

## Conflict of female sex workers in films *Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover*

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### Abstrak

*Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover* adalah film yang diangkat dari empat seri buku karya Moammar Emka dengan judul yang sama. *Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover* menceritakan kehidupan malam kota Jakarta yang penuh kejutan, yang mencakup ambisi-ambisi warganya, beragam bentuk prostitusi dan pesta malam yang diklaim tidak banyak diketahui, hingga narkoba. Film ini memiliki misi menyuarakan nilai kemanusiaan pada masyarakat. Sutradara, Fajar Nugros ingin memvisualisasikan dan mengangkat isu kekerasan terhadap perempuan, premanisme, kemiskinan, jeritan kaum minoritas. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui konflik-konflik yang terjadi pada perempuan pekerja seks kelas atas. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan analisis semiotika John Fiske melalui kode-kode televisi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa film *Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover* merepresentasikan perempuan pekerja seks komersial kelas atas serta beberapa konflik yang diterima perempuan. Serta menunjukkan sisi gelap kota Jakarta yang dilakukan oleh supermodel, pejabat, dan kalangan atas lainnya. Selain itu, penelitian ini menunjukkan beberapa konflik yang melatarbelakangi perempuan bekerja di dunia prostitusi kelas atas dan mengundang banyak resiko. Film ini juga memberikan suara pada perempuan mengenai ketidaksetaraan gender.

**Kata Kunci:** Pekerja seks komersial; gender; konflik sosial; semiotika

### Abstract

*Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover* is a movie that was lifted from four series of works by Moammar Emka with the same little. *Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover* tells the Jakarta city nightlife that is full of surprises, which includes the ambitions of its citizens, various forms of prostitution and parties that claimed to be unknow, to drugs. This film has a mission voice humanity's value to society. The director, dawn nugros wants to visualize and raise the issue of violence against women, thuggery, poverty, the screams of minorities. The purpose of this research is to find out the conflicts that occur in women of high sex workers. This research is a qualitative research using John Fiske semiotic analysis through *The Television Codes*. The results of this study indicate that *The Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover* movie, represents upper-class commercial sex workers as well some conflicts received by women. And shows the dark side of the Jakarta City, which is carried out by supermodels, officials, and other uppers classes. In addition, this study shows that some of the conflict underlying women work in the world of high class prostitution and invite many risks. That movie also gives a voice to women about gender inequality.

**Keywords:** Prostitute; gender; social conflict; semiotics

## **Introduction**

*Grafent Pictures* and *Demi Istri Production* present the film *Jakarta Undercover* which airs in Indonesian theaters starting February 23, 2017. The cinema, which reveals a different side of Jakarta, is adapted from four series of novels with the same title by Moammar Emka. The *Jakarta Undercover* film which contains sensuality. The story in the film is based on Moammar Emka's book, *Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover*, which tells the story of Jakarta's nightlife which is full of surprises, which includes the ambitions of its citizens, various forms of prostitution and night parties that are claimed to be unknown, to drugs. The director of *Jakarta Undercover*, Fajar Nugros, revealed that the film's other mission is to convey human values to society. The film *Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover*, which premiered at the Jogja Asian Film Festival (JAFF) in December 2016, intends to visualize a number of issues that have been uncomfortable to discuss. "Violence against women, thuggery, poverty, the screams of minorities, are some of the realities that we want to bring up in this film," said Fajar Nugros (Asrianti, 2017).

Based on the background described above, researchers are interested in conducting research on social problems that often occur around us. Seeing social problems is not only from one side, but must be viewed from various sides. Therefore, the researcher took the title of representation of women in films (semiotic analysis of the film *Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover*) because this film depicts the realities of life that we often encounter and which we don't know about the realities of someone's life.

This study focuses on fundamental questions about how the conflict between women sex workers (Commercial Sex Women) in the film *Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover* through John Fiske's semiotic analysis. At the marker level, a film is a text that contains a series of photographic images that result in the illusion of motion and action in real life. At the marker level, films are a reflection of metaphorical life (Danesi & Admiranto, 2010). Films are considered more of a medium of entertainment than a medium of persuasion. But what is clear is that films actually have great persuasion or persuasion power (Panuju & Susilo, 2019; Van Dijk, 2014; Whelehan & Gwynne, 2014). Public criticism and the existence of censorship institutions also show that films are actually very influential. Because films demand large audiences, because foreign markets are a major source of income, and because government control is always threatening, producers try not to offend anyone. They do make all kinds of films about juvenile delinquency, romance scandals, racial segregation, crime and mental aggravation, but they don't touch anyone's interests.

Understanding and differentiating between the concept of sex and gender is needed in carrying out an analysis to understand the problems of social injustice that afflict women (Susilo, 2017; Susilo & Kodir, 2017). This is because there is a close relationship between gender differences and gender injustice with the broader structure of societal injustice (Handayani, 2002).

Gender differences give birth to gender differences and gender differences have created various injustices (Susilo, 2021). Most of the myths that arise in society will benefit men and discourage women because the Indonesian state adheres to the law of patriarchal hegemony (Susilo, 2021). Patriarchy describes the domination of men over women and children in the family and this continues to dominate men in all other spheres of society. (Handayani, 2002).

Commercial Sex Worker is someone who sells himself, by having sex with the aim of earning money. Money is a life requirement for every human being, as well as prostitutes, when sex workers realize that not all environments are able to accept their presence, they play certain characters. There is a message management that he creates to provide understanding to a certain environment, according to what he hopes.

Following Koentjoro (2004) prostitutes are a profession that sells services to satisfy the sexual needs of customers. Usually this service is in the form of renting out the body. In Indonesian society, prostitution is viewed negatively, and those who rent or sell their bodies are often seen as community trash. There are also those who consider prostitution to be bad, even evil, but necessary (evil necessity) (Nurulita & Primadini, 2021). This view is based on the assumption that the presence of prostitutes can channel the sexual desires of those who need them (usually men) without channeling it, it is feared that their customers will actually attack and rape good women.

Factors for the occurrence of commercial sex workers (CSWs):

a. Economic Factors

The dominant factor behind them selling themselves as prostitutes is economic factors. Operationally, the economic factor is that it is difficult to understand their daily needs due to the absence of a job that is able to fulfill their daily needs. Economic factors or pressures that make them fall into regulations are a further result of structural poverty which has become a naked reality.

### b. Lifestyle

Lifestyle is a person's way of living and doing things related to everyday life. Shifting norms always occur anywhere, especially in a dynamic society. Norms of life, social norms, and even legal norms are often ignored in order to achieve something. The tendency to prostitute themselves to many women is to avoid the difficulties of life, in addition to adding pleasure through shortcuts. Reporting from the page okezone.com "some women who do commercial sex work purely because of their lifestyle. Some are due to economic factors, but from the lower class. The motivation is to be more stylish. For the lower class, to live (economic factors). For the upper class, the motivation is to make life more stylish," said Emka to Legal.

### c. Environmental factor

The environment is everything in the environment and is involved in individual interactions when carrying out their activities. The environment includes the physical environment, psychosocial environment, biological environment, and cultural environment. Where one of the environmental factors is:

- Free sex
- Derivative
- Broken Home

Conflict in literary works according to Semi (1988) can be divided into two kinds, namely internal and external conflicts. Internal conflict is the conflict between two desires within a character. External conflict is conflict between one character and another, or between a character and their environment. Meanwhile, if it is related to social realities in society, conflicts generally follow Schellenberg (1996) is a situation where another individual or group in order to win something desired based on competing interests due to differences in identity or attitude. When associated with conflict, women as part of the social community are not free from and tend to be in a vulnerable position. As contemporary socialist feminist Juliet Mitchell has linked, the status and function of women are determined in a plural manner by their roles in production, reproduction and sexuality.

In the book written Vera (2014) John Fiske's view on semiotics is the same as the views of other semiotic figures, such as Charles Sanders Peirce, Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthe, and others, that the three main elements that must be present in any study of meaning

and sign, reference to signs and use of signs . Sign is something that is physical, can be perceived by human senses; sign refers to something other than the sign itself; and depending on the recognition by the user so it can be called a sign. In semiotics (the science of signs) there are two main concerns, namely the relationship between signs and their meanings and how a sign is combined into a code.

John Fiske put forward the theory of television codes (the codes of television). According to Fiske, the codes that appear on television shows are interconnected to form a meaning. In the television codes expressed in John Fiske's theory, events broadcast in the world of television have been encoded by social codes which are divided into the following three levels (Vera, 2014).

1. Reality level, consisting of code of television appearance, dress (costume), make up, environment, behavior, speech (dialogue), gesture (movement), expression, and sound.
2. Representation level, consisting of camera code (camera), editing, music.
3. Ideological level, consisting of individualism (individualist), feminism, race, class, materialism, capitalism.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In semiotics (the science of signs) semiology John Fiske put forward the theory of signs that have been encoded into television codes, divided into several levels. In this analysis, according to the theory put forward by John Fiske, the researcher will only use a few television codes (J Fiske, 2004; John Fiske, 2010). This type of research is a qualitative method using a semiotic approach by examining the meaning of a film Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover through John Fiske's semiotic analysis which refers to television codes.

The researcher collected data on the film Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover which was downloaded through the website and through the documentation and observation process. Literature study is also carried out to complement the supporting data and theory as a reference in conducting an analysis.

This study uses qualitative methods to study and observe the signs and meanings of the concept of gender in the film Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover: Reflections on Love, Party and Reality according to John Fiske's semiotics. As an audio visual work, a film is a description of social realities that occur in the community and can provide audiences with an

understanding of their unknown surroundings. So that we must be able to capture observable meanings from the story line, language, and pictures.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Characters in the film *Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover***

#### **Pras (Oka Antara)**

A man who migrated to Jakarta to be significant. Pras has an innocent character, is required to write revolutionary writings, innocent inscriptions write about Jakarta nightlife. His strong desire to become a journalist made Pras go directly to the dark side of Jakarta.

#### **Yoga (Baim Wong)**

A drug supplier and organizer of a night party in Jakarta. Yoga has a bad boy character and a violent nature, which falls in love with a high-class prostitute. Yoga felt that his life was different after knowing Laura.

#### **Laura (Tiara Eve)**

A supermodel who is well known in Jakarta, on the other hand, she also works as a class prostitute. Laura was forced to take on a prostitute job because she actually didn't want to sell herself. However, he has no power, he has to make ends meet, where his family's economy is collapsing due to the corruption that has ensnared his father.

#### **Mama San (Agus Kuncoro)**

A man who dresses like a woman, with his calm and calm figure, turns out to be the pimp of a high-class commercial sex worker in Jakarta. Mama San considers the woman who works for him to be an investment. He also takes care of female prostitutes at night parties and night clubs.

#### **Sasha (Nikita Mirzani)**

The figure who introduced Laura to Mama San, she is also one of the upper class prostitutes that Mama San shelters. She is willing to work as a high-class prostitute, really to support her needs. His life depends on the results of his work.

## DISCUSSION

### Economic Conflict Analysis

In the film Moammar Emka's *Jakarta Undercover*, it analyzes several pieces of the film scene that refer to economic conflicts seen from the level of reality and the level of representation, experienced by Laura and Sasha, a supermodel who also works as a high-class commercial sex worker.

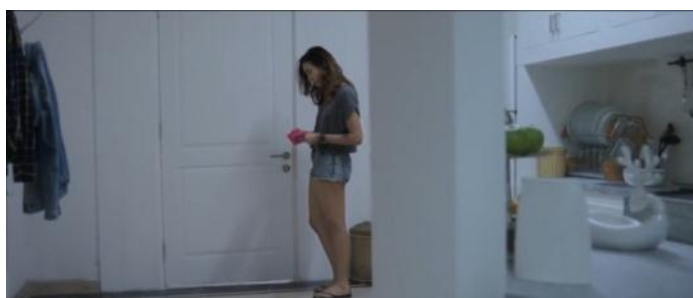


Figure 1.  
Laura representing in the film



Figure 2  
Laura felt scary during the phone

- *Speech* (dialogue code)

In Figure 1 and Figure 2 there is a dialogue code in the form of a narrative between Laura and Pinkan talking via telephone

Pinkan: "sis?"

Laura: "OK"

Pinkan: "transfer brother? "

Laura: "Yes, partly for daddy!"

Pinkan: "why for dad anyway?"

Laura: "Pinkan ..."

Pinkan: "just do not want to!"

Laura: "Yes, because you can go to college like you are now, because you can also get link modeling in Jakarta"

Pinkan: "yes it's brother not me"

It can be seen from the dialogue code, there is disharmony in Laura's family.

- *Expression*

Supported by picture 1, Laura's facial expression slightly decreases, indicating Laura's annoyance with Pinkan for not obeying Laura's orders regarding the distribution of money to her father.

- *Camera*

It was also emphasized by the camera code, that the camera angle was taken in a medium close up, to clarify Laura's frustration with Pinkan. It could be said that Laura became the only backbone in the family after what happened to her father.

- *Dress & lightning*

This is reinforced by the plain gray T-shirt worn by Laura in picture 1 and picture 2 and the lighting code in picture 1 and picture 2 with dim light and grayish light. It can be interpreted that the color gray represents serious, dependable and stable. According to Eisman, "Gray is a strong and practical color." Choose this color to show that you are a responsible person. It is clear that Laura's attitude is still responsible for her family, for the sake of continuity.

From there it can be seen that the economy and the family are the main things for all levels of humanity. Someone is willing to do anything for the sake of the family, in order to support the family economy. No matter how bad a job is, the human heart itself still has feelings. To be significant is not extravagant, to provide for the family's economy is one of the significance for them. Not all high-class commercial sex workers even do this work for their lifestyle only. Behind the jobs they are doing, there is an economic problem behind them being forced to become high-class prostitutes. Pressing economic needs make them think not to get money quickly. Regardless of the consequences, ignoring the rules in the prostitution business that must return the money and interest to the pimp. It is also considered an



economic conflict because of the indirect emphasis on them being required to always work in the prostitution business. How do they also think about how to return the investment money.

The negative stigma they get, they throw away ignoring their surroundings. Because the focus for them is on the economy and family. They also feel regret after entering the world of prostitution. The world that he had never imagined or dreamed of happened in his life.

### **Romance Conflict Analysis**

In the film Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover, it shows love conflicts. This romance is a love triangle between Yoga, Laura and Pras. This love conflict started when Laura got to know Pras in a mini market. The meeting ended up happening in the same place when they met.

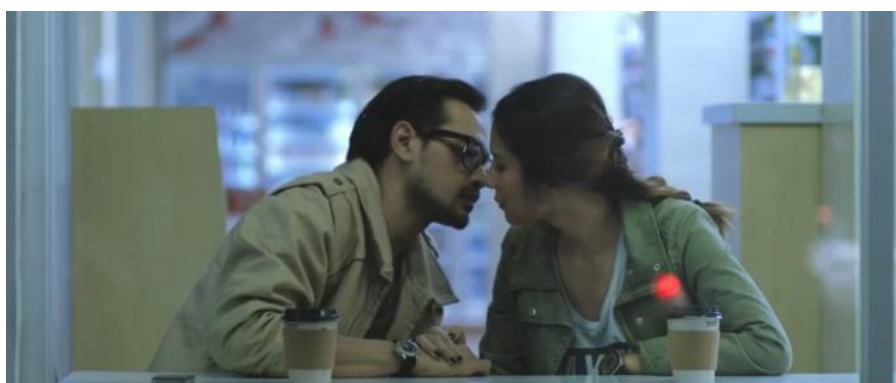


Figure 3  
Laura and Pras Kissing

- *Environment*

It can be seen from the environmental code (in picture 3) Laura and Pras are in a mini market, where they are used as a place to meet each other. The meeting they had was very intense. When Laura was busy with her world, she still took the time to meet Pras.

- *Gesture*

From the gesture code it can be seen (in picture 3) that if Laura and Pras will kiss each other, it indicates that they have the same feelings. The feeling of being interested in Pras had started since he first met Laura. And the next day Laura gave a telephone number through the mini market cashier to give to Pras. from there they often meet and finally both know each other's feelings. From the code of movement, it can be seen that Pras's

gesture of kissing gets feedback from Laura by doing the same thing. It seems they like each other.

- *Camera*

Judging from the camera code (in figure 3), it can be seen that the two shoot technique is where two shoots show two people in one frame aiming to build a relationship between one subject and another. You can see Laura and Pras in one frame, depicting that they are building a relationship with opposite sex attraction.



Figure 4  
Pras Angry with the Commercial Sex Worker



Figure 5  
Pras Angry with the Commercial Sex Worker

- *Environment & apperance*

From the dialogue code in Figure 4 and Figure 5, there is Laura and Yoga's debate about "what is real".

Laura: "She is the only real one in my life"

Yoga: "real? you want to know what real is? The 1 billion money I gave to Mama San, it's all real. Do you want to know what real is? Even though now you are a supermodel, you can't pay your mom to the hospital and you can't save your papa in prison, you can't! and

you know what real is? Pras, a journalist, is real. He writes articles about our world. It's all real. And if you really know from the beginning, Pras knows that you are ...

Laura: "what? call! "

Yoga: "would he marry you if he knew you were a person from the start ...

Laura: "call!"

Yoga: "Whore"

From the dialogue code, it can be seen that for Laura Pras, he is a real person in his life. Laura can be herself when she is around Pras. But all of Laura's statements were dismissed by the actions Yoga had done to Laura by redeeming Laura for 1 billion and revealing the fact that Pras knew Laura's profession was besides being a model.

- *Camera*

Laura's sad feeling to hear Yoga's statement can be seen from the camera code in picture 5 with a close up shot. Expressing disappointment and sadness over Yoga's harsh statements.

The love conflict that occurs between Yoga, Laura and Pras can be said to be a love triangle where Yoga really loves Laura by willing to save money to redeem Laura of 1 billion to Mama San and help pay for Mama Laura's hospital fees and Laura's sister's college. But this intention is hindered by the status of Yoga as someone's husband. Yoga was not ready if he divorced his wife and Laura had time to discuss the problem.

The presence of Pras makes Laura feel different, Laura feels like herself when she is around Pras. Pras, who is what he is, makes Laura interested. This was also welcomed by Pras who was interested in Laura from the beginning of the meeting. Laura mentions that Pras is something real to her. Laura's life will be more meaningful if Pras is there.

This love conflict is also present in the life of prostitutes, even though they are in the upper class. Where what they expect is not just material but a sense of comfort, to be themselves in front of others. Choosing simple things and not all about money.

## Violent Conflict Analysis

In the film Moammar Emka's *Jakarta Undercover*, it analyzes several pieces of the film scene that refer to violent conflicts seen from the level of reality and the level of representation, which Laura and Sasha experienced while being a prostitute.

Night work as a prostitute is never without violence. For them, the violence they experience is a risk at work. For example, in the film *Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover* which shows the existence of violence against women perpetrated by male clients.



Figure 6  
government official strangles Laura's neck



Figure 7  
government official who is having sex with Laura

The public view thinks that being a prostitute is the easiest and quickest job to get money. Every job has risks, just like being a prostitute, there is violence against a prostitute. Not only sex workers with low rates but also high-class prostitutes also receive violence.

- *Gesture*

As in picture 6, in the movement code shows a man, he is a government official who is having sex with Laura in the scene the official treats Laura inhumanely, he strangles Laura's neck and in picture 7.

- *Apperance*

From the appearance code, you can see Laura's messy appearance, Laura is left lying helpless and then he leaves. This is one of the risks faced by a prostitute even in the upper class. Inevitably Laura had to comply with all requests from clients because that was her job. The official's treatment was completely unreasonable, wanting to get a different sensation by torturing.

- *Expression*

From the code Laura's expression looks tormented, in picture 6 she endures the pain of strangulation that she received. The pain that Laura received is also seen in Figure 7.

Violent conflict is also found in the dialogue code showing a client's narrative saying "you are here to help me visualize my imagination when I was in junior high school, two female warriors I imagine my claws listen to her voice, soft sexy"

The job of being a prostituted woman even in the upper class also has serious risks. Bruises, bleeding wounds, and psychological wounds can be received at the same time. Almost all the risks they ignore because the problems they carry are heavier

## **Conclusion**

In the film Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover, the conflict of female prostitutes is represented through the reality level of appearance codes, dialogue, gestures, costumes, environment, and expressions. At the representation level, camera and lighting codes are used. And the level of patriarchal ideology. The results of the observations from this study are the conflict between female sex workers in the film Moammar Emka's Jakarta Undercover, there are three conflicts, namely economic conflict, love conflict and violent conflict. From these conflicts, this film opens the public's eyes that jobs that are considered easy and instant have heavy risks. And not everyone who does work is willing to become a prostitute because of their lifestyle. And in this film gives a voice to women who experience gender inequality.

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