




100% Manusia Film Festival as Cultural Activism, Strategic Cinephilia and Queer Counterpublic in Indonesian Film Scheme

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Abstract. 100% Manusia is an annual festival that has been held since 2017. This festival aims as a space to spread awareness on inclusivity, especially on gender related issues and LGBTQ, for the public and cinephilia in Indonesia. This article examines the cultural activism, strategic cinephilia, and queer counterpublic on 100% Manusia Film Festival. This research is conducted using qualitative and observation methods. Following examination conducted by Intan Paramaditha that sees Q! Film Festival as cultural activism, strategic cinephilia, and queer counterpublic, the authors examine how 100% Manusia brings the same mission brought by Q! Film Festival. This article shows how 100% Manusia is making strategies by using variation of themes and fringe events. However, because of the expansion of the theme, the value of queer counterpublic is blurry and does not clearly define the festival.

Keywords: Cultural Activism, Queer, Counterpublic, Strategic Cinephilia, 100% Manusia.

1 Introduction

100% Manusia Film Festival is an independent film festival in Indonesia that was created in 2017. This film festival was not only created independently but also financially independent through crowdfunding. 100% Manusia Film Festival aims to become a transformation agent, increase awareness of human rights issues, and support human empowerment for a better future. Amelia [1] stated that this festival also becomes an alternative screening room. From 2017 up to 2022, 100% Manusia has been screening films that work on several themes such as human rights, gender issues, diversity, and minorities. However, the most important issues that have always been brought up by 100% Manusia are gender fluidity and the relation of LGBTQ and human rights. The festival's support of the minority, which is not accepted by conservatism in Indonesia, is similar to what the Q! Film Festival stands for. Q! Film Festival was born in 2002. However, in 2017, the festival decided to take a hiatus or break due to the repression by Front Pembela Islam (FPI, Islamic Defenders Front). FPI believes that LGBTQ is against Islamic values. Besides the repression from FPI, another context that should be

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noted is the emergence of Islamic radicalism. Asrori [2] stated that several organizations, such as Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, and FPI, wanted to apply the Shari'a Law in Indonesia. Besides that, LGBTQ is also banned by local government law in Indonesia. As stated by Papilaya [3] the law from South Sumatra to Palembang believes that LGBTQ is an act of prostitution that should be punished.

Due to the demonization of LGBTQ in Indonesia, 100% Manusia could be argued as an act of cultural activism. According to Giddens as quoted in Hakim [4], cultural activism relates to agency, structure, and cultural structuration theories. 100% Manusia is an actor who can change the cultural structure by using self-potentiality as an agent with large or small power, which other individuals also influence. As explained by Giddens, the agent here is related to the actor who gets what he wants through actions or the actor who utilizes the construction of previous cultural structures, whether from economic institutions, politics, religion, or other things through constructions made by the actor, see Hakim [4]. Moreover, Hakim [4] stated a film festival can be seen as an agent that supports the formation of the structure by creating the system production of a social action that uses existing resources and rules to create system reproduction in which there are also social and cultural systems.

Previous research had been done by Paramaditha [5] who saw the festival as the opposition to the dominant narrative, especially related to the relation of gender and sexuality in Indonesia. Paramaditha [5] argues that Q! Film Festival made cultural activism that not only affected the queers but also introduced queer to middle-class Indonesians. Besides that, Paramaditha [5] offers strategic cinophilia, cultural activism, and queer counterpublic in seeing the struggle of Q! Film Festival. Paramaditha argues that strategic cinophilia is a strategy used to declare the legitimate presence of a movement in the existing public sphere. She sees that Q! Film Festival brings together LGBTQ people and middle-class people in Indonesia interested in arts and culture through film. Meanwhile, as a cultural activism, Q! Film Festivals dared to disrupt the order of society in Indonesia after the Reformation. Cultural activism aims to bring about a change in the existing culture of the society. The festival focuses on bringing an open discussion to increase public awareness of LGBTQ and the popularization of queer as a concept in Indonesia as mentioned by Paramaditha [5]. Q! Film Festival is seen as queer counterpublics, aiming not only to counter the public narration but also to bring societal changes [5].

Another theory contained in the article is the theory of counterpublics. The initial counterpublic theory presented by Warner [6] began with theories regarding feminism and the public sphere. Counterpublic can be interpreted as a discussion that opposes the rules found in the "public" which is made in a structured manner by positions that are opposite to those expressed by the "public" [6]. Counterpublic provides many examples in discussions in the LGBT environment because its background comes from feminist theory. The development of feminism into LGBT is related to cultural identity. Warner [6] argues that counterpublics can consciously or unconsciously understand their movements to be below or inferior to the public.

Even though Paramaditha's article is important in seeing festivals as cultural activism, it must be underlined that this article was published after the Q! Film Festival decided to go on hiatus indefinitely from 2017 as mentioned by Badalu [7]. Therefore,

this article offers a continuation of cultural activism, strategic cinephilia, and queer counterpublic through the 100% Manusia Film Festival. The research question for this article such as follows: How does the 100% Manusia Film Festival carry out strategies regarding cultural activism, strategic cinephilia to queer counterpublic in its journey in the Indonesian film scheme?

The authors chose this topic due to several factors. First, it is related to the way the festival is not only embracing the LGBTQ despite the demonization in Indonesia but also aiming to be more inclusive by embracing the marginalized topic as a way to restructure the public sphere after more than 20 years of Reformation in Indonesia. Second, discussing the festival as an agent of cultural activism is rarely discussed, especially if it relates to queer subjects.

2 Methodology

This research is qualitative. Apart from that, this research also uses a descriptive approach with basic and conceptual research characteristics. This qualitative nature comes from the author's desire to know the cultural activism, queer counterpublic, and strategic cinephilia implemented by the 100% Manusia Film Festival. This reading is qualitative because it will reveal the social phenomena in the 100% Manusia Film Festival. Based on the theory of qualitative research which explains data descriptively, not numerically as mentioned by Shanahan [8]. Thus, qualitative with basic and conceptual research is the most suitable approach used in this research.

Data collection for this research will use a case study method with a methodology in the form of observation. The observations will be taken from publicly available catalogs that the public can access. This research will take the form of discourse analysis. Analysis will be carried out based on the 100% Manusia Film Festival discourse, which will be linked to the theory presented in this research. The observations are from the festival catalogs, news reports, and festival observations.

The film catalog comes from the 100% Manusia Film Festival film catalog from 2017 to 2022. The catalog data will be the primary data in this research. Secondary data or supporting data in this research will be from existing news reports related to the festival. In addition, additional data from film synopsis from the festival catalogs. Therefore, this research uses content analysis methodology. The authors will first collect all catalog data on the 100persenmanusia.com web page. Then, the author will analyze the existing data, which available secondary data will support.

3 Result

3.1 100% Manusia Film Festival from year to year

100% Manusia Film Festival was held for the first time in 2017. This festival had a variety of themes. As quoted in the available e-catalog [9], the festival focuses on "human rights themes, encompassing gender, diversity and minority issues". They screen

more than 50 films from Indonesian and international sources with a variety of different programs. 11 Program titles in the first 100% Manusia mostly use “neutral” words such as Love, Freedom, and Bloodline, except for one program entitled “100% Non-confirming” related to the gender variant. Non-confirming is an action or decision to reject or to choose not to position one’s gender identity based on gender binary opposition. In its programs, 100% Manusia also collaborated with the International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT) and KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival.

Not only is there a film screening, but the festival also holds other programs. Other programs include KU.MIS (Kumpul Kamis) is a discussion forum with filmmakers, 100% Friday Movie Screening is a special film screening, a tour of production locations called A Walk To Understand, a book discussion forum entitled 100% All You Can Read, an art exhibition called Making Sense, and talk show called 100% Nyinyir Talk Show [9]. In 2018, the 100% Manusia Film Festival raised a special theme of “inclusivity”. Apart from the main issues raised in the festival, namely human rights, gender, diversity, and minorities, they also became more focused on highlighting these themes. The minority theme in 2018 focuses on religious and ethnic minorities. There are also additional themes in the form of HIV/AIDS issues, mental health, and disabilities [10].

This theme was raised by showing 87 feature and short films and other programs similar to the previous year’s festival, such as a Walk to Understand, art exhibitions, talk shows, special screenings, and book discussion forums. However, there are additional programs in the form of stage performance and 100% Health Care in the 2018 edition. Then, the film screening for this year was divided into 12 categories. A few categories from the 2018 edition are 100% In Motion, 100% V for Venus, and even collaborating with other film festivals such as 100% Collaboration: Minikino and 100% Collaboration: KASHISH. Each category of film did not include a description or explanation. However, like the 2017 edition, the 2018 100% Manusia Film Festival collaborated with KASHISH, a film festival focused on the SOGIE (Sexual orientation, gender identity expression) issue which is one of the huge human rights issues [10].

In 2019 and 2020, the e-catalogue on the official 100% Manusia Film Festival website could not be found. The festival archive for those two years only displays the programs and categories of films screened in those two years. In 2019, more than 58 films were screened in categories divided into 100% V for Venus, 100% Short Films Compilation, 100% In Motion, 100% Free Spirit, and 100% Bhineka [11].

Meanwhile, in 2020, there was no division in categorizing the screened films. The author can only see the screened film list divided into the opening, 100% Screen Sho(r)ts!, and closing. The author could only find 20 films that were screened in 2020. The few films screened at the 2020 edition were due to the Covid-19 pandemic [12]. In 2021, the Festival will once again be held online. The fifth edition of this festival has the theme Journey, with 25 films originating from 15 countries as stated by the 100% Manusia Film Festival website [13]. The festival opened on International Day Against Gender-Based Violence and closed on World AIDS Day. The 100% Manusia Film Festival [14] description states the festival’s desire to unwrap individuals from negative labels, stereotypes, prejudice, and stigma.

The 100% Manusia Film Festival in 2021 [14] is similar to the categorization of film screenings in 2020. That is because there are only two film categories, namely 100% All Around the World and 100% Local Flavors. Meanwhile, the rest are only screenings of feature films that are not categorized. The 2021 edition of the festival screened ten feature-length films and held 14 fringe events. A few notable fringe events from the 2021 edition that cover LGBTQ issues are 100% Healthcare: Test from Home and 100% Film Talks: Local Flavors on Gender. 100% Healthcare gives access to an HIV test available from home, and 100% Film Talks discuss gender issues with a few Indonesian Filmmakers.

In 2022, this festival will be held for the first time in a hybrid manner. The main theme of this year's festival is Changemakers. The main message to be conveyed at this year's festival is that everyone can bring change to their own lives and humanity. This theme was achieved by screening 56 films from 22 countries plus 11 fringe events. The film screening categories are divided into 11 categories, such as 100% F for Fluid, which, based on the description of the program, focuses on finding true love. One of the films screened in the program is *And Then We Danced* (2019), which earned a nomination for Queer Palm from Cannes Film Festival 2019 [15]. The 2022 edition also collaborated again with KASHISH with the program 100% Kiss Me Kashish!. Then, there were 11 categories of fringe events, such as 100% Heart to Heart, 100% Healthcare, and 100% Talks: Freedom of Expression & Us.

4 Discussion

100% Manusia Film Festival was held from 2017 to 2022, when this research was written. From the beginning of the festival, their main theme and mission was to raise human rights issues. This broad issue covers various topics, ranging from gender equality, diversity, and disability to HIV/AIDS. More specific themes will only begin to be raised at the festival in 2021 and 2022. In the first four editions of the festival, they did not focus on one topic but instead highlighted the festival's main theme. Several supporting arguments showcase the breadth of topics the 100% Manusia Film Festival covers. The topic of gender equality is one of the topics raised. One of the films featured at the 100% Manusia Film Festival is *Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts* (2017). As stated by Ekarahendy [16] the film shows several problems experienced by women, such as the lack of autonomy over the body, missing laws and justice enforcement apparatus, discrimination against gender construction, and the exile experienced by women.

Strategic Cinephilia is the main strategy set by this festival with a different approach from Q! Film Festival. As Paramaditha [5] said, "inclusionary boundary-work" was carried out by the festival as a way for them to be accepted as a recognized segment in Indonesian society. Changing themes that raise human rights issues is their way of expanding the scope so that it can be legally accepted in the public sphere.

Several films raised issues regarding human rights at the 100% Manusia Film Festival in 2017. One feature film that raises human rights issues is *Istirahatlah Kata-Kata* (2016) by Yosep Anggi Noen [9]. The film depicts the figure of poet Wiji Thukul, who had to hide from the Soeharto regime at that time as mentioned by Yusuf [17]. Wiji

Thukul's figure is described as bored and scared because he was a fugitive at that time [17]. Another short film in the festival that raises human rights issues during the new order is *Langit Masih Gemuruh* (2015) by Jason Iskandar [9]. The issue of sexual violence experienced by Indonesian citizens of Chinese descent is the main topic in this film as mentioned by Pramudito [18].

The application of strategic cinephilia in the 100% Manusia Film Festival is carried out in the main theme and through all the programs and forms of collaboration. In 2017, they invited one of the guest stars, a person with a disability. In 2022, they also hold 100% Cinerigi in the form of a screening of *Preman* (2021) for people with visual impairment [15]. Since the festival was founded, they have collaborated with Angsamerah to provide sexual health tests [10]. Of the people who use Angsamerah's sexual health testing services, 50% of men are homosexuals, see Nafisah et al. [19].

The 100% Manusia Film Festival also implements cultural activism, making the festival an agent. The festival utilizes the construction of cultural structures formed through collaboration with various institutions in Indonesia. Collaboration with state institutions such as the European Union, Institut Francais Indonesia, and community organizations such as Arus Pelangi and KontraS [15]. That is what Hakim [4] conveyed through his theory regarding cultural activism, that actors can use the construction of existing cultural structures through state institutions to community organizations. 100% Manusia Film Festival also strives to be part of the social and cultural structuration that is forming in Indonesia. The development of dialogue can be seen in various film screenings accompanied by discussions with filmmakers and various fringe events held. The dialectic built attracts not only filmmakers but also book writers, tattoo artists, and even activists. Gibbens's theory of structuration, as quoted in Hakim [4] says, "a situation of continuity or transfiguration of structures that results in the reproduction of a social system". The structuration development is also broad, just like the main message they want to convey. From feminist activists to disabled activists, everyone is reached by the festival [15].

Raising topics about culture in Indonesia is not only limited to the festival's fringe events but also a film screening program appropriate to the cultural topics they want to raise. One of these films is *Sekala Niskala* (2017) by Kamila Andini. The film is based on a cultural myth in Bali regarding the curse of twins (twins of different sexes) as stated in Diah [20]. The topic aligns with what the 100% Manusia Film Festival is trying to cover in its program.

Both values are achievable by 100% Manusia Film Festival People due to the breadth of scope they wish to achieve. However, the value of queer counterpublic in the festival is still disproportionately low compared to other achievements. This can be seen from the main theme which does not explicitly fight for queer or LGBTQ, but with the words "encompassing gender and minority issues" [9]. One of the 100% Manusia Film Festival screening categories in 2022 is 100% F For Fluid. The description given in this category is a program for those looking for the possibility of finding love. The choice of words to search for love is one form of doubt in this festival.

These doubts are certainly not without basis. The rejection phenomenon by the FPI community organization was one of the main factors in their decision. The existence of activism from extremists who reject queers in Indonesia means they do not explicitly

highlight queers in this festival. Even though there are doubts about the message conveyed in the program, the 100% Manusia Film Festival continues to strive to show films with LGBTQ themes. This effort was achieved by screening one of the LGBTQ films by Monica Vanesa Tedja, *Dear to Me* (2021). The film tells the story of Tim and the problems he experiences as a homosexual regarding his family, who are strict Christians and reject this sexuality, as cited in Pasaribu [21]. However, including LGBTQ-themed films in the festival does not mean that they openly promote LGBTQ ideas as a form of queer counterpublic to promote the festival as in Q! Film Festival, see Paramaditha [5].

Counterpublic efforts at the 100% Manusia Film Festival are also less visible. Even though the festival provides LGBTQ-themed films or sexual health tests, this is because this festival also supports the rules formed by the public. As stated by Warner [6] in his article, the queer counterpublic itself challenges the values of the public to raise the level of understanding held. Community support for people with disabilities, gender equality, and religious and ethnic minorities are rules that are also fought for by the public or the general public. The nature of this resistance cannot be seen in their struggle for queer and LGBTQ people, even though this resistance can bring about change by ratifying the PKS Law (Sexual Violence Crime). Efforts to avoid previously occurring conflicts are also visible in the 100% Manusia Film Festival. The fear of existing conflicts can be seen from the opening and closing ceremonies, which, from the festival's founding until 2022, are still invitation only. Also, it can be seen with the rules set by the festival. When people want to see a film screening, they must register to become members, which is an effort to reduce the emergence of conflict during this festival [15].

5 Conclusion

From the data obtained, it can be concluded that the 100% Manusia Film Festival raises broader themes and issues in human rights. The issues raised range from gender equality, diversity, minorities, and HIV/AIDS to disabilities. These issues are raised at the festival through film screening programs and various fringe events, such as talk shows, book discussions, karaoke, art exhibitions, and exhibitions of film production locations. 100% Manusia Film Festival can achieve the achievement of cultural activism to strategic cinephilia. This achievement utilizes the festival as a cultural agent that provides a space for discussion with the creators of the work.

They also hold various events useful for building inclusionary boundary work as a characteristic of strategic cinephilia. Various programs such as screening films for people with disabilities and providing places for sexual health tests are their efforts as a form of cultural activism and strategic cinephilia. However, the queer counterpublic nature of this festival remains to be seen. This is because of the trauma from the conflict that the Q! Film Festival has gone through with FPI. This doubt can be seen in the more closed rules to the more careful choice of words in representing queer people in the 100% Manusia Film Festival.

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