

Filmmaking and Critical Pedagogy Amongst Youth as Cultural Empowerment in Banyumas, Indonesia

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Abstract

The local film community run by cultural activists typically conducts several film practices, such as film production, distribution, and exhibition independently. In post-New Order Indonesia, the Banyumas subculture has become an alternative site of struggle for producing critical films against mainstream and commercial films. This study questions how Banyumas cultural activists develop critical learning and nurture an awareness-raising process for local students through filmmaking and how Banyumas' local film production forms a new culture enacting social change. The authors adopt a qualitative approach with multiple case studies to investigate the phenomenon. The data was obtained by conducting in-depth interviews with cultural activists and the vocational/high school students as a filmmaker, observation, and documentation of the films they produced. This study implements Paulo Freire's idea of critical pedagogy through collaborative filmmaking performed by Banyumas cultural activists and local young students within a specific cultural and outside-classroom setting. Through collaborative filmmaking, the local subjects interrogate the current sites of power and social roles by encouraging dialogue and problem-posing methods. Using visual media, the practice of empowering local cultural identities finds its embodiment in filmmaking as a process and result. As a living cultural expression, films preserve the local culture, redefine the value of humanism, and raise critical awareness about larger social, political, economic, gender, and cultural issues.

Keywords: : Filmmaking; critical pedagogy; youth; cultural empowerment; Banyumas

Introduction

This article learns a film community's study of media literacy and critical media education in post-New Order Indonesia. Current research attempts to explain the process of producing community media outside Indonesian government-funded formal education institutions. The Indonesian government provides almost all formal education for filmmaking through state-funded higher education institutions or vocational schools specializing in cinematography/broadcasting majors. These institutions are the primary educational service

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provider for filmmaking within Indonesian context. The media community that thrived in various regions in the post-New Order Indonesia held alternative educational practices for media production in their way. This community serves the interests of the residents in their closest environment. This practice differs from mainstream media production education oriented towards market and industry interests. According to Fuller (2016), community media is predominantly driven by attaining social goals instead of private gain. Community media empower people rather than treat them as passive consumers, and they nurture local knowledge instead of replacing it with standardized industry solutions.

This study discusses the dynamics of independent film production located at some periphery areas in Indonesia, namely Banyumas. The Banyumas cultural area represents a culturally imbued society called *penginyongan* land, a Javanese subculture comprising five regencies: Banyumas, Purbalingga, Banjarnegara, Cilacap, and Kebumen. A long history of Javanese cultural politics portrays Banyumas as a Javanese cultural center's outer area or periphery. The geo-cultural context of this periphery--a specific geographical location taking into account several cultural characteristics of the people inside such as common language, shared history, customs and norms, and artistic expressions---emulate Banyumas unique features as *adoh ratu cedhak watu*. Lexically, Banyumas is located far away from the center of the Javanese Kingdom's Palace and near the stone, symbolically representing the mountain and the river with many stones (Priyadi, 2018). This unique phrase of Banyumas highlights the locus of Banyumas outside the ruling areas of Mataraman (Yogyakarta and Surakarta) and closer to the lives of ordinary people with agricultural backgrounds, Slamet's mountain slope and on the riverbanks of Serayu river.

The marginalization of culture and people of Banyumas through this framework of thinking about the center and periphery was still carried over during the Old Order and New Order eras, where the *wong cilik* (little people) culture continued to be suppressed. Under the Javanese feudal-oriented New Order, the Banyumas people were belittled as *wong ngapak-ngapak*. *Ngapak-ngapak* is known among the Javanese people as a vulgar dialect. It is considered inferior to the refined Javanese dialects of the *Sultan* palaces, such as in Surakarta and Yogyakarta. This situation is no different when this dialect is represented in television media. Comedians use this *ngapak-ngapak* dialect as a laughing stock (Khoiri, 2010).

According to Priyadi (2007), the tradition of *cablaka* as local wisdom reflects the egalitarian value and freedom spirit of the Banyumas community. It entails a moral story of being a Banyumas people is showing a straightforward character. Banyumas also have a folklore as a symbol of life of oral tradition, such as the oral story of Raden Kamandaka. It lives as a story with educational content. In the context of the daily communication practice, the various cultural symbols and dialects of the Banyumas people can reflect an egalitarian, friendly, and openness among its residents. Equality, a sense of close-knit community, and residents' hospitality--especially within a spatial context close to rural reality--can develop into an equal approach to learning. One phenomenon observed is the practice of media education that emerged and was developed by the film community in Banyumas.

For the last two decades, Banyumas society - especially the creative communities - has been struggling with the practice of independent film production by adopting an inter-

generation critical pedagogy approach in media. Critical media pedagogy in teaching media production is a continuous process involving the transformation of consciousness (and self-reformation) that occurs in the interaction between three institutions: educators, learners, and knowledge production (Denski, 1991). The context of critical media pedagogy in Banyumas shows that the educational process of media production involves learning subjects across generations. Educators come from a monumental era in Indonesia's history, namely Indonesia's political reformation in 1998. Some educators were former student activists in 1998 and the early days of the Reformation (Taufiqurrohman et al., 2017). Otherwise, the students come from the post-1998 young generation. The critical media pedagogy entails an independent filmmaking crew and many students from middle to the high school level designed in a non-formal way. Seen from Banyumas filmmaking's earliest historical roots in 2001, the practice of local filmmaking in Banyumas did not start formally from the Javanese' cultural centers' of film production institutions in Yogyakarta or Jakarta.

This paper attempts to show the creative way in which the existing independent filmmaking in Banyumas is supported, to some extent, by a critical pedagogy-based collaborative filmmaking process aiming toward cultural empowerment for the people in rural areas. This collaborative filmmaking involves a media production process by cultural activists and school students. According to Denski (1991), critical pedagogy addresses questions about knowledge in production and exchange. This process lies in a cycle of theory and practice where students and teachers as agents in transactional dynamics. At the same time, theoretical analysis returned to practice through production, negotiation, and transformation processes. The authors argue that the critical factor in sustaining the existence of Banyumas' local film production is the active youth involvement in their dialogue and interactivity with the local and independent film activists. This study focuses on the dynamics of local film activists from three film communities in Banyumas.

The changing political landscape of post-New-Order Indonesia and the robust growth of media technology have shaped the socio-cultural dynamics of local societies. Heryanto (2015) argues that society's communication culture influences how they respond to technology. In a heavily-nuanced oral culture society like in Indonesia, the birth of telephones, television, and video camera have ignited society's members' passion for producing films autodidactically. The cultural transformation process from oral to visual has come together with technology affordance and legal protection (Indonesian Law on Film, No. 33, Year 2009) in the Indonesian context. These two critical factors pave the way for society's members to produce their films. Banyumas' film activists made Banyumas-stamped film as a socio-cultural practice (Taufiqurrohman et al., 2017).

A previous study of independent filmmaking by actors outside the film industry found that indigenous community filmmaking in the Australian region used various media and screen formats. This cinema practice includes hundreds of documentaries and plays that actively engage indigenous communities and are produced and distributed across the spectrum of screen media in Australia. The scope of this screen media covers the use of analogue to digital-based film media. (Davis & Morton, 2011).

In Southeast Asia, independent filmmaking can be observed in the case of Malaysian filmmaking. The motivation behind independent filmmaking stems from the advent of digital video technology, which helped democratize filmmaking and activated the indie film movement. In addition, rampant piracy also means affordable access to international films on VCD, DVD, and software (Khoo, 2007). This dynamic aligns with the Banyumas film genealogy, which is closely related to the democratization of filmmaking by citizens and the existence of access to filmmaking technology (Taufiqurrohman et al., 2017). Another characteristic of Malaysian independent films is that they are deeply rooted in the particular socio-political context of Malaysia, especially in its urban spaces. The entire phenomenon of independent filmmaking in Malaysia is concentrated in the metropolitan city of Kuala Lumpur. However, practitioners may come from Ipoh, Trengganu, Sarawak (East Malaysia), Penang, or other remote towns and states. This situation is in stark contrast to independent filmmaking in Indonesia. Banyumas' filmmaking community emphasizes film production in spatial space based on rural contexts and resistance to urbanization ideology (Taufiqurrohman et al., 2021).

Individual and collective awareness to counter ideology occurs through educational activities, specifically critical pedagogy. Paulo Freire, a leading scholar from Brazil, once coined the term and sought new forms of critical pedagogy applied in different circumstances. For Freire, pedagogy is not simply an a priori method or technique for all students but a political and moral practice that imparts knowledge, skills, and social relations that enable students to explore the possibilities of what it means to be critical citizens while broadening and deepening their participation in a democratic society. Critical thinking for Freire is not an object lesson in taking exams but a tool for self-determination and civic engagement (Giroux, 2010). He also studies recent relations between oppression in various settings and the liberating effect of "conscientization." This study explores the practice of media production by the community as a critical awareness practice for young people in rural areas and their involvement in various community social issues. This study explores a new understanding of community media production as a critical pedagogical practice. What unifies his thematic works is critical awareness as the driver of cultural emancipation (Freire, 2005).

From a cultural perspective, the film production process generated by local communities is a significant cultural emancipation process for marginal societies. Cultural empowerment runs through a series of media production educational activities. Critical pedagogy for media education starts with the realization that every educational system is a political way to maintain or modify the appropriation of discourse and the power and knowledge it brings (Sholle, 1994). Power and knowledge are not neutral discourse; they contain a partial view of society's particular condition. The Freire's educational practice based on rural realities with situations of poverty and powerlessness of uneducated citizens. Freire worked on the practice of critical pedagogy with this group of leftist utopian Catholic students at the start of the Liberation Theology movement in Angicos, a small and impoverished region, 178 Km from Natal, in Rio Grande do Norte, Northeast Brazil. Project Angicos in 1963 was the first systematic experience of literacy training by Freire to take place. It experienced marked the first milestone in Freire's political, pedagogical journey. Freire opens literacy and reading skills for the poor; Freire's

educational praxis invites learning subjects to question the relationship between them and social inequality (Torres, 2013).

Nevertheless, The Freire concept of critical pedagogy primarily addresses the socio-cultural problems within the domain and context of formal education. Meanwhile, this study develops his ideas on the community media production process outside formal education. The authors will analyze how local cultural activists in Banyumas develop a critical learning and awareness process for young people through filmmaking and how the local Banyumas film production forms a new culture in the process of social change in the post-New Order society.

This research seeks to answer two research objectives: First, to explore the dialogue and interactivity between cultural activists and high school/vocational high school students in film production as cultural empowerment in the rural context of Banyumas. Second, to explore the impact of the filmmaking process and the impact of its results on the changing socio-cultural context of Banyumas. This study has a significance to enrich the communication study of cinema by reviewing the practice of film production within the sphere of "peripheral" culture that builds new socio-cultural realities in the Indonesian film landscape, thus filmmaking is no longer limited to big cities, which provide various educational accesses to learn about cultural issues and cultural production. As researchers have observed, generally in Indonesia, there are still many inequalities in access to education for citizens and village youth to develop activities in the film sector. This study also seeks to demonstrate the existence of a new film center that runs parallel with the tendency of democratization and decentralization of Indonesian politics after the New Order.

Literature Review

The independent film in this study refers to alternative media terminology. The profit motive does not drive the alternative media types. Alternative media exist to fight for specific goals that usually do not get adequate coverage across mainstream media. Terms such as 'underground', 'subcultural', and 'DIY' (Do It Yourself) usually portray alternative media types (Laughy, 2009). The community widely owns alternative media. Ownership and control of community media are rooted in and responsible for the communities they serve. They are committed to human rights, social justice, the environment, and a sustainable development approach (Fuller, 2016).

Previous research reveals the practice of community media production with participatory and active involvement in independent filmmaking practices that explores queer issues in one Indonesian locale. The study shows the Indonesian queer community phenomenon with an autoethnographic approach (Coppens, 2015). Another collaborative film production in local Indonesia is making films by and for the cultural community (*wayang orang* group) on the slopes of Mount Merapi, Central Java. Through his participatory research, Imanda (2019) reveals the practice of local traditions and arts lived by rural communities. Both filmmaking and its films serve specific communities with central themes of human rights, social justice, and the environment. These two studies explore how filmmaking involves an educational process for residents who have never previously studied filmmaking.

Residents' involvement in collaborative filmmaking is highly related to filmmaking's pedagogical approach. Freire's critical pedagogical approach builds the argument that educators are students and students are educators. According to him, the unique contribution of educators to the birth of a new society must be in the form of critical education that can help shape attitudes and awareness of citizens/students (Freire, 2005). In the problem-posing education model, the educator constantly reshapes his/her reflection through student reflection. Students—no longer perceived as merely obedient listeners—now become critical investigators in dialogue with educators (Freire, 1970).

Dialogue is the primary condition of critical pedagogy. Dialogue requires critical thinking, which will also give birth to a new form of critical thinking. Without dialogue, there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education. It means an education that allows the process of humanization for learning subjects. The content of the dialogue can and should vary according to historical conditions and the degree to which the oppressed perceive reality (Freire, 1970). According to Freire and Hooks, when students are pushed to the center of knowledge creation and expected to produce knowledge for themselves and others, it can empower students and connect them with deep transformational learning (Hess & Macomber, 2020).

Critical pedagogy that has developed since the 1970s puts forward political and moral choices for democratic forms of education. Critical pedagogy requires a democratic curriculum whose not defined in abstract categories of isolated disciplines (such as history, English literature, and other subjects). However, it would instead incorporate themes and issues that address adult life's concrete conditions and problems (Sholle, 1994). Media education faces several structural, theoretical, and conceptual conditions that prevent it from developing a critical pedagogy aligned with the goals of cultural politics (Sholle, 1994).

Suppose that embedded critical pedagogy in filmmaking, especially documentary films. In that case, the interpretation of critical pedagogy is making documentary films allowing students to be involved in knowledge creation by taking on the role of educators. Hess and Macomber's research shows that at the end of the lesson on the topic of feminism - particularly the issue of gender inequality through filmmaking - students have the capacity and ability to act as "local experts" on the main areas they choose in making films such as domestic violence, sexual violence, and sexual harassment. Students have a medium to talk more about these issues. In this context, the learner is not just a recipient of knowledge but as a giver of it. The primary outcome of a filmmaking project is creating a collaborative community. The filmmaking process provides opportunities for students to practice reciprocity and find ways to build trust-based relationships (Hess & Macomber, 2020). Collaborative filmmaking as an anti-oppression research tool is radical and relational. This activity brings an opportunity to build community through repeated and sustained site-specific struggles (Wiebe, 2015).

Learning in filmmaking can be interpreted as cultural empowerment for a group of people. According to Ames (in Kamata, 2000), cultural empowerment is an effort to transfer skills to lesser subjects and provide opportunities to present their point of view in an institutional context. This definition lacks a dynamic internal process of critical awareness in Freire's sense. For Freire, cultural empowerment has a dual focus on politics and pedagogy to legitimize the life experiences of subordinate groups to provide affirmation and provide conditions for them to display their voice and presence actively (Kamata, 2000).

In the context of filmmaking, cultural empowerment is related to the term participatory. A critical feature in promoting cultural diversity is the participation of community media and

filmmaking (Malik et al., 2017). Making culturally diverse on community films is all about enabling the voices of the 'inaudible' and marginalized communities. Moreover, residents and students from rural areas can articulate these views through community filmmaking in various ways (Malik et al., 2017). Cultural empowerment enables less powerful people to maintain and utilize their culture to strengthen self-affirmation and group synergy through critical reflection on their own culture and experiences. It consolidates society's socio-political and psychological power to build a better future, but the process must be highly analytical of meanings and power relations in 'indigenous culture' (Kamata, 2000).

The theme of local culture in filmmaking has been previously studied by Kurnia (2019), especially in terms of independent filmmaking based on local culture in Indonesia. Her research looks at local film productions by the Cinema Lovers Community in Purbalingga, Central Java. This local film community consistently produces various films based on geographic areas by highlighting local languages and local issues. The first local film with the Banyumas language produced by filmmaker Purbalingga, Bowo Leksono, is *Peronika*, which reveals the cultural shock that causes conflict in a family in the village due to the use of new communication technology. The film used the Banyumas language, which inspires the filmmaking students to use the local language and reveal local issues. A similar pattern in local films is the object of observation in this study.

The local film community develops a cultural strategy by building a spirit of independent filmmaking that places film as a medium to express their ideas about social, cultural, and political issues in their environment. The local film community contributes very significantly to creating films with local identities to appear in the cultural arena of national and international contexts. The existence of film communities in these suburbs challenges the dominance of independent film communities in big cities in Indonesia, such as Jakarta and Yogyakarta. The local film community in Purbalingga has developed an alternative film production system that prioritizes local films and local filmmakers (Kurnia, 2019). This situation is different from the dynamics of independent films in big cities - Jakarta, for example - which can observe by independent filmmakers who previously stated that *Manifesto I-Cinema* eventually entered the mainstream Indonesian film industry and entered into contracts with large studios that were more commercially oriented (Sasono, 2020).

According to Wiebe (2015), filmmaking can also understand as a vehicle for advancing intercultural dialogue for radical action and social change. It offers an engaging way for young people to raise their concerns vis-à-vis authority figures and address misinformation about indigenous peoples while collectively working towards decolonization. Figueroa, a Jamaican independent film activist and academic, said indigenous cinema emphasizes a sense of authenticity, where people represent themselves and often counter-narratives, either because of the absence of representation or false representations. His activities as a filmmaker result from the lack of mainstream media and a social underrepresentation (Martens, 2013).

Based on the literature review, this study reveals the media production process in the Banyumas subcultural community as an antithesis to the mainstream popular culture represented by the national broadcast and film industry. In this process, a critical pedagogical approach is an observation. Another gap in previous research that this study tries to answer is the relationship between critical pedagogy and cultural empowerment involving actors across generations in a specific cultural context that previous studies have not reviewed. This research

is also a follow-up exploration of prior studies that addressed local film issues in the Banyumas area, which is still limited to the Purbalingga independent film community.

Methods

The research strategy in this study uses a multi-case study through observing life in various situations (Stake, 2006). The research sites in this multi-case study are located in Purbalingga, Cilacap, and Kebumen Regencies, Central Java Province, Indonesia. The unit of analysis in a case study is focused on studying an event, program, activity or more than one individual (Creswell, 2015). The unit of analysis in this research is local collaborative filmmaking activities at each research location and local film works.

Table 1. *Unit Analysis in Multi Case Study*

COMMUNITY	OBSERVED FILM	LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS
Cinema Lovers Community (CLC), Purbalingga	Documentary, <i>Segelas Teh Pahit</i> (Utami, 2014) Fiction, <i>Selendang Lengger</i> (Nurwijayanti, 2014).	Filmmaking based on extracurricular practices in high school
Sangkanparan, Cilacap	Documentary, <i>Dangsak</i> (Suningsih, 2015) Documentary, <i>Jenitri 2015</i> (Andaeni, 2015).	Filmmaking based on field industrial practices on vocational school
Komunitas Kedung, Kebumen	Fiction, <i>Melawan Arus</i> (Saputri, 2018) Fiction, <i>Tanah Tuan Tanah</i> (Sari, 2018).	Filmmaking based on community programme

(Source: research data, 2020)

This study collects data through observation, interviews, and documentation. Researchers observe and take notes on the community's daily behavior to understand how relations, dialogue, and interactivity work among film activists. Researchers also examine closely the digital artifacts in the form of recordings of the filmmaking process and the films produced by collaborative work between high school/vocational high school students and film community activists. The selection of subjects and films from high school/vocational high school students uses several considerations: (1) most films produced are collaborations between high school/vocational high school students and film community activists. (2) critical pedagogy builds an adult education approach, with the learning subject being adults. High school/vocational high school students are in this characteristic. Meanwhile, film community activists have formal educational backgrounds related to law (founder of CLC), visual communication design (founder of Sangkanparan), and broadcasting (founder of Kedung Community).

Researchers select these collaborative works based on thematic categories in the form of Banyumas cultural issues in the art tradition and local agricultural culture within a rural area

setting. Semi-structured interviews conducted to collect data from local filmmakers, namely high school/vocational high school students with three female directors and two male crew members. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and through online media. This study also interviewed three activists from the three film communities to understand how dialogue and interactivity occur between students and educators in their different settings.

Data analysis was carried out by thematic analysis, identifying patterns or themes in qualitative data (Maguire & Brid, 2017). Themes in qualitative research is a broad set of information composed of several grouped codes to form a general idea (Creswell, 2015). The validity of the data in this study used a source triangulation technique.

Results and Discussion

One of the markers of changes in Indonesian visual culture after the New Order was the proliferation of various film communities initiated by young people in various regions (Taufiqurrohman et al., 2017). The dynamics of local cinema history in Banyumas began thanks to a group of students from Jenderal Sudirman University, the oldest state university in Banyumas area, who formed the Youth Power film community. Their first film was produced in 2002, titled *Kepada Yang Terhormat Titik Dua*. This documentary is an engaging Banyumas cultural marker and a creative manifestation emphasizing the issue of Banyumas locality. It also represented in the first Banyumas-language film, *Peronika*, directed by Bowo Leksono from Purbalingga in 2003. These two films, produced and screened in Purwokerto, Banyumas Regency, symbolize the expression of Banyumas' local identity. The euphoria of the Reformation had reached its peak in 2003, as was the indie film movement (Van Heeren, 2012). With his films, Bowo Leksono articulates a counter-narrative on the ideology of developmentalism, which voices anti-urbanization discourse. His films provide endless support to promote marginalized local cultures (Taufiqurrohman et al., 2017). In its development, film production in Purbalingga began with education and training through a series of film workshops for high school and junior high school students. CLC produces films featuring local issues such as education, environment, politics, corruption, health system, culture, tourism, and employment (Kurnia, 2019).

The filmmaking practices in Banyumas connected with the network dynamics between film community activists between districts. Since 2006, filmmakers in Banyumas have initiated a joint institution (container) which they call the *Jaringan Kerja Film Banyumas* (JKFB). The JKFB facilitates various film activities and film "education" for the Banyumas public. Film activists in Banyumas build interactivity between local and intergenerational actor. The dynamics of this cross-local network activity growth in several periods:

1. Generation 1 (period 2006-2009) consists of Cinema Lovers Community, Sangkanparan, and Arisan Film Forum. They are active in the local districts of Purbalingga, Cilacap, Banyumas,
2. Generation 2 (period 2009-2015) consists of Cinema Lovers Community and Sangkanparan. They work locally from Purbalingga and Cilacap Regencies.

3. Generation 3 (2015–present) consists of Cinema Lovers Community, Sangkanparan, and Komunitas Kedung. They are active in the local districts of Purbalingga, Cilacap, and Kebumen.

The three film communities in the third generation above are the main actors of the local Banyumas film activism, which still exists today. Every year they produce local films with various thematics based on local issues. In practice, these three communities build film activism dynamics together with students, villages youth, and local creative industry activists.

Local Films as a Medium for Voicing Local Issues

Collaborative filmmaking by Cinema Lovers Community and high school students about the existence of local arts performances



Figure 1.

Cut of film *Segelas Teh Pahit*
(Source: Utami (2014))



Figure 2.

Cut of film *Selendang Lengger*
(Source: Nurwijayanti (2014))

Both of these films take the theme of *lengger lanang*. These two films are based on extracurricular activities at Rembang High School, Rembang District, Purbalingga Regency. *Lengger lanang* is a local performing art of male dancers with female appearances. It is a traditional Banyumas art that has been around for decades. This dance has an aspect of local wisdom commonly attributed to the people of Banyumas. The local wisdom attached to the traditional art of *lengger lanang* is the *cablaka* character which is interpreted as an open, honest, and candid attitude. *Cablaka* can be seen in the openness of the dancers' attitude, who in their dances have the concept of attracting attention to have closeness with the community. This open attitude is represented in the act of inviting residents to have fun by dancing with him (Dwi et al., 2013). *Segelas Teh Pahit* tells the story of the *lengger lanang* art performance activist dominated by the elderly and almost extinct due to the absence of regeneration. Meanwhile, *Selendang Lengger* tells the story of tensions or conflicts between generations in daily interactions that question this traditional art practice. Contradictions related to the "ambiguous" gender roles are the background for the tension between the three male figures involved and told --grandfather-child-grandchildren -- in this film.

Collaborative filmmaking by Sangkanparan and Vocational High School students about the existence of local arts and agricultural practices



Figure 3.
Cut of film *Dangsak*
(Source: Suningsih (2015))



Figure 4.
Cut of film *Jenitri 2015*
(Source: Andaeni (2015))

It is making films about regional art performances known as dangsak. Dangsak is a Kebumen performing art. The film *Dangsak* - directed by a young woman from Public Vocational High School 1 of Kebumen - tells the story of art that has existed since colonialism in Indonesia. This performing art became known during the Dutch colonial period. From various oral folks, the villagers at that time deliberately used terrible makeup like long-haired demons to scare off the invaders who wanted to control the people's land. The second film is about jenitri, titled *Jenitri 2015*, directed by a female student from Public Vocational High School 1 of Kebumen. It is the sequel to film *Jenitri* produced in 2014. The film of *Jenitri* has won various recognitions and appreciations in Indonesia's documentary film festival circuit. *Jenitri 2015* explores agricultural practices and cultivation processes by describing types of jenitri. This local commodity has cultural and religious value for Hindus.

Collaborative filmmaking by the Komunitas Kedung with Vocational High School students on contradictions in local agricultural practices



Figure 5.
Cut of film *Melawan Arus*
(Source: Saputri (2018))



Figure 6.
Cut of film *Tanah Tuan Tanah*
(Source: Sari (2018))

The two films produced by the *Komunitas Kedung* above are fictional. The first film, *Melawan Arus*, was directed by a female student from Public Vocational School 1 of Kebumen. This film tells the story of the struggle of women farmers who defend their land from the expansion of land by the military for the benefit of war games in coastal areas. This film conveys a strong message about the reality of agricultural culture on the southern coast of Central Java which conflicts with the state apparatus. How the repression of the state apparatus on civilians over land conflicts in coastal areas. The film *Tanah Tuan Tanah*, directed by a young woman from Public Vocational School of 1 Karanggayam, tells the story of the contradictions of parents - village farmers with small lands - who built their child's imagination to graduate from a university majoring in agriculture. This film shows how this village farmer "bets" by selling his land to pay for his son's college. This farmer's son successfully graduated as an agricultural graduate, but instead of continuing his parents' mission to become a farmer, he worked in the financial industry.

Table 2. Cultural Issues in Banyumas Local Films

Producer	Collaborator	Title/Year/Genre	Cultural Issue
Cinema Lovers Community & Pak Dirman Production,	SMAN 1 Rembang (Public High School)	<i>Segelas Teh Pahit</i> 2014 Documentary	Local culture preservation
	SMAN 1 Rembang (Public High School)	<i>Selendang Lengger</i> 2014 Documentary	Gender identity in local art performance
Sangkanparan & Beja Production	SMKN 1 Kebumen (Public Vocational School)	<i>Dangsak</i> 2015 Documentary	Local culture preservation
	SMKN 1 Kebumen (Public Vocational School)	<i>Jenitri</i> 2015 Documentary	Local farming practices
Komunitas Kedung & Lemah Wedhi Production & Netuka Creative Community	SMKN 1 Kebumen (Public Vocational School)	<i>Melawan Arus</i> 2018 Fiction	Marginalization of woman farmer
	SMKN 1 Karanggayam (Public Vocational School)	<i>Tanah Tuan Tanah</i> 2018 Fiction	Marginalization of small farmer

(Source: Author's research data, 2020)

Critical Pedagogy-Based Film Production

The collaborative filmmaking mode developed in the three film communities observed received input from students through two primary "recruitment" channels: cinematography extracurricular activities for high school students and facilitation of the implementation of

Industrial Work Practices (*Praktik Kerja Industri/Prakerin*) for vocational students. Media production education for high school/vocational high school students occurs because of institutional cooperation between the film community and schools. Extracurricular activities supplement students to explore local low-budget filmmaking and community-facilitated tools. Cinema Lovers Community regularly holds film production workshops in various schools in Purbalingga and Banjarnegara Regency. It is goodwill from school institutions providing experiences for students in audiovisual media production.

Sangkanparan mainly produces films from the *Prakerin* line. They facilitate students from various regions in the former Kedu Residency, the former Banyumas Residency, to the former Pekalongan Residency. The *Prakerin* is equivalent to a study period of one semester (4 – 5 months) for Vocational High School students majoring in Multimedia. Sangkanparan provides a learning space for students joining the *Prakerin* program at Sangkanparan to experience and gets involved in the community's daily life. Komunitas Kedung modified these two paths by developing the *Sinema Kedung Meng-Desa-Desa - Sinema Kedung go to villages - program* (SKMDD) to heighten awareness of cinema culture for rural residents. Komunitas Kedung reaches out and attracts audiences and candidate filmmakers from the village through this program.

Film production basis on the three communities encouraging inter-generational dialogue and social analysis. For CLC, film production workshops are a time to provide students with basic knowledge to analyze local issues and problems. The dialogue between educators and students continues the learning process by observing the construction of local knowledge formed by previous films. The main object of conversation is movie content. These films result from the production of the early generations of filmmakers. To manage the knowledge they produce, the three communities build mini-libraries as information centers that students can access at any time. Students learn and converse about cinematographic technicalities and analyze the local socio-cultural situation shown in the film. The knowledge construction presented by local movies is a critical reflection on the findings of the research process during filmmaking.

Collaborative filmmaking can be a tool for seeking local knowledge and raising the existing local knowledge. It aims to carry out community empowerment activities through de-centering knowledge. This process allows each learning subject to develop critical reasoning and understand their immediate reality more thoroughly. To better understand the society's main challenges and problems, they set out to research for several purposes, such as (1) Understanding the subject's situation and socio-cultural environment, including efforts to approach the filming subject that the filmmaker is not someone else. This approach shows that the filmmaker is not just an external observer or a stranger to the film subject. The filmmaker is an inseparable part and blends into the film subject's daily life. (2) The importance of determining the main narrative represented in the film. (3) Introduction of field conditions to further determine the production strategy.

Research is a critical and decisive stage in making films for students. In the case of making *Melawan Arus* (2018), the stories developed based on the results of research and archives of its predecessor film, *Urut Sewu Bercerita* (2017), produced by students of Public Vocational High School 1 Kebumen while doing Industrial Work Practices in Sangkanparan, Cilacap. *Melawan Arus* (2018) represents the active involvement of all cross-local film activists in Banyumas. They are affiliated with JKFB (*Jaringan Kerja Film Banyumas/Banyumas Film Networks*) in the story development process to execute the film production.

The developed learning space is a democratic learning space. This purpose aligns with the equal positioning of educators and students in a critical pedagogical approach. The mentoring and learning filmmaking model develops a dialogue approach to rural everyday lives and neighborhood practices. The dialogue can happen when the filmmaker does not distance himself from the film subject and reality. The process of critical pedagogy shows filmmakers' involvement in the daily life of film subjects (traditional art actors and local agricultural actors).

This involvement draws students closer to the subject and allows building solidarity between the filmmaker and the film's subject. This process involves asking "what happened in the closest neighborhood?", "what is the social problem?", and "why did this happen?". "Is this important and relevant to be raised as a theme in the film? What is the main issue?". Learning to question the conditions faced is the first step for students to grow sensitivity and criticality in looking at problems. Making collaborative films involves both parties, educators (cultural activists) and students (high school/vocational students). Dialogue as the main element developed in the humanization of critical pedagogy allows interaction, knowledge sharing, and interactivity in the collective learning process. The dialogues and interactions that develop critical thinking are evident from the expressions of cultural activists in viewing students and the learning process together, such as:

"I learned a lot [from the student filmmaking process]. They make films; they make concepts. They make story ideas, and I accompany them. I learned a lot from them. I don't understand dangsak, I don't understand Kampung Tudung, Kampung Genteng. I do not understand. When I was taken on walks [research and film production], I learned a lot in the end. I also learned a lot [new knowledge] from the films they made" (Cilacap cultural activists).

The cultural activists provide ample space for high school students to determine specific issues, themes, and phenomena to be explored in the research and filmmaking process. Purbalingga cultural activists provide an affirmation for that:

"Yes, at first, we let them choose the theme. Then we will continue to discuss. So, surprisingly, a sensitive theme appears. It can happen after they read. They read [book and phenomena], and some have an older brother who is an activist [as partner to discuss]." (Purbalingga cultural activists)

In building a critical dialogue, how high school students view the cultural activists can be observed in the following statement:

"After doing that [field research], it turns out to be interesting. Discussions with friends, watching movies together, being invited to talk with *Mas Bowo* [cultural activist], being taught this is about the film. Having close friends, really close friends... Because we talk together almost every day, there is good communication. Then it is also fun to learn a lot from *Mas Bowo*, know many films from the Banyumas area, and continue to learn a lot about filmmaking." (Purbalingga student)

Cultural activists accompany and invite students to debate until students can find the critical thinking and main relevance of why it is necessary to film an issue, subject, or social phenomenon. This interactivity provides opportunities for students to develop their critical

perspectives. Cultural activists emphasize that filmmaking is the moral responsibility of filmmakers.

"... I was completely liberated. What film do you want to take, what story? Please go home [Kebumen] and conduct research. And then returning to Cilacap, you have already brought what you were looking for. [*The cultural activist talk to me*] After that, in Cilacap, we will develop the story's treatment, and after [research] is finished, we will produce it. So it was research from the beginning to find a [relevant and important] story." (Kebumen student)

The director/filmmaker is an inseparable part of the social structure of society. Some grew up, inhabited, lived with, and interacted directly with the film subject's daily life. Filmmakers engage in the daily problems and anxieties of the film subjects. The daily struggles of filmmakers and their connection to the films they make are found in *Dangsak*, *Tanah Tuan Tanah*, and *Jenitri 2015*. Filmmakers are residents of the village where the film's narrative and setting are built. They present the reality in their respective villages. For filmmakers who are not residents of the village where the film was produced, educators provide a challenge to approach the film subject using a live-in approach, where filmmakers are involved in the socio-cultural activities of traditional art performers. Challenges are given to push students out of their comfort zones and raise awareness to explore the daily struggles of citizens and what will be the relevance of the films to be made. The live-in approach allows for the involvement and emergence of filmmaker (students) empathy. This second case is seen in the filming of *Segelas Teh Pahit*, *Selendang Lengger*, and *Melawan Arus*. From this close engagement process, students' perspectives and alignments are built for cultural empowerment and, in the process, enable cultural actors who are marginalized by popular culture in mainstream media.

The observed film content contains messages contrary to the hegemonic power of the mainstream media. When national and local television is predominantly tuned-in to show the artificial cultural productions set in an urban setting, Banyumas films intentionally show the unfiltered reality of life in a rural setting. From the Gramscian perspective, alternative media provide space for alternative views and voices. Alternative media attempts to counter-hegemony the mass media system, which tends to marginalize this alternative opinion through structural efforts to strengthen the dominant elite's values and ideas (Laughey, 2009).

The six films observed are film products that have roots in the historical realism of Banyumas residents and their daily lives. From the beginning, Banyumas films raised locality issues and promulgated the daily practices of residents. Transformative learning is achieved through highlighting and heightening awareness for students of the main problems the cultural actors face in traditional arts culture and local agriculture. The reality of rural residents and the challenges villagers face at the increasing pace of modernity are central themes in making films for Banyumas students. Filmmakers observe social issues from their immediate environment. The proximity approach or the drawing closer of the social issues and the subjects involved is a conscious choice in collaborative filmmaking.

Cultural Empowerment and Social Change in Local Context

Filmmaking in Banyumas encourages local cultural empowerment. It targets the subject (human) and the indigenous practice itself. The researchers saw the subjects found in the persona of students (filmmakers), independent film community activists, and actors of cultural arts/agricultural culture. For students, cultural empowerment means increasing capacity and a new thinking system to appreciate local knowledge that they are not aware of previously. It also means increasing the capacity and mindset/new thinking system to appreciate local values and cultural characteristics in the form of visual media. Otherwise, students have increased their technical capacity to operate various recording media technologies. In addition, they experience a critical education process more than just dealing with filmmaking technicalities. The emergence of new perspectives in critical awareness and a new attitude to take sides with the marginalized are also gradually rooted in their minds. The students' critical awareness gradual process runs as follows: the 'greetings' develops into the 'getting acquainted' stage where the subjects superficially know their surroundings. Then, it goes into the 'immersion' stage, which means getting to know deeper about the situation's complexity and the conditions they face. From immersion, it goes further into the 'involvement' stage, where the critical awareness rises and articulates more thoroughly. The last stage is a call to the action stage, manifested in the filmmaking process. This finding is in line with Figueroa's practical experience in filmmaking in Jamaica, which states that it favors the preservation of indigenous culture and the production of local content. Over time they produced more works dealing with political and cultural issues (Martens, 2013).

Preservation of indigenous culture can be seen in the making of the *Dangsak* film. The director of *Dangsak*, Suningsih, admitted that she changed to make a film because of a desire to appreciate traditional arts performers in her village, namely Peniron. Through her films, she develops a vision to make this art performance not forgotten and remains sustainable. In line with *Dangsak's* filmmaker spirit, through the *Jenitri 2015*, Andaeni as the film producer wrote a story about her family and village, which has a culture of growing jenitri. Jenitri is a local agricultural commodity with cultural value to the Hindu community. For people in India and Nepal, this plant believed as the tears of Lord Shiva. This film reveals local agricultural culture connected to global business networks. This film shows a guide to cultivating this commodity and its potential for improving the social and economic level of the village. As a potential local commodity, jenitri neglected by the government. These two films want to show how residents have empowerment in cultural and socio-economic improvement.

This study found cultural empowerment for the subject of filmmakers related to the issue of the position of women in the film production process. In many cases, even in the practice of film in the national film industry, there are still many how women become a vulnerable group who do not get an equal position with men. The culture of a strongly patriarchal society is rooted, especially in rural Java. In various studies, there are still many women in rural areas of Java who are powerless to make independent choices for themselves. The young directors in the six films analyzed were women. They gain the trust of the facilitator (mentor/film activist) and their production team to lead and manage the process of creating cultural products.

The author argues that in the dynamics of filmmaking, a breakthrough in the idea and practice of decentralizing gender roles has developed. The role of a leader is no longer attached to the figure of a young man, imagination, and practice which built on respect for equal human dignity, both women and men. Filmmaking in the three communities provides equal access and

opportunities for women and men to take on the role of leaders in film production. The practice of women's leadership empowers counter-cultures of masculine culture domination in society. Opportunities for young women to emerge as leaders facilitate through film practice in Banyumas. The opening access for young women to make films expands opportunities for young women to create works. In Central Java, especially in the cultural context of Banyumas, young women – especially in villages – tend to be victims of the community tradition of child marriage (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020; Eviyanti, 2020). Filmmaking has given rise to alternative ideas and new enthusiasm for developing new roles and works by young women.

Empowerment for cultural actors (traditional arts and farmers) is found through facilitation and opportunities for them in the modern entertainment industry that increasingly marginalizes local indigenous arts. In some of the cases that we observed, cultural actors were slowly aging and threatened extinction. After the process, they get social recognition from young people to express their cultural beliefs. In line with the process of empowering actors, there is also empowerment for language and traditional arts to the artistic taste of residents of local culture. These student films have the potential to strengthen their collective identity as the Banyumas people. Fiction filmmakers (director and producer) *Selendang Lengger* and *Melawan Arus* consciously choose to use the Banyumas language, penginyongan, in their film narratives to strengthen their collective identity as residents of the Banyumas subculture. In the socio-cultural construction of Java in general, the penginyongan language is still often associated as a marginal language. Many Banyumas subculture residents are not confident and even feel inferior using this language when dealing with residents of Yogyakarta and Surakarta (Santosa, 2015). Under its development trajectories, local identity construction has moved into communication mediums such as local films from Banyumas and communication practices on social media, which can display a very Banyumas face. Not only raising life, problems, and the local environment, they no longer hesitate to celebrate the “ngapak-ngapak” language as their identity (Khoiri, 2010; Santosa, 2015). This positioning is very different from the creative industry production in film and national television, which indulge in luxury. Filmmakers in Banyumas feel more confident as Banyumas people. This finding aligns with Lee's (2019) explanation that a film is an excellent tool for critical pedagogical purposes. The filmmaking process can expose students to other cultural discourses and perspectives, which can challenge them to see another view and explore their own identities in the process of reflection, or discussion.

Banyumas films carry the value of humanism. Thematic choices are chosen by departing from a sense of empathy and concern for marginalized and oppressed subjects. This value of humanism is built through a series of dialectical processes and continuous dialogue during the pre-production, production, and post-production processes. For students, the process of dialogue and interactivity is not only about the technical learning of filmmaking. Conversations formed to develop a broader perspective of humanity as conveyed by one of the students:

"... I think the learning there is worth it for us as beginners who want to start studying in the film world. However, there, we do not just learn about movies. ... There, we are taught something called respect [to the other human]. Respect for the environment in particular. Yes, respect is what I can learn from there [the community]" (Kebumen student)

Film activists from Sangkanparan who accompanied the making of the documentary revealed that the process of discussion and dialogue with students explored the principles of respect for humans. The subjects of this film are humans who are attached to local cultural entities and have power. Through the movies they made, they want to invite the audience to understand that film's subject has the strength to face reality and challenges. Filmmakers build the imagination of aimed impact when the film upon released successfully. The awareness to present empowered subjects was obtained through dialogue, debate, and a thought process with the Sangkanparan film community activists to discover the social relevance of filmmaking. The cultural activist and students build the conversations and discourses in the spirit of non-exploitative filmmaking. They developed an antithesis for television shows in Indonesia which presented visuals that depicted the sadness and helplessness of the subject to increase the rating on TV. The internal dynamics in this community encourage filmmaking to lead to the representation of empowered subjects films.

Filmmakers position their films as a medium for socio-cultural campaigns based on local issues: human development, local economic development, and preservation of local culture. An empowered culture is a culture able to present itself, gain recognition, and have various kinds of actualization and expression. Cultural empowerment enables diverse languages, arts, traditions, rituals, ideas, and cultural practices to carry out across generations continuously. Through the critical pedagogy-based filmmaking process in Banyumas, the local cultural empowerment gets ample space and a support system to remain sustainable and bestow a future legacy.

Conclusion

The practice of filmmaking in the three communities studied develops the idea of critical media production and education practices for young people outside the formal education setting. The patterns and motives of local film production in the three communities are non-profit media carrying the values of local wisdom, humanity, and social justice. In the media production approach, students and community film activists collaborate to raise local issues embedded within the film content they produce. By performing this collaboration, they counter-narrative mainstream media content, which tends to exploit rural lives, no matter the cost. The cultural activist and high school/vocational school struggle to open the wider access of the literacy and education of media for young people in villages to have the same rights as young people in cities to produce their films. They also trying to raising the critical consciousness of young people through filmmaking as media education practices.

Banyumas local film activists build a culture of inter-generational dialogue and interactivity to create a new culture for rural people who have a strong oral tradition. Cultural empowerment engages several subjects: high school/vocational high school students, film communities, and traditional arts actors/local farmers. Filmmaking activity with local themes reflecting Banyumas people's needs and concerns provides a sense of awareness for local cultural actors to continue empowering and surviving amid the disruptive challenges of modernity. With films, cultural activists and students build a new universe of knowledge and document the knowledge, language, and arts of local Banyumas traditions. The geo-cultural context with the same cultural values has contributed to the solidity and collaboration of the independent film community that has succeeded in creating a new socio-cultural structure that

grows and develops in the political context of post-New Order Indonesia. Future research is still needed to explore the cultural empowerment through filmmaking for marginalized people that related to local political context. This study limits the analysis to the micro and meso levels, namely to the subjects of filmmakers (students), film community activists (cultural activist) and the films they produce.

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