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# The "Anglophone crisis" in Cameroon: cultural diversity as governmentality of (post)colonial divide

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## *ABSTRACT*

*This article attempts to highlight the challenges of the discourse of diversity in Cameroon. It shows the strategic function of diversity as governmentality of the Anglophone-Francophone conflictuality of which the war of secession in Anglophone Cameroon is the manifestation. The notion of diversity and the communication that accompanies it are at the center of a major issue here: neutralizing the Franco-British colonial heritage and bringing English-speaking secessionist forces back into the national arena. The discourse of diversity serves to build consensus around national unity. The article also shows how the question of diversity arises in Cameroon less in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, immigration, social class, and age – categories particularly mobilized in studies on diversity in the West. In Cameroon and in much of Africa, the notion of diversity refers to precolonial and (post)colonial ethnicity*.

**Keywords:** Postcolonial state, Anglophone-Francophone divide, Discourse of diversity, Governmentality, Intercultural communication in postcolony.

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## INTRODUCTION

In Cameroonian context marked by political demands of an ethnic nature over the last decades (Collectif 1992; Ngoh, 1999, Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003; Zognong & Mouiche, 2002), "diversity" has appeared as an instrument of governing ethnicity (Sama, 2007). The aim of this article is to highlight the challenges of the discourse of diversity in Cameroon. By discourse of diversity, we mean all the socio-political narratives having as their object the question and the notion of diversity. It is a set of discursive and semiotic productions having as their lexico-semantic core the notion of diversity (Aboussier and *al*, 2023; Tatchim, 2023). The article sheds light on the way in which the postcolonial State produces and puts into circulation in the public space a set of formulations around "diversity" for the purpose of building consensus around State power and the national community. Recently emerging from the colonial experience (Mbembe 2000), the nation-state throughout Africa is in the process of construction. In the case of Cameroon, how does intercultural state communication operate in its overall policy of building the postcolonial nation-state? This fundamental question structures our thinking. One of the hypotheses of this research is that the Cameroonian government is attempting through the discourse of diversity to neutralize different centrifugal ethno-identity forces. The article shows that diversity in Cameroon is at the center of a national discursive system, and that in this context, it takes the form of an injunction towards the populations. We thus show a strategical use of the discourse of diversity. This functions, as we will demonstrate below, for example as a regime of governmentality of the conflict between Anglophones and Francophones of which the ongoing war of secession in Anglophone Cameroon is the manifestation[1]. The notion of diversity and the communication that accompanies it are here at the center of a major issue: to bring English-speaking separatist forces back into the national arena. Its discourse serves to build consensus around national unity within a “stationary state” where power finds itself "in an atmosphere of end of reign"[2] (Eboko & Awondo 2018). More clearly, this article understands the discourse of diversity in Cameroon in its relationship with the Franco-British colonial history of the country, that is to say as a communication device caught between the issues of pacification of cultural relations between Anglophones and Francophones and the construction of a postcolonial nation-state.

In the lines that follow, we first provide an understanding of the elements of the socio-historical context of the discourse on diversity in Cameroon. A set of survey data from archival and/or documentary corpora shed light on the process of building the postcolonial nation-state in Cameroon as well as the socio-discursive trajectory of "diversity". The division of Cameroon between France and England in the colonial context largely contributed to the emergence of the discourse on diversity in the public space in Cameroon in the aftermath of independence and the Reunification of the two Anglophone and Francophone Cameroons.

We then show how, in the absence of government responses to the "Anglophone problem", that is to say the discomfort of the Anglophone minority (around 20% of the population) in cohabitation with Francophones since Reunification in 1961, this mutated from

2016 into a war of secession in the English-speaking regions. This military phase will force the state not only to recognize the existence of an "Anglophone problem" but also to put it into public policy. Surveys by interviews, documentary research and ethnographic observation in the English-speaking regions (2016-2022) show the entry of cultural and linguistic diversity into the state agenda. Diversity then appears as the governmentality of the “Anglophone crisis”.

In the discussion section, we show how the question of diversity arises in Cameroon less in terms of race, sexual orientation, gender, immigration, social class, and age – categories particularly mobilized in studies of diversity in the West. In Cameroon and in much of Africa, the notion of diversity refers to precolonial and (post)colonial ethnicity. We also highlight the issues and theoretical challenges of studies on diversity in postcolonial French-speaking Africa.

## THE DISCOURSE OF DIVERSITY BY THE POSTCOLONIAL STATE IN CAMEROON

### SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Cameroon is a state which, in its precolonial configuration, is made up of more than 230 ethnolinguistic groups. Because of its forced openness to the West, in the context of triangular trade and colonization, the postcolonial authorities inherited at the dawn of the "independence" of a bicultural, bilingual, even bi-territorial Cameroon (English-speaking and French-speaking). A German colony until 1914, Cameroon was placed by the League of Nations (SDN) under Franco-British administration after the First World War (Le Vine, 1934). An almost logical decision given the Franco-British military expedition against Germany on Cameroonian soil, and the sharing of the territory by the two allied powers. At the dawn of "independence", Cameroon is therefore an ethnically diversified state at the peripheral or regional level. At the national level, it is politically and linguistically bipolarized (Anglophone and Francophone).




FIGURE 1. Map of Cameroon after Independence and the Reunification of the English-speaking and French-speaking territories

Faced with the challenge of nation-state building faced by young African states, postcolonial authorities implemented a hegemonic political project where national unity was a political religion (Fogui 1990). In the speech, national unity was sacred. Any demonstration of an ethno-regional nature was considered an unpatriotic act. The ethnocidal state (Coulon 1978) was deployed until the beginning of the 1990s – the so-called democratic transition period, characterized internally by struggles for the liberalization of political and public life (Monga 1995; Vubo 2011), and at the global level, the multilateralization of cooperation relations, due, among other things, to the collapse of the Soviet bloc (Dieng 1996).

Thus, we observed during the 1990s the emergence of a discourse on cultural pluralism (Collectif 1992; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003; Tatchim, 2023, 2020). After several years of political struggles between the State and the re-emerged opposition political parties, notably with the support of international partners in favor of democratic opening, the country resulted in the adoption of a new Constitution in January 1996. Cameroon introduces in its fundamental law the question and the notion of "linguistic and cultural diversity" and expresses the will to "enhance this heritage". Here is an excerpt from the preamble to the 1996 Constitution:

> The Cameroonian people, proud of their **linguistic and cultural diversity**, the element of their national personality which it helps to enrich, but deeply aware of the imperative need to perfect their unity, solemnly proclaim that they constitute one and the same nation...

The beginning of the 1990s was particularly marked by the construction of legitimate ethno-identity issues, what Cameroonian political scientist Luc Sindjoun (2002) calls the

politicization of ethnicity. This is reflected notably in the political formulation of the "Anglophone problem", that is to say the construction of the "Anglophone malaise" as a political problem (Konings 1996; Konings and Nyamnjoh 2003; Sama 2007; Tatchim, 2023, 2021). The political use of ethnicity also concerns precolonial identity groups previously forced by the repressive state apparatus to become invisible (Collectif 1992; Vubo 2011). The political construction of the "Anglophone problem", coupled with the injunction to democratic openness and ethno-identity pluralism on the part of international partners, made the 1990s a unique period in the historical process of state construction. -nation in Cameroon. Endogenous and exogenous upheavals shape diversity issues. The injunction to cultural diversity issued by supranational organizations appears, however, much more clearly from the 2000s, with the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the eponymous Convention in 2005 (Sholomon-Kornblit 2019). It is reflected in Cameroon by the entry of the term "cultural diversity" into official discourse. The 2010s, and especially the outbreak of the Anglophone secessionist crisis (2016), allow us to see a political instrumentalization of the notion as well as the discourse that carries it. A diachronic reading of the political discourse shows, from the mid-2010s, a democratization of the discourse of diversity within the state apparatus. The notion of diversity and the discourse surrounding it constitute an issue of neutralization of internal ethno-identity conflict. The notion works as an operator for building consensus around national unity.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS, METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

Thus, this research attempts to shed light on government strategies for building the national community in a multi-ethnic context. How does the state proceed to neutralize the colonial heritage through communication and build consensus between the Anglophone and Francophone communities around national unity? To what extent does the notion of diversity and the discourse surrounding it contribute to the intercultural communication of rapprochement between Anglophones and Francophones? These are the main questions that structure this research. Beyond the Cameroonian case, the problem posed by this article is that of the challenges of the state discourse of diversity in a postcolonial context. Methodologically, the article is based on qualitative surveys carried out as part of our doctoral thesis on the issues of the discourse of diversity in the process of building the postcolonial nation-state in Cameroon. The thesis favored a diachronic approach to the discourse and policies of cultural diversity in Cameroon since the postcolonial period. Various surveys were conducted between 2015 and 2022 to shed light on the research problem. The analysis is based on a corpus of interviews and archival speeches, i.e. institutional documents collected as part of our investigations. Regarding the corpus obtained by interview, we had long discussions with public officials serving or having served at the highest level of the State: a former minister and a former secretary general at the presidency of the Republic (both members of National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism)[3]. We also had interviews with officials at the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Secondary Education, and the management of the national museum in Yaoundé. All the interviewees were selected on the basis of their functions or former functions of State agents responsible for implementing the

"diversity policy" as well as the discourse that accompanies it. The objective of the interviews was to understand the endogenous logics, that is to say the reasons which govern in depth the state discourse on diversity. Regarding archive discourse, the analysis is based on a set of institutional documents. We have collected from the ministries mentioned above a set of documents and speeches, the characteristics of which are as follows: solemn speeches by the President of the Republic and the Ministers of Culture; decrees and legal texts; about ten issues of the information and communication magazine of the Ministry of Culture (*Culture Infos*). The documentary and interview survey are supplemented by a media watch of more than five years which has enabled us to collect press interviews of State agents at national and local level (ministers, prefects, sub-prefects)[4] between 2016 and 2021, a period of high political-military tension in English-speaking Cameroon. What guides the selection of interviews is the fact that the notion of diversity is clearly mentioned there. The analysis is therefore thematic and the approach qualitative and critical. The corpus provides an overview of the dynamics of the State's discourse on diversity. Through this approach, research contributes to shedding light on the processes allowing organizations to implement various enunciative strategies (Gobin 2004). State discourse carries and establishes the question and the notion of diversity. It has, by its nature, a strong normative dimension.

## THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As indicated above, the article explores the hypothesis of cultural diversity as governmentality of the Francophone/Anglophone divide and more specifically of the Anglophone secessionist crisis. The reflection is informed by the conceptual framework defined by Michel Foucault around the notions of governmentality and system (Foucault 1980, 2007, 2008). Taken up and worked on in recent years, various works show their operability in the analysis of the management of ethno-racial diversity and conflict (Doytcheva 2020b, 2021; Auboussier et al. 2022). Indeed, the definition of diversity as a paradigm for managing ethno-identity conflict appeared in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. Diversity is central in the management of the issue of ethnic minorities. *Affirmative action* grants preferential treatment to communities defined according to their ethno-racial identity and having historically been subjected to a discriminatory legal regime: African Americans, Hispanics, and descendants of indigenous populations, among others (Sabbagh 2012, 2000). In Europe, studies on diversity have particularly been carried out on what John W. Berry calls "settler societies" (2018, 27) and which are largely based on immigration. Here, diversity is an instrument of governing postcolonial immigration (Bosma et al. 2012; Doytcheva 2021). In recent decades, it has contributed to the emergence of multicultural spaces that are the subject of public policies (Fossum et al. 2020). Diversity is central to the governance of integration and multiculturalism (Rea et al. 2018). In France, it is used to address the issue of the integration of North African and sub-Saharan populations and more broadly racialized groups such as the Roma (Doytcheva 2021). In England, it influenced policies around the massive influx of people from the South, particularly in the context of the 1990s marked by political crises in certain African and West Asian countries (Barkawi & Brighton 2013; Thandi 2012; Karatani 2003; Joppke 1999). The

situation is roughly similar in Germany, where the question arises of the integration of populations originating from the former territories of the Germanic Empire (Layne 2022; Joppke 1999).

Contrary to Western societies – for the most part industrialized and where the question of diversity often appears in connection with the racial problem – the question arises in the African context mainly in terms of precolonial and (post)colonial culture (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Mhlanga 2013). Governing diversity in many postcolonial African states amounts to governing a political community in its dual relationship to the precolonial and (post)colonial past. In Namibia, for example, governing diversity means on the one hand governing the German-speaking culture and on the other hand governing a dozen ethnolinguistic communities with pre-colonial roots. The situation is roughly similar in South Africa and Tanzania where there is a cohabitation of German-speaking, English-speaking and Zulu-speaking cultures. In Cameroon, governing diversity means governing, on the one hand, the Francophone/Anglophone cleavage inherited from the double French and British colonization, and on the other hand, building consensus between more than 230 ethnolinguistic groups whose establishment precedes the colonial expansion (Vubo, 2006).

Understanding diversity in terms of device involves discursive and extra-discursive elements (Foucault 1977). Diversity appears not only as language (Ahmed 2007) but also as production including non-language elements (Milena 2021). Diversity is then considered as a "system of relations" (Foucault 1977), that means a heterogeneous set of discursive and non-discursive elements[5]. In the Cameroonian context, this refers both to the sloganization of "diversity" through communication campaigns, to the legalization of diversity or to the establishment of a diversity observatory.

Rooted in state discourse analysis, this research also explores the theoretical issue of the production and circulation of discourses (of diversity) in the public space (Auboussier et al. 2023), and therefore, the devices that ensure its social mediation. One of the strategies for circulating the discourse of diversity seems to be sloganization. In 2004, the European Union made “United in diversity” its motto. This political choice, which aims to bring together around a common ideal the 27 countries of the union, has a communication advantage: to facilitate media coverage and the circulation of expression for the construction of an intercultural European public space (Dacheux 2001). A similar observation can be made in Cameroon.

## THE “ANGLOPHONE CRISIS”: CULTURAL DIVERSITY AS AN OPERATOR FOR NEUTRALIZING CONFLICT

### THE ‘‘ANGLOPHONE CRISIS”

In the history of societies, we often observe great moments of political upheaval, historical periods of great social transformations. These moments of profound rupture are accompanied, on the discursive level, by the renewal of the political lexicon. This bears witness to the social changes taking place. Michel Foucault speaks of "discourse events" (1994: 706) to

qualify these moments of rupture in the socio-discursive trajectory of a society. In Cameroon, the ‘‘Anglophone crisis’’ marks a turning point in political and social discourse. At the same time, it is the event that gives the notion of cultural diversity and the discourse that accompanies it a strategic function in the resolution of the crisis.

The ‘‘Anglophone crisis’’, as described by the media, is initially (October 2016) the expression of a historical malaise experienced by English-speaking teachers and lawyers in the exercise of their profession daily – they mainly talk about the Francophonization of the English school and judicial systems (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997). Badly managed by the state (repression, arrest, torture, humiliation, etc.), the demonstrations organized by the latters gave way to an armed secessionist movement (Pommerolle & Heungoup, 2017; Bouopda, 2018). The “Anglophone crisis” is an armed conflict between Anglophone secessionist forces and the Cameroonian army which has already caused, according to NGOs, nearly 6,000 deaths and hundreds of internally and externally displaced people, mainly refugees in Nigeria (Ketzmerick, 2022; Tatchim, 2023). The “Anglophone crisis” is the culmination of a political and discursive struggle led by part of the Anglophone elite since the reunification of the former English and French Cameroons in October 1961 (Tatchim, 2020, 2021, 2023). It also results in street demonstrations and protests. Every Monday, for example, has been declared a ghost town in the English-speaking regions for 8 years. Through the placards, the demonstrators denounce the political, economic, cultural and linguistic marginalization of English-speaking Cameroonians. They define themselves as second-class citizens.




FIGURE 2. Street demonstrations. Screenshot of the socio-digital networks of separatist leaders, by the author, 2023.

The ‘‘Anglophone crisis” is the manifestation of a "historical malaise" experienced by English-speaking Cameroonians in cohabitation with French speakers (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003; Ngoh, 1999). In their speeches[6], the English-speaking separatists denounce the Francophonization of central power, the monopolization of collective resources by the latter, the moral and economic corruption inherited from the French colonizer, the Francophonization of English-speaking educational and judicial systems, among others (Tatchim, 2020, 2023). In terms of the production of political discourse, the “Anglophone crisis” has given the notion of diversity a “formular destiny”, (Tatchim, 2023; Auboussier et al.

2023) that is to say an expression which functions as a discursive operator for neutralizing conflicts (Krieg-Planque 2010).There are several modes of circulation of the notion and the discourse it structures in the public space: the direct discourse of the elite in power (of the press interview type), sloganization (which is a government speech delegated to youth as we will see below) and the implementation of diversity, that means the adoption of new managerial practices governed by the issue of cultural and linguistic diversity.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY AS A NATIONAL ASSET TO BE PROTECTED

After the outbreak of the "Anglophone crisis", there was an intensification of the media speaking out by public authorities, which allowed the dissemination of the discourse of diversity throughout the national territory. Faced with the secessionist discourse which denounces the policy of colonization of English-speaking Cameroon by the French-speaking part, the government develops the argument that cultural diversity constitutes the identity of Cameroon. It is built as a wealth, a common heritage to be protected and promoted by all Cameroonians. At the Ministry of Culture, the mission is clearly to work "in the direction of the conservation of the cultural diversity of Cameroon", indicates the director of cultural heritage[7]. The authorities present diversity as a means of building peace and national unity. In the press, state personnel speak as follows:

> Our homeland is built on the foundations of its cultural diversity. This cultural diversity has its roots in a glorious past, the one made, built by our ancestors and who bequeathed to us a tangible and intangible cultural heritage[8].
> Our cultural diversity is a wealth. I ask all the populations of the department who have communicated with those of the other departments and regions of our country to always keep in mind that Cameroon must remain united, and it is in its unity that it keeps its strength[9].
> Antoine de Saint Exupéry said "the difference enriches rather". This is why we must be proud of the contribution of each other for a better construction of society[10].

We note through this sample a heterogeneity of enunciators and places of enunciation within the state apparatus. The first statement is that of the Minister of Culture. The second is that of a civil administrator. The last statement is made by an official of the National Education – national education precisely where, "at this moment, the teaching of cultural and linguistic diversity to our youth is the priority of priorities", explains the National Inspector of Arts, Languages and National Cultures at the Ministry of Secondary Education[11]. Indeed, with the Anglophone crisis, the notion of diversity spread within the State apparatus and made it possible to observe a phenomenon of recovery going as far as the local representations of the administration (prefects, deputy prefects, heads of districts, mayors).

It should be noted that in its discursive strategy which proceeds by neutralizing the colonial heritage and the ethnic identity bipolarity of the State (Anglophone-Francophone), the public authorities almost never use the terms "Anglophone" and "Francophone", or any other

expression that can highlight the cultural and linguistic difference between the English-speaking and French-speaking regions. Government rhetoric on the crisis favors the notion of "diversity" or "cultural diversity" which appears to be neutral and conciliatory (Auboussier & al., 2023). In addition to traditional media, it circulates through other types of media and forms of discourse.

## THE SLOGANIZATION OF "DIVERSITY"

Another mode of circulation of discourse (of diversity) in the context of the ‘‘Anglophone crisis’’ is sloganization – a process that Maurice Tournier (1985) defines as "the set of moments when discourse turns back on itself". This is organized around a slogan, explicit or not, which serves to mobilize people through its ability to touch affect (Tournier, 1985). The sloganization, associated with the national holiday and the civil and military parade, in a situation of war as it is the case in English-speaking Cameroon, gives the speech a propagandist character. It enriches state communication with epideictic political speech (Nicolas 2009).

Indeed, with sloganization, the discourse of diversity is a particularly strategic discourse. It remains the discourse of power, but the enunciation is here delegated to Cameroonian youth, particularly within the framework of the civil and military parade which marks the national and youth holidays, respectively on May 20 and February 11. In addition to patriotic songs magnifying Cameroonian cultural and linguistic pluralism, primary school children, young people in secondary and higher education carry different messages on placards in the middle of which the syntagm "diversity" figures prominently. These speeches and slogans are produced by the Ministry of Youth and Civic Education, in charge of organizing the civil parade. The speech shows the sloganization of the formular and its co-referents as shown in the following images:




FIGURE 3. Schoolchildren marching as part of Cameroon's National Day, May 20, 2017, in Yaoundé (Screenshot of the website of the Presidency of the Republic, by the author, 2023).

This first image shows a banner that reads "*Cameroon is one and indivisible, proud of its cultural diversity*". The banner is worn by schoolchildren as part of the civil parade (May 20, 2017). The event takes place at Boulevard du 20 mai, in Yaoundé, and is chaired by the Head of State. There are also in the stands all the members of the government, the diplomatic corps accredited in the capital and many other personalities. This parade is the very first after the outbreak of the ‘‘Anglophone crisis” in October 2016.

The sloganization of "diversity" continued in the following years as shown in the following image taken from the sky of Yaoundé. It is a large banner crossing the Boulevard du 20 mai and on which we can read: "*Our living together in diversity, our identity, our wealth*". It is a support produced as part of the national holiday, edition of 2018. The banner overlooks the Boulevard du 20 mai. It welcomes official and non-official spectators in the sky. It is mainly aimed at young parties from all the districts of the capital to take part in the patriotic event. This is the second civil and military parade since the outbreak of the ‘‘Anglophone crisis”.




FIGURE 4. Banner in the sky of Yaoundé, May 20 comic strip, as part of the civil and military parade, May 2018. Screenshot, report on national television, by the author, 2018.

The discursive strategy of the State within the framework of the instrumentalization of the national holiday and the civil and military parade, also shows a sloganization of the co-referents of "diversity". Thus, and as can be seen in the following image, the notion of "multiculturalism" has the same functioning as "diversity". It is sloganized. It is inscribed on a banner which reads: "*Youth, Multiculturalism, Peace and National Unity*". The banner is carried by students from the University of Dschang, in West Cameroon, as part of the civil parade on May 20, 2018.




FIGURE 5. Civil parade, students of the University of Dschang, National Day, May 20, 2018. Screenshot of the University of Dschang website, by the author, 2018.

Several observations can be made regarding these different images. First, the state seizes the national holiday as a moment of political communication on cultural diversity and links it to the Anglophone secessionist crisis. The government instrumentalizes the civil parade and particularly school youth for its crisis communication. Public authorities elaborate a discourse that euphemizing the Anglophone/Francophone bipolarity and delegates the enunciation to very young schoolchildren – very probably unaware of the historical stakes of the political struggles at work.

From the point of view of the discourse itself, we note in substance as in form, a rapprochement between "diversity" and "indivisibility" of Cameroon, between "diversity" and "living together". More generally, we note other syntagmatic constructions such as “bilingualism, peace and national unity”, “unity in diversity”, “multiculturalism for peace” which reflect the competing trajectories of formulations. The sloganization of "multiculturalism" thus constructs the same relationship between cultural pluralism, peace, and national unity. Through sloganization, words are at the center of resolving the “Anglophone crisis”. "Diversity" is the lexical and semantic core of a network of discourses that euphemize historical tensions and the bi-cultural state recalled by the Anglophone secessionist war. The notion of diversity and the discourse that accompanies it criss-cross the national territory because the civil and military parade takes place simultaneously in all the capitals of regions, departments, boroughs, and districts and is chaired by the leaders of each of these administrative units. There is an injunction to diversity, or, more precisely, a discursive strategy of delegating the discourse on diversity and national unity to young people. The approach shows a self-injunction of youth to cultural diversity (Tatchim, 2020; 2023).

## IMPLEMENTING CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

In his definition of the concept of device, Michel Foucault (1977) shows the articulation of heterogeneous elements including the discursive and the non-discursive. In Cameroon, in fact, the Anglophone crisis has shown, beyond speeches, the inclusion of diversity in the agenda

of government action. With the “Anglophone crisis”, the issue of ethno-identity pluralism has become very clearly institutionalized. The State is developing new management practices integrating cultural and linguistic diversity with the aim of responding concretely to Anglophone regions claims. The end of the 2010s was characterized by the establishment of a set of politico-legal and discursive systems. Diversity as governmentality of the “Anglophone crisis” ranges from the creation of a National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism to the adoption of a law on the promotion of official languages (English and French), passing, among others, by setting up a kind of "cultural and linguistic diversity label" for public administrations and companies.

## THE BILINGUALISM AND MULTICULTURALISM COMMISSION OR THE NATIONAL DIVERSITY OBSERVATORY

Only a few months after the outbreak of the “Anglophone crisis”, the government set up a national commission for the promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism which functions as an observatory of cultural and linguistic diversity. The Vice-President of the Commission explained to us in the context of our investigations that the institution makes evaluation

> On the equal use of French and English in communication and daily work in the administrations. We already have a few observations and proposals. So, our report will go to the Head of State this week[12].

The Commission was created by presidential decree in January 2017 when the “Anglophone crisis” was clearly turning into an armed confrontation between secessionist and government forces. Chaired by Peter Mafany Musonge, former Prime Minister and native of English-speaking Cameroon, the Commission's mandate is "*to work to promote bilingualism, multiculturalism in Cameroon, with a view to maintaining peace, consolidating national unity […] and living together*" (art 3 paragraph 1). As of 2018 – and in order to strengthen coexistence between Anglophones and Francophones, and more broadly, between all ethno-regional communities – the Commission has provided citizens with a toll-free number (1518) so that they can denounce any act of discrimination of an ethno-identity nature, in particular. The Commission thus appears as a “diversity observatory”, or a “diversity barometer” (Guerfel-Henda and Broussillon, 2011) through its work of evaluating diversity in companies and public institutions.

In this same perspective, the Commission is working on the establishment of a *National Multiculturalism Day*. On February 26, 2021, it launched the first activities of this Day at the headquarters of the institution in Yaoundé. On this occasion, one can read on its website, "*all, including the staff, wore traditional outfits highlighting the cultural diversity of Cameroon*"[13]. The Commission criss-crosses the regions, organizes meetings with media actors, administrative, religious, and traditional authorities, youth groups, women's associations, in order to "*discuss the causes, consequences and means of combating hate speech and xenophobia in Cameroon*", it says[14]. These visits to the field allow the Commission to ensure the effectiveness of bilingualism (French and English) and diversity within organizations, as it was the case within the electricity distribution company, ENEO Cameroon, on November 03,

2021, in Douala – return visit, indicates the Commission's website[15], as part of the evaluation of the practice of bilingualism in companies. The initiative thus makes it possible to issue a sort of diversity label to "good companies".

## LAWS TO ENSURE THE EQUAL USE OF ENGLISH AND FRENCH

The implementation of diversity, since the outbreak of the “Anglophone crisis”, is also reflected in the adoption by Parliament of Law n° 2019/19 of December 24, 2019, promoting the official languages (English and French). In its article 5, paragraph 1, it is indicated that the law

> "aims to ensure the equality of the use of English and French in the administrations and public bodies, and to encourage Cameroonian citizens to express themselves in English and French". Specifically, the law "guarantees the right of every citizen to exchange freely with the public administration, and to benefit from the services that he requires from it in the language of his choice" (article 5, paragraph 2).

For the President of the Bilingualism Commission, responsible for monitoring the application of the said law, his interest is that it "*enshrines the principle of equality in the use of the two official languages*"[16]. It must be said that the “Anglophone crisis” also arises from the feeling among English-speaking Cameroonians of being treated, linguistically for example, as second-class citizens. Because in public administrations, French is the most spoken language. In the capital Yaoundé, headquarters of the institutions, English speakers are most often forced to express themselves in French, which they have always experienced as a form of injustice.

This situation of discrimination is also observable in the field of justice where Anglophones denounce the Francophonization of the judicial system inherited from Great Britain: *The Common Law*. It is in response to this denunciation, clearly formulated since the 1990s (Konings, 1996; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003) and by English-speaking lawyers in 2016, that the government has made "*English and French (languages) used interchangeably before ordinary and special law courts*" (see art. 26, paragraph 1, of the law promoting official languages). The second paragraph specifies that "*court decisions are rendered in one or the other official language, according to the language of preference of the litigant*". It should be noted that these measures are direct responses to the denunciations of English-speaking lawyers concerning the inability of certain magistrates to render justice in English in the courts of English-speaking Cameroon. These denunciations, among others, were at the root of the “Anglophone crisis” in 2016.

Other policies aimed at promoting cultural and linguistic diversity as a response to the “Anglophone crisis” have been taken by the authorities. We will content ourselves here with listing a few of them: strengthening the network of bilingual high schools (English-French); the overhaul of school programs in order to better train young people in "bilingualism and multiculturalism", in the "consolidation of national unity", in “the promotion of living together and national solidarity"[17]; the granting of a special status to the English-speaking regions – a status of quasi-autonomy, necessary for the preservation of their cultural and linguistic identity.

As we can clearly see, the set of normative measures taken by the State accounts for the articulation of a heterogeneous set of elements, both linguistic and extralinguistic.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This research has attempted to respond to the issue of cultural diversity as governmentality of (post)colonial ethno-identity conflict in the State in Cameroon. We have shown the challenges of diversity, particularly in terms of neutralizing the English-French divide and the euphemization of the British colonial heritage in the English-speaking regions. The State has put in place a communication strategy that mobilizes a set of socio-technical devices to disseminate its discourse in the social body. The discourse on diversity circulates through different platforms: mainstream media, banners, signs, digital platforms, etc. In all the statements, the notion of diversity is very clearly identifiable. It is accompanied in its socio-discursive trajectory by co-references such as "multiculturalism", "bilingualism and national unity", etc.

What should also be noted is the fact that the discourse of the State faces, as a hegemonic production, the Anglophone dissident discourse which, despite the strategies of governmental neutralization, finds the means to exist, notably through alternative media or digital social networks. It is, moreover, this English-speaking dissident discourse that has succeeded in politically formulating the "Anglophone malaise", in transforming it into a public problem, thus calling for public policy. He imposed in the political debate the question of the bicultural and bilingual national identity, taboo since the "decolonization" and the Reunification of the former British and French Cameroons.

This “Anglophone discourse”, like the “Anglophone crisis” itself, shows the limits of government discourse on the issue of the peaceful coexistence of cultures. As in other socio-political contexts, the state in Cameroon sinks into a romantic vision of diversity (Doytcheva 2021; Pavlenko 2018). This is imagined as a miracle solution to the crisis of integration of the English-speaking minority into the nation-state under construction. The state narrative on diversity implicitly participates in, and at the same time betrays, a kind of Francophono-centrism, i.e., the fact of considering the French language and Francophone culture as national. The state must decolonize its approach to diversity and its relationship with the periphery, especially the English-speaking regions. We note that contrary to the diversity or racial inequality that can be perceived, the "Anglophone malaise" continues to be denied by the power and a part of Cameroonians for the most part of French-speaking culture. Opponents of the “Anglophone cause” place Anglophone demands in the social and economic register and not in ethnicity. They defend the idea that the difficulties experienced by English speakers are those experienced daily by the entire Cameroonian people.

This research also shows that the issue of diversity arises in Cameroon less in terms of race, sexual orientation, gender, immigration, social class, or age – categories particularly mobilized in studies of diversity in the West. Here, as in much of Africa, the notion of diversity refers to precolonial and (post)colonial ethnicity. In Cameroon, this is appreciated in terms of French-speaking and English-speaking culture. We observe, however, in the context of the

English-speaking secessionist war, to arise according to an intersectional analysis, the (post)colonial question and that of gender, that is to say on the one hand the relations of domination of Francophones over Anglophones minority, and on the other hand, the abuse and exploitation, particularly sexual, of which are victims of English-speaking women and girls displaced by war and in situations of internal and external migration. Because beyond the thousands of deaths, the "Anglophone crisis" has made hundreds of thousands of refugees as far as Nigeria.

We thus think that beyond the articulation of the precolonial and the (post)colonial, understanding the question of diversity in relation to gender, social class, and intra-African immigration, among others, presents itself as a challenge for both public policy and academics. It constitutes a challenge, as well as a research perspective to be developed in French-speaking Africa in particular. This involves the development of innovative survey concepts and methods. Critical works on diversity are little developed in French-speaking Africa. By following the perspective of critical diversity theory (Zanoni and al. 2010), this article also contributes to making this theoretical field known in a cultural and geographical area that is not very open to the international scene on these issues. It invites the development of a critical reflection on the policies of diversity.

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[2] President Paul Biya, 91 years old, has been in power for 42 years.
[3] Structure created by presidential decree in January 2017 and whose mission is to provide responses to the Anglophone crisis and "promote living together" in the context of the rise of ethnicist discourse. Its "main objective [can we read in the decree], is "to maintain peace, consolidate national unity, strengthen the will and the daily practice of living together".
[4] Interviews with prefects and sub-divisional officers mainly take place within the framework of the national holiday (May 20) and that of Youth (every February 11) which take place throughout the national territory.
[5] See for example the thematic file of the Journal *Mots. The languages of politics*, which deals with this problem. https://www.cairn.info/revue-mots-2023-1.htm. Read this article in particular: Auboussier, J., Doytcheva, M., Seurrat, A. & Tatchim, N. (2023). La diversité en discours : contextes, formes et dispositifs. *Mots. Les langages du politique*, 131, 9-26. https://doi.org/10.4000/mots.30824
[6] Here are the links to online secessionist media: https://www.abcambatv.com; YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@ABCAmbaTV/videos, consulted in march 2024.
[7] Interview conducted in Yaoundé on October 18, 2017.
[8] Narcisse Mouélé Kombi, Minister of Arts and Culture, interview given to the 8:30 p.m. newspaper on state television, CRTV, April 20, 2018, edition.
[9] Antoinette Zongo, prefect of the Koung-khi department, interview given to the 8 p.m. newspaper, Equinoxe Television, edition of May 20, 2018.
[10] Adélaïde Mvondo, principal of Akwa high school (public high school, Douala), interview given to the 8 p.m. newspaper of Equinoxe TV, November 15, 2018, edition.
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[12] Interview conducted on November 20, 2017, in Yaoundé.
[13] https://www.cnpbm.cm/fr/actualites/journee-du-multiculturalisme-a-la-cnpbm, consulted in December 2022. See its website: https://www.cnpbm.cm/fr/actualites/une-delegation-de-la-cnpbm-est-en-mission-dans-la-region-du-centre-contre-les-discours -hatred-and-xenophobia, consulted in December 2023.
[14] See its website: https://www.cnpbm.cm/fr/actualites/une-delegation-de-la-cnpbm-est-en-mission-dans-la-region-du-centre-contre-les-discours -hatred-and-xenophobia, consulted in December 2023.
[15] Ibid. https://www.cnpbm.cm/fr/actualites/le-secteur-prive-invite-a-promouvoir-le-bilinguisme, consulted in December 2022.
[16] See its editorial in the Journal de la Commission, *Le Compatriote*, n°004 January-February-March 2020, p. 6.
[17] See Circular n°002/CAB/PM of November 23, 2017, Principles governing the book, textbook and other teaching materials sector in Cameroon.

# Negaraku Sebagai Simbol Identiti Nasional: Perbincangan Menerusi Perspektif Primordial di Malaysia

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## ABSTRACT

The creation of national symbols plays an important role in displaying the identity of a nation-state. The national anthem is the earliest national symbol used in the world. The unique structure of the national anthem has a strong impact on listeners. This can be seen through the creation of Negaraku as Malaysia's national anthem. Even though Negaraku binds each ethnic group as a symbol of identity, research regarding its significance is still limited in Malaysia. Furthermore, no studies still link the national symbols with the discourse of identity formation and the nation-state. Primordial perspective discussion in both areas is also limited because most discussions are through political and economic aspects. Therefore, this research paper aims to emphasize the significance of Negaraku as a symbol of the formation of Malaysian national identity through a primordial perspective. An integrative literature review analysis was conducted covering international and local reference sources, related articles and journals, and old newspaper clippings. The findings of the study found that Negaraku has a clear connection with the primordial elements in terms of history, ethnicity, language, culture, and tradition that contribute to the formation of national identity. In conclusion, this study can expand the spectrum of ethnic studies through the field of anthemology in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Negaraku; primordial; national symbol; identity; national

## ABSTRAK

Penciptaan simbol negara memainkan peranan yang sangat penting dalam memaparkan identiti sesebuah negara-bangsa tersebut. Lagu kebangsaan merupakan simbol negara yang terawal digunapakai oleh seluruh dunia. Keunikan struktur lagu kebangsaan yang tidak ketara ini menjadikan ianya sebagai satu simbol yang memberikan impak yang kuat terhadap emosi pendengar. Hal ini dapat dilihat menerusi penciptaan Negaraku sebagai lagu kebangsaan Malaysia. Walaupun Negaraku menjadi pengikat kepada setiap etnik dan simbol identiti tetapi kajian mengenainya masih lagi terhad di Malaysia. Bahkan, tiada lagi kajian yang menghubungkaitkan simbol negara dengan wacana pembentukan identiti dan negara-bangsa. Selain itu, wacana pembentukan identiti dan negara-bangsa di Malaysia dari perspektif primordial juga masih lagi terhad kerana kebanyakan diskusi adalah menerusi aspek politik dan ekonomi. Justeru itu, kertas kajian ini bertujuan untuk menekankan kepentingan Negaraku sebagai sebuah simbol pembentukan identiti nasional rakyat Malaysia menerusi perspektif primordial. Analisis secara tinjauan literature intergratif dilakukan meliputi sumber rujukan antarabangsa dan tempatan, artikel dan jurnal berkaitan dan keratan-keratan akhbar lama dalam rekod sejarah. Dapatan kajian mendapati bahawa Negaraku mempunyai perkaitan yang jelas dengan elemen primordial dari segi sejarah, etnik, bahasa, budaya dan tradisi yang menyumbang kepada pemebentukan identiti kebangsaan. Kesimpulannya, kajian ini mampu meluaskan spektrum kajian etnik menerusi bidang antemologi di Malaysia.

**Kata kunci**: Negaraku; primordial;simbol negara; identiti; kebangsaan

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## PENDAHULUAN

Penciptaan simbol negara memainkan peranan penting dalam pembentukan negara-bangsa dan identiti kebangsaan sesebuah negara tersebut. Peranan simbol negara ini telah menjadi alat yang strategik dalam menyampaikan mesej identiti dan perpaduan negara (Cerulo, 1993; Benjamin, 2019). Tambahan pula, kewujudan simbol negara boleh dilihat secara lisan, visual mahupun ikonik seperti bendera negara, lagu dan bunga kebangsaan, jata negara mahupun mata wang yang digunakan. Hal ini kerana, tujuan utama penciptaan simbol negara ini adalah sebagai alat untuk menyatu padukan rakyat serta menyampaikan nilai patriotisma dan nasionalisma dalam kehidupan seharian mereka. Lazimnya, simbol negara secara jelasnya memaparkan budaya dan sejarah sesebuah negara di mata dunia. Justeru itu, kebanyakan simbol negara yang dicipta bagi setiap negara-bangsa adalah unik dan mempunyai pendekatan dari segi budaya, tradisi dan latar belakang sejarah bangsa (Benjamin, 2019; Shazlin, 2022).

Malaysia juga tidak ketinggalan dalam mencipta simbol negara dan hal ini telah dicatatkan di dalam sejarah Malaysia dengan penciptaan bendera dan lagu kebangsaan pada 1957 semasa persiapan kemerdekaan. Kedua-dua simbol ini dikenali sebagai Jalur Gemilang (bendera kebangsaan) dan Negaraku (lagu kebangsaan). Bahkan, kedua-dua simbol ini merupakan lambang pertama yang menjadi kebanggaan dan maruah yang dipegang oleh setiap rakyat Malaysia dalam kepelbagaian budaya dan etnik (Shazlin, 2018, 2020, 2022). Namun begitu, kertas kajian ini hanya akan memfokuskan kepada lagu kebangsaan sebagai alat pembentukan identiti nasional kerana ianya merupakan simbol negara terawal yang dicipta bagi mewakilkan negara di mata dunia. Lagu kebangsaan juga berfungsi sebagai 'modern totem' yang digunakan kebanyakan negara dalam mewujudkan ikatan, memperkukuhkan kuasa formal dan memotivasikan tindakan patriotik dalam masyarakat (Mead, 1980; Reed & Bristow, 1987; Crampton, 1990; Cerulo, 1993, Waterman, 2019; Khalilah. 2020).

Struktur unik dalam lagu Negaraku yang tidak ketara[1] seperti simbol-simbol negara yang lain menjadikan ianya kurang untuk dikaji. Berbeza dengan kajian Jalur Gemilang sebagai identiti negara, ianya banyak disiarkan secara meluas melalui mana-mana platform untuk difahami kerana penggunaan warna dan simbol dalam bendera memudahkan orang ramai memahami intipati nasionalisma berbanding lagu kebangsaan (Elgenius, 2005, 2011; Shazlin, 2022). Kekurangan struktur material yang sukar untuk dilihat dengan mata kasar dan hanya boleh dihayati menerusi melodi menjadikannya ianya unik dan sukar untuk dikaji. Tetapi lagu kebangsaan memberikan impak yang kuat terhadap ikatan emosi terutamanya kepada pendengar (Waterman, 2019; Nancy, 2002). Sehingga kini, hanya ada dua tokoh terkemuka yang menjadi pelopor terhadap kajian Negaraku iaitu Dr Shazlin Hamzah dan Saidah Rastam. Kedua-dua tokoh ini menjurus kepada kajian mengenai perkembangan muzik di Malaysia dan kesannya terhadap intergrasi nasional. Malangnya, walaupun Malaysia kaya dengan pelbagai simbol kebangsaan, kebudayaan dan tradisi, tetapi ianya masih gagal untuk diterapkan di dalam proses pembentukan identiti nasional. Hasilnya, konsep identiti nasional masih lagi kabur sehingga kini.

Unsur kebudayaan dan tradisi yang diterapkan di dalam penciptaan lagu Negaraku mencerminkan kepentingan lagu ini terhadap identiti negara (Shazlin, 2021; Khalilah, 2020; Waterman, 2019). Melihatkan kepada sejarah pembentukan Malaysia, budaya, tradisi, kaum, dan bahasa telah menjadi elemen yang membentuk Malaysia hari ini. Elemen-elemen ini juga dikenali sebagai elemen primordial. Namun begitu, kebanyakan perbincangan identiti nasional di Malaysia hanya memfokuskan kepada perspektif politik dan ekonomi semasa sahaja. Corak perbincangan identiti nasional sejak kemerdekaan lagi adalah berdasarkan kepada kontrak

sosial antara tiga kumpulan etnik majoriti iaitu Melayu, Cina dan India. Bagi mencapai kemerdekaan, setiap kumpulan etnik bersetuju untuk bersatu berdasarkan kontrak tersebut yang meliputi kelebihan kedudukan politik dan ekonomi setiap kaum (Shamsul, 1996, 2004, 2022; Murad, 2019; komunikasi peribadi, 2022). Manakala, elemen promordial ini diabaikan dan hanya menjadi topik perbincangan dalam konflik antara kaum di Malaysia. Bahkan, kerajaan masih lagi gagal menghasilkan takrifan identiti nasional yang kukuh yang boleh difahami dan dihayati oleh setiap etnik (Ahmad Murad, komunikasi peribadi, 2022; Shamsul, 1996). Masih lagi tiada kajian yang menjurus kepada kepentingan Negaraku dalam pembentukan identiti nasional. Apatah lagi, diskusi mengenai pembinaan negara-bangsa dan pembentukan identiti nasional dari perspektif primordial.

Seharusnya, konsep identiti nasional perlulah difahami orang ramai dan berkait rapat dengan amalan kehidupan seharian masyarakat tersebut. Justeru itu, unsur primordial dari segi budaya dan tradisi secara asasnya menyumbang kepada kekuatan identiti nasional khususnya dalam masyarakat berbilang kaum di Malaysia. Oleh itu, kertas kajian ini bertujuan untuk menekankan kepentingan Negaraku sebagai sebuah simbol pembentukan identiti nasional rakyat Malaysia menerusi perspektif primordial. Manakala, objektif kertas kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji elemen primordial terhadap pembentukan identiti nasional dalam kalangan masyarakat berbilang kaum di Malaysia menggunakan Negaraku sebagai medium utama.

## KAJIAN LITERATUR

### ELEMEN PRIMORDIAL

Secara asasnya, primordial boleh ditakrifkan sebagai elemen terawal yang menyumbang serta menjelaskan evolusi hubungan antara manusia (Shahabudin, 2014; Chiara, 2022). Hubungan inilah yang menjurus kepada pembentukan sesuatu negara- bangsa tersebut. Penemuan sejarah purba yang ditemui memainkan peranan penting dalam pembentukan masyarakat serta identiti sesebuah negara tersebut. Hal ini dapat dilihat menerusi penemuan Batu Bersurat di Kuala Terengganu dan rangka Perak Man yang dijumpai di Lenggong, Perak. Melalui penemuan inilah, penjelasan budaya, tradisi, etnik dan bahasa menjadi kunci kepada kewujudan sesebuah negara sehinggalah ke generasi masa kini (Smith, 2000; Connor, 1993, 1994; Coakley, 2017; Chiara, 2022).

Okrimli (2017) juga menyatakan bahawa primordialisma ini berfungsi sebagai istilah utama yang menggambarkan konsep kewarganegaraan sebagai bahagian terawal dan aspek semula jadi manusia. Beliau juga menyifatkan bahawa primodialisma ini boleh dilihat menerusi pertuturan, penglihatan atau bau yang sentiasa berlegar di sekeliling manusia dan ianya akan terus berkembang untuk selama-lamanya. Bahkan, konsep ini boleh dibentukkan berdasarkan pandangan orang awam tentang negara dan nasionalisma kerana kebanyakan elemen tersebut berkait rapat dengan amalan harian dalam kumpulan manusia tersebut. Muro (2015) menyenaraikan konsep primordial ini adalah salah satu daripada tiga aliran pemikiran utama dalam menjelaskan asas identiti selain dari dua konsep utama lain iaitu instrumentalisma dan konstruktivisma.

Malangnya, pandangan ini telah dipinggirkan dalam kajian identiti kerana instrumentalisma dan konstruktivisma menolak primordialisma dalam kajian identiti (Shahabudin, 2014; Chiara, 2022). Bahkan, Wimmer (2013) juga mengulas perkara yang sama apabila beliau menyatakan “kajian teori identiti hanya tertumpu pada hagemoni konstruktivisma dan kemunculan konsensus konstruktivisma yang meminggirkan pandangan primordialisma ini.” Walau bagaimanapun, pemerhatian dan kajian sosiologi terkini

menunjukkan pengiktirafan kepada tafsiran primordial ini. Hal ini dapat dilihat menerusi penyelidikan primordial yang digunakan dalam kajian identiti nasional pada abad ke-21 seperti Jackson-Preece (2010), Shahabudin (2014), Haque (2015), Dieckhoff (2016), Mahmudlu (2017) dan Chiara (2022). Kesemua penyelidikan menunjukan bahawa konsep primordial adalah topik yang masih lagi relevan dan penting untuk dibahaskan terutamanya dalam nasionalisma dan kesusasteraan teori identiti nasional.

Konsep primordial di dalam kajian sosiologi dan identiti adalah berdasarkan kepada elemen keterikatan primordial *(primordial attachment)* yang menjadi asas utama dalam setiap perbincangan dan perbahasan konsep ini. Secara mudahnya, ia boleh difahami sebagai sebahagian daripada pembentukan kumpulan etnik kerana ianya mustahil untuk menolak komponen etnik apabila membincangkan mengenai pembentukan sesuatu negara-bangsa. Etnik memainkan makna sosial yang berkait rapat dengan emosi serta talian persaudaraan (Grosby, 1994; Shahabudin, 2014). Kumpulan etnik adalah berlainan dan unik berbanding kumpulan sosial yang lain kerana kriteria formatif mereka ini berdasarkan kepada ciri yang 'diberikan' atau 'andaian yang diberikan' serta sosio-sejarah yang dibinakan oleh etnik tersebut. Geertz (1963) juga mengulas perkara yang sama apabila beliau menyatakan "... keterikatan primordial bermaksud salah satu cabang yang 'diberikan' atau lebih tepat lagi 'andaian yang diberikan' dalam kewujudan sosial manusia." Oleh itu, Shahabudian (2014) turut menjelaskan bahawa, budaya, tradisi, sejarah dan bahasa menjadi pengikat utama bagi kumpulan etnik ini. Beliau juga menjelaskan bahawa lampiran primordial dalam kehidupan seharian dinyatakan serta dicipta mengikut peringkat sosial. Hal ini berlaku kerana setiap individu di dalam perkumpulan etnik tersebut berkongsi idea dari segi pertalian darah, adat resam, tradisi, agama dan bahasa.

Keterikatan primordial (*primordial attachmennt*) ini juga boleh dilihat melalui struktur sosiologi di Malaysia. Sejarah struktur sosiologi Malaysia menunjukkan bagaimana elemen ini menyumbang kepada pembentukan unik identiti nasional atau identiti kebangsaan rakyatnya. Hal ini merupakan elemen penting dalam pembentukan negara-bangsa yang berkait rapat dengan amalan budaya dan tradisi. Justeru itu, kepelbagaian budaya pelbagai etnik memerlukan penerimaan dalam kalangan masyarakat bagi membolehkan pemerintahan dapat dilakukan dengan harmoni dan aman walaupun berbeza budaya dan tradisi. Penerimaan inilah yang menjelaskan identiti dan rasa kekitaan rakyat terhadap negara-bangsa berdasarkan tradisi, sejarah dan budaya, cita-cita, nilai moral, kepercayaan dan kedaulatan (Ashmor et al., 2001, Tajfell &Turner, 2004; Liu & Turner, 2018).

Kebanyakan perbincangan dan perbahasan mengenai identiti kebangsaan di Malaysia tertumpu kepada pandangan modernisma yang mengkhususkan kepada perspektif politik dan ekonomi. Maka, sudah tiba masanya untuk perbincangan dari segi primordial ini diperluaskan agar ianya begitu dekat kehidupan setiap etnik di Malaysia. Struktur sosiologi yang pelbagai etnik dalam pemerintahan Malaysia ini menunjukkan bahawa masyarakat berkongsi pemahaman identiti yang difahami dan diamalkan oleh setiap kaum. Kewujudan Negaraku sebagai simbol identiti negara inilah yang mengikat setiap etnik untuk menerima lagu ini sebagai satu bentuk sumpah setia sebagai rakyat Malaysia.

Hal ini bertepatan dengan penjelasan Muir (1916) apabila beliau menyatakan bahawa "memiliki tradisi atau sejarah yang sama, memori penderitaan dan perjuangan bersama, dan kemenangan yang dikecapi bersama yang dinyatakan di dalam cerita-cerita rakyat mahupun sejarah itu merupakan faktor yang paling kuat dan sangat diperlukan dalam proses pembinaan identiti kebangsaan." Dalam erti kata yang lain, walaupun Malaysia mempunyai kepelbagaian

etnik, budaya, tradisi dan agama, mereka disatukan dengan kefahaman sejarah yang satu sewaktu Malaysia berusaha untuk mencapai kemerdekaan. Bahkan, penerimaan Negaraku ini dapat dilihat menerusi kelakuan setiap warganegara yang akan berdiri tegak sewaktu menyanyikan dan mendengar lagu kebangsaan ini walaupun berbeza kaum dan etnik. Oleh itu, kajian ini akan menggunakan lima elemen keterikatan primodial (*primordial attachment*) iaitu etnik, bahasa, sejarah, budaya dan tradisi dalam menjelaskan pembinaan negara-bangsa dan identiti kebangsaan dalam kepelbagaian kaum di Malaysia.

## LAGU KEBANGSAAN SEBAGAI SIMBOL NEGARA

Kewujudan lagu kebangsaan bagi mewakili sesebuah negara telah dianggap sebagai lagu nasionalis yang memainkan peranan penting dalam memelihara, memulihara, menyatakan, mencipta serta membangkitkan rasa kebangsaan dalam kalangan majoriti mahupun minoriti (Smith, 1994). Bahkan, ianya turut dikenali sebagai satu bentuk gubahan muzik patriotik atau muzikal nasionalisma yang mengingatkan rakyat mengenai sejarah, tradisi dan perjuangan untuk memerdekakan tanah air mereka. Tujuan utama lagu kebangsaan ini dicipta adalah untuk dinyanyikan bagi menyatakan komitmen, semangat patriotisma serta cinta akan negara. Justeru itu, kandungannya sangat bermakna dalam menyampaikan mesej yang penting untuk rakyat. Bukan itu sahaja, lagu kebangsaan juga dianggap sebagai 'simbol patriotik rasmi' yang wujud dalam bentuk pendengaran, tetapi, fungsinya sama juga seperti bendera, mata wang atau jata negara (Perry, 2000; Voros dan Fekete, 2012). Kenyataan ini disokong oleh Surjowati (2021) dalam satu kertas kajian beliau, bahawa lagu kebangsaan ini ibarat 'payung' yang memayungi sesebuah negara-bangsa tersebut.

Menurut catatan sejarah, lagu kebangsaan ini merangkumi dua fungsi penting yang memberikan kesan kepada semangat patriotisma dan nasionalisma rakyat. Fungsi pertama dikenali sebagai fungsi emosi yang terdiri daripada struktur muzik yang mampu menjentik emosi pendengar. Ianya juga dikenali sebagai struktur semantik oleh kebanyakan ahli-ahli muzik kerana struktur ini berkait rapat dengan melodi dan not yang dibina dalam menghasilkan sesebuah lagu tersebut. Susunan not tersebut menghasilkan muzik yang bertindak sebagai medium antara pendengar dan tindak balas emosi manusia. Struktur ini menjadikan lagu kebangsaan itu unik kerana fenomena ini tidak boleh dibincangkan menerusi perbincangan mahupun diskusi biasa sahaja tetapi, ianya perlu dihayati dan dirasai bagi memahami intipati lagu tersebut (Waterman, 2019; Erikson, 2005). Shazlin (2022) membahaskan bahawa melodi itu sendiri mampu untuk mencerminkan kebudayaan dan tradisi sesebuah bangsa tersebut hasil daripada keterikataan muzik dan emosi manusia yang begitu kuat. Bahkan, ianya dipercayai bahawa keterikatan emosi tersebut terbentuk dan diekspreskan dalam bentuk melodi menerusi pengalaman ataupun sesuatu objek yang diperkukuhkan dengan pengulangan.

Selain itu, fungsi kedua lagu kebangsaan ini dapat dilihat menerusi fungsi simbolik iaitu melalui lirik lagu yang ditulis. Fungsi ini juga boleh dikenali sebagai struktur sintaktik dalam penciptaan sesebuah muzik tersebut. Teks yang ditulis tersebut dipercayai mampu berkomunikasi dan berinteraksi dengan pendengar, maka, ia dapat menghasilkan suatu maklumat yang konkrit untuk difahami oleh pendengarnya. Hal ini boleh berlaku sekiranya pendengar mampu memahami bahasa yang digunakan pada tahap tersirat (Surjowati, 2021; Abril, 2007; Merriam, 1964). Keupayaan lagu kebangsaan ini dapat dilihat melalui perkaitan serta sambutan yang dilakukan oleh rakyat melalui muzik (Allan, 2007). Ianya telah diiktirafkan sebagai satu lambang persembahan yang mampu menyemarakkan semangat nasionalisma dan patriotisma dalam kalangan rakyat. Tambahan pula, ianya sering dan amat sesuai digunakan sebagai medium yang kerap digunakan dalam menggalakkan sosialisasi

politik, pembinaan atau mengekalkan ideologi identiti terutamanya dalam masyarakat berbilang kaum. Hal ini kerana, lagu kebangsaan memegang peranan yang penting dalam penbentukan jati diri negara dan sering digunakan terutamanya sewaktu peperangan. Gabungan lirik serta alunan muzik sewaktu peperangan dapat menyemarakkan semangat mereka untuk memerdekakan tanah air yang tercinta walaupun berbeza warna kulit, agama mahupun budaya (Musvoto, 2009; Shazlin, 2022)

Oleh itu, tidak dinafikan lagi bahawa Negaraku ini berperanan sebagai pengikat kepada kepelbagaian etnik di Malaysia. Hal ini dapat dilihat menerusi penerimaan setiap kaum terhadap lagu Negaraku sebagai lagu kebangsaan serta simbol identiti negara. Sewaktu lagu ini berkumandang atau dinyanyikan, setiap kaum akan berdiri tegak untuk menghormati lagu ini walaupun mereka berbeza etnik, bahasa, budaya, agama mahupun tradisi. Tingkah laku itu sendiri mencerminkan kekuatan identiti nasional sebagai seorang warganegara Malaysia. Petikan dari Straits Time (1956) mencatatkan bahawa penciptaan lagu Negaraku itu sendiri mempunyai kualiti yang menggembirakan, memaparkan kesungguhan tertentu, maruah serta simbolik kelahiran negara baru untuk dihayati oleh semua rakyat. Gabungan struktur muzik dan lirik tersebut menunjukkan keterikatan emosi yang unik dan kukuh yang hanya boleh dihayati sewaktu dinyanyikan (Shazlin, 2018, 2022).

## METODOLOGI

### REKA BENTUK PENYELIDIKAN

Pendekatan kajian kualitatif akan digunakan secara menyeluruh sebagai prosedur utama penulisan kertas kajian ini. Manakala, reka bentuk penyelidikan pula adalah berdasarkan pendekatan sejarah atau lebih dikenali sebagai kajian sejarah. Bahkan, reka bentuk ini juga boleh dilihat menerusi kajian dari Shazlin Hamzah (2018, 2020,2021, 2022) dan Saidah Rastam (2015,2017). Secara amnya, kajian sejarah ini boleh ditakrifkan sebagai metod kajian yang melibatkan pengenalpastian, lokasi, penilaian dan sintesis data dari masa lalu. Ia bukan sahaja berusaha untuk menggali data dari masa lalu tetapi cuba mengaitkan peristiwa masala lalu tersebut dengan peristiwa masa kini dan akan datang. Di samping itu, reka bentuk ini juga memerlukan penerokaan artifak sejarah, budayam dokumen, audio serta monumen. Dalam erti kata lain, tujuan kajian sejarah ini adalah untuk mengumpul, mengesahkan dan mengintegrasikan data dari masa lalu bagi mendapatkan pemahaman tentang peristiwa masa kini (Hassan, 2022; Creswell, 2007; Barbara 1984). Dengan menggunapakai pendekatan sejarah sebagai reka bentuk penyelidikan, kertas kajian ini akan menyediakan penyelidik untuk meneroka dan meluaskan wacana berkaitan Negaraku dalam pembentukan identiti nasional menerusi perspektif primordial. Hal ini kerana penciptaan Negaraku sebagai lagu kebangsaan dan simbol identiti negara adalah berdasarkan latar belakang sejarah Malaysia itu sendiri. Justeru itu, kertas kajian ini akan lebih memfokuskan kepada reka bentuk sejarah yang melibatkan pengenalpastian, lokasi, penilaian dan sintesis catatan masa lampau. Perkaitan erat Negaraku dan sejarah Malaysia merupakan asas kepada pembentukan identiti nasional yang perlu dicakna dan difahami.

### PENGUMPULAN DATA

Pengumpulan data bagi kertas kajian ini akan dilakukan secara bacaan fizikal dan carian elektronik terhadap beberapa rujukan berkaitan Negaraku di Malaysia dan kajian berkaitan simbol negara serata dunia. Disebabkan rujukan berkenaan kajian Negaraku ini sangat terhad di Malaysia, maka, rujukan utama kajian ini adalah kajian yang dipelopori oleh Muhammad Hashim, Datin Saidah Rastam dan Dr Shazlin Hamzah. Tokoh-tokoh ini sahaja yang

memfokuskan tentang kajian latar belakang sejarah Negaraku dan impaknya kepada intergrasi sosial di Malaysia. Beberapa buku rujukan utama juga telah menjadi sumber primer dalam menganalisis fakta sejarah berkaitan lagu Negaraku. Antaranya ialah, Taman Saujana (Sheppard, 1983); *Rosalie and the other love songs* (Saidah, 2017); Sejarah Perak Semakan 2020 (Buyong Adil, 1981) dan Warna-warna dalam seloka Malaysia (Shazlin, 2023). Buku-buku ini juga adalah rujukan yang sentiasa digunakan oleh para sejarawan apabila menceritakan tentang Negaraku. Selain itu, carian elektronik secara menyeluruh juga telah dilakukan melalui keratan akhbar yang melaporkan mengenai penciptaan lagu Negaraku sepanjang persiapan kemerdekaan pada 1957. Disamping itu, pencarian artikel dan buku rujukan secara elektronik dilakukan melalui Scopus, Jstor dan beberapa lagi jurnal akademik antarabangsa yang merangkumi tema lagu kebangsaan, primordial, identiti, negara-bangsa, simbol negara dan Negaraku. Hasilnya, tujuh rujukan antarabangsa, empat rujukan utama sejarah Negaraku, 35 artikel daripada jurnal antarabangsa dan tempatan dan 10 keratan akhbar telah disemak bagi menyediakan kertas kajian ini. Spektrum sumber literasi yang meluas dan berkaitan dilakukan kerana sumber rujukan yang terhad mengenai topik Negaraku dan perbincangan perspektif primordial dalam aspek pembentukan identiti kebangsaan dan negara-bangsa. Justeru iru, penulis cuba menggunakan data yang didapati dan dirujuki sebaik mungkin dalam menganalisis data.

### DATA ANALISIS

Kertas kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan tinjauan literatur intergratif (*intergrative literature review*) bagi membincangkan kepentingan Negaraku dari sudut primordial dalam pembentukan identiti nasional. Pendekatan ini juga ditakrifkan sebagai kaedah tanpa hubungan (*non-contact method*) kerana analisis sintesis data dilakukan sepenuhnya secara pembacaan dan analisis literatur sedia ada mengenai topik atau isu tertentu (Guijian, 2009; Synder, 2019; Mavuso et.al, 2022). Kaedah ini juga tidak melibatkan sebarang objek atau individu tetapi hanya memfokuskan kepada tujuan kajian menerusi sumber sedia ada sahaja. Justeru itu, penyelidik akan mengkategorikan tema berdasarkan carian kandungan secara tersirat (*latent content search*) melalui carian elektronik secara komprehensif dan pembacaan buku yang berkaitan. Semua sumber yang ditemui sewaktu proses pengumpulan data ini telah dianalisis mengikut kaedah yang dinyatakan mengikut tema Negaraku, identiti nasional, primordial dan simbol kebangsaan.

## DAPATAN KAJIAN DAN PERBINCANGAN

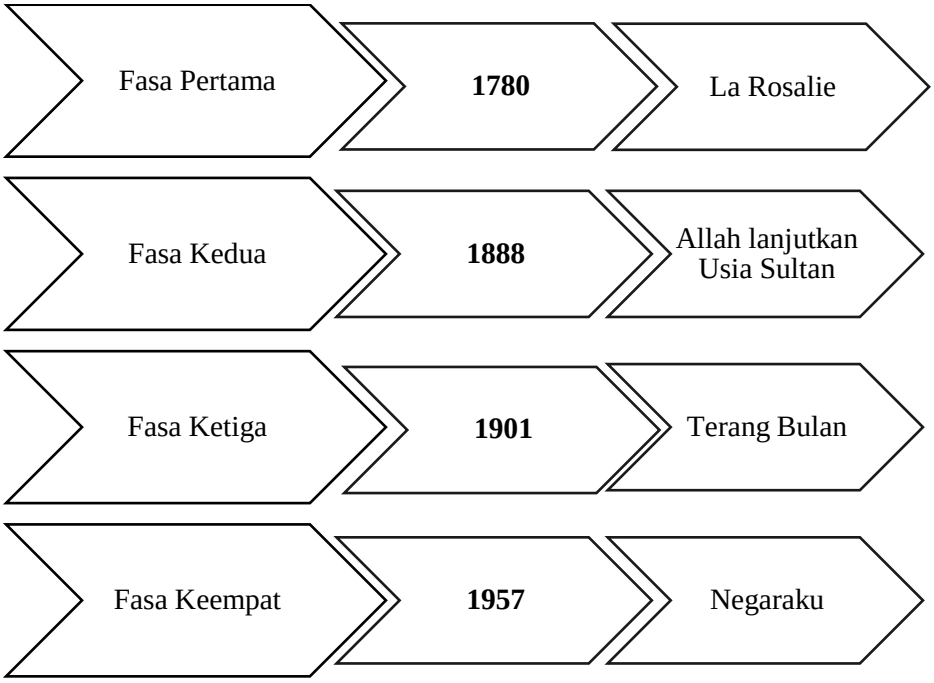
Bahagian ini akan menjelaskan bagaimana susur- galur dalam sejarah penciptaan Negaraku ini berkait rapat dengan pembentukan identiti kebangsaan dan negara-bangsa Malaysia. Hal ini bertepatan dengan salah satu elemen dalam keterikatan primordial (*primordial attachment*) iaitu sejarah sebagai pengikat kepelbagaian kaum di Malaysia. Kefahaman yang jitu mengenai sejarah lagu ini sangat diperlukan dalam usaha untuk membentuk satu penghayatan terhadap kewujudan Malaysia.

### SEJARAH PENCIPTAAN LAGU NEGARAKU

Negaraku merupakan satu kebanggaan serta identiti Malaysia. Lagu ini adalah satu-satunya lagu kebangsaan Malaysia yang dipegang oleh rakyat Malaysia selama 60 tahun lamanya. Fungsi utamanya sebagai simbol yang paling sonik dicipta untuk mencerminkan usaha yang berterusan dalam pembinaan negara-bangsa. Bahkan, ianya bertindak sebagai pengikat bahawa setiap kaum di Malaysia perlulah bersatu padu dalam menerima kepelbagaian sebagai sebahagian daripada identiti negara. Hal ini dapat dilihat menerusi kelakuan semula

jadi setiap kaum ketika mendengar dan menyanyikan lagu ini. Secara automatik, setiap dari kita akan berdiri tegak untuk menghormati lagu kebangsaan ini (Ahmad Murad 2019; Shazlin 2018).

Namun begitu, sejarah disebalik Negaraku merupakan satu kisah yang panjang yang perlu diselusuri seawal 1874. Proses penciptaan lagu Negaraku ini telah melalui empat fasa dalam penceritaan sejarah. Jadual menunjukkan secara ringkas evolusi serta pertukaran lirik yang berlaku bermula dari 1800 sehingga 1957.




Rajah 1: Perkembangan fasa kepada penciptaan lagu Negaraku (Saidah 2017; Act 808, 2018)

Penerangan kepada Rajah 1 di atas akan dijelaskan dalam sub topik seterusnya.

***Fasa Pertama: La Rosalie (1780)***

Penceritaan kepada wujudnya La Rosalie ini perlu dilihat menerusi peristiwa Perjanjian Pangkor yang dimeterai pada 1874. Menurut catatan dari Wajah Malaysia dalam Gurindam Lagu tulisan Shazlin Hamzah (2022) menyatakan bahawa peristiwa ini memainkan peranan yang sangat penting dalam sejarah penciptaan lagu Negaraku. Sewaktu perjanjian ini dimeterai, ianya merupakan satu waktu yang signifikan dalam menjelaskan hubungan antara British dan Melayu. Hal ini disebabkan oleh kemasukan residen British dalam tampuk pemerintahan Melayu, sekaligus mencabar kedaulatan raja dan adat istiadat Melayu. Perjanjian ini jugalah permulaan kepada siri penentangan terhadap konsep modernisma yang ingin diperkenalkan oleh British dengan cara melupuskan sistem hamba abdi dan gundik dalam pentadbiran Perak. Rentetan dari itu, J.W.W Birch yang merupakan Residen British pertama Perak setelah perjanjian ini dimeterai telah dibunuh dalam satu konspirasi penentangan yang dijalankan oleh Raja Abdullah sendiri.

Pada tahun 1877, Raja Abdullah, Muhammad Amir, Syahbandar, Che Ngah Ibrahim dan beberapa lagi sekutu telah dihantar ke pulau Seychelles. Walaupun pulau ini sinonim dengan hukuman buang negeri ketika itu, pulau yang dikenali sebagai Mahe ini juga merupakan tempat persinggahan yang terkenal kepada pedagang luar yang hendak berdagang

di sekitar Asia Tenggara. Pulau inilah tempat mereka berehat sebentar, mengisi minyak kapal dan berhibur sebelum meneruskan perjalanan mereka. Kepulauan ini banyak dikunjungi oleh pedagang-pedagang Eropah terutamanya dari Perancis. Sekaligus, menjadikan kepulauan ini sebagai hub pengumpulan pelbagai budaya seantero dunia.

Di sinilah permulaan kepada kemunculan La Rosalie dalam sejarah penciptaan lagu Negaraku. Sejarah menyebut, ada seorang pemuisi Perancis yang bernama Pierre Jean De Beranger yang menulis sebuah puisi bertajuk La Rosalie (Zara 2021; Shazlin 2022; Saidah 2017). Rajah di bawah adalah puisi asal La Rosalie yang ditulis oleh Pierre Jean Beranger berserta terjemahannya dalam Bahasa Inggeris yang banyak direkodkan di dalam penulisan sumber-sumber ini.

Versi Perancis:
*La Rosalie asise par sa fenetre,*
*J'ebtend la pluie qui verse sur son dos,*
*Son petit couer qui repose a son aise ,*
*Et le mien qui na point de repos.*

Terjemahan Inggeris:
*La Rosalie seated by her window,*
*I hear the rain pouring down her back,*
*Her little heart rests at ease,*
*And mine which has no rest.*

Rajah 2: Lirik lagu La Rosalie beserta dengan terjemahan Bahasa Inggeris

Sheppard (1997) menakrifkan bahawa alunan melodi dan lirik La Rosalie ini mengisahkan tentang kekecewaan dan penghinaan seorang wanita yang telah ditinggalkan oleh kekasihnya. Kenyataan ini juga disokong oleh beberapa sejarawan lain seperti Gullick dan Harding (1997, 68-74) dalam tulisan mereka yang menyatakan bahawa melodi yang dipersembahkan adalah sangat melankolik kerana ianya memaparkan seorang wanita yang bersedih mendendangkan lagu ini di tepi tingkap sewaktu hujan turun. Ianya menjadi sangat popular di sekitar kepulauan Seychelles sehinggakan pada setiap petang ianya dimainkan. Lagu ini sering dimainkan di belakang rumah agam milik Raja Abdullah dan menjadi lagu kegemaran beliau sepanjang tinggal di kepulauan tersebut. Bahkan, lagu ini menjadi alunan popular yang meniti di setiap bibir penduduk dan pedagang di sekitar kepulauan ini (Shazlin, 2023; Sheppard, 1885).

Ianya sering dimainkan di serata Seychelles menjadikan ianya puisi yang sangat popular pada ketika itu. Namun begitu, beberapa sejarawan berpendapat bahawa Pierre Jean Beranger hanya menulis puisi tersebut tetapi alunan muzik yang mengiringinya dicipta mengikut citarasa tempatan ketika itu. Pendapat dari James Harding dan John Gullick (1997) juga menyatakan perkara yang sama menerusi penulisan beliau bahawa Beranger sebenarnya tidak mengetahui sebarang notasi muzik. Selalunya, beliau akan menyanyikan melodi yang terlintas di kepalanya sahaja kemudian melupakannya sejurus selepas itu. Beberapa kali juga, rakan beliau mencatatkan melodi tersebut dan memainkan semula atas kebenaran Beranger.

Dalam ruangan editorial nota kaki tulisan Mubin Sheppard menyatakan bahawa ianya 'dipercayai' merupakan muzik Beranger berdasarkan kenyataan dari Raja Aminah yang merupakan anak kepada Sultan Abdullah. Bahkan, dalam biografi yang ditulis Sheppard pada tahun 1979 merekodkan bahawa sebuah pancaragam memainkan lagu ciptaan Beranger yang

dipanggil Rosalie. Menerusi Taman Saujana (1983) juga, beliau menyatakan bahawa Ketua Pancaragam Perancis yang memberitahu Raja Mansur bahawa komposer lagu ini adalah Beranger. Informasi ini disampaikan oleh Mubin Shepard pada 1993 kepada Gullick adalah menerusi kenyataan terperinci dari Raja Halijah yang merupakan kakak kepada Raja Aminah (Saidah , 2017; Shazlin, 2022).

Sehingga sekarang, sejarah masih lagi tidak dapat membuktikan tentang kesahihan melodi La Rosalie ini adalah ciptaan Beranger. Hal ini kerana, menurut Harding dan Gullick (1997), sebanyak 650 buah lagu telah diterbitkan oleh Beranger, namun, tiada satu pun yang mempunyai tajuk atau perkataan Rosalie. Bahkan, tiada kesan melodi La Rosalie ini ditemui dalam mana-mana karya beliau (Saidah, 2017). Namun begitu, kepelbagaian penceritaan sejarah La Rosalie ini masih lagi kekal dan dicatatkan sebagai permulaan kepada penciptaan lagu Negaraku.

***Fasa kedua: Allah Lanjutkan Usia Sultan (1888)***

Pada tahun 1888, Sultan Idris yang merupakan Sultan Perak ketika itu telah menerima undangan daripada Ratu Victoria. Hal ini disebabkan, hubungan rapat antara Sultan Idris dan Ratu Victoria menyebabkan baginda menerima tiga kali undangan dari Ratu. Di sinilah, pertama kalinya melodi La Rosalie berkumandang di langit Eropah. Mengikut sejarah yang direkodkan, terdapat dua versi penceritaan mengenai lagu ini diangkat menjadi lagu negeri Perak. Tidak dinafikan bahawa dua versi ini menimbulkan kekeliruan ramai kerana terdapat pelbagai pendapat samada Raja Chulan atau Raja Mansor yang pergi menemani Sultan Idris pada setiap undangan tersebut. Pencanggahan pendapat dan pandangan tersebut disokong menerusi buku tulisan Mubin Sheppard (1983) dan Buyong Adil (1972) yang menjadi sumber rujukan utama. Namun begitu, kedua-dua versi tersebut disahkan kesahihannya berdasarkan kajian yang dilakukan oleh Mubin Sheppard menerusi Taman Saujana (1983) berhubung asal-usul dan sejarah lagu Negaraku. Cuma, setiap undangan yang baginda hadiri itu melibatkan salah seorang sosok terpenting ini, sama ada Raja Chulan atau Raja Mansor.

Versi pertama diceritakan oleh Bekas Pengarah Arkib Negara, Mubin Sheppard menerusi penulisan beliau dalam Taman Sarjana (1983) adalah berdasarkan penceritaan semula kisah Tuan Haji Mustafa Al Bakri, selaku Penyimpan Mohor Besar Raja-Raja Melayu. Lagu ini pertama kali berkumandang pada tahun 1901 pada acara pertabalan Raja Edward VII di England. Ketika itu, Sultan Idris Murshiduladzam Shah menghadiri undangan tersebut dengan ditemani bersama-sama Raja Chulan, Raja Harun dan Hurlow (residen British). Setibanya mereka di Southampton, biro protokol England meminta Sultan Idris menyerahkan skor lagu bagi lagu kebesaran negeri mereka kerana ianya telah menjadi amalan rasmi untuk kerajaan England memainkan lagu tersebut di acara yang terpenting. Malangnya, Perak tidak mempunyai sebarang lagu kebesaran yang menjadi identiti utama Perak. Maka, bagi menjaga maruah negeri dan air muka sultan, setiausaha Sultan, Raja Harun memberitahu kepada biro tersebut yang skor muzik tersebut tertinggal di istana. Pengalaman beliau sebagai pemuzik membolehkan beliau mengarang sendiri lagu tersebut dengan bantuan Raja Chulan mengikut melodi La Rosalie sebagai lagu kebesaran negeri Perak.

Versi kedua pula, menerusi tulisan Mohamad Hashim (2014) ini diceritakan semula oleh Raja Kamarulzaman yang merupakan anak kepada Raja Mansor. Ketika itu, Raja Mansor menemani Sultan Idris dalam salah satu undangan ke England. Beliau bertanggungjawab sebagai jurubahasa bagi Sultan Idris. Menurut sejarah, melodi La Rosalie atau Terang Boelan ini telah diuar-uarkan di istana sebagai lagu kebesaran negeri Perak selepas pertabalan Sultan

Idris pada 1888. Namun begitu, Baginda tidaklah menjadikan lagu ini rasmi dan umum di negeri itu. Apabila mereka tiba di sana, wakil Ratu Victoria bertanya kepada rombongan tersebut tentang lagu memo untuk upacara perarakan Ratu. Hal ini kerana, ianya telah menjadi adat istiadat buat *House of England* memainkan lagu kebesaran setiap wakil yang hadir ke acara tersebut. Malangnya, Perak masih belum lagi mempunyai lagu rasmi yang menjadi identiti utama negeri Perak. Bagi menjaga maruah dan air muka negara dan negeri tercinta, Raja Mansor berbohong kepada wakil tersebut bahawa beliau terlupa untuk membawa lembaran muzik tersebut. Walaubagaimanapun, beliau boleh mengalunkan melodi lagu tersebut dan wakil boleh menulisnya[2]. Kenyataan dari Raja Halijah dan Raja Aminah (1960, 1961) juga menceritakan yang Raja Mansor bersiul alunan lagu Terang Boelan yang begitu popular dimainkan di Nusantara sebagai lagu rasmi negeri Perak (Suzan 2008; Saidah 2017; Shazlin 2018, 2020, 2022)

Kedua-dua versi menjadi penceritaan utama dalam asal-usul penciptaan lagu kebesaran negeri Perak, Allah Lanjutkan Usia Sultan telah direkodkan oleh Buyong Adil dalam buku beliau Sejarah Perak (1972). Kedua-dua versi ini juga telah menjadi peristiwa penting yang dicatatkan dalam Sejarah Perak. Rajah 2 adalah lirik lagu Perak yang secara rasminya dimainkan pada 1888.

Dilanjutkan Allah usia Sultan,
Adil dan murah memerintah watan,
Diataati rakyat kiri dan kanan,
Iman yang soleh Allah kurniakan,
Allah berkati Perak Ridzuan,
Allah selamatkan Negeri dan Sultan

Rajah 3: Lirik lagu Allah Lanjutkan Usia Sultan

Bahkan, sejarah juga mengiktirafkan bahawa lagu tersebut merupakan lagu pertama di Tanah Melayu yang dijadikan lagu rasmi negeri dan mempunyai kedudukan istimewa terhadap rakyatnya (Raja Kamarulzaman, Raja Halijah & Raja Aminah 1960, 1961; Shazlin 2022).

***Fasa ketiga: Terang Boelan (1901)***

Terang Boelan adalah gubahan daripada melodi La Rosalie yang popular didendangkan sekitar kurun ke-18. Lagu ini tersebar menerusi aktiviti perdagangan yang berlaku di sekitar Nusantara menjadikan populariti La Rosalie memuncak dan diadaptasikan mengikut cita rasa tempatan. Melodi La Rosalie sering diadaptasikan kepada beberapa versi dalam pelbagai bahasa di seluruh negara. Ianya pertama kali diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Belanda, kemudian ke dalam bahasa Indonesia, Jepun, Inggeris, Kantonis dan Mandarin (Kay Kim 2016). Menurut blog ulasan yang ditulis oleh Shazlin (2021), *Negaraku: A Celebrated Tune in the Archipelago, Unifying Force for Malaysia'* menyatakan bahawa La Rosalie sendiri dikenali sebagai Terang Boelan dengan lirik berbeza-beza di rantau negeri.

Menerusi catatan Saidah Rastam (2017) dan Shazlin Hamzah (2023), La Rosalie ini popular di seluruh Tanah Melayu dan Nusantara, maka, terciptalah Terang Boelan yang merupakan adaptasi dari La Rosalie ini sekitar tahun 1900. Ianya seringkali dipersembahkan oleh kumpulan Bangsawan[3] yang begitu popular sebagai kumpulan penghibur. Mereka akan menjelajah sekitar Indonesia, Tanah Melayu dan Singapura dan mula membuat persembahan di setiap destinasi perhentian mereka. Salah satu persembahan terkenal ialah Stamboel[4] 1 yang merupakan lagu pengantara sewaktu tempoh rehat ketika pementasan dijalankan. Antaranya

adalah persembahan di Pulau Pinang pada 1900 dinyanyikan oleh Wayang Kassim dan Indra Zanzibar semasa persembahan opera Nyai Dasimah.

Menerusi buku *La Rosalie and the other love songs* (2017) populariti Terang Boelan yang semakin memuncak menjadikan lagu ini banyak dinyanyikan semula dan digubah liriknya mengikut tren semasa. Bahkan, ianya diterbitkan di dalam buku, majalah, surat khabar dan filem. Lagu ini dinyanyikan oleh penyanyi dan pelakon Indonesia lagenda, Miss Roekiah dalam filem Terang Boelan (Saidah 2017; Shazlin 2022). Lirik lagu Terang Boelan ini asalnya ditulis oleh Herman Tip pada tahun 1940 dan ianya juga disiarkan di dalam buku yang oleh Armjin Pane pada tahun 1938. Menariknya, buku beliau telah diterjemahkan hampir ke tujuh bahasa dan ianya menjadi sumber rujukan sastera di Amerika sehingga ke hari ini. Berikut adalah lirik lagu Terang Boelan yang popular dimainkan.

Terang bulan, terang dipinggir kali,
Buaya timbul disangkalah mati,
Jangan percaya mulutnyaa lelaki,
Berani sumpah, tapi takut mati.
Waktu potong padi di tengah sawah,
Sambal bernyanyi riuh rendah
Memotong padi semya orang,
Sedari pagi sampai petang.
Waktu potong padi di tengah sawah,
Sambil bernyanyi riuh rendah,
Bersenang hati sambal bersuka,
Tolonglah kami bersama-sama.

Rajah 4 : Lirik lagu Terang Boelan

Ada beberapa versi Terang Boelan yang digubahkan dan dimainkan. Versi pertama dimainkan oleh Orkestra Jerman yang dikenali sebagai Philip Anderson and Hawaian. Versi ini digubah dan dikenali sebagai Mamula Moon dan mempunyai sedikit lenggok Hawai. Versi kedua pula adalah Terang Boelan yang dinyanyikan oleh seorang Indonesia-Belanda yang bernama Anarchy Dromo. Akhir sekali, adalah versi yang dimainkan oleh Keroncong Orkes Malaysia iaitu kumpulan Bangsawan tadi (Saidah 2017; Shazlin 2022) .

***Fasa Keempat: Negaraku***

Bagi pemilihan lagu kebangsaan Malaysia telah diadakan pada tahun 1957 dengan kerjasama antara Radio Malaya dan Kerajaan Persekutuan. Kerjasama dua agensi ini sebulat suara bersetuju untuk mengadakan satu pertandingan bagi memilih lagu kebangsaan. Penyertaan tersebut terbuka bukan sahaja kepada rakyat Malaysia tetapi seluruh dunia. Satu jawatankuasa juga telah ditubuhkan diketuai Tunku Abdul Rahman selaku juri pemilihan lagu ini. Mengikut keratan akhbar *Straits Time* bertarikh 15 Mei 1957, direkodkan sebanyak 514 penyertaan telah diterima merangkumi penyertaan dari seluruh pelosok dunia, merangkumi pemuzik dari Malaya, Indonesia, Britain, United States, Perancis, Denmark, Sweeden, Hungary, Turki, Mesir dan India (Saidah 2017). Namun begitu, rekod rasmi lainnya mencatatkan sebanyak 419 penyertaan yang diterima. Satu-satunya rekod rasmi adalah menerusi keratan akhbar *The Malay Mail* pada Januari 1957 berkenaan pertandingan penciptaan lagu kebangsaan (Shazlin 2022). Walaupun terdapat percanggahan maklumat antara

dua akhbar ini, ianya sudah cukup membuktikan bahawa pertandingan ini berlaku sewaktu pasca-kemerdekaan Malaysia.

Dalam proses pemilihan lagu tersebut, jawatankuasa mempunyai beberapa syarat tertentu dalam sistem penilaian. Antaranya, lagu tersebut mestilah mempunyai nilai patriotisma yang tinggi tetapi dalam masa yang sama perlu ada elemen-elemen Malaya. Ianya merupakan satu cabaran yang besar kerana untuk menilai sebanyak 514 lagu yang dihantar bukanlah sesuatu yang mudah. Namun, ada juga lagu-lagu yang telah disenarai pendek untuk dimainkan oleh Pancaragam Polis Diraja Malaysia bagi penilaian seterusnya (Perputakaan Negara 2003; Saidah 2017; Shazlin 2022) . Malangnya, tiada satu pun lagu tersebut menambat hati Tunku untuk dijadikan lagu kebangsaan. Pada Jun 1957, Tunku juga ada menjemput Zubir Said, seorang komposer terkenal di Nusantara pada ketika itu untuk membantu mencipta lagu kebangsan buat Malaysia. Beliau cuba untuk mengubah dan menyusun beberapa lagu Melayu Klasik yang ada, tetapi, kebanyakan lagu tersebut mendayu-dayu. Bahkan, Tunku tidak gembira dengan gubahan yang dilakukan oleh beliau. Cubaan kedua dilakukan tetapi Tunku tetap tidak berpuas hati dan menyatakan bahawa ianya tidak sesuai untuk dijadikan lagu kebangsaan.Akhirnya, Tunku menolak ketiga-tiga buah lagu yang telah diusulkan oleh Zubir Said (Mohamad Hashim 2014; Shazlin 2022).

Catatan dari Perpustakaan Negara (2003) juga menceritakan situasi pada ketika itu semakin genting kerana hari kemerdekaan sudah semakin dekat tetapi Malaysia masih tidak mempunyai lagu kebangsaan untuk dimainkan di hari kemerdekaan. Tunku mengambil keputusan untuk mengambil lagu kebesaran Negeri Perak untuk dijadikan lagu kebangsaan. Melihatkan kepada sejarah dan nilai sentimental di sebalik melodi lagu sebagai lagu rasmi negeri yang pertama di Tanah Melayu menjadikan ianya sebab utama dipilih sebagai lagu kebangsaan.

Rakaman rasmi bagi lagu Negaraku ini dilakukan oleh kumpulan Koir Merdeka dan ianya diseliakan oleh Ahmad Merican yang bertugas di Radio Malaya pada ketika itu. Kumpulan koir yang membawakan lagu Negaraku ini membawa simbolisma kepelbagaian budaya yang sangat kuat kerana kumpulan ini terdiri daripada Melayu, Cina dan India. Kumpulan ini menjadi lambang perpaduan negara yang terdiri daripada masyarakat berbilang kaum. Tony Fonseka merupakan orang yang bertanggungjawab dalam pemilihan penyanyi dan latihan bagi sesi rakaman tersebut. Saidah Rastam turut menyatakan kekaguman beliau atas usaha tersebut dalam temu bual podkas bersama stesen radio BFM pada 18 November 2015[5],

> “Apabila Tuanku memutuskan untuk mencipta himpunan lagu baharu untuk Malaysia, kumpulan koir yang dibentuk untuk menyanyikan lagu Negaraku ini datang dari pelbagai agama, kepercayaan dan warna.”
>
> (Saidah, Podcast: History, Stories and Anecdotes of Negaraku in Song, 2015)

Transkripsi berikut merupakan bukti bagaimana dari awal pensejarahan Negaraku ini, ianya sudah diterima dan disukai ramai. Hal ini menjelaskan bahawa sejarah penciptaan Negaraku menerusi elemen sejarah ini mampu menjadi pengikat kepada setiap kaum di Malaysia sekiranya ia dihayati dan difahami.

**REPRESENTASI IDENTITI DALAM NEGARAKU MENERUSI ELEMEN PRIMORDIAL**

Seterusnya, elemen bahasa dapat dillihat menerusi penggunaan Bahasa Malaysia pada lirik lagu Negaraku yang wajib dinyanyikan dan dihafal oleh setiap kaum walaupun berbeza etnik dan bahasa. Malaysia tidak menyekat penggunaan bahasa-bahasa lain dari setiap etnik, tetapi, Bahasa Malaysia menjadi bahasa kebangsaan dalam sistem komunikasi formal di Malaysia. Setiap lapisan generasi dalam setiap kaum perlu fasih dan faham akan Bahasa Malaysia. Bahkan, ianya telah dicatatkan di dalam Perkara 12, Artikel 152 bahawa bahasa kebangsaan adalah bahasa Melayu. Manakala, sub-seksyen (a) dalam artikel yang sama menetapkan syarat supaya tiada seorang pun boleh dilarang atau dihalang daripada menggunakan, mengajar atau belajar bahasa-bahasa lain. Namun begitu, ianya menjadi satu kesalahan sekiranya Negaraku ini dinyanyikan selain daripada Bahasa Melayu. Hal ini boleh dilihat menerusi kontroversi yang berlaku pada 2019 apabila seorang guru di sebuah sekolah jenis kebangsaan dikenakan tindakan apabila mengajar pelajar-pelajar bukan Melayu menyanyikan lagu Negaraku dalam Bahasa Mandarin. Guru tersebut dikenakan tindakan di bawah seksyen 8 Akta Lagu Kebangsaan di bawah kesalahan tidak menghormati lagu kebangsaan dengan cara menukar lirik lagu Negaraku kepada bahasa lain. Perkara ini menjelaskan bagaimana pentingnya Bahasa Melayu sebagai bahasa penyatuan yang perlu untuk dihormati oleh setiap kaum di Malaysia.

Elemen etnik, kebudayaan dan tradisi dapat dilihat menerusi maksud tersirat di setiap baris lirik lagu Negaraku. Jikalau diteliti menerusi baris pertama dan kedua dalam perenggan pertama lagu Negaraku:

| |
|---|
| Negaraku<br><br>Tanah tumpahnya darahku |

Rajah 2: Baris pertama dan kedua dalam perenggan pertama lagu Negaraku

Struktur baris lirik di atas secara jelas diibaratkan sebagai sumpah setia oleh setiap warganegara Malaysia. Menerusi catatan sejarah yang direkodkan oleh beberapa sejarawan, semasa proses penciptaan lagu ini, Tunku sentiasa menyatakan hasratnya untuk memasukkan perkataan ‘Negaraku’ sebagai ayat simbolik pertama dalam lagu kebangsaan Malaysia. Beliau menyatakan bahawa perkataan ‘Negaraku’ itu membawa makna simbolik kepada setiap orang yang menyanyikan lagu kebangsaan ini. Tunku juga membayangkan apabila lagu ini dinyanyikan semasa sambutan Hari Kemerdekaan, masyarakat akan menyedari bahawa Malaysia kini telah menjadi sebuah tanah yang merdeka serta berdaulat di mata dunia. Baris seterusnya ‘Tanah tumpahnya darahku’ pula merupakan kesinambungan kepada baris sebelumnya. Baris ini secara jelas menggambarkan Malaysia sebagai negara kelahiran semua bangsa yang bergelar warganegara walaupun berbeza etnik dan budaya. Walaupun struktur sosiologi Malaysia penuh dengan kepelbagaian etnik, bahasa, budaya, tradisi mahupun agama, mereka yang mengaku sebagai rakyat Malaysia akan sanggup untuk bergadai nyawa bagi mengekalkan keamanan dan kebanggaan negara. Bahkan, ianya memancarkan rasa kasih serta kesedaran bahawa Malaysia ini sekarang telah menjadi tanah ibunda kepada etnik lain selain Melayu (Mohamad Hashim, 2014; Shazlin, 2022).

Rakyat hidup

Bersatu dan maju

Rajah 3: Baris ketiga dan keempat dalam perenggan pertama Negaraku

Jikalau diteliti baris lirik di atas, secara harafiahnya kita memahami bahawa ianya menjadi pengikat kepada setiap kaum untuk bekerjasama dalam membina negara-bangsa. Perbezaan kaum, agama, budaya dan tradisi bukanlah penghalang untuk mereka yang bergelar sebagai warganegara untuk berganding bahu antara satu sama lain dalam membangunkan negara. Dalam proses untuk mencapai ketamadunan dan pembinaan negara-bangsa yang sejajar dengan perkembangan globalisasi dan modernisasi dunia, penyatuan serta perpaduan dalam masyarakat berbilang kaum merupakan aspek yang sangat penting untuk dikecapi. Sekiranya baris lirik ini dihayati dan difahami oleh setiap rakyat Malaysia, setiap cabaran dan halangan dalam usaha untuk mencapai ketamadunan ini akan dapat dicapai (Mohamad Hashim, 2014; Khalilah, 2020; Shazlin, 2022).

Bergerak kepada baris lirik seterusnya memaparkan bagaimana fungsi Negaraku sebagai penyatuan budaya dan identiti nasional. Pengulangan kepada perenggan kedua dan ketiga Negaraku ini secara jelas memaparkan penerimaan dan kesepaduan setiap kaum dalam kepentingan beragama. Hal ini dapat dilihat dengan jelas menerusi baris lirik di bawah:

Rakyat bahagia

Tuhan kurniakan

Rajah 4: Baris pertama dan kedua dalam perenggan ketiga dan keempat Negaraku

Merujuk kepada baris di atas, ianya dengan jelas menggambarkan kepentingan keagamaan dan ketuhanan dalam masyarakat. Tambahan pula, baris ini meraikan semua agama yang dianuti oleh setiap kaum di Malaysia dan tidak menspesifikasikan kepada satu-satu agama sahaja walaupun Islam adalah agama rasmi. Tunku sedar bahawa Malaysia terdiri daripada masyarakat berbilang kaum serta mengamalkan spektrum kepercayaan dan keagamaan tersendiri. Walau bagaimanapun, setiap agama dan kepercayaan itu mengiktirafkan kewujudan Tuhan dan Tuhan sahaja yang dapat melimpahkan rahmat kepada manusia (Khalilah, 2020; Mohamad Hisham, 2014).

Manakala, baris seterusnya pula merujuk kepada penerimaan setiap kaum terhadap raja berperlembagaan yang menjadi identiti utama Malaysia.

Raja kita

Selamat bertakhta

Rajah 5: Baris ketiga dan keempat dalam perenggan ketiga dan keempat Negaraku

Baris di atas merupakan kesinambungan kepada lirik sebelumnya seperti yang tertera di Rajah 4. Baris lirik ini jelas menunjukkan keperntingan raja berperlembagaan sebagai identiti, budaya dan tradisi yang diterima oleh setiap kaum di Malaysia. Menurut catatan

sejarah, sewaktu penciptaan lirik lagu ini, jawatankuasa yang diketuai oleh Tunku Abdul Rahman dengan kerjasama Saiful Bahri memberikan perhatian kepada kesesuaian bait-bait lirik yang berkait dengan unsur raja berperlembagaan. Hal ini kerana, Sultan merupakan satu sosok yang penting dalam susur galur sejarah pemerintahan Tanah Melayu. Setiap negeri mempunyai Sultan yang memerintah dan YDPA menjadi ketua bagi ke semua sultan ini. Jikalau kia teliti lagi gabungan baris lirik di Rajah 4 dan 5, ianya adalah suatu bentuk titipan doa oleh setiap rakyat Malaysia atas kesejahteraan pemerintahan beraja kita. Kedudukan sultan itu sendiri menunjukkan kedudukan yang kukuh dan penting dalam menentukan kekuatan bangsa dan negara Malaysia di mata duni (Khalilah, 2020; Mohamad Hashim, 2014; Shazlin 2022).

## IMPLIKASI TERHADAP KAJIAN ETNIK

Kertas kajian mampu untuk memberi impak dalam memperluaskan wacana berkaitan pembentukan negara-bangsa dan identiti kebangsaan dalam perspektif primordial. Hal ini kerana, kebanyakan wacana berkaitan identiti kebangsaan, negara dan bangsa di Malaysia hanya terhad dibincangkan di dalam perspektif politik dan ekonomi. Walhal, elemen primordial merupakan satu aspek yang sangat dekat dengan jiwa setiap rakyat kerana struktur sosiologi Malaysia yang terdiri daripada masyarakat berbilang kaum. Oleh itu, perspektif primordial ini mampu meluaskan lagi kefahaman dari segi kajian etnik supaya setiap etnik lebih memahami perihal negara, bangsa dan identiti mereka sebagai rakyat Malaysia. Selain itu, ianya mampu menjadi nilai tambah dalam kajian etnik dan sains sosial kerana buat masa kini kajian berkaitan perspektif primordial masih lagi terhad di Malaysia.

Di samping itu, kertas kajian ini juga akan mengembangkan bidang antemologi (lagu kebangsaan) dalam kajian sains sosial di Malaysia. Hal ini akan memberikan pendedahan kepada pengkaji di luar sana untuk meneroka lagi fungsi simbol-simbol negara dalam pembentukan negara-bangsa dan identiti nasional. Negaraku merupakan satu alat yang kukuh dalam menggariskan konsep primordial dalam wacana kebangsaan. Sehingga kini, kajian berkenaan Negaraku masih lagi terhad dan hanya dipelopori oleh tiga orang tokoh sahaja iaitu Saidah Rastam, Dr Shazlin Hamzah dan Mohamad Hashim. Tambahan pula, penulis mencadangkan supaya kepentingan simbol negara ini akan dijadikan medium yang digunakan dalam setiap inisiatif kerajaan.

## KESIMPULAN

Berdasarkan kepada analisis yang dilakukan, ianya dapat disimpulkan bahawa peranan Negaraku penting sebagai salah satu medium dalam wacana pembentukan identiti kebangsaan di Malaysia. Lagu ini bukan hanya untuk dijadikan ritual dalam majlis-majlis rasmi sahaja, tetapi, makna disebalik lirik lagu ini memaparkan bagaimana elemen primordial dari aspek sejarah, etnik, budaya, tradisi dan bahasa memainkan peranan dalam memperkukuhkan kefahaman rakyat tentang konsep identiti kebangsaan dan negara-bangsa. Hasil daripada analisis yang dilakukan kepada 4 buah rujukan utama tempatan, 7 rujukan utama antarabangsa, 35 jurnal dan artikel dan 10 keratan akhbar mengenai Negaraku ini sudah cukup membuktikan bahawa kelima-lima elemen keterikatan primordial tersebut wujud di dalam lagu ini. Hasilnya, dapatan kajian dari analisis sumber yang dinyatakan dibincangkan menerusi dua sub-topik utama. Pertama, analisis menjurus kepada sejarah perkembangan dan penciptaan lagu Negaraku melalui empat fasa sejarah. Manakala, sub-topik kedua pula adalah analisis yang mendalam sebagai salah satu unsur representasi identiti dalam Negaraku menerusi elemen primordial.

Melihatkan kepada kepentingan Negaraku dalam pembinaan identiti kebangsaan, hal ini boleh diperkukuhkan lagi melalui aspek pendidikan dengan cara memasukkan perkaitan Negaraku dan elemen primordial di dalam silibus pembelajaran. Hal ini merupakan langkah pertama dalam membina pemahaman serta penghayatan akan makna di sebalik lagu Negaraku ini. Pembentukan mentaliti setiap kaum ini perlu dibentuk dari pendidikan awal menerusi orientasi pembelajaran dan pengajaran di setiap jenis sekolah. Kementerian Pendidikan perlu untuk memantau dan meneliti bahawa aspek primordial ini tidak hanya dijadikan sebagai perihal yang membincangkan perbezaan antara etnik tetapi menjadi pengikat kepada kesepaduan setiap kaum di Malaysia. Selain itu, silibus yang memperkenalkan elemen ini bukan hanya tertumpu kepada subjek Sejarah sahaja tetapi boleh divariasikan menerusi subjek-subjek lain seperti Bahasa Melayu, Bahasa Mandarin, Bahasa Tamil dan lain-lain.

## NOTA

[1] Tidak ketara ini menjurus kepada aspek yang boleh dilihat menerusi mata kasar.
[2] Lembaran muzik yang ditulis ini merupakan lembaran rasmi pertama kepada Allah Lanjutkan Usia Sultan.
[3] Bangsawan merupakan Kumpulan penghibur yang sangat terkenal pada era 1900 di sekitar Nusantara. Perkumpulan ini menjelajah ke seluruh Nusantara dengan melakukan persembahan berbentuk teater mengenai cerita-cerita rakyat.
[4] Stamboel adalah perkataan yang diambil dari perkataan Turki dari Istanbul. Namun, ejaan tersebut diubah mengikut bahasa Belanda ketika itu.
[5] Saidah Rastam dalam sebuah temubual di stesen Radio BFM 2015, transkripsi perenggan 17.

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# The Media Spectacle of Tujia Culture on Douyin: Homogenization, Feminization, and Decontextualization

*(Spektakel Media Budaya Tujia dalam Douyin: Homogenisasi, Feminisasi, dan Dekontekstualisasi)*

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*ABSTRACT*

*This study investigates the role of Douyin in shaping the media spectacle of the Tujia ethnic group, an indigenous community from China. Through a case study analysis of popular Douyin bloggers representing Tujia culture, the research explores the challenges and consequences of cultural representation in the digital media landscape. By applying Guy Debord's theory of media spectacle, the paper critically examines the homogenization, feminization, and decontextualization of Tujia cultural symbols on Douyin. The findings reveal that Douyin contributes to the construction of a feminized, homogenized, and superficial representation of Tujia culture, detached from its historical and cultural context. The paper suggests strategies for addressing these issues, including promoting innovation in content creation, fostering gender balance, and advocating for collaboration between content creators and government bodies. This research offers valuable insights into the representation of minority cultures on digital platforms and provides a foundation for future research on ethnic media portrayal in China.*

*Keywords: Tujia ethnic group; Douyin; media spectacle; cultural representation; cultural commodification.*

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*ABSTRAK*

*Kajian ini menyelidiki peranan Douyin dalam membentuk spektakel media kumpulan etnik Tujia, sebuah komuniti pribumi dari China. Melalui analisis kajian kes terhadap blogger terkenal di Douyin yang mewakili budaya Tujia, kajian ini meneroka cabaran dan kesan perwakilan budaya dalam landskap media digital. Dengan menggunakan teori spektakel media oleh Guy Debord, makalah ini secara kritis menganalisis homogenisasi, feminisasi, dan dekontekstualisasi simbol budaya Tujia di Douyin. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa Douyin menyumbang kepada pembentukan perwakilan budaya Tujia yang feminis, homogen, dan bersifat dangkal, terpisah daripada konteks sejarah dan budaya asalnya. Makalah ini mencadangkan strategi untuk menangani isu-isu ini, termasuk mempromosikan inovasi dalam penciptaan kandungan, menyeimbangkan peranan jantina, dan menggalakkan kerjasama antara pencipta kandungan dan badan kerajaan. Kajian ini menawarkan pandangan yang bernilai mengenai perwakilan budaya minoriti di platform digital dan menyediakan asas untuk penyelidikan masa depan tentang penggambaran media etnik di China.*

*Kata Kunci: Kumpulan etnik Tujia; Douyin; spektakel media; perwakilan budaya; komodifikasi budaya.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Tujia ethnic group, referred to as *Bifzivkar* in their native language, is one of the largest ethnic minorities in China, primarily residing in the Wuling Mountain region, which spans the provinces of Hunan, Hubei, Chongqing, and Guizhou. With a population of over 9.5 million as of 2021, the Tujia people possess a rich cultural heritage, including unique traditions in music, dance, and craftsmanship. However, due to the region's geographical isolation and limited access to modern communication infrastructure, the dissemination of Tujia culture has faced significant challenges.

The rise of social media platforms such as Douyin (known internationally as TikTok) has presented new opportunities for minority cultures to engage with broader audiences. Douyin's short-form video format allows users to quickly share content and reach millions of viewers, transforming it into a powerful tool for cultural communication. For the Tujia ethnic group, Douyin has become a key platform for preserving and promoting their cultural identity. However, the portrayal of Tujia culture on Douyin is often filtered through the lens of the platform's algorithms and audience preferences, which prioritize viral content over authenticity.

This paper delves into how Douyin has shaped the media spectacle surrounding the Tujia ethnic group. Using Guy Debord's theory of media spectacle as a conceptual framework, we explore how Tujia cultural representations are homogenized, feminized, and decontextualized on the platform. Debord's theory of the spectacle emphasizes the role of media in transforming cultural and social relations into passive spectacles consumed by the masses. In the context of Douyin, this theory helps us understand how the platform's commercial imperatives influence the representation of minority cultures, often distorting their authenticity and reducing them to simplistic, commercialized forms.

The study employs a case analysis approach, focusing on ten popular Douyin bloggers who have gained prominence through their portrayal of Tujia culture. These bloggers' content is examined to identify patterns of representation and to understand the broader implications of media spectacle in shaping the cultural image of the Tujia ethnic group. By examining the ways in which Douyin users consume and interact with Tujia cultural content, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on media and ethnic representation in the digital age.

## TUJIA ETHNIC

The Tujia people predominantly reside in highland regions characterized by hilly terrain, typically inhabiting altitudes between 400 and 1,500 meters (NEAC, 2010). These regions are rich in natural resources, such as Chinese medicinal ingredients, minerals, and timber, which serve as their primary sources of wealth. The term "Tujia" signifies the local populace embodying distinct regional traits (Archive.org, 2006).

The Tujia trace their roots to the ancient Ba State in the Chongqing region, dating back 2,500 years. Known as the ancient Ba people, they experienced a transformative period in 316 BCE when the Qin Dynasty annihilated the Ba Kingdom, leading to their transition from a sovereign state to a tribal community (Deason, 2018). The term "Tujia" first appeared in historical records in the 14th century, and during the Qing Dynasty (1728–1735), the Tujia were officially governed as part of ancient China.

With the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Communist Party recognized the Tujia as one of the nation's 56 ethnic groups in January 1957. This acknowledgment granted them autonomy, enabling the establishment of autonomous counties and prefectures to preserve their cultural identity (McLaren, 2008).



Figure 1: Tujia House - Diaojiao Lou.

The Tujia people are known for their artistic creativity, deeply rooted in their cultural traditions. One of their most celebrated cultural practices is the Baishou dance, which has a history of over 500 years (Li, 2020). This communal dance is characterized by over 70 intricate hand gestures, each symbolizing various aspects of Tujia life, such as hunting, warfare, agriculture, courtship, and celebration (Yang & Wang, 2012).



Figure 2: Baishou Baishou Dance.

Tujia folk songs are another cornerstone of their cultural identity, marked by powerful and vibrant vocal styles that resonate across their mountainous terrain (Guoliang, 2019). Similarly, their attire reflects artistic ingenuity. Tujia costumes are renowned for their floral motifs and pleats, with women's garments often crafted from gold and silver, showcasing a distinct aspect of Tujia costume culture (Tian, 2021).

The Tujia also possess a rich culinary heritage, featuring dishes such as sausages, sweet potato powder, tempeh, bamboo shoots, and kohlrabi (Tujia.org, 2021). Their craftsmanship, particularly in Tujia brocade weaving, holds a special place in Chinese intangible cultural heritage.

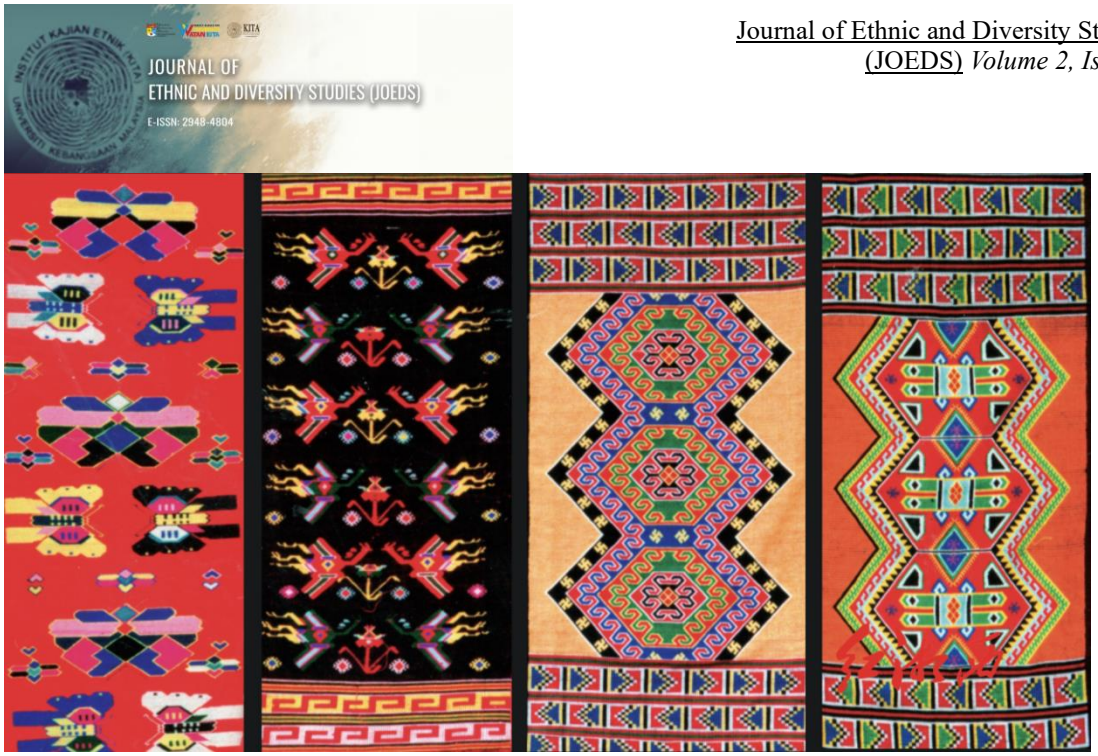



Figure 3: Tujia brocade.

Tujia brocade is not merely a craft but an artistic expression of emotion and cultural identity. Traditional brocade patterns depict flora, animals, and auspicious symbols, blending aesthetic beauty with cultural significance. For instance, the "24-hook" and "48-hook" designs symbolize blessings, protection, and prosperity (Hong, 2018). The Tujia attribute their favorable living conditions to ancestral blessings, which are honored through elaborate ceremonies involving dance, music, and offerings (Qiu, 2010). These ceremonies play a vital role in major life events such as weddings, agricultural rituals, and festivals.

However, with the increasing migration of Tujia people to urban areas in search of economic opportunities, their culture faces the dual challenges of neglect and erosion. The isolation of their highland regions and limited access to modern communication facilities further hinder the transmission of their rich traditions to younger generations. Despite these obstacles, the Tujia continue to adapt by documenting and promoting their traditions through various media platforms, ensuring their cultural legacy is preserved and shared with broader audiences.

## CONTEXTUALIZING THE PLATFORMS IN SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE

TikTok and Douyin, despite being essentially the same platform developed by the Chinese company ByteDance, operate in distinctly different ecosystems due to cultural, regulatory, and audience considerations. TikTok is the international version, tailored for a global audience, whereas Douyin is specifically designed for users in China, adhering to local regulations and cultural sensibilities. Both platforms exemplify the evolving nature of social media, where short, engaging, and algorithm-driven content plays a pivotal role in shaping user experiences and influencing global media trends.

Douyin, launched in China in 2016, predates TikTok and remains a separate

entity with a localized focus (Iqbal, 2024). It operates within China's regulatory framework, adhering to strict content moderation and censorship policies while offering features uniquely suited to Chinese users, such as integration with e-commerce platforms and educational content. TikTok, launched for the global market in 2018, adopts a more universal approach, providing a space for creative expression and viral trends (Zhang & Fung, 2021). However, it is not subject to the same regulatory constraints as Douyin and must navigate varying cultural and legal landscapes across different countries.

These platforms differ in how they contextualize content and engage users. Douyin's algorithms emphasize localized and culturally relevant content, ensuring users encounter material resonating with their regional context (Guo & Zhao, 2022). Conversely, TikTok adopts a broader strategy, fostering global trends and cross-cultural interactions while catering to a wide array of user preferences. Despite these differences, both platforms epitomize the essence of modern social media: interactivity, user-generated content, and real-time engagement.

Contextualizing TikTok and Douyin within the broader scope of social media highlights their transformative role in redefining communication, entertainment, and commerce. Social media has evolved from being a mere networking tool to a dynamic ecosystem for content creation, cultural exchange, and social influence (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Platforms like TikTok and Douyin leverage advanced algorithms to personalize user experiences, fostering high engagement levels and enabling creators to reach vast audiences (Lu & Hou, 2020). This shift underscores the increasing significance of short-form video content in capturing attention and shaping societal narratives.

Moreover, the rise of TikTok and Douyin reflects broader trends in social media, such as the prioritization of visual storytelling and the gamification of content consumption. These platforms encourage participatory culture, where users not only consume but actively contribute to content creation through challenges, trends, and collaborations. Their rapid growth and widespread adoption signify the changing preferences of social media users, who increasingly favor interactive and ephemeral formats over static, text-based content.

In this broader context, TikTok and Douyin are not just tools for entertainment but also powerful instruments for marketing, cultural dissemination, and social movements. Their impact extends beyond digital spaces, influencing global trends, shaping cultural identities, and redefining how individuals and communities interact in an increasingly interconnected world (Polanco et al, 2022).

## MEDIA SPECTACLE AND ETHNIC REPRESENTATION

The concept of *media spectacle* originates from Guy Debord's theory of the *spectacle society*, a framework that explores the grand, media-driven representations designed to captivate public attention. Debord, founder of the French Situationist movement,

emphasized the communication characteristics of mass media images, particularly their "singleness" and "image substitution." He argued that mass media has become the primary driver and the most conspicuous manifestation of the spectacle society. As such, "media spectacle" reflects a universal mode of existence in both the spectacle society and real-world society (Debord, 1967). This concept captures the essence of contemporary media culture, which embodies societal values, adapts individuals to modern lifestyles, and dramatizes societal conflicts and their resolutions (Douglas, 2003).

In the digital media era, the notion of spectacle has evolved, especially with platforms like Douyin and TikTok. Douyin, China's counterpart to TikTok, operates within strict regulatory frameworks, offering tailored content for Chinese audiences. TikTok, in contrast, targets global markets with diversified content and policies. Both platforms prioritize creating viral, entertaining, and sensational content. Douyin has become the leading visual social media platform in China, with approximately 750 million daily users (Iqbal, 2024). Its short-video format allows users to alleviate stress, spend leisure time, access information, and enhance life satisfaction (Cai & Jin, 2021). It provides temporal and spatial flexibility, enabling consumers to engage anytime and anywhere via mobile devices and the internet (Zuo & Wang, 2019).

Douyin's dual-role model encourages users to be both creators and consumers (Bossen & Kottasz, 2020). It also permits less innovative users to replicate, reinterpret, and distribute others' creations without legal or intellectual property concerns (Facca et al., 2022). This dynamic has facilitated the resurgence of ethnic minority handicrafts, with algorithm-driven content amplifying their reach (Yu et al., 2020). Douyin is recognized as a novel tool for disseminating intangible cultural heritage, including ethnic minority crafts (Wang & Fu, 2020). For instance, cultural exchange flourishes on Douyin as enthusiasts create and share diverse visual and audio content (Polanco et al., 2022).

However, the representation of ethnic minorities like the Tujia people on platforms such as Douyin often succumbs to the media spectacle mechanism, prioritizing aesthetic appeal and user engagement over cultural authenticity. Modern media frequently commoditizes complex cultural traditions, reducing them to simplified, marketable performances aligned with capitalist interests (Kong, 2007).

Historically, the Tujia ethnic group has played a significant role in China's governance under the *Tusi* (hereditary chieftain) system. This administrative framework, rooted in the Tujia tradition, allowed local ethnic rulers to pledge allegiance to the Central Plains dynasties while retaining autonomy (Chen, 2006). The Tusi system granted the Tujia elevated administrative recognition, including six high-status domains during the Ming Dynasty, such as Yongshun and Baojing (Cheng & Qin, 2010). Despite the rapid shifts in central dynastic rule, the Tusi system ensured the Tujia's governance continuity over 800 years (Cheng, 2014).

Ethnic representation in media has long been scrutinized for its tendency to marginalize or misrepresent minority groups. While platforms like Douyin provide

minorities with opportunities for cultural expression and global dissemination, they also prioritize content that aligns with corporate goals, often sensationalizing or exoticizing cultures (Li & Wang, 2021). For example, Douyin showcases visually captivating aspects of Tujia culture, such as traditional dances and attire, while often neglecting deeper cultural practices and meanings (Hu, 2024). This focus on spectacle-driven entertainment over cultural integrity highlights the broader challenges faced by ethnic minorities in digital media (Gao, 2022).

## TRANSITION FROM TRADITIONAL TO DIGITAL REPRESENTATIONS

The representation of ethnic minority cultures on social media is shaped by several significant challenges, including homogenization, feminization, and decontextualization. These dynamics profoundly impact how Tujia culture is portrayed on platforms like Douyin, often distorting its original essence.

### HOMOGENIZATION OF TUJIA CULTURE

Homogenization refers to the process by which diverse cultural expressions are reduced to repetitive, uniform images that lack depth and complexity. On Douyin, the portrayal of Tujia culture frequently follows a standardized template, characterized by similar themes, music, and visual aesthetics. For instance, videos often emphasize the hand-waving dance ("Bifzivkar") as a defining element of Tujia identity, overshadowing other cultural aspects like traditional craftsmanship, spiritual practices, or storytelling traditions. This repetitive depiction limits the audience's understanding of the multifaceted nature of Tujia culture, creating a narrow and oversimplified narrative. Similar trends have been observed in the representation of other ethnic groups, such as the Yi and Miao, where visual appeal often trumps cultural depth (Mi, 2021).

Before the rise of Douyin and similar platforms, Tujia culture thrived as a rich tapestry of diverse traditions rooted in the community's agrarian and spiritual lifestyle. Historically, Tujia rituals and ceremonies were deeply connected to their environment, celebrating agricultural cycles, ancestor worship, and communal gatherings. These practices emphasized both masculine and feminine roles, with men often leading rituals involving strength and endurance, such as martial arts displays and hunting festivals, while women showcased intricate weaving and embroidery skills. The balance between these roles offered a holistic representation of Tujia life, now overshadowed by the platform's preference for visually striking but superficial content.

### FEMINIZATION OF TUJIA REPRESENTATION

Another prominent challenge is the feminization of Tujia culture on Douyin, where young women are frequently depicted as the primary representatives of their ethnic identity. These videos typically highlight traditional attire, focusing on the aesthetic

appeal of Tujia women, often in scenic backdrops. While such content may draw attention and celebrate feminine beauty, it inadvertently reinforces gender stereotypes by sidelining male figures and other aspects of cultural significance. This trend mirrors broader patterns in media representation, where women from ethnic minority groups are often portrayed as passive bearers of tradition rather than active cultural participants or innovators (Mei, 2011; Ge, 2020).

Before Douyin's influence, Tujia culture maintained a balanced representation of genders. Men played crucial roles in ceremonial dances and spiritual rituals, while women contributed through artistic expressions like crafting vibrant batik prints and performing folk songs that carried historical and moral lessons. The digital emphasis on femininity, however, marginalizes these traditional roles and narrows the perception of Tujia culture to a gendered and commodified image.

## DECONTEXTUALIZATION OF TUJIA CULTURAL SYMBOLS

Decontextualization involves the removal of cultural symbols from their historical, spiritual, or communal contexts, presenting them in isolation for entertainment or commercial purposes. On Douyin, traditional elements like Tujia clothing or dances are frequently showcased without any explanation of their origins or significance. For instance, while the intricate embroidery on Tujia attire reflects centuries-old storytelling and spiritual symbolism, these deeper meanings are rarely conveyed in the short, entertainment-focused videos on Douyin. As Debord (2006) explains, the spectacle detaches cultural practices from their authentic settings, reducing them to consumable visual fragments for mass audiences.

Historically, Tujia cultural practices were deeply embedded in the community's way of life. Traditional dances, for example, were performed during harvest festivals and religious ceremonies, symbolizing gratitude, unity, and spiritual devotion. These dances often incorporated movements inspired by agricultural tasks or local wildlife, conveying stories of resilience and harmony with nature. By contrast, Douyin's representations strip these symbols of their narrative depth, transforming them into mere aesthetic spectacles.

## DIGITAL MEDIA AND THE SPECTACLE OF ETHNIC REPRESENTATION

Digital platforms like Douyin have emerged as significant mediators of ethnic representation in contemporary China. With its short-video format and advanced algorithmic suggestions, Douyin enables users, including ethnic minorities, to achieve broad visibility and engagement. This accessibility has allowed groups like the Tujia to share their cultural heritage with wider audiences. However, Douyin's prioritization of entertainment and virality often leads to the commodification of cultural elements, reducing intricate traditions into simplified, visually captivating content tailored for mass appeal (Jia & Bie, 2021; Zhang, 2023).

As Douyin commercializes cultural content, traditional practices are frequently

sensationalized or distorted to fit the platform's requirements for brevity and engagement. This trend highlights a shift in how ethnic cultures, such as that of the Tujia people, are portrayed. While the platform has undeniably enhanced the visibility of minority cultures, the trade-off is often the loss of cultural authenticity in favor of material designed to attract viewers (Yuan, 2021).

The *media spectacle* framework provides a critical lens to understand these dynamics. Originally conceptualized by Guy Debord, the theory of spectacle addresses the commodification of cultural experiences into passive, consumable images. On Douyin, algorithms amplify content that generates high engagement, perpetuating the widespread circulation of superficial and sensational cultural representations. This aligns with Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality, where distinctions between authentic cultural practices and their mediated portrayals blur. The Tujia people's cultural identity on Douyin is often transformed into hyperreal spectacles—performances designed to entertain rather than reflect the lived experiences of the community (Cheng, 2021).

Furthermore, electronic communication has reshaped society, creating a fundamentally different environment where digital media dominates cultural narratives. This evolution has significant implications for ethnic representation, particularly in contexts where algorithms and commercial interests dictate visibility and engagement. For the Tujia, their presence on platforms like Douyin reflects a new form of hyperreality, where their culture is curated and consumed not as authentic heritage but as commoditized spectacle for viewer amusement (Li, 2023).

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND SIGNIFICANCE

This study seeks to analyse the impact of Douyin on the media portrayal of Tujia culture. This study aims to analyse the depiction of Tujia culture through prominent Douyin bloggers. Subsequently, examine the impacts of homogenisation, feminisation, and decontextualisation on the portrayal of Tujia culture. Ultimately, propose strategies to improve the genuine and varied depiction of Tujia culture on digital platforms.

This study addresses a deficiency in the academic literature about the representation of ethnic minority cultures within the digital media sphere, specifically in China's swiftly transforming social media context. This study examines Tujia's presentation on Douyin, contributing to the discourse on media presentation power dynamics and the influence of digital platforms on cultural preservation. It offers pragmatic insights on the interaction between ethnic minority cultures and contemporary media instruments while preserving their cultural integrity.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND CASE STUDY SELECTION

This study adopts a qualitative research design, leveraging a case study approach to

investigate the representation of Tujia culture on Douyin. Case studies are particularly effective for examining complex social phenomena within real-life contexts, providing a framework for exploring the nuanced interplay between Douyin's content dynamics and the portrayal of ethnic traditions. By narrowing the focus to specific creators, this research aims to uncover the ways in which platform algorithms and audience engagement shape the depiction of Tujia cultural identity.

The study centers on ten Douyin bloggers who have gained prominence for their portrayal of Tujia culture. These bloggers were selected based on criteria such as popularity, content relevance, diversity of representation, and levels of audience engagement. The selected creators reflect a variety of backgrounds, including professional cultural promoters and everyday users. For example, "Lina," a 25-year-old Tujia woman, uses her background in traditional dance to share performances and tutorials with her followers, while "Yang," a 32-year-old cultural enthusiast of mixed heritage, focuses on Tujia handicrafts and traditional rituals. This mix ensures a holistic representation of the cultural expressions explored on the platform.

To capture the diversity of Tujia cultural portrayals, the selected bloggers' content includes a wide array of themes, such as traditional clothing, music, dance, and ceremonies. These individuals have a significant following, typically exceeding 100,000 followers, which ensures that their content has broad reach and relevance. This targeted selection allows the study to delve into the most visible and impactful representations of Tujia culture, while also recognizing the potential limitations of focusing solely on popular creators.

## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data collection process involved analyzing video content uploaded by the selected bloggers over a six-month period, spanning from January to June 2024. A total of 150 videos were examined, with an average of 15 videos per blogger. These videos were systematically reviewed to identify recurring themes, visual styles, and narrative structures. The textual elements, including captions and dialogues, were studied alongside visual content, such as costumes, settings, and choreography, to uncover patterns in how Tujia culture is represented.

Textual analysis was employed to explore critical dimensions of representation, focusing on themes such as homogenization, feminization, and decontextualization. Homogenization refers to the standardization of cultural portrayals, often influenced by platform algorithms that favor widely appealing content. Feminization examines the emphasis on young women as central figures in cultural narratives, highlighting how gender dynamics intersect with cultural representation. Decontextualization analyzes how traditional elements are presented in isolation, stripped of their historical or social significance, to create visually appealing but superficial content.

Audience analysis complemented the textual examination by focusing on user comments and engagement metrics, such as likes, shares, and reposts. This approach

provided insights into how audiences interpret and interact with Tujia cultural representations. Comments were analyzed to understand audience perceptions, whether they viewed the content as entertainment, a form of cultural preservation, or an exotic spectacle. Additionally, engagement patterns were studied to identify which aspects of Tujia culture resonated most with viewers, offering clues about the types of content that gain traction on Douyin.

The integration of textual and audience analyses provided a comprehensive understanding of how Tujia culture is mediated through Douyin. While the textual analysis focused on the creators' content, the audience analysis shed light on the reception and interpretation of this content, bridging the gap between production and consumption in the digital space.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The scope of this study is confined to examining Tujia cultural representations on Douyin, focusing specifically on the content created by ten selected bloggers. The research offers a detailed exploration of how Douyin functions as a platform for cultural expression, emphasizing the dynamics of representation, audience engagement, and the commodification of ethnic traditions. By centering on Tujia culture, the study provides a focused case that contributes to broader discussions about digital media's role in shaping cultural identities.

However, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the selection of popular bloggers introduces a potential bias, as their content is already amplified by Douyin's algorithm, which may not reflect the full spectrum of Tujia cultural representations on the platform. Less visible creators who produce more authentic or niche content may be underrepresented. Second, the study is platform-specific, analyzing content solely on Douyin without considering alternative social media platforms like WeChat or Kuaishou, where Tujia culture might be depicted differently. Future research could adopt a multi-platform approach to provide a more comprehensive view of digital representations.

Additionally, audience interpretation is primarily assessed through publicly visible user comments, which may not capture the full range of audience perceptions. While engagement metrics provide quantitative insights, they may not reveal the motivations or deeper cultural understandings driving user interactions. Despite these limitations, the study lays a foundation for future research on the digital mediation of ethnic identities, offering valuable insights into the intersection of culture, technology, and audience dynamics in the context of Douyin.

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Here is a graphical representation of the research framework. The diagram illustrates the relationships between the key components of the study:

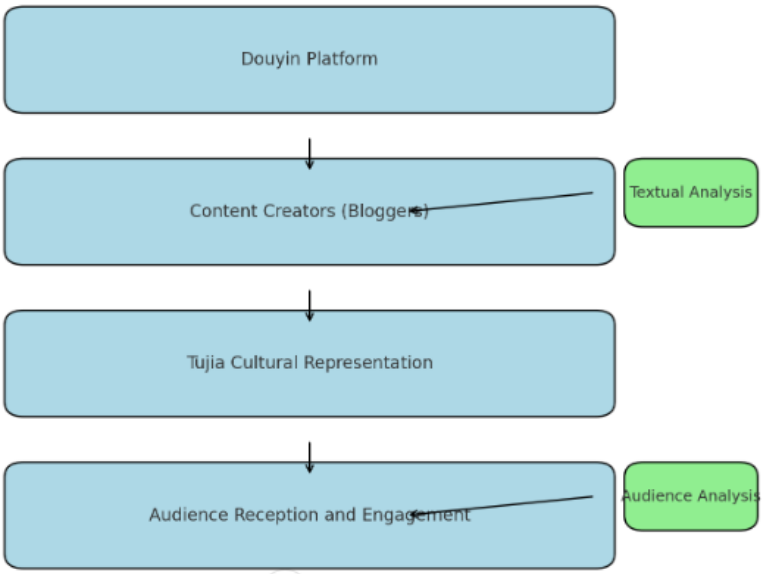



Figure 4: Research framework.

1. Douyin Platform: At the top, representing the source of content dissemination.
2. Content Creators (Bloggers): Connected to Douyin, showcasing their role in generating Tujia cultural content.
3. Tujia Cultural Representation: Highlighting how culture is portrayed on Douyin by creators.
4. Audience Reception and Engagement: Indicating how the audience interacts with and interprets the content.

Additionally, the research methods include:

- Textual Analysis: Analyzing the creators' content for cultural themes and patterns.
- Audience Analysis: Examining user interactions to understand reception.

Note: Arrows represent the flow of influence and analysis pathways within the research framework.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section presents the key findings from the case study and textual analysis of Douyin videos featuring Tujia cultural content. The analysis focuses on the themes of homogenization, feminization, and decontextualization, which emerged as dominant patterns in the representation of Tujia culture on the platform. The findings are organized around these themes, with supporting examples from the videos and insights from audience engagement.

## HOMOGENIZATION OF TUJIA CULTURE ON DOUYIN

One of the most significant findings of this study is the homogenization of Tujia cultural representations on Douyin. Homogenization refers to the process by which diverse cultural expressions are reduced to standardized, repetitive forms that lack distinction. On Douyin, Tujia culture is often portrayed through a limited set of visual and thematic elements, which are repeated across multiple videos.

### STANDARDIZED VSUAL AND NARRATIVE ELEMENTS

Across the 150 videos analyzed, certain visual and narrative elements were repeatedly emphasized, leading to a uniform portrayal of Tujia culture. Most videos featured bloggers dressed in traditional Tujia clothing, dancing or posing in front of recognizable landmarks or natural landscapes. The use of traditional Tujia music or popular Douyin soundtracks further contributed to the standardization of these videos.

For instance, a significant number of videos focused on the "Bifzivkar" hand-waving dance, a prominent aspect of Tujia culture. While this dance is an important cultural tradition, its over-representation on the platform reduces Tujia culture to a singular visual spectacle, neglecting other aspects such as traditional crafts, architecture, and spiritual practices. This pattern reflects a form of aesthetic conformity, where creators prioritize content that aligns with audience expectations and platform trends rather than providing a diverse representation of their culture.

### IMPACT OF DOUYIN'S ALGORITHMIC SYSTEM

Douyin's recommendation algorithm, which promotes content based on user engagement, plays a key role in reinforcing the homogenization of Tujia culture. Videos that conform to popular trends and formats are more likely to be promoted by the platform, encouraging content creators to adopt a similar style in order to maximize their reach. As a result, more nuanced and diverse aspects of Tujia culture are often overlooked in favor of visually appealing, easily consumable content.

This finding is consistent with previous studies on the portrayal of minority cultures on digital platforms (Li & Wang, 2021), which have highlighted the tension between cultural diversity and the platform's commercial imperatives. The dominance of certain visual tropes, such as traditional clothing and dance, can overshadow other elements of Tujia identity, leading to a superficial understanding of the culture.

## FEMINIZATION OF TUJIA CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

Another key finding is the feminization of Tujia cultural representation on Douyin. Most of the analyzed videos featured young women as the primary representatives of

Tujia culture, often emphasizing beauty, fashion, and aesthetic appeal. This focus on femininity is closely tied to the platform's broader trends, where visually appealing content featuring women tends to attract higher levels of engagement.

## THE ROLE OF FEMALE BLOGGERS

Female bloggers play a central role in the portrayal of Tujia culture on Douyin, with many videos showcasing young women dressed in traditional Tujia attire, performing cultural dances, or modeling in scenic locations. While these videos can generate significant attention and help raise awareness of Tujia culture, they also contribute to a narrow and gendered representation of the culture.

In many videos, the focus on traditional clothing and feminine beauty aligns with broader societal expectations of women as cultural bearers and symbols of ethnic identity. This emphasis on female imagery often sidelines the contributions of men and the broader community in preserving and promoting Tujia culture. Moreover, the portrayal of women in these videos is often framed through a commercial lens, where traditional clothing and cultural practices are commodified for the purpose of generating likes, shares, and followers.

## REINFORCEMENT OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

The feminization of Tujia culture on Douyin reinforces existing gender stereotypes, where women are depicted as passive figures of beauty and tradition, rather than active participants in cultural preservation or innovation. This is consistent with previous research on the representation of ethnic minority women in Chinese media (Mei, 2011; Ge, 2020), which has shown how media portrayals often focus on the aesthetic and domestic roles of women, neglecting their roles as cultural leaders or innovators.

Audience engagement with these videos further reinforces these gendered representations. Comments on many of the analyzed videos often focus on the physical appearance of the female bloggers, rather than engaging with the cultural content of the videos. This suggests that for many users, the consumption of Tujia culture is mediated through the spectacle of feminine beauty, rather than an appreciation of the cultural practices being depicted.

## DECONTEXTUALIZATION OF TUJIA CULTURAL SYMBOLS

The decontextualization of Tujia culture on Douyin is another prominent theme in the findings. Decontextualization refers to the process by which cultural symbols are removed from their original historical, social, or spiritual context and presented in isolation for entertainment or commercial purposes.

## CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN ISOLATION

Many of the videos analyzed for this study featured isolated cultural symbols, such as traditional clothing or dance, without any accompanying explanation or context. For example, several videos depicted bloggers wearing traditional Tujia garments, but there was little to no information provided about the cultural significance of the attire, its history, or its role in Tujia ceremonies or daily life. Similarly, videos of Tujia dances were often presented as entertainment without any reference to the cultural meaning or the occasions on which these dances are traditionally performed.

This decontextualization is consistent with Debord's theory of the spectacle, where cultural practices are transformed into commodified images, stripped of their original meaning and repurposed for mass consumption. On Douyin, cultural symbols are often presented in a manner that prioritizes visual appeal and entertainment value, at the expense of cultural depth and authenticity.

### LOSS OF CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY

The decontextualization of Tujia culture on Douyin raises concerns about the loss of cultural authenticity. While Douyin provides a platform for Tujia culture to reach a broader audience, the way in which this culture is presented often distorts its original meanings. For example, traditional clothing is frequently used as a visual prop in videos, without any acknowledgment of its ceremonial significance or its role in Tujia identity. As a result, viewers may come to associate Tujia culture solely with its visual elements, without an understanding of the deeper cultural and historical context that gives these symbols meaning.

Audience responses to these videos suggest that many users engage with Tujia culture as a form of exotic entertainment, rather than a meaningful cultural practice. Comments often focus on the visual appeal of the videos, with little reference to the cultural content or its significance. This highlights the risk of cultural commodification, where ethnic cultures are reduced to spectacles for entertainment, rather than being presented in a way that fosters cultural understanding and respect.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the complex relationship between digital platforms and the representation of ethnic minority cultures. While Douyin provides a valuable platform for Tujia culture to reach new audiences, it also contributes to the creation of a media spectacle that distorts and commodifies cultural practices. The homogenization, feminization, and decontextualization of Tujia culture on Douyin reflect broader trends in the digital media landscape, where platform dynamics prioritize engagement and entertainment over cultural authenticity.

### PLATFORM DYNAMICS AND CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

Douyin's recommendation algorithm plays a key role in shaping the representation of Tujia culture on the platform. The algorithm's preference for content that generates high levels of engagement incentivizes creators to produce videos that align with popular trends, leading to the homogenization of cultural representations. This research finding echoes previous research on the impact of platform algorithms on minority cultural representation (Zhang, 2023), which has shown how commercial imperatives often override the need for diverse and authentic cultural portrayals.

At the same time, the platform's focus on visual appeal contributes to the feminization of cultural representation, where young women become the primary symbols of cultural identity. This gendered representation reinforces existing stereotypes and limits the ways in which Tujia culture is understood by the platform's audience.

## THE COMMODIFICATION OF CULTURE

The decontextualization of Tujia cultural symbols on Douyin points to a broader issue of cultural commodification in the digital age. As cultural practices are removed from their original context and repurposed for entertainment, they risk losing their cultural significance. This process of commodification is particularly problematic for ethnic minority cultures, which are already vulnerable to marginalization and misrepresentation in mainstream media.

Debord's concept of the spectacle is useful in understanding how digital platforms like Douyin contribute to the commodification of culture. In the case of Tujia culture, the platform transforms cultural practices into consumable images, detached from their historical and social context. This process not only distorts the meaning of Tujia cultural symbols but also limits the potential for these symbols to foster cultural understanding and respect.

## IMPLICATION FOR CULTURAL PRESERVATION

The findings of this study have important implications for the preservation of Tujia culture in the digital age. While Douyin offers opportunities for cultural visibility, the way in which Tujia culture is represented on the platform raises concerns about the loss of cultural authenticity. If Tujia culture is to be effectively preserved and promoted on digital platforms, there is a need for greater attention to cultural context and depth in the portrayal of cultural symbols.

# CONCLUSION

This study has examined the representation of Tujia culture on Douyin through the lens of media spectacle. The findings reveal that the platform contributes to the

homogenization, feminization, and decontextualization of Tujia cultural symbols, transforming them into commodified images for mass consumption. While Douyin offers a valuable platform for the visibility of ethnic minority cultures, the way in which it shapes cultural representation raises important questions about cultural authenticity and preservation in the digital age.

To address these challenges, content creators, platform developers, and cultural institutions must collaborate to promote more diverse and authentic representations of minority cultures on digital platforms. By fostering a more nuanced and respectful portrayal of Tujia culture, Douyin can play a role in preserving cultural heritage while also engaging with the platform's global audience.

Future research could expand the scope of this study by examining the representation of other ethnic minority cultures on Douyin and other social media platforms. Comparative studies could provide valuable insights into the different ways in which digital platforms shape cultural representation and contribute to the commodification of ethnic identities. Additionally, further research on audience reception could shed light on how users interpret and engage with cultural content, providing a deeper understanding of the social impact of digital media on cultural preservation.

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# Fostering Community Resilience through Public Spaces in Low Cost Housing in Selangor

*Memupuk Ketahanan Komuniti melalui Ruang Awam di Perumahan Kos Rendah di Selangor*

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***ABSTRACT***

*Rural-urban migration has intensified in many developing regions, including Selangor, Malaysia, leading to an increasing demand for affordable housing. In response, the government has implemented a zero-slum policy aimed at eradicating informal settlements through the promotion of high-rise, low-cost housing developments. However, these projects often neglect the quality of public spaces, resulting in social isolation and environmental degradation. This study examines three low-cost strata housing projects in Selangor, analysing how inadequate public spaces exacerbate social and environmental issues, including overcrowding, limited community interaction, and reduced ecological resilience. Through qualitative and quantitative assessments, the research reveals that the lack of well-designed public spaces within these developments contributes to social fragmentation and environmental stress. Residents report feelings of disconnection, reduced safety, and limited recreational opportunities. Conversely, case studies of successful public space interventions highlight transformative impacts on social cohesion and community well-being. By integrating green areas, communal facilities, and inclusive design, these interventions foster interaction among residents, enhance social ties, and promote a sense of belonging. The findings indicate that enhancing public spaces in low-cost housing can significantly improve the quality of life for residents, bridging the gap created by rapid urbanization. The study underscores the need for policymakers to prioritize public space design in future housing initiatives, aligning with the goals of the zero-slum policy while addressing the socio-environmental challenges posed by rural-urban migration. Ultimately, this research advocates for a holistic approach that considers both housing and public space as interconnected elements vital for fostering sustainable urban communities in Selangor.*

*Keywords: migration; rural; urban; public space; low cost strata housing*

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***ABSTRAK***

*Migrasi luar bandar ke bandar yang semakin meningkat di kebanyakan kawasan membangun, termasuk Selangor, Malaysia telah menyebabkan peningkatan permintaan perumahan mampu milik. Sebagai penyelesaian, kerajaan telah melaksanakan dasar 'setinggan sifar' yang bertujuan menghapuskan penempatan tidak rasmi melalui pembangunan perumahan kos rendah berstrata. Walau bagaimanapun, projek-projek ini didapati seringkali mengabaikan kualiti ruang awam, yang mengakibatkan pengasingan sosial dan kemerosotan alam sekitar berlaku. Justeru, kajian ini meneliti tiga projek perumahan strata kos rendah di Selangor melalui analisis bagaimana ruang awam yang tidak mencukupi mempengaruhi isu sosial dan alam sekitar mengakibatkan interaksi komuniti yang terhad, dan penurunan ketahanan ekologi. Melalui penilaian kualitatif dan kuantitatif, kajian ini mendapati bahawa ketiadaan reka bentuk ruang awam yang baik dalam pembangunan ini menyumbang kepada perpecahan sosial dan kesan terhadap alam sekitar. Kajian turut melaporkan penduduk merasa terasing, keselamatan yang rendah, dan kekurangan peluang rekreasi. Sebaliknya, kajian kes intervensi ruang awam yang berjaya menunjukkan impak positif terhadap perpaduan sosial dan kesejahteraan komuniti. Dengan mengintegrasikan kawasan hijau, kemudahan komuniti, dan reka bentuk inklusif, intervensi ini dapat meningkatkan interaksi antara penduduk, memperkukuhkan hubungan sosial, serta memupuk rasa kekitaan. Penemuan kajian ini menekankan keutamaan reka bentuk ruang awam dalam perancangan perumahan kos rendah, yang sejajar dengan matlamat dasar sifar-setinggan, selain menangani cabaran sosio-alam sekitar yang timbul daripada migrasi luar bandar ke bandar. Secara keseluruhannya, kajian ini mencadangkan perancangan holistik amat diperlukan dalam memastikan kediaman dan ruang awam dianggap sebagai elemen yang saling berkait dan penting dalam membangunkan komuniti bandar yang berdaya huni di Selangor.*

*Kata kunci: migrasi; desa; bandar; ruang awam; rumah strata kos rendah*

## INTRODUCTION

The stark reality of 1.1 billion people living in slums underscores the significant failures of traditional top-down approaches to housing and basic services. Without sufficient land allocated for affordable housing developments, families are often forced into informal settlements, where conditions are substandard and security of tenure is uncertain. This situation not only contributes to the growth of slums but also increases vulnerability to eviction and displacement. In Malaysia, the government's introduction of a zero-slum policy aimed at eliminating slum conditions by the year 2000 marked a proactive step towards addressing this crisis. However, the implementation of this policy has encountered numerous challenges that have hindered its effectiveness. One of the primary issues has been the ad-hoc nature of housing development. Many projects have been rolled out without a comprehensive urban planning strategy, leading to haphazard construction that fails to consider the specific needs of local communities. As a result, these neighbourhoods often lack cohesion and essential amenities, making them less liveable and sustainable.

Inadequate social infrastructure compounds these problems. While housing units may be constructed, they frequently lack accompanying facilities such as schools, healthcare centres, and

recreational areas. This absence of essential services not only diminishes the quality of life for residents but also perpetuates cycles of poverty, as families find it difficult to access education and healthcare, which are vital for upward mobility. Moreover, community exclusion from the planning process has been a significant barrier. When residents are not actively involved in the decision-making related to their living environments, the solutions developed can be misaligned with their actual needs and aspirations. This disconnect can lead to dissatisfaction and resistance, further complicating efforts to improve housing conditions.

To address the pressing issues of inadequate housing and social fragmentation in low-cost strata housing, a research initiative focused on identifying factors that contribute to social cohesion through the development of public spaces has been undertaken.

This research aims to explore how well-designed communal areas can foster interaction, build community ties, and improve the overall quality of life for residents. The primary goal of the research is to understand the elements of public space that enhance social cohesion among residents of low-cost strata housing. This includes investigating the types of public spaces that are most effective—such as parks, playgrounds, gathering areas, and community centres—and how these spaces can be designed to encourage social interaction and inclusivity. By addressing these systemic issues through a multifaceted approach, Malaysia can make significant strides toward fulfilling its zero slum policy goals, ultimately ensuring that all citizens have access to safe, affordable, and sustainable housing.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The introduction of low-cost housing in Malaysia was officially enacted during the First Malaysia Plan (1966-1970). This initiative aimed to enhance the welfare of low-income residents, as outlined by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU, 1965, p. 182). The Malaysian government undertook this initiative with financial assistance from the Federal Government. Throughout the First Malaysia Plan, a significant proportion of low-cost housing was constructed to resettle urban squatters and to provide rental options (Aziz, 2007). Low-cost housing in Malaysia was further developed in accordance with official guidelines set forth in the Fourth Malaysia Plan (1981-1985). During this period, the government mandated that each five-year development plan prioritize the construction of low-cost housing for low-income groups. This concern centred on the capacity of public and private sector developers to construct sufficient low-cost units during each five-year cycle, ensuring access to affordable housing for all citizens.

Despite nearly four decades since its inception, the quality of low-cost housing has not seen significant improvements compared to other housing categories. Key issues frequently overlooked include the often-remote locations of these developments and the substandard quality of social and recreational amenities, with some housing projects lacking communal spaces altogether. One contributing factor to the persistence of these challenges is the imperative to maintain low housing prices, thereby ensuring affordability for low-income residents. This situation has led to widespread dissatisfaction among residents regarding the quality of low-cost housing (Musa et al., 2020), subsequently giving rise to a myriad of increasingly severe social and environmental issues.

The constraints faced by occupants of low-cost housing are evident in several dimensions, including the overall cleanliness of the housing areas, health risks, limited parking facilities, neighbourhood dynamics, safety concerns, population density, and pollution—encompassing air, water,

and noise contamination. Such issues contribute to the discomfort experienced by residents and the broader community residing in low-cost housing. This assertion is substantiated by a study conducted by Nooriah Yusof (2019) in her article titled "Contributing Factors to Housing Stress in Low-Cost and Low-Medium Housing Areas in Penang." The research involved communities residing in low-cost housing across several locations, including George Town, Bayan Baru, Gelugor, and Bukit Jambul showed that. residents of low-cost housing in these areas, reported experiencing stress attributable to factors related to housing quality and environmental conditions, such as overcrowding, inadequate parking, transportation costs, cleanliness, and safety. The subpar quality of the living environment and housing in low-cost areas has negative repercussions for the overall well-being of residents and the community at large.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SPACES IN LOW-COST HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Public spaces play a critical role in addressing social and environmental challenges within low-cost housing developments, particularly as urbanization accelerates and communities grapple with issues such as social isolation, crime, and inadequate infrastructure. These spaces serve as accessible venues for interaction, recreation, and economic activity, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life for residents. By fostering inclusive environments, public spaces contribute to social cohesion and well-being, while also incorporating green elements that support sustainability and environmental health (Gray et al., 2024). The design and implementation of such spaces are increasingly viewed as cost-effective strategies to mitigate the pressing issues faced by low-income communities, transforming them into vibrant areas where individuals can thrive collectively.

However, the effectiveness of public spaces in low-cost housing is often compromised by challenges such as neglect, poor maintenance, and inadequate management. These issues can lead to underutilization and deterioration, particularly in resource-limited settings. To address these challenges, a collaborative approach involving local governments, community organizations, and residents is essential (Ramburn et al., 2023). Prioritizing the maintenance and development of public spaces through joint initiatives can ensure their accessibility and functionality for all residents. Investing in the upkeep and enhancement of these areas is crucial for fostering connection, safety, and economic opportunity, ultimately realizing their potential to improve the quality of life for residents in low-cost housing developments (Montemayor, 2019; Arnold, 2022). The research implications suggest that effective management and community engagement are vital for maximizing the benefits of public spaces in urban settings.

## METHODOLOGY

The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with residents. The research commencing with a comprehensive need inventory to identify the specific requirements and preferences of the community (Ramos et al. 2019). This process included engaging residents through informal gatherings and community meetings to build rapport and establish trust (Cheung et al., 2022). By understanding local customs, values, and social dynamics, researchers ensured that the resulting public spaces were relevant and beneficial. Actively involving the community in the design process was achieved through workshops and participatory design techniques, which

empowered residents to contribute their ideas and preferences. Once a consensus on the design was reached, the project transitioned into a collaborative development phase, where community members participated in volunteer days to construct and landscape the public space. This collaborative effort is hoped to foster a sense of ownership and pride while reinforcing social bonds among residents (Voinea, and Profiroiu, 2022).

To enhance the sustainability and vibrancy of these public spaces, knowledge transfer programs and community events that equipped residents with the necessary skills by universities and Non-Governmental Organisation were carried out.

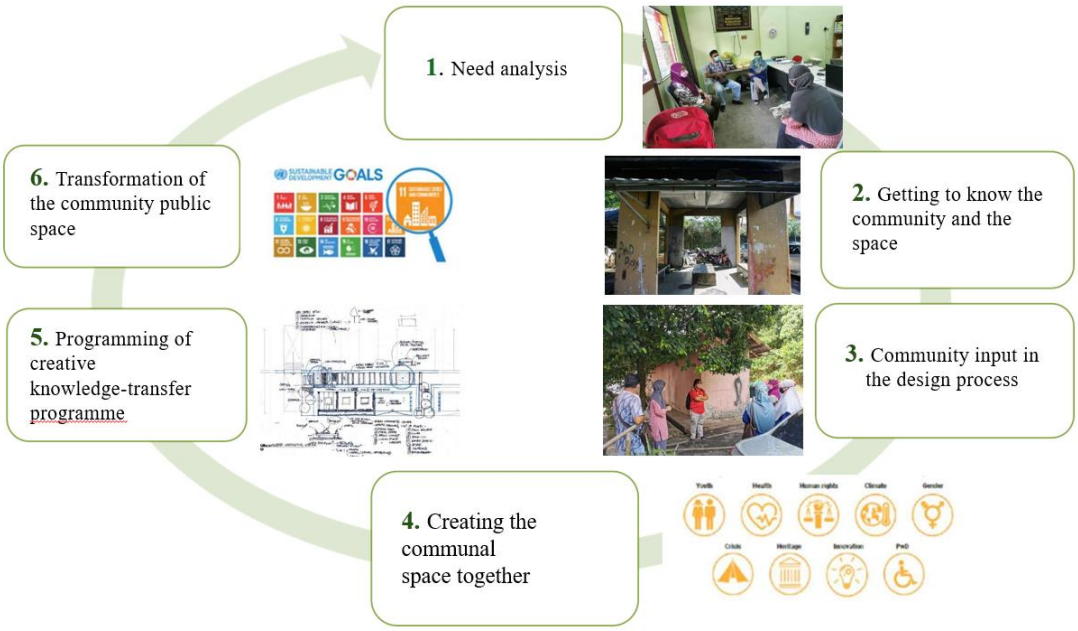



Figure 1.0: Process and strategies involved throughout the project

## SITE STUDY AND CRITERIA OF SITE STUDY SELECTION

This project starts with the selection of 3 community areas in three (3) different sites – Flat Taman Industri in Ampang, Flat Ukay Perdana in Ulu Klang and Flat PPR Gombak Setia in Gombak that have limited communal spaces and green spaces. The selection of the area will be carried out after the consultation and agreement of the PBT and the shortlisted JMB representatives. With this, a program model that focuses specifically on the potential of each community can be designed to be replicated to other strata housing areas for a more systematic environmental and social empowerment.

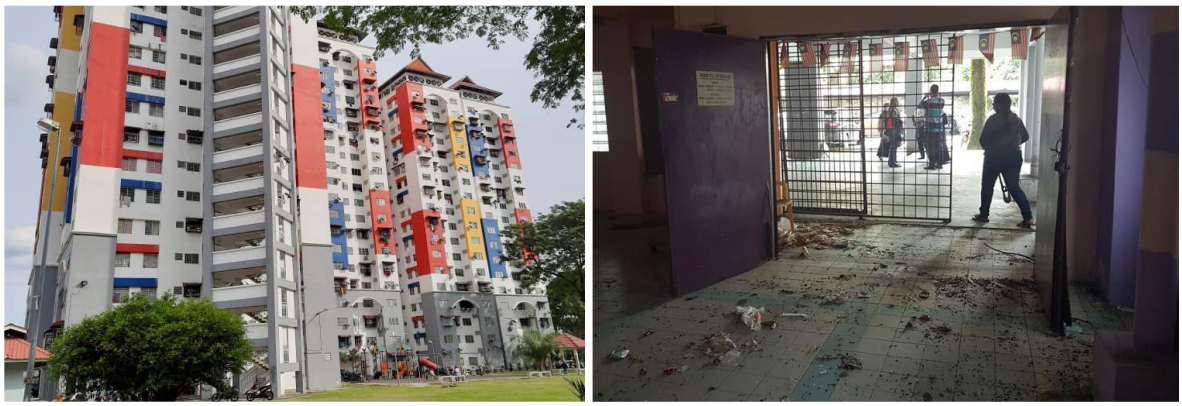
**Figure 2.0**: Flat Taman Industri and the space before the communal area development



**Figure 3.0:** Flat Ukay Perdana and the space before the communal area development



**Figure 4.0**: Flat PPR and the space before the communal area development



## RESULTS

### UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY PREFERENCES FOR PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN

The need inventory conducted within the community revealed a diverse array of preferences among residents, highlighting the importance of safe play areas, green spaces, and facilities for social gatherings. Data collected through surveys and interviews indicated that community members are particularly interested in public spaces that promote interaction and enhance their overall quality of life. Recent research underscores the significant benefits of urban green spaces on public health, emphasizing their role in fostering community well-being (Lindsey & Kuo, 2023). These findings suggest that incorporating such features into public space design can lead to improved physical and mental health outcomes for residents.

### FOSTERING TRUST THROUGH MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Previous studies have shown that rapid pace of rural-urban migration has become a central focus in urban studies, with significant implications for community development and resilience. As people migrate from rural to urban areas, they often encounter new social, cultural, and economic environments, which can lead to challenges in social integration and a sense of belonging in the urban context (Ley, 2019). Therefore, effective community engagement, as outlined in the development of public spaces, emerges as a crucial factor in addressing these challenges and fostering community resilience. In this research, building rapport with the community emerged as a critical factor for the successful development of public spaces. Informal gatherings, community meetings, and daily social events served as effective strategies for relationship-building, enabling researchers to gain valuable insights into local customs and priorities. Trust-building is vital, as evidenced by recent studies that examine successful urban projects where engagement strategies fostered trust between community members (Wright & Wong, 2023).

The findings also revealed how process of trust-building is particularly significant in contexts where rural-urban migration introduces cultural diversity and shifts in community dynamics. Such findings in parallel with recent study which have demonstrated that when stakeholders engage with local communities through informal gatherings, cultural events, and participatory workshops, they not only gain valuable insights into local customs and priorities but also build the necessary trust for successful urban interventions (Wright & Wong, 2023). In areas with high migration rates in the study areas, trust-building becomes even more critical, as rural migrant populations may initially feel alienated from both the urban infrastructure and long-standing residents.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATORY DESIGN IN PUBLIC SPACE DEVELOPMENT

The design process in the three study areas with active engagement among different age group through workshops and focus groups, allowing residents to express their ideas and suggestions. By utilizing participatory design techniques, community members were empowered to visualize their concepts,

fostering a sense of ownership in shaping their environment. Research indicates that such collaborative approaches not only enhance the relevance of public spaces but also improve community satisfaction and well-being (Amado et al., 2010). The involvement of residents in the design phase ensures that the resulting public spaces genuinely reflect community needs and preferences, as highlighted by the work of Harun et al. (2021), who emphasizes the importance of inclusive practices in urban planning.

Additionally, the participatory design approach is also a direct response to the challenges of social fragmentation and marginalization. By integrating community input at every stage of the design process, developers and urban planners ensure that public spaces are not just physical sites, but also social and cultural hubs where all members feel represented and valued. As highlighted by Voinea, and Profiroiu (2022), inclusive practices in urban planning are essential to building equitable spaces that support a thriving, cohesive and resilient society. It is by involving residents in shaping their environments that make these spaces become more than just physical locations—they become symbolic centers of community strength and cohesion.

## COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT FOR LASTING PUBLIC SPACES

After the design was complete, community members participated voluntarily for landscaping and construction as part of the collaborative development phase. In addition to giving people a sense of pride and ownership, this practical involvement improved social ties as they collaborated to achieve a common objective. Research indicates that community resilience and social cohesion can be improved through participatory development procedures (Legge, 2020). Furthermore, frequent updates and chances for comment enabled the area to change to meet community standards, highlighting the importance of continuous communication in public space initiatives (Sergio et al., 2023).

Programs for knowledge transfer were put in place to encourage sustainability and guarantee the public space's lifespan, giving locals the skills, they would need for future upkeep and community administration. Workshops given by experts equipped community members with the skills and information necessary for efficient area stewardship. Residents' sense of responsibility is increased by this program, which also promotes continued use of the area (Jiang et al., 2020). The idea that community-led maintenance projects can strengthen social networks within the community and improve the sustainability of public areas is supported by research (Kim and Kim, 2022).

The findings further emphasise the importance of community engagement as a vital component for the sustained success of public spaces. Janmaimool et al. (2019) emphasise that this involvement should be viewed as a continuous process rather than a singular event, necessitating regular feedback and adaptation. Public spaces that evolve in response to the changing needs of the community are likely to remain valuable, experience high levels of usage, and foster positive social interactions.

**Figure 5.0:** Figures show the condition of each public space after collaborative development




Before



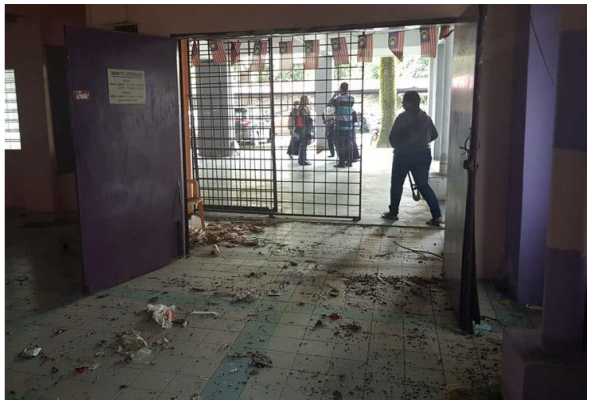
After



Before



After



Before




After

In summary, the research demonstrated the critical role of public spaces in low-cost housing developments as facilitators of community resilience and social cohesion. These spaces not only provide essential venues for social interaction but also enhance collective efficacy and empower residents through participatory design and management processes. The evidence suggests that well-designed public spaces can mitigate social isolation, foster informal support networks, and contribute to improved mental well-being among residents. Furthermore, community-led initiatives that prioritize resident involvement in decision-making processes can strengthen social capital and trust, which are vital for navigating socio-economic challenges.

As urbanization continues to accelerate and low-cost housing becomes increasingly necessary, it is imperative for policymakers and community leaders to recognize the multifaceted benefits of public spaces. By investing in inclusive and accessible public spaces, communities can cultivate environments that promote social cohesion and resilience, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for residents in low-income neighbourhoods. Future research should therefore continue to explore innovative strategies for public space design and management that prioritize community engagement, ensuring that these vital resources serve the needs of all residents effectively.

## ETHNIC STUDIES IMPLICATION

The research on rural-urban migration and low-cost housing in Selangor, Malaysia, has significant implications for ethnic studies, particularly in how urbanization impacts different ethnic communities. As rural populations migrate to urban centers, ethnic groups may experience varying degrees of integration or marginalization, depending on the design and accessibility of public spaces. The study suggests that poor-quality public spaces in low-cost housing developments may contribute to ethnic segregation, social isolation, and tension, especially when these spaces fail to cater to the cultural and social needs of diverse groups. Ethnic studies would explore how these developments might either reinforce or challenge existing ethnic divisions, focusing on how spatial design can promote or hinder interactions between different communities. If public spaces are not designed with ethnic diversity in mind, marginalized groups may face increased social fragmentation, which could exacerbate ethnic inequality and disconnection.

Additionally, the study raises ethical considerations regarding cultural representation and inclusion in urban design. Ethnic studies would examine whether public spaces in these developments provide opportunities for cultural expression, community gatherings, and the preservation of ethnic identities. Inadequate public spaces may lead to feelings of exclusion, especially for minority or immigrant groups who may not have their cultural needs acknowledged. Furthermore, the design of public spaces can influence inter-ethnic interaction and social cohesion. Well-designed spaces can foster positive relationships across ethnic lines, helping to build a sense of belonging and solidarity. From an equity standpoint, ethnic studies would also assess whether all groups have equal access to quality housing and public spaces, which could affect their integration and overall well-being. Ultimately, the study underscores the need for inclusive urban policies that consider ethnic diversity to promote more equitable and harmonious communities.

## CONCLUSION

This research on rural-urban migration and low-cost housing in Selangor, Malaysia, has significant implications for ethnic studies, particularly in how urbanization impacts different ethnic communities. As rural populations migrate to urban centers, ethnic groups may experience varying degrees of integration or marginalization, depending on the design and accessibility of public spaces. Poor-quality public spaces in low-cost housing developments may contribute to ethnic segregation, social isolation, and tension, especially when these spaces fail to cater to the cultural and social needs of diverse groups. Ethnic studies would explore how these developments might either reinforce or challenge existing ethnic divisions, focusing on how spatial design can promote or hinder interactions between different communities. If public spaces are not designed with ethnic diversity in mind, marginalized groups may face increased social fragmentation, exacerbating ethnic inequality and disconnection.

Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of community engagement in the successful development and sustained success of public spaces. Continuous involvement ensures that spaces adapt to changing needs, maintain high levels of use, and foster positive social interactions, promoting a strong sense of community. Feedback and adaptation are essential for the long-term viability of these spaces. Inequality in the constructed environment often results in limited access to quality spaces for marginalized communities, reinforcing social divides. The research advocates for a more inclusive approach to design, emphasizing human-centered design principles that prioritize empathy and understanding of diverse user experiences. By engaging directly with marginalized groups, urban designers can create spaces that meet physical, emotional, and cultural needs, fostering social cohesion. Repurposing underutilized urban areas into community assets can bridge gaps between privileged and marginalized populations, enhancing community resilience. Ultimately, participatory planning that empowers marginalized groups strengthens social equity, creating environments that enhance belonging and inclusivity. This research aims to guide policymakers, urban designers, and developers in creating sustainable, vibrant communities through public space design that promotes social cohesion and resilience.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Lembaga Perumahan Hartanah Selangor (Selangor Board of Housing and real Estate) for their generous support of this research (II-2024-002), Ministry of Higher Education and Knowledge Transfer Programme Research. Their funding has been instrumental in advancing our work and enabling us to explore people-centred design in a low-cost strata housing area in Malaysia.

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## SHORT COMMUNICATION / RESEARCH NOTE

# Moriarty the Patriot: Sherlockian Manga and the Game of City Living

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*ABSTRACT*

Manga is a form of Japanese comics that have become a global source of discourse, arguably reaching intellectual heights. It is often considered pure entertainment, although it contains potential for self-education. Barberis and Grüning (2021) observed that sociologists' interest in comics is older than one may suspect, traceable to at least the 1940s. This essay analyses the portrayal of urban living in a popular Japanese manga title, from the sociological perspective of social stratification and diversity. Using thematic analysis of Volumes 1 and 2 of *Moriarty the Patriot*, this essay highlights the *habitus* that a reader can develop from reading these manga, regarding the spoken and unspoken rules of living in cities corresponding to Bourdieu's concepts of *illusio* and *doxa* – formal and informal "rules of the game", in navigating the dimensions of social stratification. A short public opinion survey was also conducted to gauge the public perception of manga. Manga could act as an unofficial walkthrough, a dramaturgical map of the lived realities of city life, a tool for socialisation. This study corresponds to the following SDGs: 3. Good Health and Well-Being; 4. Quality Education; 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities.

*Keywords: comics, manga, sociological imagination, habitus, illusio, doxa*

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*ABSTRAK*

Manga adalah sejenis komik Jepun yang telah menjadi sumber wacana antarabangsa, yang semakin mencapai taraf ilmiah. Manga seringkali dianggap hanya hiburan, walaupun ia mengandungi potensi untuk pembelajaran kendiri. Barberis and Grüning (2021) memerhatikan bahawa minat para sarjana dalam komik lebih terasas dalam sejarah berbanding tanggapan umum, dan boleh dikesan sehingga ke zaman 1940an. Karangan ini menganalisis paparan kehidupan bandar di dalam sebuah judul manga Jepun, dari perspektif sosiologi iaitu stratifikasi sosial dan kepelbagaian. Dengan menggunakan analisis tematik terhdap Judul 1 dan 2 manga *Moriarty the Patriot*, karangan ini mengetengahkan peraturan-peraturan ketara dan tidak ketara mengenai kehidupan di bandar, dan bagaimana ini dijadikan modal budaya yang merangkumi *habitus, illusio*, dan *doxa* (konsep oleh Pierre Bourdieu) untuk menangani stratifikasi sosial. Kajian ini berkait dengan SDG berikut: 3. Good Health and Well-Being; 4. Quality Education; 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities.

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*Kata kunci: komik, manga, imaginasi sosiologikal, habitus, illusio, doxa*

Dana: Kajian ini dibiayai oleh Sumitomo Foundation dengan nombor kod 23804004.

## INTRODUCTION: COMICS AND MANGA

This essay delves into a brief history of comics as an educational medium, by first tracing its origins, then the beginnings of sociological interest in it, a survey regarding the public perception of manga, followed by examples of comics that focus on highlighting the workings of a city. It connects to the theme of shared urban spaces, especially the lived realities of cities, which contain an intersection of various sociological dimensions such as age, gender, social class, religion, politics, and different ability. Today, city living has been enhanced by the rapid growth of technology, possibly creating a further digital divide that is possible to relate to socioeconomic stratification, as well as age cohorts. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been created to address a multitude of quality-of-life concerns, with a substantial number of these revolving around urbanisation concerns. For a city-dweller, how does one navigate the written and unwritten rules, or illusio and doxa, of surviving in the urban jungle? This essay asserts that certain comic books, or manga, possess educational potential that can assist in the socialisation of a youth towards the norms and mores of city living.

Sociologists' interest in comics have existed since at least 1944, when the American Journal of Education published a special issue devoted to comics (Barberis & Grüning, 2021). Given its immediate influence among youth, the authors saw comics as a social force, since its language and characters might be harnessed for purposes beyond entertainment (cf. Gruenberg, 1944; in Barberis & Grüning, 2021). In terms of comics' sociological influence, Mickwitz (2020) had even considered how comics had asserted their presence as a vehicle for advocacy and representation in the context of a refugee crisis, related to the "forced migration" and ongoing global crisis of the displacement of people (a humanitarian crisis).

The definition of comics is neither static nor absolute; many are still in debate over the actual all-encompassing criterion. However, for the purpose of our analysis, comics are defined as 'stories told through a sequence of juxtaposed images', a shortform provided after much lexical distillation by independent comic shop Page 45 (Aggleton, 2018). Cohn (2015)'s definition is also cited, in which comics are "un-defined", by tying the usual characteristics of "images, text, and sequentiality", to the "industry that produces comics, the community that embraces them, the content which they represent, and the avenues in which they appear", providing a cultural context for the demarcation of comics from other art forms. Visual language is the crucial element, which is communicative across cultures.

Manga has historically been a Japanese art form, evolving from ukiyo-e, eventually gaining place as a contemporary form of entertainment. Manga is a form of Japanese comics that originated from Japan in a form known as ukiyo-e, woodblock prints, or "pictures of the floating world" (Brenner, 2007; in Chan, 2018). Its outstanding characteristics include a unique

drawing style, in which characters are depicted with large expressive eyes, up-close perspectives of characters' facial expressions, framed in panels laced with textual vocalization of sounds, as well as explanatory notes or comments by the mangaka (manga artist). Manga genres are categorised based on the age and gender of its target readers, for example, shonen manga (for teenage boys), shojo manga (for teenage girls), josei manga (for women), and seinen manga (for men) (Wong, 2006; in Chan, 2018). Compared to other forms of multimedia, manga encourages its readers to use their own imagination, and hence engages the reader in an interactive social learning process. The reader is able to utilise their sociological imagination to mentally locate the individual, which is symbolised by the manga character or characters, within the reader's own social reality. In reading manga, one undergoes a different experience compared to viewing a film, as in the latter one does not need to use one's imagination so intently and completely to understand what is happening. Manga's ability to be evocative could surpass that of reading novels, as there are visual cues in addition to text. Furthermore, manga is often a multi-volume affair, with a continuous storyline, compiled from monthly serials published in specialised manga magazines. Thus, this structure requires readers to possess an understanding of the social, cultural, and historical context of the manga's theme, especially if it is a historical manga (Chan, 2023).

## MANGA AS EDUCATIONAL PLATFORM

Chan (2023) previously observed through a thematic analysis of selected Malaysian manga, that manga is a dramaturgical and communication tool that could be used not only in entertainment but also in education. To gauge the perception of comics, and manga in particular, as a medium of informal learning, a survey was conducted at the National University of Malaysia (UKM) with 95 complete responses, including undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as staff. The following are the results obtained from the survey.

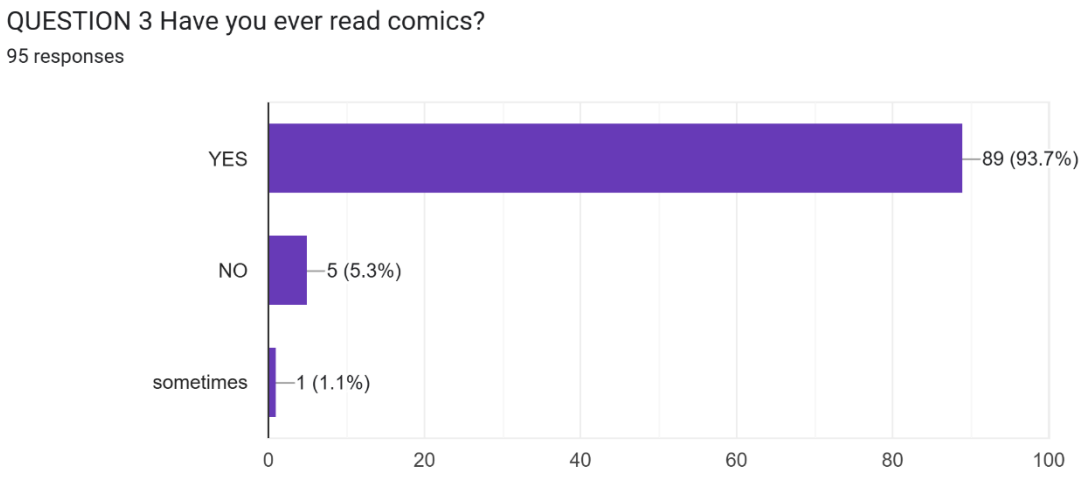



**Figure 1 - Experience with reading comics**

The majority of respondents, at almost 94%, reported having read comics, thus this shows that they are familiar with the platform.

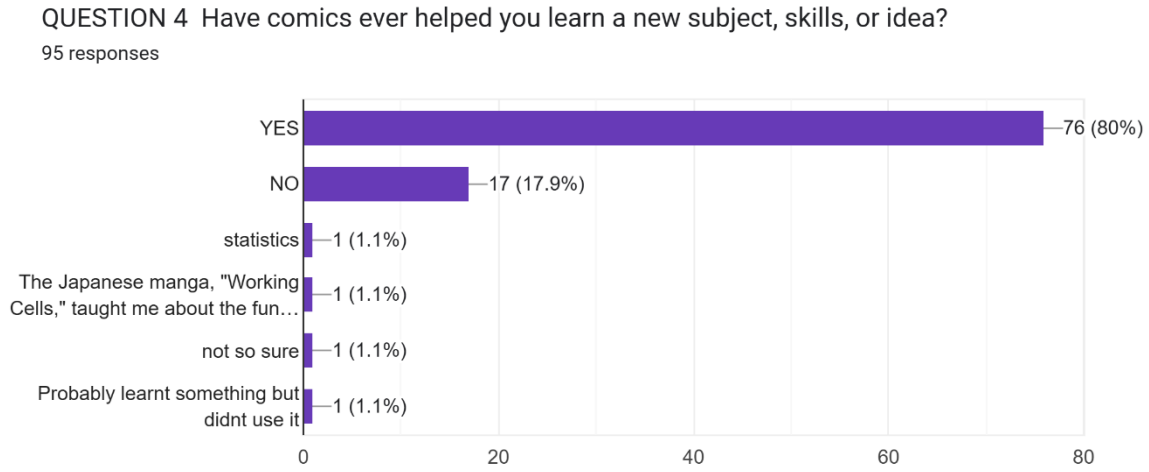



**Figure 2 - Learning experience with comics**

80% of respondents reported having learnt a new subject, skills, or idea from reading comics. This shows that for the respondents, comics contain the possibility of broadening one's general knowledge.

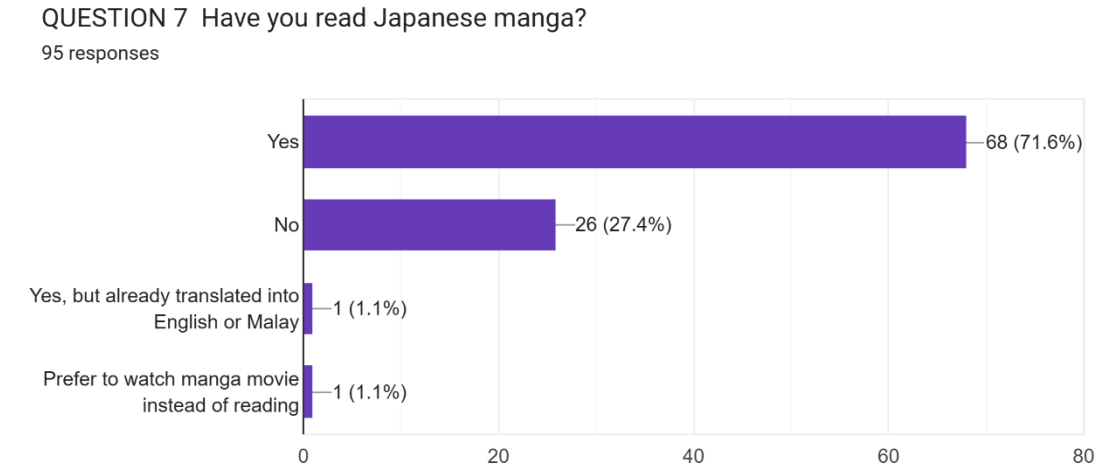



**Figure 3 - Experience with reading Japanese manga**

Almost 72% of respondents claimed to have read Japanese manga, showing that a majority of the respondents are familiar with the genre.

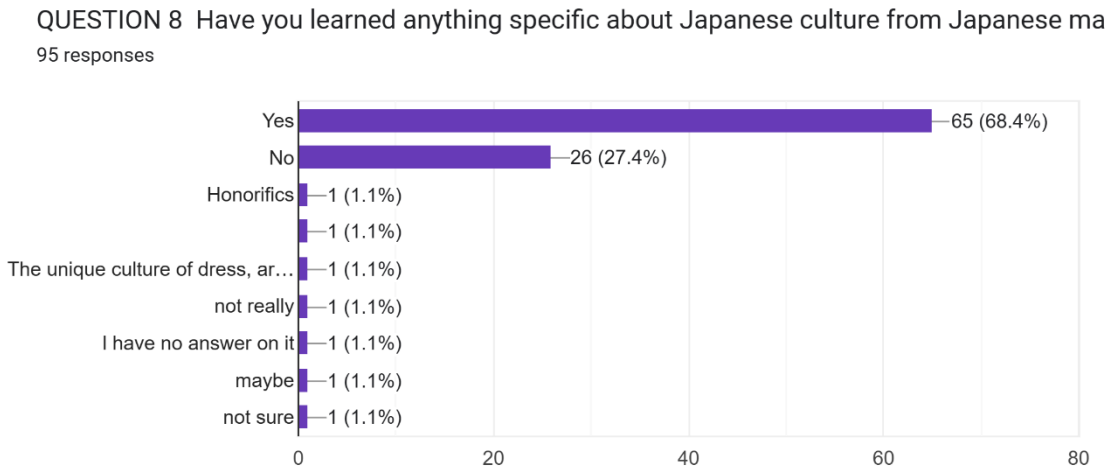



**Figure 4 - Learning outcomes from Japanese manga**

Almost 68% of respondents reported having learnt useful knowledge from reading manga. Among the items learnt include those such as clothing and costume like "Kimono"; "the details about ramen"; "food (dorayaki) history (kyoto as old capital of Japan)"; and "History, the spirit of the Yamato people, food culture, clothing culture, architectural culture, etc." These fall under the knowledge categories of ""language, culture, food, fashion, history", as one respondent spelt out.

## ILLUSIO AND DOXA ENCODED: THE UNOFFICIAL WALKTHROUGH TO THE GAME OF CITY LIVING

Bourdieu (1984) introduced the term cultural capital to describe the worldview, life experiences, and lifestyle preferences of select groups of people demarcated by their relations to the means of production. Cultural capital incorporates three forms: objectified, institutionalised, and embodied. The embodied form is the habitus, or lived dispositions; the objectified form is the consumption of commodities; and the institutionalised form includes the legitimacy accorded to forms of cultural capital by social institutions such as education (Igarashi & Saito, 2014; Chan, 2016a; Chan, 2016b; Chan, 2016c). Within the "fields" to which they belong, an individual's power, or "capital", is both a weapon to use to their advantage in the game and a stake to be won (Harrington et al, 2015). The amount and type of "capital" an individual possesses determines their relative position in the "field" (Harrington et al, 2015). The "rules of the game" determine this value, and hence the "field"'s symbolic capital is the ultimate basis of power (Bourdieu, 1977; Harrington et al, 2015). The "rules of the game" is also known as "illusio", a concept developed by Bourdieu, defined as "the belief that the 'game' we collectively agree to play is worth playing, that the fiction we collectively elect to accredit constitutes reality" (Cuille, 1997; Chan, 2017a). An individual's "habitus", or internal dispositions, enable them to use "doxa" for playing the game effectively (Harrington et al, 2015). "Doxa" comprises the taken-for-granted shared knowledge of the values, practices, and associated language of the field[ ibid]. Failure to know or abide by the "illusio" as well as the

"doxa" may result in social exclusion through the lack of "capital", or as Chan (2017b) terms it, "anti-capital" (Chan, 2017b).

We shall take as the starting point, a youth who is fresh out of school, just at the cusp of adulthood and past the threshold of adolescence, who is at the psychosocial stage of identity vs. identity confusion (Orenstein & Lewis, 2022), and who is newly introduced to the city. At this point in their life, the individual "weighs out their previous experiences, societal expectations, and their aspirations in establishing values and 'finding themselves' (Orenstein & Lewis, 2022). They are not only in need of a roadmap to the city, but also to discovering their "true selves". For socialisation agents, the youth has their education, their peers, their family, and the mass media. Comics fall into the latter. It is not always the case that one is situated comfortably in a functional relationship with one's peers or family, and one can be unreceptive to formal education at times. Hence the power of mass media, a less coercive medium, which many consider to be unassuming and approachable, may reveal a wealth of knowledge without appearing to play an authoritative role. Such mediums are conducive to self-learning and autodidacticism, where the reader can learn through exploration, or pick up facts indirectly. This tends to increase the youth's interest in their surroundings. This essay thus takes the role of highlighting just how comics, in particular manga, can do just this, that is, provide guidance in a non-authoritarian way, about the unspoken rules of city life. Indeed, the sociologist Georg Simmel had linked the metropolis to one's mental life, chronicling the individual's struggle to maintain independence of mind in the bustle of the city, as early as 1903. One such example would be from the illustrious God of Manga, Osamu Tezuka (Power, 2009), who also produced, among many others, the manga Metropolis. Metropolis is a legendary 1949 graphic novel about a beautiful, artificially created girl of the future, who is essentially a robot, but unaware of it, wandering in search of her parents amidst a desolate world populated by humans and their enslaved robots. The main theme of this oeuvre was the nature of humanity in a technological society, thematically similar to his other landmark work, Astro Boy. Tezuka was commended for his many works commenting on society's fixation with technology. However, for the purpose of this essay, a recent manga which focuses strongly on the theme of social stratification in an urban context will be analysed.

## SHERLOCK'S NEMESIS AS THE GUIDE TO CITY LIFE TENSIONS

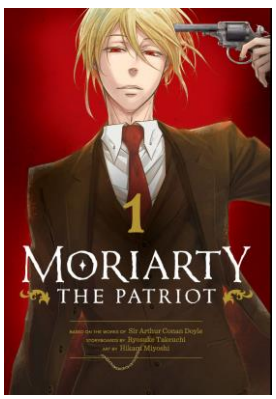



**Figure 5 - The front cover of Moriarty the Patriot Vol. 1. Note: Don't try this pose at home.**

The choice of manga for this case study is Yuukoku no Moriarty, or Moriarty the Patriot, by Ryosuke Takeuchi and Hikaru Miyoshi (2016 to present) published in English by Viz Media. It was chosen based on the individual manga's suitability as critical discourse, from criteria such as accuracy of social and historical reality (no magical realms), and its popularity which suggests a wide readership. The manga's main theme revolves around social class discrimination in 19th century Britain. The author has used this manga as a case study in their sociology class, hosted also on their YouTube online teaching channel:

Malaysian manga as dramaturgy of everyday defined realities by Dr. Rachel Chan Suet Kay (Part 1) (youtube.com);

Malaysian manga as dramaturgy of everyday defined realities by Dr Rachel Chan Suet Kay (Part 2) (youtube.com);

Peeref Webinar 5 Minute Research Ideation Challenge Entry: Malaysian Manga as Educational Platform (youtube.com)

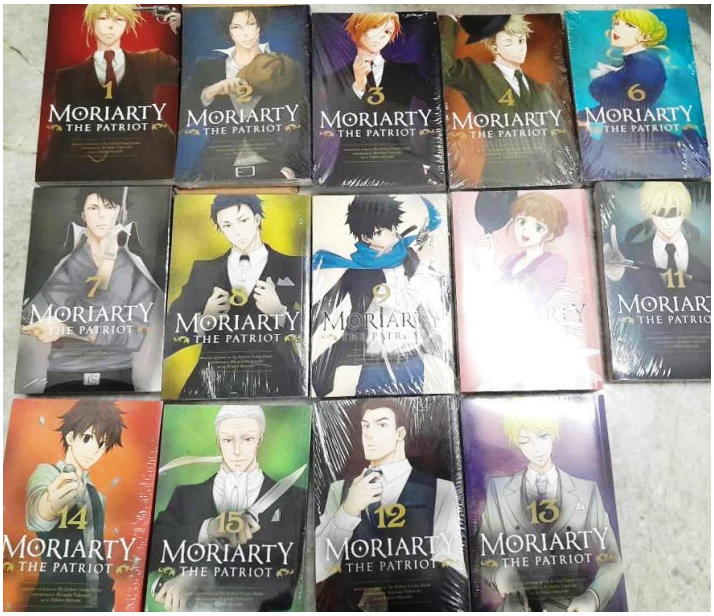



**Figure 6 - The author's collection of Moriarty the Patriot translated to English by Viz Media, funded by Sumitomo Foundation 23804004.**

Moriarty the Patriot's narrative derives from the Sherlock Holmes series by Arthur Conan Doyle, and is a retelling of the origin story of Holmes' antagonist, Professor Moriarty. It is written by Ryōsuke Takeuchi and illustrated by Hikaru Miyoshi, and was serialised in Jump Square magazine beginning Aug 2016 and was adapted into anime starting Oct 2020. This manga is a creative medium of broadcasting social critique, as it uses a sociological analysis of inequality, focusing on social class from a Marxian perspective.

> "In the late 19th century, Great Britain rules over a quarter of the world. Nobles sit in their fancy homes in comfort and luxury, while the working-class slaves away at their jobs. When young Albert James Moriarty's upper-class family adopts two lower-class orphans, the cruelty the boys experience at his family's hands cements Albert's hatred of the nobility he was born into." (Volume 1, Moriarty the Patriot, Viz.com)

The manga is set in 19th century Britain and thus features an ethnically homogeneous cast of European characters, with appearances that match. This manga focuses almost exclusively on the nobility in Britain during the first Industrial Revolution and their treatment of commoners which is depicted as often being negative, discriminatory, and abusive. However, not all commoners are depicted as blanket good guys and neither are all aristocrats made to be cruel – that is to say there are a reasonable number of exceptions.

The main family in question is an aristocratic one, the House of Moriarty, with three brothers consisting of an Earl (or Count) who has two adopted orphan brothers, and their extended "crime network". Alternately, the nemesis of the protagonist Moriarty is also portrayed, that is Sherlock Holmes, his housemate Dr. John Watson, and their landlady Ms. Hudson (as well as Mycroft Holmes, Sherlock's elder brother). The families in question are not biological nor nuclear families but have a non-kinship-based structure.

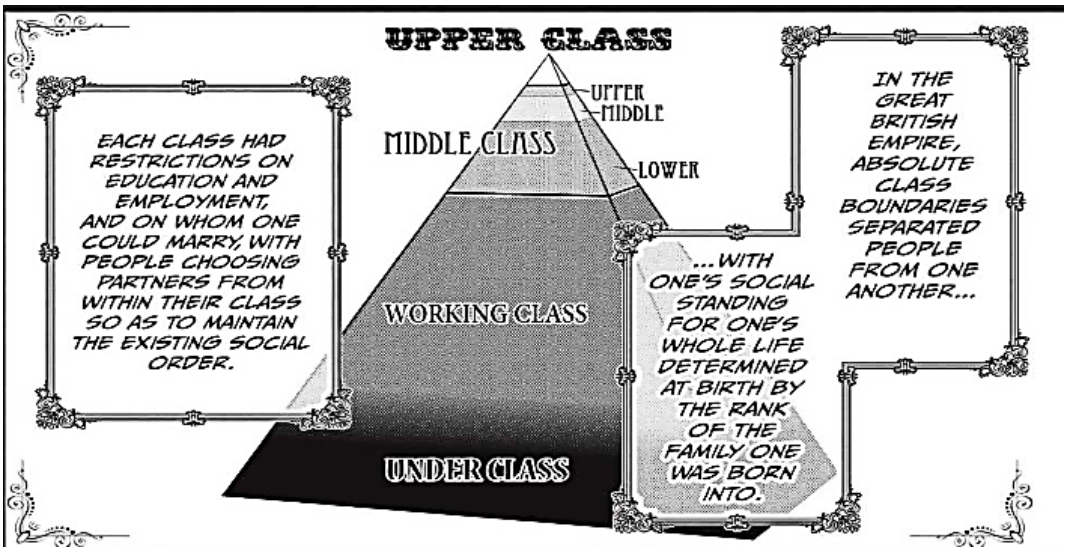



**Figure 7 - A literal panel explaining social class in Marxian terms in the manga Moriarty the Patriot**

Stratification is a core area in sociology (Kenworthy 2007), where one of the main goals of classical sociology was to measure and explain the reason for the existence and persistence of stratification" (Giddens & Sutton, 2013). The social conflict theorist, Karl Marx, used the concept of social class to describe social inequality in terms of relations to the means of production (Giddens & Sutton 2013). The end result of stratification, which is the segmentation of individuals into categories, is inequality.

The central dimension of power examined in this manga is that of social class and estate. The Moriarty brothers believe in aspiring towards equality, though they aim to achieve it by illegal means, in a fashion akin to Robin Hood by vigilantist social justice. As this manga acknowledges from the very beginning itself, it is a tale of a well-known fictional antagonist of the Sherlock Holmes series by Arthur Conan Doyle, who is Professor William James Moriarty (name slightly adapted by the manga). He is a known "Napoleon of Crime" and in this incarnation is known as the "Lord of Crime". Thus, moral values are not the main or direct concern here, though by elimination and critical reading, the manga appeals to one's sense of social justice, as social class stratification is persistent even in contemporary society. William

is often shown to interweave mathematical puzzles into his master plans, and creates mysteries for Sherlock to solve, using this as his grand design. However, William is shown to not be just any crook, but one that has social reform (albeit somewhat revolutionary) in his mind. The front stage which they aim to portray is that of the perfect crime, while the backstage is the dramaturgical medium of revealing the exploitations that are initially hidden but that are exposed when a staged crime beckons an investigation. These fictional crimes that the protagonists seek to expose in the plot include child abuse, slavery, substance abuse, sexual harassment, and more violent crimes such as murder, all depicted in a way that visually explains its underlying mechanisms to aid the uninitiated reader, while explaining why it is wrong and must be stopped. The task of William and Sherlock is to eliminate these various forms of social injustice, by playing the role of "ethical criminals". In here, famous fictional characters like a certain suave British spy and Jack the Ripper are also inserted, though with a twist.

The city is depicted in contrast between the Whitechapel area, which is primarily inhabited by the working class[1], and the nobles' locales. Durham is also shown to contain a contradiction between "town" and "gown", much like the history of Oxford (Collison, 2012). Oppositions between the posh aristocratic students and the working-class townsfolk form a crucial part of the setting. The urban-rural divide is made clear. Even when the Moriarty brothers use both London and Durham as their base, they choose it for different reasons. The iconoclasm of the original Doylean Sherlock Holmes universe with regards to the city has been observed. Weise (2017) for example, had noted that the Sherlock Holmes canon contained "a very iconic and somewhat stereotypical image of the city", in which it is described as "A foggy, smoke ridden city, congested with traffic, populated by exotic figures, which in the nineteenth century has become the heart of a global Empire" (Weise, 2017). But nowhere is this more pronounced than in a graphic novel version of the many Holmesian pastiches that exist out there. The beginnings of diversity, as observed by Vertovec (2007), had already been germinating in this famous narrative, where superdiversity is expressed as "a level and kind of complexity surpassing anything the country has previously experienced", and "distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of immigrants who have arrived over the last decade, who are: new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified" (Vertovec, 2007). This era that was depicted in Moriarty the Patriot was described in Vertovec (2007)'s paper as having the characteristics of "significant immigrant influxes in the 1800s – 1900s", "a heterogeneity of people described by poet Wordsworth (Holmes, 2007)[2]", and "people divided between cosmopolitan vs xenophobic attitudes (Statt 1995)". The migratory trends that Vertovec (2007) observed had featured in some way in the selected manga, Moriarty the Patriot, which remained true to the iconoclasm of the Doylean vision of Sherlock Holmes, a man who was upper middle class in cultural capital but clear in his intentions to help the downtrodden. The trick was in the

[1] For more history on the class divide in Whitechapel, there are other sources, such as Oakley (2023): https://www.eastlondonhistory.co.uk/visit-whitechapel-east-london/#:~:text=The%20East%20End's%20Whitechapel%20may,attractive%2C%20eclectic%20and%20varied%20history.

[2] Not Sherlock.

transposition of these characteristics into another protagonist as the main character, a character directly meant to be an educator and reformer[3].

In conclusion, this visual narrative of city life and its tensions, which derives from the original ideas of Arthur Conan Doyle, but excellently flipped and portrayed in graphics by Ryosuke Takeuchi and Hikaru Miyoshi, provides the young reader with a vicarious and cathartic glimpse into the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of living in the city. Having performed a thematic analysis of the Moriarty the Patriot manga and anime, having used it as in-class supplementary teaching material, as well as having conducted the opinion survey above, the observations stand testament to the power of manga as a supplementary learning tool for both formal and informal self-learning.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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[3] Real-life scholars have studied the fictional Professor Moriarty's scholarly works. See for example: Jenkins, A. (2013). *On the Title of Moriarty's 'Dynamics of an Asteroid'.* https://arxiv.org/abs/1302.5855

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# Book Review: Chinese Values, Western Values And The Survival of The Chinese Clan As Social Institution

*Ulasan Buku: Nilai Cina, Nilai Barat Dan Kelangsungan Pertubuhan Klan Cina Sebagai Institusi Sosial*

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*ABSTRACT*

*The fact that Chinese immigrants influxed into the country during British colonization is inseparable from modern Malaysian history. The mass migration of Chinese immigrants to Southeast Asia, especially in Tanah Melayu (literally meaning the Malay Land), has changed the original structure of the local community. Basically, Tanah Melayu in the early days was the land inhabited by the indigenous Malay people, who were the majority with numerical strength. Diverse immigrant populations emerged as a result of this transition. The contributions of the ethnic Chinese community in Malaysia, brought by these immigrants, included the establishment of Chinese schools, Chinese newspapers, and ethnic-based organizations.*

*Keywords: Chinese; clan; guanxi, shetuan; huiguan.*

*ABSTRAK*

*Fakta kemasukan imigran Cina secara besar-besaran ke negara ini tidak dapat terpisah daripada sejarah Malaysia moden. Penghijrahan imigran Cina yang melibatkan bilangan yang ramai ke Asia Tenggara, terutamanya di Tanah Melayu, telah mengubah struktur asal komuniti tempatan. Pada awalnya Tanah Melayu merupakan kawasan didiami oleh golongan peribumi penduduk Melayu, yang menjadi golongan majoriti dan mempunyai kekuatan dari segi bilangan. Kewujudan populasi golongan imigran yang pelbagai merupakan kesan daripada peralihan ini. Antara sumbangan Masyarakat etnik Cina di Malaysia, yang dibawa masuk oleh imigran suatu ketika dahulu, termasuk penubuhan sekolah Cina, surat khabar Cina, dan pertubuhan Cina.*

*Kata kunci: Cina; klan; guanxi; shetuan; huiguan.*

The fact that Chinese immigrants influxed into the country during British colonization is inseparable from modern Malaysian history. The mass migration of Chinese immigrants to Southeast Asia, especially in Tanah Melayu (literally meaning the Malay Land), has changed the original structure of the local community. Basically, Tanah Melayu in the early days was the land inhabited by the indigenous Malay people, who were the majority with numerical strength. Diverse immigrant populations emerged as a result of this transition. The contributions of the ethnic Chinese community in Malaysia, brought by these immigrants, included the establishment of Chinese schools, Chinese newspapers, and ethnic-based organizations.

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Rachel Chan Suet Kay is the author of the book "*Chinese Values Western Values And The Survival of The Chinese Clan As Social Institution*", published by UKM Press in 2022. The book consists of 4 chapters and 105 printed pages in total, with a detailed bibliography at the end. The purpose of references and indexes is to allow other readers or academics to further explore the studies about clan associations in Malaysia. As pointed out by Chan, the main focus of this publication is to examine the relevance of Chinese clan associations among the wide spread of the Chinese diaspora in a modern context. The main objective of this book is to explore the causes for the perpetuation of clan associations in Chinese diasporic societies, contemporary Chinese ethnic majority societies, and the Western world (page 18). Primary mixed-method observations were chosen as the methodology to carry out this study. To investigate the bearing of traditional values, secular-rational values, survival values, and self-expression values, Inglehart and Welzel's World Values Survey (2015) is used (page 19). Besides that, library materials related to Chinese clan associations in the western world and Mainland China were also part of the methodology. To discover the features, comparisons were made between Chinese clan associations in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Vancouver Canada, and Guangdong Province, China.

The establishment of Chinese clan associations in Guangdong province, China. The wave of Chinese migration from Guangdong province to other countries also brought with it a philosophy of life rooted in Confucianism. This aspect can be justified through the practice of ancestor worship. Based on this publication by Chan, the work has reviewed the functions and roles of Chinese clan associations, discussing the dynamics of association members and the influence of clan associations on their daily lives. In short, clan associations play a role as social institutions in today's society, fulfilling the functional imperative championed by Talcott Parsons, which promotes social cohesion (page 9).

In Chapter 1 (page 11), the author outlines the perspectives of scholars who argue that kinship is fundamental to social formation and helps us to understand social order more effectively. In fact, the factors that define kinship are different in Europe and the United States. In ancient times, the Chinese interpreted family and national identity as synonymous and interchangeable. The family has formed the basic unit in all activities of society. Taylor argues that addressing a person as father, mother, grandfather, or grandmother while ignoring their real name is referred to as "tekonomymy." (page 12). Meanwhile, family life in China consists of a father, mother, sons, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren. It is evident that Chinese society is rooted in the authority of the father and that Chinese clan associations are influenced by Confucianism, with one of the pure values emphasized being filial piety, alongside responsibility towards family members and the practice of moral values. The complex clan system originated in China and spread after the mass migration of immigrants to other countries, peaking in the 19th century. Although Chinese immigrants have settled in a new country to seek opportunities to change their fortunes, Overseas Chinese have a strong personal and emotional connection to China. On pages 13–14, it narrates that the objective of establishing clan associations is to provide long-term economic, cultural, and social support to their members. Clan associations have upheld the family as the fundamental unit that symbolizes Chinese identity, Chinese dialect groups, and the pure values of Confucianism.

The data from the Department of Statistics Malaysia shows that there are over 6.6 million Chinese people in Malaysia (page 14). Meanwhile, the Chinese clan associations are extensively distributed all over the country, these associations are divided into regional and

non-regional associations, historical blood organisations, surnames, and same-ancestor organisations. As described on page 16, the majority Chinese immigrants found in Malaysia came from Guangdong and Fujian in South China to make a living across the sea. In the case of Guangdong, ethnic groups, economies, cultures, and languages vary among sub-regions. In terms of daily language usage, the main dialects of Chinese in Malaysia are Cantonese, Hokkien, and Hakka. In addition to that, a significant number of Chinese speak Teochew, Hainan, Guangxi, and Henghua dialects.

In contrast, in the western world, as outlined by MacPherson (1966), see page 16, Gaelicor Scottish clann is one of the kinship-based social structures that still exist in western countries, particularly in Europe. The western clan is based on kinship structure, which means that extended family based primarily on the connection among cousins and their ancestors can be traced back to a few ancestors whose chronicles were rather vague several generations ago.

In the beginning of Chapter 2, the author, Chan, summarizes the history of the establishment and background of the Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association Kuala Lumpur and Selangor (CSSYKL). The Chan See Shu Yuen Clan Association Kuala Lumpur and Selangor (CSSYKL) is a tourist attraction located in a strategic location in Kuala Lumpur, at the end of Petaling Street. In 1896, influential leaders among Chinese immigrants, namely Chan Sow Lin, Chin Choon, Chan Sin Hee, and Chan Choy Thin, founded the CSSYKL, which plays the role of the clan consanguinity organization. As I have mentioned before, the valuable assets that the ethnic Chinese community in Malaysia had brought by these immigrants included the establishment of Chinese schools, Chinese newspapers, and ethnic-based organizations. It is true that even though Chinese immigrants have settled in their countries of emigration, they still have connections with mainland China, so it is not surprising that the establishment of CSSYKL has historical connections with Chen's College, which was built in Xiguan, Guangzhou, China, in 1894 (page 32). In addition to the family temples found in ancient China, Chen's Ancestral Hall serves as an ancestral temple. Today, CSSYKL plays the same role as Chen's Ancestral Hall, to honor and offer deference to ancestors of the same surname and place of origin (*Ibid*.). One of the most fascinating aspects of this publication was the author's hands-on fieldwork. Chan had carried out the fieldwork by "turun padang" to obtain the data and meet the publication's objectives (pages 33–38). This advantage makes the book a scholarly work that attracts readers among researchers and academics.

No individual can resist the waves of change in reality. Humans, instead, must adapt to the waves of change that urge us to evolve so as not to be seen as outdated. The same goes for clan associations. The functions and roles of clan associations today are very different compared to the past. There is a comparison between the initial function and the new function of CSSYKL, as presented by the author in Table 2.1 (page 34). For example, CSSYKL in the past promoted the importance of education, but nowadays CSSYKL organizes visit tours for businessmen and academic researchers. The adaptations to the waves of change have fulfilled the Chinese saying, "The trends of the world are vast and unstoppable; those who follow them will prosper, while those who go against them will perish (天下大势, 浩浩汤汤, 顺之者昌, 逆之者亡)".

The recognition of George Town and Malacca as part of the UNESCO World Heritage List also opens up opportunities for the author, Chan, to explore the Chinese clan associations in Penang that serve similar functions and roles as CSSYKL, as shown in Table 2.2: Functions

of the Penang Clan Associations (Kongsi), see pages 39–42. The clan associations in Penang were previously known as Kongsi, but the name was eventually altered to *Huiguan* to maintain its significance. Nowadays, *Huiguan* in Penang plays the roles of clan society, provincial clubs, and a place for worshiping deities.

With the rise of China, its influence is growing. There is a saying among Chinese: "Wherever there is seawater, you will find Chinese people (有海水的地方就有华人)". The footprints of Chinese are spread all over the world. Regarding the ethnic character of the Chinese, they can survive in any corner of the earth, no matter how challenging the situation. Table 2.3 shows Chinese clan association and society buildings in Vancouver, Canada (pages 43–45). The clan associations in Canada are still standing in the current of development and able to respond to the demands of the great era. The dynamism of those clan associations is the best reflection of the Chinese immigrant character in early times.

The foundation of CSSYKL in the past was a clan association, but now the organization responds to the rapidly changing world. The CSSYKL membership is no longer limited to the elderly; it also includes young adults from urban regions. Therefore, CSSYKL provides a platform for young adults to build up social networks while also advancing personal and professional growth. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is gaining importance (pages 50–54).

Chapter 3 outlines the role and function of *huiguan* and *shetuan*, other than clan associations that have been examined by the author in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. In this chapter, Chan distinguishes the role and function between *huiguan*, *shetuan*, and clan associations in order to help readers gain a deep understanding of these kinds of Chinese-based organizations. Table 3.1 shows The activities of *Huiguan*, which cover economic, political/administrative, education and culture, social and entertainment, religious, and philanthropic (page 57). Based on studies, *huiguan* originated in ancient China, which was commonly known as district associations. The objective of *shetuan* was to help and support immigrants who came from the same region. The collected *shetuan* membership fees were intended to support those who migrated to new places and adapted to a new life within a short period of time (pages 56–58). Kuah-Pearce (2006) describes the functions of *shetuan* in modern society. *Shetuan* serves as an intermediary between the Chinese community and the greater society. It offers mutual aid and protection to Chinese in the adopted country, fostering transnational connections and social networks (page 58). Based on the structural-functionalist perspective in sociology, the significant role of social institutions lies in their ability to unite society in order to achieve social cohesion. These social functions determine the continuity of social institutions, which cannot be separated from social order. Table 3.2, which summarizes the typologies of Chinese associations by scholars (pages 59–61), is very helpful for us to quickly understand the different types of Chinese associations. On pages 61–84, interesting tables, figures, and photos are included about the backgrounds and struggles of the founders of the CSSYKL. This section has opened the minds of readers, as the achievements of CSSYKL today were the result of the hard work and dedication of the founders in the past.

If we fail to comprehend the influence of Confucius, we will be unable to engage in a meaningful discussion about the origins of ancestor worship and clan associations. Confucianism has significantly shaped the practice of ancestor worship and played a crucial role in ensuring the survival of clan associations as a value system (pages 90-96). Chapter 4

narrates the secret of the longevity of Chinese clan associations. This final chapter provides readers with a chance to deeply understand the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guide the author throughout the writing process. Kuah-Pearce (2008) urges the early establishment of clan associations to help Chinese immigrants who have moved to new locations. However, the time flying has rendered clan associations no longer relevant; therefore, in order to remain relevant, a new mission needs to be sought to ensure that clan associations can respond to the demands of the great era (page 86). Meanwhile, Kuah-Pearce & Hu-Dehart (2006) conclude that the scope of assistance from clan associations has been extended to clans, lineages, or places of origin. (*Ibid*.). It cannot be denied that the Chinese community and Chinese organizations enjoy building relationships, known as guanxi in Chinese (pages 87), with outsiders so that one can easily obtain help and support in difficulty. The Chinese strongly believe that interpersonal relationships impact daily life. The scholars, Guthrie and Wank (2002), point out that guanxi are able to impact the political culture and business practices in China (pages 86–87).

The establishment of Chinese clan associations relates to deontological quality. It reveals a logical action taken out of duty or obligation. Additionally, these associations serve a utility-based function in society by achieving their functional imperatives, based on the Parsonsian sense of AGIL (adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency); see pages 88, 96-98, and Table 4.1 on page 99. Parson, influenced by Durkheim and Weber, developed structural functionalism, considering that every component in society has a function and a role to play. The social system has to keep everything in balance and make sure all its parts are working together to stay alive (page 88).

Finally, this scholarly work is well presented in proper academic English and has made a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge in Chinese cultural studies. This book is likely to be reprinted. I suggest that the author may include a glossary of cultural terms related to clan associations and the names of Chinese leaders in Chinese, either in complex Chinese form (繁体字) or simplified Chinese form (简体字), as well as Chinese pinyin (汉语拼音) in each term consistently in the appendix at the end of the reprinted edition, to make the revised edition more extensive. The additional information in the revised edition could provide a way for researchers and academics outside of Malaysia, particularly from Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan, who are interested in the research of Overseas Chinese and Nanyang Studies (海外华人与南洋研究), to cross-reference by accessing the contents of this publication to gain a more comprehensive and balanced perspective in order to carry out their rigorous studies.

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# BOOK REVIEW

## The Singapore Ethnic Mosaic: Many Cultures, One People

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*ABSTRACT*

The book "The Singapore Ethnic Mosaic: Many Cultures, One People" offers a comprehensive exploration of Singapore's ethnic diversity, examining how various ethnic groups contribute to the formation of a cohesive national identity. Through in-depth analysis, the book delves into the histories, cultural practices, and socio-political dynamics of the Chinese, Malay, Indian, and other communities in Singapore. It highlights the challenges and accomplishments in maintaining cultural heritage while fostering a shared Singaporean identity. The book also evaluates government policies, educational initiatives, and community efforts that promote multiculturalism and social cohesion. Overall, it provides valuable insights into the complexities of ethnic diversity and national unity in Singapore's multicultural society.

*ABSTRAK*

Buku "The Singapore Ethnic Mosaic: Many Cultures, One People" menawarkan eksplorasi komprehensif mengenai kepelbagaian etnik di Singapura, mengkaji bagaimana pelbagai kumpulan etnik menyumbang kepada pembentukan identiti kebangsaan yang padu. Melalui analisis mendalam, buku ini meneliti sejarah, amalan budaya, dan dinamika sosio-politik komuniti Cina, Melayu, India, dan lain-lain di Singapura. Buku ini mengetengahkan cabaran dan pencapaian dalam mengekalkan warisan budaya sambil membina identiti bersama sebagai rakyat Singapura. Buku ini juga menilai dasar kerajaan, inisiatif pendidikan, dan usaha komuniti yang mempromosikan multikulturalisme dan perpaduan sosial. Secara keseluruhannya, buku ini memberikan pandangan yang berharga tentang kompleksiti kepelbagaian etnik dan perpaduan kebangsaan dalam masyarakat multikultural Singapura.

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## INTRODUCTION

The book "The Singapore Ethnic Mosaic: Many Cultures, One People" offers a comprehensive exploration of ethnic diversity in Singapore, shedding light on the various ethnic communities that coexist within the nation. Authored by renowned scholars in the field of ethnic studies, the book provides a deep understanding of the complex dynamics of multiculturalism and national identity in Singapore.

The main objective of the book is to examine the diverse ethnic groups in Singapore and analyze the processes through which they contribute to the formation of a cohesive national identity. By delving into the intricate tapestry of Singapore's ethnic mosaic, the book aims to uncover the challenges, accomplishments, and interactions among different ethnic communities, as well as the factors that have shaped their identities.

Understanding ethnic diversity in Singapore is of utmost importance due to the country's unique history and demographics. As a multicultural society, Singapore is home to various ethnic groups, including Chinese, Malay, Indian, and others. The book recognizes the significance of this diversity and its implications for Singaporean society, politics, and culture.

Through an in-depth exploration of the book's themes, readers gain insights into the historical, social, and cultural foundations of each ethnic group. The authors provide a nuanced analysis of how these communities have evolved over time, maintaining their distinctive identities while simultaneously contributing to the overarching Singaporean identity.

## EXAMINATION OF THE BOOK'S EXPLORATION OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN SINGAPORE

"The Singapore Ethnic Mosaic: Many Cultures, One People" provides a comprehensive examination of ethnic diversity in Singapore, offering valuable insights into the complexities of multiculturalism and national identity. The book presents a meticulous exploration of various ethnic communities, highlighting their unique histories, traditions, and contributions to the nation's cultural landscape.

One of the strengths of the book is its comprehensive coverage of different ethnic groups in Singapore. The authors delve into the Chinese, Malay, Indian, and other ethnic communities, providing a rich and detailed account of their origins, migration patterns, and cultural practices. By delving into the historical roots of each community, the book provides readers with a deeper appreciation for the diverse heritage that constitutes Singapore's multicultural society.

The authors also examine the interplay between the ethnic communities and the formation of a cohesive national identity. They delve into the processes through which these communities have negotiated their cultural identities while embracing a shared sense of Singaporean nationality. The book explores how these communities have contributed to the nation's social fabric, fostering a sense of unity and collective identity.

Moreover, the book goes beyond a mere description of the ethnic communities by delving into the social, political, and economic factors that have shaped their identities. The authors critically analyze the impact of government policies, educational institutions, and cultural

initiatives in promoting multiculturalism and fostering interethnic understanding. They examine the challenges faced by these communities, including issues of integration, language preservation, and cultural representation.

Throughout the book, the authors provide a nuanced understanding of the complexities and nuances of ethnic diversity in Singapore. They highlight the vibrant cultural tapestry that exists within the nation, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and appreciating the contributions of each ethnic group.

## DISCUSSION OF THE BOOK'S ANALYSIS OF VARIOUS ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN SINGAPORE

The book offers a thorough analysis of the different ethnic communities that contribute to the rich tapestry of Singapore's multicultural society. The book delves into the histories, cultural practices, and experiences of the Chinese, Malay, Indian, and other ethnic groups, providing readers with a nuanced understanding of their unique identities.

The authors' analysis of the Chinese community is particularly insightful. They explore the influence of Chinese migration patterns, language, and cultural traditions on the formation of the Chinese identity in Singapore. The book highlights the significant contributions of the Chinese community to Singapore's economic development and social fabric, underscoring the importance of preserving Chinese cultural heritage while embracing Singaporean nationalism.

Similarly, the book offers a comprehensive analysis of the Malay community in Singapore. It examines the historical roots of the Malay identity, including the impact of colonialism and the development of a distinct Malay culture. The authors shed light on the challenges faced by the Malay community in maintaining their cultural heritage while navigating the evolving social landscape of Singapore. The analysis emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and recognition of the Malay community's contributions to the nation.

The book's exploration of the Indian community is equally comprehensive. It delves into the diverse subcultures within the Indian community, such as Tamil, Malayali, and Punjabi, and examines their respective contributions to Singaporean society. The authors discuss the struggles faced by the Indian community in preserving their cultural practices while embracing a shared Singaporean identity. The analysis also underscores the importance of multiculturalism in fostering a sense of belonging among Indians in Singapore.

In addition to the three major ethnic groups, the book touches upon the experiences of other ethnic communities, such as the Eurasians, Peranakans, and non-Malay Muslims. Although these communities receive relatively less coverage, the book provides valuable insights into their historical background and their contributions to Singapore's multicultural landscape.

Furthermore, the book's analysis of each ethnic community is not limited to their cultural heritage. It also explores the socio-political dynamics and challenges faced by these communities. The authors critically examine issues such as language policies, cultural representation, and integration efforts, highlighting the complexities involved in balancing cultural preservation and national cohesion.

## ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF THE BOOK

The book presents a comprehensive exploration of ethnic diversity in Singapore, but a critical evaluation of the book's content, arguments, and evidence is necessary to assess its effectiveness in addressing the topic. This section will assess the book's strengths and weaknesses, compare its findings and analysis with existing literature, and evaluate its contribution to the field of ethnic studies in the Singaporean context.

## CRITICAL REVIEW OF CONTENT, ARGUMENTS, AND EVIDENCE

The book provides a well-researched and detailed examination of various ethnic communities in Singapore. The content is comprehensive, covering a wide range of topics related to ethnic diversity, cultural practices, and identity formation. The authors present cogent arguments and support them with relevant evidence, including historical data, scholarly research, and personal narratives. However, the book's analysis could have benefited from a deeper exploration of contemporary issues and perspectives, as it occasionally relies heavily on historical accounts.

### STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN ADDRESSING ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN SINGAPORE

One of the book's strengths lies in its comprehensive coverage of different ethnic communities, providing a holistic understanding of their histories, cultural practices, and contributions. It successfully highlights the challenges and accomplishments of each community and explores the formation of a cohesive national identity. However, the book's focus on major ethnic groups leaves less space for in-depth analysis of smaller ethnic communities, limiting the representation of their experiences and perspectives.

## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The book carries significant implications for policy, practice, and future research on ethnic diversity in Singapore. The book provides valuable insights into the experiences, challenges, and contributions of different ethnic communities, which can inform policymaking in areas such as education, language preservation, cultural representation, and social integration. It emphasizes the importance of inclusive policies and initiatives that recognize and value the diverse heritage of Singapore's ethnic groups while fostering a strong sense of national identity.

Practitioners working in the fields of multicultural education, community development, and intercultural dialogue can draw upon the book's analysis to enhance their understanding of the complexities of ethnic diversity and to develop more inclusive and culturally responsive approaches.

Future research can build upon the book's findings and delve deeper into contemporary issues and emerging trends within Singapore's multicultural society. Topics such as the impact of globalization, transnational connections, and intergenerational dynamics on ethnic identities can be further explored. Additionally, research that includes the voices and experiences of individuals from smaller ethnic communities can help to provide a more comprehensive understanding of ethnic diversity in Singapore.

This book has the potential to contribute to a better understanding of social cohesion and multiculturalism in Singapore. By highlighting the experiences and contributions of various ethnic communities, the book promotes a more inclusive and appreciative society. It emphasizes the need to recognize and celebrate diversity while fostering a sense of shared national identity. The book's insights can inform efforts to promote intercultural understanding, respect, and dialogue among different ethnic groups in Singapore, ultimately contributing to a more cohesive and harmonious society.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this book offers a comprehensive exploration of ethnic diversity in Singapore, providing valuable insights into the formation and maintenance of a cohesive national identity in a multicultural society. The book's analysis of different ethnic communities, their histories, cultural practices, and contributions enriches our understanding of multiculturalism and the complexities of ethnic diversity.

The book's strengths lie in its comprehensive coverage, nuanced analysis, and relevance to the Singaporean context. While it could have delved deeper into contemporary issues and smaller ethnic communities, it remains a significant resource for scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and individuals interested in ethnic studies and multiculturalism.

This book has implications for policy, practice, and future research, providing insights that can inform policymaking, shape inclusive practices, and guide further investigations into ethnic diversity in Singapore. It has the potential to contribute to social cohesion and multiculturalism by fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Singapore's diverse heritage.

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# ULASAN BUKU

## Yi-Fu Tuan. 1977. Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

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ABSTRAK

Buku ini membincangkan tentang persoalan ruang dan tempat yang diperjelaskan menerusi pendekatan geografi humanistik. Ia merupakan sebuah pendekatan konseptual yang memfokuskan kepada manusia beserta keupayaannya yang unik untuk membentuk sebuah pengetahuan dan kefahaman yang jelas berkait hubungannya dengan lingkungan persekitaran mereka. Menurut pengarang Yi-Fu Tuan, pengalaman adalah suatu istilah yang meliputi kesemua kepelbagaian kaedah yang digunakan untuk mengetahui dan membentuk sesebuah realiti. Dengan menggunakan perspektif pengalaman ini, Tuan menjelaskan definisi ruang dan tempat yang melampaui definisi fizikal yang biasa. Beliau kemudiannya mengembangkan perbincangan kepada idea geografi peribadi dan geografi kebersamaan. Seterusnya, beliau juga menyelusuri bagaimana ruang mitos/mistik dan ruang seni bina mempengaruhi kesedaran manusia terhadap dunia mereka. Hubungan ruang dan masa adalah merupakan sebuah kesepaduan yang menyebabkan lahirnya elemen keintiman dan keterikatan seseorang terhadap sesuatu tempat. Di bahagian akhir buku ini, beliau memberikan sebuah rumusan tentang makna ruang dan tempat dari perspektif kepengalamanan. Bagi Tuan, tempat adalah apabila kita hadir di situ dan mengalami, lantas melahirkan makna dan ingatan.

ABSTRACT

This book explores the concepts of space and place through the lens of humanistic geography. It presents a conceptual approach that emphasizes the unique human capacity to create knowledge and understanding in relation to their environment. According to the author, Yi-Fu Tuan, experience encompasses the various methods used to comprehend and shape reality. By adopting this experiential perspective, Tuan offers a definitive understanding of space and place that transcends conventional physical definitions. He further develops the discussion to include

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personal geography and collective geography. Additionally, he examines how mythical/mystical spaces and architectural spaces influence human awareness of their surroundings. Furthermore, the relationship between space and time forms a unity that fosters intimacy and attachment to specific places. In the concluding section of the book, Tuan summarizes the meaning of space and place from an experiential viewpoint. For him, a place is defined by our presence and experiences within it, leading to the creation of meaning and memory.

## PENDAHULUAN

Yi-Fu Tuan merupakan sarjana yang berusaha untuk menjelaskan geografi humanistik sebagai satu sub-bidang berasaskan ilmu geografi. Pendekatan geografi humanistik ini menekankan kesedaran individu atau kumpulan beserta pengalamannya berkait hubungan yang berlaku antara manusia dan lingkungan persekitaran mereka. Dalam hal ini, peranan agensi manusia sebagai makhluk rasional dipertegaskan dengan keupayaannya untuk mencerap, berfikir, berinteraksi dan memahami lingkungan persekitarannya secara aktif berbanding sebelumnya hanya pasrah sebagai penerima yang pasif semata-mata.

Sebagai latar belakang, pendekatan geografi humanistik paling menonjol pada tahun 1970-an sehingga 1980-an dengan penghasilan banyak karya-karya penyelidikan yang signifikan oleh beberapa sarjana penting dalam sub-bidang ini (Cresswell 2013). Salah satu karya terkemuka yang telah dihasilkan dalam tempoh ini ialah "*Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*" karangan Yi-Fu Tuan. Buku ini menyelongkar persoalan ruang dan tempat berdasarkan perspektif kepengalamanan individu atau kumpulan yang terlibat. Untuk membahaskannya, beberapa tema penting telah dikenalpasti sebagai inti kepada perbincangan buku ini.

## DEFINISI RUANG, TEMPAT, DAN PERSPEKTIF PENGALAMAN

Sebelum meninjau lanjut, hal pertama yang perlu diperjelaskan adalah persoalan definisi topik atau istilah perkataan yang digunakan oleh penulis. Apabila kita melepasi peringkat definisi, tentunya akan memudahkan perbincangan seterusnya. Langkah yang serupa diambil oleh Tuan dengan mendatangkan definisi tentang ruang, tempat dan perspektif pengalaman dalam dua bab awal bukunya ini. Baginya, ruang dan tempat adalah dua hal yang sangat berkait rapat dan saling bergantung antara satu sama lain.

Beliau telah mendefinisikan tempat dengan memerihalkan ruang dalam ungkapannya, "*if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause*". Dalam kata lain, tempat adalah keadaan berhenti sebentar manakala ruang pula adalah tentang keadaan lapangan terbuka untuk tindakan dan pergerakan. Beliau menambah lagi bahawa tempat adalah sebuah keamanan dan ruang adalah tentang sebuah kebebasan dengan ungkapannya, yakni "*place is security, space is freedom.*" Daripada definisi-definisi ini, ternyata perbincangan tentang tempat dan ruang

melampaui perbincangan sebatas sebuah lokasi mahupun wilayah. Bahkan, perbincangan ini telah bersangkutan dengan elemen persepsi, kesedaran dan pengalaman manusia itu sendiri sehingga berupaya untuk mewujudkan sebuah ikatan afektif di antara manusia dengan sesuatu tempat (Cresswell 2004).

Bagi menjelaskan tentang pengalaman pula, Tuan telah melakukan pembahagian kepada dua fokus utama iaitu tentang sifat pengalaman dan sifat perspektif dari pengalaman. Pembahagian ini menjelaskan dua perbezaan yang agak ketara. Pertamanya, pengalaman merujuk kepada keadaan yang kita alami secara rutin, berulang-ulang, dianggap remeh (*taken for granted*) dan kebiasaannya berada pada tahapan minda bawah sedar kita. Manakala yang keduanya pula ialah pengalaman sebagai keadaan tatkala tahapan minda sedar kita berusaha untuk mengingat kembali, merenung dan berfikir tentang pengalaman yang kita telah alami sekaligus menghasilkan sebuah perspektif tersendiri yang mengandungi persoalan idea, makna dan pengetahuan berkait pengalaman-pengalaman tersebut.

Secara umumnya, pengalaman boleh difahami sebagai suatu istilah yang meliputi kesemua kepelbagaian kaedah yang digunakan seseorang untuk mengetahui dan membentuk sesebuah realiti (Tuan 1975). Kepelbagaian kaedah ini merujuk kepada serangkaian keupayaan manusiawi terutamanya deria, akal budi dan perasaan yang digunakan sama ada secara aktif atau pasif. Dalam kata lain, pengalaman adalah sesuatu yang diarahkan kepada dunia luar yakni di luar diri. Apabila kita melihat kepada sesuatu, apabila kita berfikir tentang sesuatu, makanya semua ini adalah suatu keadaan yang diistilahkan oleh Tuan sebagai "*intentionality*", yakni keterarahan kepada sesuatu.

Dalam ungkapan lain, keadaan ini terwakil dengan tindakan belajar, yakni belajar tentang sesuatu yang kita arahkan kepadanya. Tindakan ini juga adalah sebuah proses untuk memperolehi suatu pengetahuan dan kefahaman yang konkrit terhadap sesuatu. Hal ini akan menatijahkan dua perkara iaitu: pertamanya menunjukkan kualiti-kualiti tertentu yang dirasai oleh seseorang sama ada terhadap benda, tempat, seseorang bahkan dunia ini sendiri (bersifat luaran), dan keduanya mempengaruhi diri seseorang yang mengalami tersebut secara batin kemudian membentuk suatu sudut pandang dunia tersendiri terhadap sesuatu realiti (bersifat dalaman).

## IDEA TENTANG GEOGRAFI PERIBADI VS GEOGRAFI KEBERSAMAAN

Perbincangan berkait geografi peribadi sudah muncul lebih awal lagi (Cresswell 2013). Lazimnya, perbincangan ini merujuk kepada satu set tempat yang unik di mana setiap orang menghabiskan sebahagian besar masanya sekaligus merangkai hubungan antara mereka dan tempat-tempat tersebut lantas mempengaruhi dan membentuk peribadi dan identiti masing-masing. Ini diibaratkan seperti sebuah peta yang mempersembahkan pengalaman, ingatan dan harapan mereka sehingga telah memaknai dunia mereka. Tuan telah menyediakan sebuah landasan perbincangan yang fundamental berkait hal ini dengan meletakkan peringkat yang paling asas bagi kehidupan manusia iaitu tahap kanak-kanak. Semakin meningkat tahap perkembangan seorang manusia,

maka semakin kaya pula pengalaman dan pemaknaan baginya. Lebih menarik, Tuan membahaskan hal ini secara lebih dalam menerusi idea perwakilan tubuh badan manusia untuk menunjukkan tentang keberadaan manusia di atas bumi ini. Bagi Tuan, tubuh badan setiap manusia yang sebenarnya sudah menyediakan sebuah konsep pemahaman yang mengandungi penjelasan tentang nilai-nilai ruang. Contohnya ialah perbezaan di antara keadaan seseorang yang sedang berdiri dan seseorang yang sedang berbaring. Sudah pasti orang yang sedang berdiri akan mendapat manfaat yang lebih baik daripada nilai-nilai ruang di mana dia berada.

Kemudian, Tuan juga membincangkan tentang hubung kait antara kemampuan ruangan, pengetahuan ruangan dan tempat. Menurut Tuan, kemampuan ruangan bermaksud kemampuan manusia untuk mengalami ruang yakni bergerak dalam ruang, mengenalpasti, mempelajari dan menguasainya sehingga terwujudnya pemaknaan pada setiap bahagian di dalam ruang tersebut. Kemudiannya, ruang tersebut akan berubah menjadi tempat walaupun pada awalnya ruang tersebut belum terbiasa dan belum terbezakan. Menurut Tuan lagi, kemampuan ruangan terlebih dahulu akan berkembang secara bertahap di dalam kehidupan manusia berbanding pengetahuan ruangan. Kemampuan ruangan akan menjadi pengetahuan ruangan apabila setiap pergerakan di dalam sesebuah ruang dan perubahan-perubahan lokasi di dalam ruang tersebut dapat dibayangkan. Walau bagaimanapun, pengetahuan ruangan juga membantu dalam prosesnya untuk meningkatkan kemampuan ruangan seseorang.

Hakikatnya, geografi kebersamaan bertentangan dengan geografi peribadi. Geografi kebersamaan merujuk kepada keadaan seseorang yang hidup bersama membentuk sebuah rangkaian hubungan. Menurut Tuan, hubungan-hubungan peribadi yang terjalin sesama mereka juga mengandungi penjelasan tentang nilai-nilai ruang. Penggunaan perkataan "kita/kami" dan "mereka" dalam perbualan harian menyiratkan makna jarak, yang tidak hanya tentang jarak fizikal tetapi juga jarak abstrak yang melibatkan elemen pengalaman dan perasaan. Daripada idea geografi kebersamaan ini juga, Tuan telah membahaskan tentang pengalaman kelapangan dan kesesakan. Kelapangan adalah keadaan mempunyai banyak ruang dan rasa bebas manakala kesesakan adalah sebaliknya. Dalam kata lain, Tuan berpendapat bahawasanya kesesakan adalah kesesakan bersama kehadiran manusia yang lain dan benda/objek yang bersifat material seperti alam dan binaan-binaan manusia. Kesesakan ini juga turut mempengaruhi pembentukan pengalaman dan pemaknaan bagi setiap manusia.

## KESEDARAN RUANG MITOS/MISTIK DAN RUANG SENI BINA

Menurut Tuan, mitos adalah satu perkara yang selalu dipertentangkan dengan realiti lantaran dianggap tidak mempunyai pengetahuan yang tepat dan memuaskan. Namun, mengabaikannya adalah tindakan yang tidak patut kerana ia adalah suatu sistem kepercayaan yang melibatkan cara pandang dunia seseorang atau sekelompok orang tertentu. Ruang mitos merupakan sebuah hasil pembentukan intelektual. Ia membuahkan sebuah sudut pandang dunia yang menjadi pegangan kepada seseorang atau sekelompok manusia. Ia merupakan sebuah usaha yang sistematik yang dilakukan oleh seseorang atau sekelompok manusia untuk memahami dan memunasabahkan dunia dan lingkungannya. Hal ini kerana untuk dunia ini boleh didiami, justeru manusia mesti

mempamerkan sebuah hubungan ketertiban dan kesesuaian yang harmoni. Maka, atas sebab ini manusia dengan daya agensinya akan berusaha untuk memahami dunia ini dan membentuk sudut pandang dunia mereka yang tersendiri.

Ruang yang kedua yang menjadi elemen penting dalam pengalaman manusia adalah ruang seni bina. Ia dianggap sebagai idea yang berseberangan dengan ruang mitos kerana ia nyata dan wujud. Perbincangan dimulakan dengan premis yang mengatakan bahawa semua manusia bahkan termasuk haiwan, tinggal di dalam sebuah lingkungan yang mereka bina sendiri. Apabila seseorang manusia ingin membina sesuatu seperti rumah, maka itu dilaksanakan dalam keadaan sedar. Kesedaran adalah berkaitan sebuah kualiti bagaimana seseorang menyedari setiap tindakannya. Paling asas dan paling awal, seseorang perlu menyedari di manakah lokasi yang hendak dibina, apakah bahan yang diperlukan untuk membinanya dan bagaimanakah bentuknya. Kemudian, apabila rumah tersebut sudah siap dibina, maka binaan tersebut akan mempengaruhi perasaan dan kesedaran manusia. Sesebuah ruang jika semata-mata ruang kosong, pengaruhnya mungkin terawang-awang dan bersifat sekejap, akan tetapi apabila ruang tersebut dibina sebuah rumah, maka pengaruhnya lebih tertumpu dan meresap menjadi pengalaman dan pemaknaan. Dalam hal ini juga, Tuan telah mengkritik secara halus tentang hierarki dan susunan sosial dalam sesebuah masyarakat melalui lokasi dan keadaan sesebuah seni bina, yakni tergambar menerusi perbezaan kawasan rumah orang kaya dengan kawasan rumah orang miskin.

## HUBUNGAN RUANG-MASA, KEINTIMAN DAN KETERIKATAN

Pengalaman adalah aktiviti atau proses yang menjelmakan kesepaduan antara ruang dan masa. Perbincangan ini terserlah dari sudut kepengalamanan iaitu dimensi yang lebih bersifat subjektif yang diorientasikan kepada potensi dan pengalaman manusia. Masa yang ditanggapi bukan masa yang semata-mata nombor berapa minit atau berapa jam, tetapi masa yang sudah diserap masuk ke dalam dunia fikiran dan dunia perasaan hasil daripada proses mengalami yang berterusan. Beliau menganalogikan dengan bakat manusia yang sentiasa mempunyai tujuan. Apabila seseorang mempunyai tujuan, maka dia dapat memanipulasikan ruang dan masa dalam sebuah perancangan untuk mencapai tujuannya. Keberadaannya dalam dimensi ruang dan masa tersebut secara berterusan akan membentuk sebuah keterikatan antaranya dengan sesuatu tempat lalu membentuk pengalaman dunia ruang-masanya yang tersendiri. Selain daripada itu, Tuan juga menyebut dalam perbincangan hal ini bahawa ruang adalah berhubungan sangat rapat dengan elemen sejarah dan pensejarahan (masa). Jika kita membelek gambar-gambar di dalam telefon pintar kita, maka pastinya ada sejarahnya yang tersendiri dan latar masanya kenapa gambar tersebut kita ambil. Dengan menerima dan memahami semua maklumat tentang gambar tersebut, maka kita berupaya untuk menyusun atur elemen-elemen visual yang wujud di dalam gambar tersebut menjadi sebuah struktur kesedaran terhadap ruang-masa yang bersifat dramatik. Hal yang sama juga berlaku jika kita memasuki ke dalam bangunan muzium atau seorang ahli geologi yang menyelidik tentang binaan-binaan zaman dahulu.

Daripada perbincangan hubungan ruang-masa dalam pengalaman seseorang di atas, kata kunci pentingnya adalah tentang persoalan keterikatan; yakni, ada sesuatu yang menjalin-ikat antara manusia dengan tempat. Sehubungan dengan ini, Tuan membahaskan pengalaman-pengalaman intim manusia terhadap tempat. Hemat Tuan, keintiman ini merupakan pengalaman yang tertanam dalam diri seorang manusia. Tuan mendatangkan contoh pengalaman intim seseorang terhadap rumah. Rumah adalah permulaan kehidupan dan pengakhiran kehidupan seseorang dalam sehari. Rumah juga dianggap sebagai tempat perawatan dan penyegaran diri untuk memenuhi keperluan dan tujuan kehidupan. Namun, Tuan menimbulkan persoalan yang menarik iaitu adakah perasaan intim kepada sesebuah rumah (tempat) akan sentiasa kekal? Adakah tempat itu sendiri berupaya mendatangkan rasa kekekalan tersebut atau sebenarnya tempat itu hanya sebagai satu bekas yang isinya adalah hubungan dan ikatan manusia yang wujud di tempat tersebut? Menurut Tuan, pengalaman intim seseorang terhadap sesuatu tempat berintisarikan kepada pengalaman hubungan dan ikatan intim manusia yang terjalin di tempat tersebut.

Seterusnya, Tuan membangkitkan bagaimana rasa keterikatan seseorang terhadap tanah airnya boleh terhasil. Tempat wujud dalam pelbagai skala dalam kehidupan seseorang. Tanah air merupakan salah satu tempat yang penting dalam kehidupan seseorang kerana di situ mungkin tempat tumpah darah kelahirannya, tempat membesar, tempat belajar dan tempat mencari rezeki. Oleh sebab itu, rasa keterikatan yang kuat kepada tanah air itu boleh terhasil dalam diri seseorang. Tuan memulakan hujah kenapa rasa keterikatan seseorang terhadap tanah air itu terhasil kerana di situ adalah tempat didirikan rumahnya (*field of care*). Idea keterikatan ini juga mirip dengan idea keberakaran (*rootedness*). Seseorang merasa bahawa dirinya mempunyai asal usul bagaimana dirinya bermula. Antara faktor yang mendorong kepada penghasilan rasa ini yang dikemukakan oleh Tuan adalah faktor agama dan faktor ingatan terhadap sejarah yang indah dan pencapaian-pencapaian luar biasa yang telah dicapai oleh nenek moyang mereka.

## SEBUAH MAKNA TENTANG TEMPAT DARI PERSPEKTIF PENGALAMAN

Di dua bab terakhir buku ini, Tuan berusaha untuk mendatangkan makna tentang tempat melalui dua pendekatan. Pendekatan pertama, tempat dari sudut kebolehlihatan (*visibility*). Ia lebih kepada tempat dari sudut fizikal. Tempat secara asasnya adalah apa-apa objek yang stabil yang berupaya menangkap perhatian kita. Apabila kita melihat pemandangan, mata kita akan memerhati dan berhenti pada suatu titik perhatian kita. Objek yang menjadi titik perhatian kita itu yang disebut sebagai kebolehlihatan yang pastinya adalah nyata dan wujud. Daripada definisi ini, kita memahami bahawa tempat boleh wujud dalam pelbagai skala seperti bangunan, kampung, daerah, negeri dan negara. Sementara pendekatan kedua pula merupakan kesimpulan penting yang dibawakan oleh Tuan tentang makna tempat dari perspektif pengalaman. Beliau membincangkan tentang hal ini dalam bab "*Time and Place*".

Tuan membentangkan tiga kaedah untuk memahami makna tempat ini. Kaedah pertama adalah dengan melihat kepada masa sebagai suatu pergerakan dan tempat sebagai suatu persinggahan

dalam arus masa yang bergerak itu. Tuan menjelaskan perkara ini dengan mempertalikan tiga unsur iaitu masa, tempat dan agensi manusia. Manusia sebagai makhluk hidup sentiasa akan melalui proses perkembangan sesuai dengan keperluan dan keinginan yang perlu dipenuhi. Apa yang dimaksudkan dengan keinginan dan keperluan itu merupakan sebuah matlamat yang hendak dicapai. Matlamat adalah merupakan kedua-duanya sekaligus iaitu satu titik dalam masa dan satu titik dalam ruang. Maka, dengan itu, manusia akan mengalami masa dan tempat secara serentak di mana masa bersifat mengalir dan tempat pula bersifat persinggahan yang menyiratkan dunia makna yang rencam dan berlapis-lapis. Dalam erti kata yang lebih ringkas, manusia hadir di situ.

Selanjutnya, kaedah kedua adalah melalui kesedaran bahawa sebuah rasa keterikatan seseorang terhadap suatu tempat adalah merupakan bahagian daripada fungsi masa. Hal ini bermaksud seseorang perlu mengambil tempoh masa tertentu untuk mengetahui, mengalami dan menghasilkan sebuah "rasa" terhadap sesuatu tempat. Pengetahuan abstrak tentang sesuatu tempat memang boleh diperolehi dalam tempoh yang singkat dengan membaca sebagai contoh. Kualiti visual sesebuah lingkungan juga boleh diperoleh jika kita memerhatikannya. Tetapi, sebuah "rasa" kepada tempat tersebut perlu mengambil masa yang lama untuk memperolehinya. Ia merupakan satu campuran yang unik antara penglihatan, pendengaran, pembauan serta hubungan keharmonian di antara irama-irama semulajadi dan buatan manusia yang wujud di tempat tersebut. Ia bersifat meresap dan terbenam dalam pengetahuan bawah sedar kita. Dalam erti kata yang lebih ringkas, makna terbit dari keadaan ini.

Kaedah ketiga adalah melalui pemahaman bahawa tempat sebagai bentuk ingatan kepada masa lalu. Ia merupakan rangkaian kesinambungan daripada pendekatan pertama dan kedua. Apabila manusia tidak mempunyai pilihan lain selain mesti mengalami masa dan tempat (pendekatan pertama), maka dengan itu sudah pasti ada tempat-tempat tertentu yang spesifik yang dialami oleh setiap individu sehingga menatijahkan pemaknaan terhadap tempat-tempat tersebut (pendekatan kedua). Kemudian, tempat-tempat tersebut seiring dengan berjalannya masa, akan memasuki suatu dimensi masa yang spesifik iaitu masa lalu (pendekatan ketiga). Dimensi masa lalu ternyata mempunyai tujuan yang spesifik yang mendorong kita mencari akar pengetahuan tentang tempat tersebut ke arah penghasilan identiti yang jelas kepada manusia yang mendiami tempat tersebut. Dalam erti kata yang lebih ringkas, proses ingatan telah berlaku dalam konteks ini.

## KESIMPULAN

Tuan memberikan kesimpulan kepada buku ini dalam bab terakhir iaitu bab epilog. Beliau menyatakan bahawa pengalaman atau dalam kata kerja "mengalami" sebenarnya adalah sebuah aktiviti dan proses pembelajaran. Tempat-tempat pada mulanya kita tidak tahu, tetapi apabila didedahkan dengan pengalaman, maka akhirnya tempat tersebut menjadi biasa bagi kita. Sebuah ruang abstrak yang tidak memberikan apa-apa kepentingan signifikan kepada kita sekarang boleh berubah menjadi tempat yang konkrit bagi kita yang dipenuhi dengan makna-makna tersendiri. Hal inilah yang dimaksudkan oleh Tuan tentang pengalaman adalah aktiviti pembelajaran

meskipun bukanlah dalam bentuk pembelajaran dengan pengetahuan dan arahan yang formal. Tuan juga mengkritik para ahli sains sosial yang meminggirkan data-data bentuk pengalaman kerana dianggap tidak memenuhi konsep-konsep yang diambil secara tidak kritis daripada sains fizikal. Oleh sebab itu, menurut Tuan lagi pembinaan pengetahuan dan pemahaman kita terhadap realiti akan menjadi bermasalah dan tidak mendalam. Tuan menutup buku terpentingnya ini dengan mempertegaskan kembali tujuan utama utamanya adalah untuk meningkatkan beban kesedaran yang sejalan dengan dorongan dan upaya geografi yang bersifat humanistik. Hal ini bermaksud menggali makna dan pengetahuan yang berada di sebalik sesebuah pengalaman yang memerlukan seseorang itu berada dalam mod kesedaran untuk menghasilkan perspektif kepengalamanannya.

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