Tradition and Industry: Representation of Silek Minangkabau in Cinema

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ABSTRACT
Film is a complex work of art production as well as a symbol of social behavior. Films also have an influence on the audience through the content they convey. This article examines three film titles containing Minangkabau: Harimau Tjampa, Merantau, and Surau dan Silek. All three are assumed to convey silek as a part of the traditional life of the Minangkabau community and represent the social changes that occur. Film semiotics and social semiotics are used as theoretical frameworks. The study focuses on visual imagery and narrative characterization tools to reveal social changes related to silek in Minangkabau. As a result, the three films show a significant change in silek representation. Harimau Tjampa can be called a quite accurate film representing silek as a tradition in Minangkabau. Film Merantau conveys silek as a means of building a film genre as an action film. Meanwhile, Surau and Silek conveyed a shift in their view of silek as a tradition to silek as a competed sport. Through its representation in the three films, it can be said that silek has undergone a social change from tradition to become an industrial commodity, in this case, the film industry.

Keywords: Silek, Minangkabau, Cinema, Tradition, Industry

1. INTRODUCTION
The long journey of the Indonesian film industry cannot be separated from the source of creation from locality and ethnicity. Minangkabau is one of the ethnic groups in Indonesia which for the last two decades, has been the source of the creation of several Indonesian films. Two of them are the results of Hamka's novels, namely Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah (2011) and Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck (2013). The revival of ethnicity in the Indonesian film industry has started since the film Merantau (2009). In addition, the film Merantau is also considered the beginning of the revival of the action film genre in Indonesia.

This ethnic content is not new if one looks back at the early days of the growth of the Indonesian film industry. The film considered the first Indonesian film is Loetoeng Kasaroeng (1926) which is Sundanese folklore. In relation to Minangkabau, the first Indonesian film about Minangkabau was Harimau Tjampa (1953). Although Melati van Agam (1930) and Siti Noerbaja (1941) appeared long before, both films raised the Minangkabau realm only as a setting of the story. It is different with Harimau Tjampa, which in his story raises aspects of social life and the traditions of the Minangkabau people. The Minangkabau element that is quite thick that Harimau Tjampa shows is silek (silat). Through storytelling, especially characters, silek is shown as one of the joints of Minangkabau people's lives.

Later, silek was brought back in Merantau. The film, which carries the name of Iko Uwais, is considered to have raised one of the richness of Minangkabau tradition, namely silek. Appointed as the title, the behavior pattern of wandering Minangkabau people does not appear in this film. This film shows more action than the content of merantau. Not long after, the film Surau dan Silek (2017) was released. The film, directed by the Minangkabau director Arief Malinnudo, presents silek from a different point of view. Through their characters, Surau dan Silek show the struggle of silek to face the currents of modernization and industrialization.

The three films – Harimau Tjampa (HT), Merantau (MR), and Surau dan Silek (SS) – highlight silek as content. As a product and a symbol of social behavior,
the three films may convey a discourse about silek. Consideration of the time difference becomes very important in this case. The difference in visualization as a manifestation of the development of film technology indirectly builds the story and, of course, affects the audience's understanding differently. Therefore, the question arises, do the different representations of silek in the three films represent social changes in Minangkabau? This article answers this question through a study of silek content in HT, MR, and SS.

On the other hand, there are several studies with the objects of the three films. Hidayat, et al. (2021) stated that Harimau Tjampa and Surau dan Silek contain Minangkabau content that is suitable for use as Alam Minangkabau teaching materials. On the other hand, according to Hidayat et al. (2021), the film Harimau Tjampa contains Minangkabau aesthetics in both material and non-material forms. Fitri (2018) considers the film Surau dan Silek as change views on silek and surau in Minangkabau. Meanwhile, according to Arief (2018), the film Surau dan Silek is a fictional film that presents different views on surau and silek from two generations of Minangkabau. Anggraini (2016) mentions that the values of tradition and folklore thick in Harimau Tjampa are similar to the romanticism of films in the colonial period. In the Kompassiana rubric, Kamal (2013) talks about Harimau Tjampa as the first Minangkabau film set.

It can be seen that the studies on the three objects are still partial. Each researcher examines a film from one point of view. The comparison of one Minangkabau content that appears in several films from different periods has not been studied. It is not impossible that the Minangkabau content conveyed represents social changes that also occur in Minangkabau society.

It is generally understood that there is a complex relationship between film and culture. When social behavior changes, which is followed by changes in social structure, the media, both technology, and information, are referred to as one of the change factors. Vice versa, changes in social behavior ultimately require technological changes with consideration of a better life. The film, as a cultural product, cannot be separated from the influence of these changes. It can be seen from changes in style, genre, content, and even in film techniques, which also affect the audience (tastes and behavior) as members of social groups. Like other cultural products, film (content) can be shaped by social structures and form social structures.

The film is often said to be a form of representation and even a reflection of life. Viewers often feel that they have experienced the same events as those shown in the film. This assumption can be accepted because, in reality, the film does "present" reality. Through audio-visual imagery and technology, films present the impression of reality and build that impression into reality. Because of its convincing nature, Metz (1991: 4) says that films can "move" audiences, has the power to draw crowds.

Concerning sociocultural practices and impressions of reality, the film results from a deliberately conditioned narrative process. There is a specific formula that involves many individuals in making a film. The idea of the story and its casting is a narrative perception of reality which is then compiled into an imaginary reality. Metz (1991: 5) calls it the power of unreality. Good pictures, sound, dialogue, even music in the film is a speech that "says something" that is deliberately produced.

Visual language (film) will not be understood transparently and universally. In this case, the sign (visual) is seen as not arbitrary (arbitrary). The "motivation" is built in the relationship between the sign maker and the context of the sign being produced. It cannot be separated from the production of analogies and classifications. The sign maker will consider, choose, and use the form that is considered appropriate to express meaning with whatever media is considered appropriate to make the sign (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006: 2-9).

The statements above indicate the presence of signs and symbols in the film. The film is not impossible as a means of communication that contains specific messages. Therefore, the film is considered a language because it "works like a language." Film as a language does not mean telling about something but instead telling something.

2. METHOD

The study of HT, MR, and SS in this article is a semiotic study. The semiotics used are film semiotics by Ehrat (2005) and social semiotics by Hodge & Kress (1988). The data on the content of silek in the three films is the visual imagery and behavior of the characters associated with the silek. Data in dialogues and character actions were transcribed into written text, while visual data used screenshots. Of course, the narrative aspect of the film cannot be ruled out. In this case, the narrative in question is not just an aspect of storytelling. According to Gunning (2009: 391), narrative refers to the content communicated by discourse, i.e., "an event or series of events, real or fictitious, which is the subject of this discourse" and which can be studied "without regard to the medium, linguistic or otherwise" in which they are expressed. In general, the narrative is a device of expression, what is conveyed, and how to express it.

The steps in this study refer to the framework referred to by Miles et al. (2014: 31), namely data condensation, data display, and conclusion verification. All three are interwoven before, during, and after data
collection in parallel form, to form a common domain called analysis. In this view, the three types of analysis and data collection form an interactive cyclical process. The researcher continues to move between the four nodes during data collection and then shuttles between condensation, display, and inference/verification for the remainder of the study.

3. SILEK IN CINEMA

*Silek* in *Harimau Tjampa* is shown through the characters Lukman, Saleh, and Datuk Langit. The three of them visually display the *silek* movement. Lukman is a youth figure wandering to acquire *silek* to avenge his father's death. Because of the heavy requirements, Lukman abandoned his intention to study with Datuk Langit and finally studied *silek* from Saleh. At the end of the story, it is known that the killer of Lukman's father was Datuk Langit. Lukman and Datuk Langit finally fought for their honor.

In addition to showing the visualization of the *silek* movement, *Harimau Tjampa* also conveyed some basic philosophies in *silek* that must be understood and practiced by students of a *sasaran* (*padepokan*). Saleh several times conveyed to Lukman that "patience" is the basis for mastering the science of *silek*. *Musuh tidak dicari, bertemu pantang dielakkan* 'enemies, are not sought; a meeting is inevitable' as an understanding of *silek* mastery also appears several times in Saleh's dialogues. Saleh also visually shows Lukman the four basic steps of *silek* in a scene.

In this film, *silek* is shown to be very closely related to the life of the surau. The characters' *silek* exercises in this film are carried out in the courtyard of Saleh's surau. In general, there are nine scenes of events that show *silek*, both in practice scenes and in fights. Visually, the *silek* movement in *Harimau Tjampa* can be easily identified. The movement of steps, punches, and kicks shows that the movements performed are *silek* moves. In addition, scenes from the tradition of accepting *silek* students are also shown. In this case, students provide several items as a condition to be able to learn *silek*.

![Figure 1. Asking master acceptance (HT)](image)

**Figure 1. Asking master acceptance (HT)**

*Silek* in *Harimau Tjampa* is shown through Yuda and Erik. Yuda is the main character in this film. Yuda, a young man from Bukittingi, went to Jakarta with the intention of teaching *silek*. Erik is Yuda's traveling companion to Jakarta. Their second encounter requires them to fight because they are on opposite sides. In Jakarta, Yuda is trapped by the presence of Astri and Adit. Astri, a club dancer whom Joni was bullying, is helped by Yuda.

Yuda's fight scenes dominate this film to help Astri. *Silek* is shown in the opening of the film, which shows Yuda practicing *silek* movements. Visually, the *silek* movement in this film can only be identified in two scenes—first, the film's opening scene, second, the scene of Yuda practicing *silek* with his teacher. The rest, Yuda's fight scenes against his enemies, *silek* movements are difficult to identify. Because the visualization of the battle scene is quite fast, the *silek* movements performed by the characters seem to be immersed in mixed martial arts. Although some movements can be recognized that suggest the *silek* movement, the fight scenes in this film are closer to freestyle combat, not *silek*.

![Figure 2. Blocking (HT)](image)

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In contrast to HT, the *silek* practice scene in MR is not performed in the surau courtyard or *sasaran*. The scene of Yuda's *silek* practice with his teacher is shown in the yard of the *rumah gadang*. It can be seen through the visual image of the *rangkiang* (barn) building in the scene. Knowledge and understanding of *silek* philosophy in this film also does not appear at all. Although at the end of the story he was killed by Ratger, Yuda was built as a character with high *silek* ability. It was manifested through his victory against his enemies. It is what builds the assumption that Yuda intends to teach *silek*.

*Silek* in *Surau dan Silek* is presented from different perspectives. Therefore the delivery is also different.
Through Adit, Kurip, and Dayat, silek is presented from a contemporary point of view. Adil, Kurip, and Dayat are students of an elementary school in Bukittinggi. The three of them loved silek so much that their loss in one tournament made an impression, and they wanted to win the next tournament. These three figures are opposed to the figure of Johar. A retired lecturer at a university in Yogyakarta returned to his hometown. Known as warriors in their youth, Johar asked to train Adil, Kurip, Dayat in silek. Initially, Johar refused because he disagreed that silek should compete as a tournament. Because of his wife’s persuasion, Johar finally agreed to train Adil, Kurip, and Dayat to win the silek tournament.

In the film Surau dan Silek, the philosophy of silek is expressed through the character of Johar. When training silek on Adit, Dayat, and Kurip, Johar juxtaposed silek with Islamic teachings, namely shalawat, shalawat, and silek, into a unified whole. The philosophy of lahiriah mencari kawan batiniah mencari Tuhan ‘outward-looking for friends, inner seek God’ and musuh tidak dicari bertemu puntang dielakkan ‘enemies are not sought to meet inevitable’ became the basis for the teachings of silek conveyed by Johar. Interestingly, in this film, silek practice is visualized in the courtyard of the surau and several places with stunning landscapes. On the other hand, the silek scene in this film and the practice scene show the silek fight as a match or tournament on stage. A fight scene appears between young Johar and his classmates, who later become “enemies” who harm him.

Figure 4. Silek as tournament

4. SILEK AS TRADITION AND INDUSTRY

Silek is a silat term known in the Minangkabau region (West Sumatra). Silek is a typical traditional martial art developed for a long time (Sjarifoedin, 2011: 9). In Minangkabau, although they cannot be separated, the concepts of pancak and silek have different meanings. Silek is the core of the game of silat (self-defense) that should not be shown. Meanwhile, pancak is a silat game that is not performed by displaying the beauty aspect of the movement (Maryono, 1999: 7). On the other hand, silek for the Minangkabau people fosters good relationships with fellow humans and their God, as mentioned in di lahia mancari kawan, di batin mancari Tuhan (Jamilus, 2010: 570).

Structurally, silek is taught to the next generation following three rules. The first is the child, the second is the kamanakan (sister's daughter), and the third is the batali sabab (good relations with people outside of matrilineal kinship due to several things). They were teaching silek to the batali sabab because there is no longer someone to teach in the kinship system, so people are looking for people who are willing and willing to join the silek teacher tribe according to the rules of applicable customs. Another reason for batali sabab is that the silat teacher feels care for someone not from his tribe in everyday life. This relationship is called batali sabab buek. The last relationship is caused by someone who has helped a teacher a lot. In contrast, if the teacher feels that the help is sincere or does not see a particular purpose behind it, this relationship is called batali sabab budi (Jamilus, 2010: 572). The relationship between batali sabab in silek is shown between Saleh as a teacher and Lukman as a student in Harimau Tjampa. The visualization of the langkah nan ampek ‘the four steps’ shows the philosophy of silek as self-defense, not a means of fighting, but of defending justice. In a tricky step, the first three steps are defense as a form of patience against the opponent's attack. Even though it seems to be an attack, the fourth step is physically pushing the opponent away (Hidayat et al., 2021a). Although it was built to tell stories, silek in Harimau Tjampa is represented as part of the social life and traditions of the Minangkabau community. The tradition of raising silek students with certain rituals shown in this film shows how accurately Harimau Tjampa represents silek as a Minangkabau tradition. The close relationship between the surau and silek also appears in this film.

Concerning the practice of silek, the surau for the Minangkabau community functions as a religious institution and as an educational institution (Abdullah, 1966: 17). In addition to being a dormitory for young people, the surau is a place to learn to recite the Koran, study religion, a place for ceremonies related to religion, and as a place for gatherings and meetings, a place for travelers to stay, a place of prayer, and others (Azra, 2003: 50). Navis (1984: 190-191) added that near the surau, a sasaran is usually built for agility training or other games. Sasaran is used not only by the people concerned but also by members of other clans as a place to learn from one of the leading warriors. It is because each sasaran has its advantages. By providing opportunities for other people to learn at sasaran, there is a relationship between the youth of each group.

Despite some criticisms about the content of silek in Merantau (Dasta, 2009; Indah, 2009), it is undeniable that silek is shown visually as the opening scene in this film. In general, the film Merantau contains classic stories about heroism and the battle between good and evil. Yuda is on the good side, and Ratger and Joni are on the evil side. The fight occurred because there was a
vulnerable group being contested, in this case, Astri. The plotting through the conflict buildings of the characters leads to predictable events. However, the weakness in this film's storyline seems to be covered by the display of action through fights and character battles. The tension that is trying to build through the fight scenes can cover the monotonous tempo of the storyline.

Silek is a Minangkabau martial art that has been part of the custom since ancient times and has grown to this day. Silek is performed by both men and women, inspired by nature and the surrounding customs (Marjanto et al., 2019: 45). Two types of silek are known in Minangkabau, namely silek harimau (tiger), which men study, and silek batino (female) specifically for women (Jamilus, 2010: 571). The Minangkabau philosophy, which considers the alam takambang jadi guru 'nature develops as the sample,' forms silek as seen from the moves that imitate the movements of animals, such as tigers, birds, and crocodiles, as well as from the differences between silek styles in the darek (plain) section, and in the pasisia (coastal) (Maryono, 1999: 227).

The data in the pictures above show one of the silek movements that show the characteristics of silek harimau. This flowing movement is inspired by the fast, precise, and robust tiger movements. According to Ulfitra & Desriyeni (2018: 112), silek harimau has several cunning movements such as kicking, hitting, locking, holding, fighting on the ground, and using weapons. Silek harimau originating from Padang, especially in Minangkabau, is characterized by an open-handed technique and mimics the claws of a tiger.

Although the film Merantau builds a narrative about silek, if close pay attention, silek in this film is only a builder of the storytelling. The silek narrative is built through the characters and characterizations as well as the background of the story. On the other hand, silek also builds characters and characterizations in the story of this film. The silek moves shown in this film will refer to the martial arts in general. Because the character Yuda comes from the city of Bukittinggi, the Minangkabau silek narrative is built. This silek narrative building is emphasized through the visual display of the symbol on Yuda's bag.

Silek for the Minangkabau people is directed at fostering good relationships with fellow humans and their God (Jamilus, 2010: 570). If it is related to this statement, the silek shown in Merantau is very different. In Yuda's meeting with Astri for the first time, Yuda's character immediately uses violence against Joni's character to help Astri. Indirectly, apart from the purpose of helping, these events build a discourse on the arrogance of characters who have silek abilities. Likewise, in the fight between Yuda and Erik. The two continue to fight because they are on opposite sides.

Yuda intends to help Astri, while Erik is paid to kill Yuda. Despite their different backgrounds, both were built as pasilek (lighter) figures from Minangkabau. The incident of Yuda's fight with Erik can be said to build a narrative of power competition between silek institutions. Silek in this film is ultimately only used as a storytelling tool to build story tension. The physical conflict in this film seems to be dominated by fight and fight scenes. On the other hand, the fight scene does not represent a fight with the typical Minangkabau silek moves.

Yuda's intention to teach silek seems different from the institutions teaching silek in Minangkabau. It can be assumed that Yuda's figure wanted to establish a silek college in Jakarta. Although it can be concluded that there is a relationship between teaching silek in a college with the rules of batali sabab, it will not be easy to find prospective students with the intended criteria. Indirectly, silek in this film is shown to have separated from its tradition and learning process, namely the surau and sasaran (Navis, 1984: 90-91). Sasaran no longer refers to the physical place to practice silek but shifts its meaning into an equivalent term for the word college or hermitage. Besides that, Yuda's intention to teach silek is entirely different. It has something to do with what he is doing. Predictably, his intention to teach silek was to support himself while he was overseas. There is a discourse on changing the interpretation of the traditional values of silek and merantau in this film. The shift understanding of silek from sasaran to an institution is in line with understanding the concept of merantau into a motive with an economic background. As a part of the modern world, silek and merantau are reproduced to suit it.

As the title suggests, the content of Minangkabauan in Surau dan Silek is dominated by content about silek. Silek in this film is shown as a branch of sports competition through its characters. In addition, the close relationship between salat, salawat, and silek is also emphasized several times in this film. This film puts forward the religious values of the Minangkabau people through the tradition of the martial art of silek. The relationship between the teacher and the silek student in this film shows a batali sabab relationship (Jamilus, 2010: 572), which is shown through Johar's character as a teacher and Adil, Kurip, and Dayat as a student.

Silek in the film Surau and Silek can be called a vehicle to convey the discourse of social change that occurred in Minangkabau. Silek is a typical traditional martial art developed for a long time (Sjarifoedin, 2011: 9). In Minangkabau, although they cannot be separated, the concepts of pancak and silek have different meanings. Silek is the core of the game of silat (self-defense) that should not be shown. Meanwhile, pancak is a silat game that is not performed by displaying the beauty aspect of the movement (Maryono, 1999: 7).
However, since the beginning of this film's story, silek has been visualized as one of the competed sports.

**Surau dan Silek** seems to depict a conflict of opinion when silat was about to be adopted as a sport. Some groups oppose silat to be exhibited, while several other groups approve of it. The opposing group considers silat as a product of a tradition passed down especially. In addition, it is feared that silat can cause violence that results in injury to athletes. On the other hand, those who agree also see silat as a product of tradition but must be maintained, preserved, and developed. By being appointed as a sport, it is believed that silat will be increasingly recognized and developed globally (Maryono, 2000: 113-130).

Johar's figure represents resistance to the shift in the understanding of traditional values, especially silek. His longing for silek in the surau atmosphere manifests the persistence of traditional values that are still firmly held. Johar refuses silek learned at the sporting level, which he thinks is not following the philosophy of silek itself. Showing off silek skills is a form of arrogance that will invite opponents. It seems that for Johar, silek is not looking for a win to compete, especially in a tournament.

However, Johar finally relented and agreed to train Adil, Kurip, and Dayat basilek. Johar came to terms with the firmness of his views on certain conditions. The quote above represents Johar's negotiations, namely by requiring how to practice according to the way he knows. Indirectly, Johar's form of negotiation is a form of acceptance of the adoption of silek as a sport for its sustainability but still rejects silek as an industrial commodity. Several dialogues and scenes in this film indirectly show that silek has become an industrial commodity quite reckon with.

**Surau dan Silek** shows the shift of traditional values into the industry. This film depicts that silek is no longer the consumption of the chosen people in a traditional environment, but rather a mass consumption. The philosophical requirements demanded in learning silek have shifted into economic and financial requirements. Registration fees, uniforms, and places to practice no longer in the surau are manifestations of this shift. The emergence of several other martial arts colleges ultimately urges Minangkabau (West Sumatra) sasaran to compete in the context of this industrial world. Winning in a tournament is the target, measure, success, and goal to get as many students as possible. A victory that even uses underhanded means. Traditional cultural values seem to have been put aside to make it happen. Winning in a standard tournament is a form of industrial hegemony.

On the other hand, resistance to the shift in the philosophical understanding of silek was ultimately defeated by conservation considerations. Industrial forces have defeated efforts to stick to the idealism of traditional cultural values. Compromise against consumers reflects the industry's dominance in order to bias and control consciousness (Adorno, 2001: 72). Tradition is manipulated and shifted its meaning into style as a form of standardization. The cultural product industry also generates positive externalities as they contribute to the quality of life in the places where they gather and enhance the image and prestige of the local area (local products) (Power & Scott, 2004: 10). This fact is interesting for policymakers to develop further.

Comparison of the representation of silek in HT, MR, and SS shows that there are differences as a form of changes that occur in silek as part of social life in Minangkabau. Over time, in this case, the release of the three films, silek as a tradition, seems to be fading. The HT, released in 1953, can be considered reasonably accurate in representing silek as a Minangkabau tradition. The film MR, released in 2009, solely uses silek as a builder of the action film genre. Meanwhile, the SS, which was released in 2017, conveyed silek from a different angle. Silek in SS is shown as a form of defeat of tradition against industrial power. Silek has been subject to the laws of economics and conglomeration by setting physical and visual standards. As a representation of resistance to the industry, in the end, Johar had to give in to personal reasons that were very cliché. It is also seen in MR through the character Yuda who intends to teach silek overseas. Silek, as part of the life of the Minangkabau tradition, has become an industrial commodity that also forms the mindset of consumers that silek is the same as silat.

**5. CONCLUSION**

Whatever the content and spirit of its manufacture, films cannot be separated from the aspect of industry and power. The film is a commodity, a tool, and a means of trade. Behind it all, conflicts of interest will always follow. The slogan of art for art would not apply in the industry. Films will always consider the profit and loss of production so that traditional culture and ethnic content that are raised are merely commodities and merchandise, not as a form of conservation, preservation, or cultural revitalization.

Changes and differences in understanding the Minangkabau concept in the film are not merely the effects of technological and information developments, especially in the film sector. In addition to Minangkabau elements, industrial, economic, political, and social aspects are important factors in this change. Whether we realize it or not, this condition has made the discourse of Minangkabau ethnic identity increasingly "widespread" both personally, socially, and geographically. Through visual imagery, the film shows the relationship between what is seen, experienced, and understood to unravel
and reach the meaning of the discourse on ethnic identity contained in it.

As a symbol, the change in Minangkabau ethnic identity can be positive or negative, especially silek. On the one hand, silek in film will strengthen the personal identity of the Minangkabau people through the film as a narrative of ethnicity. However, on the other hand, the freedom of creativity in the industrial context will bring the possibility of "melting" the content of silek. However, it takes more understanding, awareness, and wisdom to accept a fictional work of art.

AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed equally to this work.

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