective memory, particularly among the younger generation, to accept the regime's legitimacy through militaristic nationalism.

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