

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION IN SHORT FILM AND YOUTUBE AS PUBLIC OPINION REFLECTION

Short films, as visual communication media, convey various things that reflect life in society, especially short films on YouTube social media. The presence of short films on YouTube provides more opportunities for the public to express their opinions regarding a film, especially those related to social phenomena in everyday life. This chapter will explain the general description of short films that can form social construction and how comments in the YouTube comment column reflect public opinion.

2.1 Short Film and Social Construction

The specific rules for the short film awards at the 91st Academy Awards are that an original motion picture must have a running time of forty minutes or less, including all credits. Short performances, scenes of exotic cities, visually appealing backgrounds, and scantily clad people going about their everyday lives emotionally absorbed early film audiences, who did not realize that these films could be considered short films (Cooper & Dancyger, 2005). The original silent films lacked significant background information on the rules and traditions of the industry until the turn of the millennium. Filmmakers drew heavily from the theater as a source of story ideas throughout the 1900s, leading to increasingly powerful film storylines. One of the earliest short films that revolutionized the genre was 12 minutes and 52 seconds long *A Trip to the Moon*, which gave viewers a deeper dive into the stories and characters told inside. Before this film, the other short film who has duration only 1 minutes appears more like recording rather the actual film. The film title *A Trip to the moon*, changed the short film industry where the technology improved and also various genres were made which make this short film has larger audiences.

With the development of short films both in the technology used and the increasing audience, various short film festivals have emerged in the world, one of which is the Oberhausen Kurzfilmtage festival from Germany which is one of the oldest short film festivals in the world which was founded in 1954. In addition to the short film festival, another short film festival from France, the Clermond-Ferrand festival, is also a famous short film festival with various short film genres presented at the festival, including fiction, documentary, experimental, and others. With the presence of various short film festival events worldwide, short films have been recognized in the eyes of the world.

In Indonesia, the early emergence of short films differed from other film industries that did not rely on large distributors, national cinema networks, and the involvement of large investors. The Short Film Forum is one of the forums for initiating short films in Indonesia, where this forum was initiated by various parties ranging from young people, students from the Jakarta Arts Institute, the University of Indonesia, and various other artist figures. This forum is quite influential in developing the short film industry in Indonesia because it can create national issues by formulating short films as alternative and independent films and conducting various film screenings in various regions in Indonesia. With this forum spreading the development of short films in various regions in Indonesia, various movements related to other short films have emerged which help in developing these short films so that short films in Indonesia can be screened in international festivals.

Short films are usually made independently because the production costs are relatively cheaper and short films provide a freer space for expression for the filmmaker. Unlike feature films, short films have their characteristics where short films are a powerful persuader in our society. Short films in Indonesia are already widely known internationally, but domestically, short films are still something that needs to be developed because the short film industry has experienced a decline due to the absence of regulations related to film laws that do not favor alternative filmmakers outside of large capital. Regulations that favor large production houses

are because the old players have always been related to money-oriented, not community interests.

From the 90s until now, there have been many short film industries that have started in communities where short films in Indonesia usually raise stories from various social phenomena in the lives of their people. According to article 5 of Law No. 8 of 1992 of the Republic of Indonesia, cinema serves as a visual-auditory communication medium that can educate, entertain, inform, and contribute to the nation's cultural development and economic growth. In this era, the production of Indonesian short films has increased in number every year with the support of the government and local film festivals that also participate in facilitating the production of short films.

Short films have become the main means of social and cultural communication and a new medium for the public to obtain information. Before the modern era, short films were distributed through alternative cinema by holding roadshows on campuses and visiting film communities on and off campus one by one. In this modern era, short film distribution is more based on digital platforms through Netflix, Viu, Disney+, and YouTube.

In Indonesia, independent short films are not only about funding issues but also about the discourse and ideology of the filmmakers that emerge as freely as possible in the making of a film work. Alfred Hitchcock, a film director in 1900s, has said: "The nearest art form to the motion picture is, I think, the short story. Its the only form where you ask the audience to sit down and read it in one sitting." The structural and communication mechanisms of short films are similar to those of feature films in that the filmmakers have more creative leeway in selecting the dramatic framework they want to use. Short films have a significant impact on society at large, even though the creative freedom and idealistic vision of its creators are somewhat limited in comparison to feature-length documentaries. Before short films are screened on this digital platform, short films are usually

screened in alternative cinemas, where cinema is a space of appreciation held by the film community with a non-commercial nature and limited audience. In addition, the presence of a special short film festival also helps market short films to the wider community because they get wider exposure when screened at the event.

The beginning of short films that were screened from alternative cinema, until they could be screened at film festivals is one of the advances in the short film industry. Short films made by these filmmakers are one of the media that are quite influential and important in spreading the ideas that filmmakers want to convey. Short filmmakers can explore various things about the themes in the films they make such as identity, social justice, community, family, affection, and various other themes.

Films can bring complex ideas and concepts to life, coupled with the development of films today which can be easily accessed online and interesting short film concepts can reach a wider audience. Films with their delivery of visual media which include images, sound, and narration to convey them to the audience, make the audience who watch them emotionally and intellectually involved, and can also convey more complex emotional ideas more interestingly.

Short films have lower production costs compared to long films, shows a diversified trend. The world has been photographed means that social relationship between people mediated by images and in a new media environment, people will quickly move on the next target if things don't get people's attention in a short period of time. Short film with lower budget, no-threshold production, arbitrary playback, and visual appeal of short films can quickly connect the lives of people apart. Nowadays short film platform, have gradually shifted from food and beauty to more diverse content such as live streaming, short dramas, sports, etc. With those various of things, people can quickly get to know the world and learn about different things through short films.

Tilik is a short film that is inspired by the filmmaker from a reality that the filmmaker witnessed firsthand. *Tilik* is a short film directed by Wahyu Agung Prasetyo and the script was written by Bagus Sumartono. The scriptwriter, Bagus, said that *Tilik* is based on his experience when he was at a food stall with his friend and told a story about a group of women visiting (tilik) a hospital, but what was interesting was that the group of women wanted to take a walk in the Malioboro area. It was this story that made the filmmaker interested in making a short film based on what he witnessed with Elena Rosmeisara as the producer of the *Tilik* film. In making *Tilik*, Agung and Elena were hampered by production costs because it was an independent film, but the funding problem was resolved with funds from the Yogyakarta Cultural Service's special funds specifically for artists.

In making the film *Tilik*, the filmmakers intended to convey a bigger issue, namely the hoax news that was rampant ahead of the 2019 presidential election at that time. Although they wanted to convey the issue in the film *Tilik*, Agung, Elena, and Bagus also included the issue related to the independence of Javanese women in the film *Tilik* because the three of them were all raised by single mothers who were often the subject of gossip from residents. The culture of *Tilik* with trucks is something unique to be brought into the film so this is another factor for the filmmakers to be able to make this film.

The film *Tilik* is set in Dusun Saradan, Bantul area with extra players who are also residents of the village. For the main players of the film *Tilik* such as Bu Tedjo and Yu Ning, Agung took local actors who already had a background in acting. One of the characters in the film *Tilik*, Bu Tedjo, played by Siti Fauziah, is a character who plays quite an active role throughout the film *Tilik*. Mrs. Tedjo in the film *Tilik* is known as a mother who likes to gossip and looks very dominant over other mothers, even Agung the director said that the character of Mrs. Tedjo had been created since the first draft of the script for the film *Tilik*. "I think it's interesting when I can present something very close to us to appear in this film to—you could say—be

central in this film because Mrs. Tedjo is the one who drives all the stories," said Agung, as quoted from an interview with VOA Indonesia.

In addition to the director's view, Siti Fauziah as the actress of Bu Tedjo in the film *Tilik* also believes that the habit of gossiping in the film *Tilik* is a depiction of the reality of society, especially Yogyakarta. "Because that is one, indirectly, a good social control for me, because after all in Yogyakarta our tradition is *srawung tonggo*, like that, you know, still have connections with the surrounding neighbors." Said Siti, as quoted from an interview with VOA Indonesia.

After the *Tilik* film crew completed the process of making the *Tilik* film, they tried to enter the *Tilik* film in various short film festivals abroad and domestically. The 2018 Maya Cup Short Film, the 2018 Jogja-Netpac Asian Film Festival Official Selection, and the 2019 World Cinema Amsterdam Official Selection are just a few of the accolades that have been earned. According to Agung, in his interview with VOA Indonesia, for short films in Indonesia to get the spotlight, this needs to be proven by the recognition that has been obtained, one of which is awards from various film festivals. Because of this, most short film crews when they finish completing a short film always have the main goal of being screened at a film festival.

After the *Tilik* film received recognition from the film festival, the *Tilik* film began to be screened on the YouTube platform. According to Elena, quoted from VOA Indonesia, the screening of the *Tilik* film on the YouTube platform was because the film had to be watched as widely as possible by the public and if it was only screened in alternative cinema, it would not get a stage because at that time there was a pandemic and people's behavior was entering the digital world. The screening of the film *Tilik* on the YouTube platform is what finally received a lot of enthusiasm from the public and various praise and criticism came with the virality of the film *Tilik*.

2.2 YouTube and Public Opinion comments

YouTube is an online video-sharing application that can be watched by the public and has been visited by two billion users from 100 countries in the world, as quoted from the official YouTube website. YouTube represents a change in the web's structure from being a read-only to a read-write web. This transition occurs when the internet is used for more than just reading; it also allows users to produce and share their own reading materials. With this shift, YouTube has become a practical social media, can be accessed by many users, and has become the most popular, complete, and varied video database.

Three individuals—Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim—who had previously worked for PayPal established YouTube in February 2005. Initial funding for YouTube came from Sequoia Capital, which put \$11.5 million into the tech venture. After being enabled on February 14, 2005, the domain www.youtube.com was progressively developed in the months that followed. The San Bruno, California-based business showcases user-made videos using Adobe Flash Video and HTML 5 technologies. Officially launched on December 15, 2005, the service was serving over two million daily video views, up from 30,000 daily during its limited "beta" launch in May 2005. As time passes, the quantity of videos submitted to YouTube continues to soar; in the summer of 2006, the site was providing over 100 million videos daily.

For users who are not registered on YouTube, they can only watch the content and for users who have registered, they can upload videos without limitations. With YouTube's global reach and extensive content library, creators have the chance to reach a massive audience. Both amateur content creators and media companies are drawn to this platform (Khan, 2017). As part of their agreement with YouTube, major companies including CBS, BBC, and Vevo are able to publish their work to the platform.

Since YouTube needs to purchase more computer hardware and broadband connections to access the Internet due to the increase in traffic, the firm in need of funds. For these reasons, YouTube started searching for a buyer to acquire their shares. Google formally acquired the YouTube platform in November 2006, and since then, it has been running as a Google subsidiary. Even though Google Video had previously opened, it was unable to attract enough users to warrant the \$1.65 billion price tag that led to the company's acquisition of YouTube. Now that Google owns YouTube, users can access it through any of Google's other services. Regarding copyright on videos uploaded to YouTube previously, Google negotiated with several entertainment companies to be able to provide permission for copyrighted video material to appear on YouTube.

Based on data from We Are Social, the development of YouTube in Indonesia is quite rapid with YouTube users in Indonesia ranked fourth with 139 million users. Quoted from statistical data by the Polling Institute (Jakpat), for YouTube content that is of interest to Indonesian YouTube users, there are differences in terms of gender. For the male gender, the most accessed content preferences are music, games, films/animations, sports, and automotive. This is different from the female gender where the most popular content preferences are music, cooking, *mukbang*, makeup, and vlogs.



Figure 2.1 Indonesian Male YouTube Content Preferences (Percent) in 2023

Source: Goodstats.id/Preferensi Konten YouTube Masyarakat Indonesia, Kamu Yang Mana?



Figure 2.2 Indonesian Female YouTube Content Preferences (Percent) in 2023

Source: Goodstats.id/Preferensi Konten YouTube Masyarakat Indonesia, Kamu Yang Mana?

YouTube, which is one of the social media, is included in the new media category. This means that YouTube was born from the evolution of technology, in other words, technology that continues to develop both in terms of features and users who access YouTube. The material on YouTube is presented in video format to make it easier for visitors to digest. In terms of both website traffic and search engine market share, YouTube ranks second worldwide, behind only Google (Tafesse, 2020). With a large number of YouTube users and various YouTube features, many use it as a means to channel talents, a place to show creativity, and a platform to debate everything. With many phenomena occurring on YouTube, a public opinion space has emerged regarding the content on YouTube.

According to Shi, public opinion is the culmination of many public moods, attitudes, and ideas that are expressed and shared online (Shi et al., 2014). As technology has advanced, people use social media tools and bulletin board system

to voice their opinions, making the internet the primary medium for disseminating public opinion. According to Price, the media's consolidation of phenomena marked the start of the process of shaping public opinion (PRICE, 2011). An alternative view of public opinion holds that it develops when individuals in a society begin to act in a certain way on a given subject based on their assumptions about the views of their fellow citizens (Davison, 1961).

The creation of public opinion does not occur spontaneously or as a result of consensus among citizens; rather, it is conditioned on the members of the community reaching a more or less firm consensus on a shared viewpoint (Shepard, 1909). Realizing this is the consensus, acknowledging its widespread dissemination, and being prepared to defend it are all necessary. For a view to be considered public opinion, it must be one that the majority of the population shares, with each member fully aware that their vote on the matter will bring them closer together. What we mean when we talk about "public opinion" is the general consensus among a group of people about important issues, including their values, wants, and ideals. Opinions held by those whom the public believes can properly evaluate the available evidence tend to have more weight in public opinion. People talk about things and public opinion follows suit. Arguments in favor of using conversation as a tool for shaping public opinion abound: it doesn't take much in the way of resources (money, time, etc.), it doesn't need a huge audience (interest or assembly), and people from all walks of life can contribute to the process.

On social media, especially in YouTube, community members can also become active participants not only just being passive. The comment part of public communication forums allows for two-way communication, which empowers community members to find, create, exchange, and disseminate information. Internet users' and critics' opinions may influence prospective viewers, and online reviews can have a major impact on offline hotels' popularity, income, and performance (Kim & Park, 2017) (Chakravarty et al., 2010). Whether the contact is real-time or delayed, netizens who engage via remark can express their thoughts

and opinions and get information from the conversation. Real-time communication is more important to social media. Remarks posted online about opinions serve the impressive purposes of making suggestions, influencing others, and encouraging changes to the current situation. Influential and biased remarks or views made on the Internet by media or netizens regarding particular topics and public social affairs are mostly what are referred to as network public opinion (Jiang, 2013).

YouTube as a digital public space platform allows users to upload video content where the video is closely related to their views, experiences, and opinions. The uploaded videos trigger audience reactions with viewers pouring out their points of view in the comments column which contains their opinions regarding the content related to other users also interacting in the comments column. The opinions collected from the YouTube comments column represent the views of certain groups with the YouTube algorithm which can strengthen an opinion through the "echo chamber" effect, where users find information that strengthens their views. With YouTube connected to the internet, this platform allows various groups of people to participate in the formation of public opinion.