Ethnic Stereotypes in the Film *Kaka Boss*: Representation of Eastern Indonesians

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study aims to examine how stereotypes toward people from Eastern Indonesia are represented in the film *Kaka Boss* and the role of the film in reinforcing or challenging stereotypes that circulate in society.

Method – This research employs a qualitative approach using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, focusing on three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth, as applied to selected scenes in the film, with the concepts of stereotype and representation theory serving as the interpretive framework.

Findings – The findings indicate that stereotypes related to violence, harsh behavior, and criminal tendencies are not portrayed as inherent traits of the main character, but rather as social constructions imposed by the surrounding environment. Through the responses of the character Kaka Boss in various conflict situations, the film presents a reversal of meaning toward social myths that associate assertiveness and the physical appearance of people from Eastern Indonesia with violence. Thus, *Kaka Boss* tends to offer a deconstruction of stereotypes by presenting representations of people from Eastern Indonesia that are more humanistic, complex, and dialogical.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country characterized by diverse cultures, languages, and ethnicities. This diversity positions Indonesia as a multicultural nation, yet it also presents challenges in intergroup interactions. One of the issues that arises is the presence of stereotypes toward certain groups. These stereotypes are often not based on objective reality, but rather on assumptions or prejudices shaped by dominant cultural narratives (Khoerunisa et al., 2021).

Stereotypes can be understood as judgments about individuals based solely on perceptions of the groups to which they are categorized. In many cases, stereotypes function as intuitive cognitive shortcuts, enabling individuals to simplify complex realities and make decisions more quickly. Moreover, stereotypes constitute a cognitive element of intergroup conflict, reflecting beliefs about the personal attributes of members within a particular group or social category. Stereotypes about a group embody expectations and assumptions regarding the characteristics of its members, thereby influencing how individuals think, process information, and make decisions (Handayani, 2018).

Ethnic stereotypes and negative prejudice toward certain groups have become an inseparable part of Indonesia's social dynamics. As a country with extensive ethnic, cultural, and tribal diversity, Indonesia frequently faces challenges in fostering fair and equitable understanding among its various groups (Khoerunisa et al., 2021). These stereotypes often emerge from everyday social experiences, media representations, and limited intergroup interactions. Communities from Eastern Indonesia—comprising ethnic groups from regions such as East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), Maluku, Papua, and others—are among those frequently subjected to stereotyping. Negative labels such as being unfriendly, harsh, hot-tempered, or even perceived as underdeveloped and backward are often unjustly attached to these communities (Wibowo, 2023).

The phenomenon of stereotyping toward Eastern Indonesian communities is also evident in various social incidents in Indonesia. One notable example is the discrimination against Papuan students in Surabaya in 2019, which involved racial slurs and negative stigmatization of their ethnic identity (Ghozali & Liana, 2024). Similar forms of discrimination are also found in everyday life, such as in housing rental practices in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, where advertisements explicitly exclude prospective tenants from Eastern Indonesia on the grounds that they are perceived as disruptive or troublesome. Research indicates that such stereotypes are partly shaped by mass media coverage and prevailing social perceptions (Ramadhan & Hakim, 2025). A similar phenomenon is observed in social interactions between Papuan students and local communities in Baciro, Yogyakarta, where differences in language, cultural background, and beliefs give rise to stereotypes that result in passive and distant social relations between the two groups (Endriyadi, 2020). These cases demonstrate that stereotypes toward Eastern Indonesians are not only present in social discourse but also influence how they are treated in everyday life.

Such stereotypes are not only formed through daily interactions but are also reinforced through media representations, both in entertainment such as films and in news reporting. Media—particularly film—plays a significant role in shaping social and cultural representations. As a form of mass media, film has considerable influence in shaping public perceptions of particular ethnic groups. The way audiences perceive groups depicted in films is influenced by representations conveyed through narrative, characterization, dialogue, and visual elements. Films can challenge, reinforce, or even dismantle existing stereotypes in society (Huda et al., 2023). For instance, if Eastern Indonesians are portrayed negatively in films, such depictions may reinforce pre-existing stereotypes. Conversely, films may reduce prejudice and dismantle negative stereotypes if they present more diverse and complex portrayals of these groups. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how specific groups are represented in films and the potential impacts of such representations.

Representation is the process of communicating reality through media. It is not a direct reflection of reality but rather a constructed depiction shaped by narratives, language, symbols, and imagery. Stuart Hall defines representation as the process of producing meaning through language and other signifying systems. Media representations are never neutral, as they convey particular beliefs, perspectives, and attitudes that may either reinforce or deconstruct existing stereotypes (Andira & Malayati, 2024).

Throughout the film, the character Kaka Boss and other characters from Eastern Indonesia are frequently associated with traits commonly linked to negative stereotypes, such as being tough, aggressive, and emotional. This makes the film *Kaka Boss* an interesting subject of study, as it presents representations of Eastern Indonesian communities within the narrative space of popular Indonesian cinema. The film's director, Arie Kriting, has stated that Indonesian media has historically tended to portray Eastern Indonesians primarily within contexts of sadness and poverty (Tia & Siahaan, 2025). This statement aligns with findings from research on *Imperfect The Series Season 2*, which shows that representations of Papuan communities in media and film are often framed through certain stereotypes, such as being harsh or aggressive, as well as portraying Papua as underdeveloped and backward (Syaifuddin, 2023). Other studies on films such as *Denias, Senandung di Atas Awan* and *Di Timur Matahari* also indicate that these films continue to construct Papuan communities as underdeveloped, traditional, and lacking education (Ayun, 2020). Therefore, *Kaka Boss* becomes a compelling subject for analysis, as it potentially offers a different representation of Eastern Indonesians while also providing an opportunity to examine whether the film reproduces or deconstructs long-standing stereotypes in media representations.

To analyze how stereotypes of Eastern Indonesians are portrayed in *Kaka Boss*, Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis is employed as the primary methodological approach. This method allows researchers to examine meanings embedded in visual, verbal, and symbolic signs within the film as part of the construction of social and cultural reality. Barthes' semiotic analysis consists of three levels of meaning: denotation (literal meaning or what is directly visible), connotation (deeper meanings shaped by cultural and emotional associations), and myth (ideological meanings that represent dominant values and perspectives within society) (Saputra & Albab, 2024). Through this approach, researchers can identify how stereotypical representations of Eastern Indonesians are constructed, reinforced, or challenged through the visual narratives and dialogues presented in *Kaka Boss*.

Previous studies have demonstrated how stereotypical representations in film can shape public opinion. For example, research by Haidar Aljufri (2018) analyzed the representation of Indonesian Arab stereotypes in the film *Abdullah v Takeshi* using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. The findings reveal that stereotypes of Indonesian Arabs are represented through specific signs, such as distinctive Arab attributes (prayer mats, *gamis* for men, *hijab* for women), the use of Arabic in conversations, and the portrayal of social relations as relatively closed and exclusive. Additionally, the profession of trading is depicted as a defining characteristic, collectively forming a homogeneous and stereotypical image of the group in the audience's perception (Aljufri, 2018).

Another relevant study by Gabriella Aurelia and Heppy New Year Haloho, titled "The Representation of Eastern Indonesians in the Film *Kaka Boss*," employs Charles Sanders Peirce's

semiotic approach with qualitative content analysis of visual, verbal, and symbolic signs in the film. The findings identify five main forms of representation of Eastern Indonesians: as dominant figures, upholders of family values, proactive and creative individuals, courageous actors in confronting conflict, and symbols of resilience in facing legal challenges (Aurelia & Haloho, 2025).

Additionally, a study by Jeni Periyani et al. titled "Analysis of Character Education Values in the Film *Kaka Boss*" uses a qualitative descriptive approach with content analysis techniques. The study finds that the film contains various character education values, including responsibility, discipline, empathy and care, social cooperation, honesty, and courage. These values are conveyed through the actions of the main character and interactions among characters in dealing with conflict, highlighting the film's potential as a medium for shaping positive social attitudes and values (Periyani et al., 2025).

These studies indicate that film functions not only as a medium of entertainment but also as a medium that constructs and disseminates social meanings related to group identity through the signs and meanings it presents. The distinction between this study and previous research lies in its focus. Aljufri's study emphasizes the representation of Indonesian Arab stereotypes, while the other two studies on *Kaka Boss* focus more on character portrayal and educational values. In contrast, this study specifically examines how stereotypes of Eastern Indonesians are represented in *Kaka Boss*, and analyzes whether these representations reinforce or challenge existing stereotypes through Roland Barthes' semiotic framework at the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth.

The central problem addressed in this study concerns how stereotypes of Eastern Indonesians are portrayed in the film *Kaka Boss*. This study aims to analyze how such stereotypes are represented through visual, verbal, and symbolic signs in the film. By employing Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, the research also examines denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings embedded in these representations to assess the extent to which the film reinforces or challenges existing societal stereotypes.

METHOD

A qualitative approach is employed in this study with the aim of obtaining an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon. According to Bogdan and Taylor (as cited in Suwendra, 2018), qualitative research gathers descriptive data in the form of narratives, derived from both spoken and written language, obtained from observed subjects and behaviors. This study adopts a qualitative approach because it seeks to understand and interpret how stereotypes of Eastern Indonesians are represented in the film *Kaka Boss* through the visual and verbal signs presented within it. A descriptive approach is utilized to systematically illustrate how meanings are formed and constructed using Roland Barthes' semiotic model, which encompasses three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. Through this approach, the study aims to reveal how stereotypical representations are constructed and to identify the ideological values embedded within the film's visual narrative.

The object of this study is the film *Kaka Boss*, directed by Arie Kriting and Kristo Immanuel, and released in 2024 as a family comedy-drama. This film is selected because it explicitly features a main character from Eastern Indonesia and contains a variety of meaningful visual and verbal signs. The study focuses on how stereotypes of Eastern Indonesians are represented through the system

of signs in the film, analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework at three levels of meaning: denotative, connotative, and myth.

Data collection is conducted through three techniques. First, observation of the film is carried out by closely examining each scene, dialogue, and visual and verbal element presented. Scenes that depict stereotypes of Eastern Indonesians are then analyzed using the three levels of meaning in Barthes' semiotic model—denotation, connotation, and myth—to uncover how such stereotypes are represented in the film. Second, a literature review is conducted to establish a strong theoretical foundation regarding representation, ethnic stereotypes, and Barthes' semiotic concepts. The literature includes books, journal articles, theses, and previous studies relevant to the research topic. Third, documentation is conducted by collecting and recording selected scenes, dialogue transcripts, and visual elements from the film *Kaka Boss* that relate to stereotypes of Eastern Indonesians. In addition, documentation includes data gathered from other written sources such as online articles and interviews, which support the observational findings and strengthen the semiotic analysis of the representations presented in the film.

Data analysis employs Roland Barthes' semiotic technique to examine how meaning is constructed through systems of signs in media, particularly film. According to Barthes, a sign consists of two primary layers of meaning: denotation (literal meaning) and connotation (figurative meaning associated with emotions, values, or culture). Furthermore, Barthes introduces the concept of myth, which operates at an ideological level and serves to legitimize dominant values within society. Each sign identified in the film is analyzed through these three levels of meaning to uncover the construction of stereotypical meanings. The resulting interpretations are then examined using the concept of stereotypes to determine whether the representations in the film tend to reproduce or instead deconstruct stereotypes of Eastern Indonesian communities.

To ensure data validity, this study applies a technique of prolonged engagement and persistent observation. Scenes in the film *Kaka Boss* are analyzed repeatedly and carefully to minimize subjective interpretative errors, particularly in identifying denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings. This technique aims to maintain consistency and enhance the credibility of the study's findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis conducted on the film *Kaka Boss*, the researcher examined five scenes that were purposively selected, as they were considered to most strongly represent the emergence of stereotypes toward Eastern Indonesian communities within the film's narrative. Purposive sampling in qualitative research involves selecting data segments that are most relevant to the research problem, thereby providing in-depth insights into the phenomenon under study (Sagita & DA, 2018). In these scenes, *Kaka Boss* portrays the story of Kaka Boss as a father figure and leader who is frequently confronted with stereotypical perceptions from those around him. Various conflicts arise within the family, workplace, and broader social interactions, illustrating how Kaka Boss's identity, appearance, and communication style are often misinterpreted by others.

Through this series of conflicts, *Kaka Boss* does not merely present an entertaining narrative but also offers a reflection of social realities that continue to persist in society, particularly regarding

stereotypes toward Eastern Indonesians. The film demonstrates how such stereotypes are constructed and reproduced, while simultaneously being challenged through the actions and attitudes of the main character.

Accordingly, this study employs Roland Barthes' semiotic model to examine the denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings present in the selected scenes. The analysis focuses on how *Kaka Boss* represents stereotypes of Eastern Indonesians through visual, verbal, and symbolic signs, and how the film either reinforces or deconstructs stereotypes prevalent in society. The following section presents the semiotic analysis based on selected scene excerpts.

Semiotic Analysis of the Film *Kaka Boss*

Figure 1. Scene from the film Kaka Boss
(00:19:55–00:21:02)

In this film excerpt, a man is depicted visiting Kaka Boss's office and making a sarcastic remark by assuming that the people coming into the room are victims of interrogation. Kaka Boss and his subordinates then clarify that the office serves clients and operates as a legitimate security service provider.

Denotative:

A man arrives at Kaka Boss's office and comments that the individuals entering the office are victims of interrogation, as indicated by his verbal statement and hand gestures mimicking the act of hitting someone. Kaka Boss and one of his subordinates then explain that they serve clients and operate within the field of official security services, not for engaging in acts of violence. After receiving this clarification, the man displays an awkward demeanor and realizes that his assumption was incorrect.

Connotative:

The sarcastic tone and the hitting gesture performed by the man represent a social prejudice toward individuals who appear firm, authoritative, and masculine. Within prevailing societal stereotypes, such appearances are often associated with violence, intimidation, or even illegal activities, making them seem acceptable as objects of humor. The relatively dim atmosphere of the room further reinforces this impression. However, Kaka Boss's calm, rational, and communicative response conveys the opposite meaning. Rather than reacting with anger, he provides a professional explanation. This response highlights Kaka Boss's humanistic qualities and directly contradicts the negative stereotypes that have been attached to him.

Myth:

Through this scene, the film exposes a social myth that individuals with a tough appearance, firm voice, and an intimidating work environment are inherently linked to violence or criminality. This myth is constructed through assumptions that are continuously reproduced in everyday social interactions, often in the form of seemingly harmless jokes. Kaka Boss deconstructs this myth by demonstrating that firmness and authority do not necessarily lead to violence, but can coexist with professionalism, emotional control, and a clear ethical framework.

Figure 2. Scene from the film Kaka Boss
(00:21:51–00:26:28)

In this film excerpt, a conflict is portrayed between Angel and her father, Kaka Boss, regarding the plan for parents to attend a school event. Angel refuses Kaka Boss's presence, expressing embarrassment and stating that her friends perceive her father as a thug. This rejection triggers an emotional response from Kaka Boss, who questions such judgment by referring to his physical identity and his background as an Eastern Indonesian.

Denotative:

At the denotative level, this scene presents an emotional conversation between Kaka Boss and his daughter in the living room of their home. Angel refuses her father's attendance at the school event because she feels ashamed due to her friends' perception of Kaka Boss as a thug. In response, Kaka Boss reacts with a raised tone and a visibly offended expression, questioning whether his identity as an Eastern Indonesian—with physical characteristics such as "dark skin" and "intense eyes"—leads others to label him as a criminal. Angel then explains that this perception originated during a career day event, when Kaka Boss demonstrated his work as a debt collector in an aggressive manner that frightened her friends.

Connotative:

The mention of dark skin and sharp or intense eyes in Kaka Boss's dialogue reflects long-standing stereotypes within society, where individuals with such physical characteristics are often perceived as harsh, hot-tempered, or dangerous. Kaka Boss's emotional reaction indicates that such judgments are not only socially harmful but also personally hurtful, especially when these stigmas influence his own child's perception of him. His statement serves as a rejection of a worldview that evaluates individuals solely based on outward appearance, rather than their actual character and

values.
Myth:

In social life, there remains a widespread belief that physical appearance reflects a person's character. Fair skin and gentle demeanor are often associated with goodness, while darker skin and a loud voice are perceived as intimidating or threatening. *Kaka Boss* challenges this assumption by portraying a main character who appears "tough" yet demonstrates care, honesty, and responsibility. Through this scene, the film emphasizes that stereotypes based on physical appearance and origin are not truths, but rather socially constructed perceptions that are reproduced and transmitted within society.

Figure 3. Scene from the film Kaka Boss
(00:48:45–00:50:43)

A conflict occurs between Kaka Boss's subordinates and local residents on a vacant plot of land. The residents accuse them of being thugs and reject their presence. When Kaka Boss arrives to provide clarification, the residents continue to act confrontational until Kaka Boss asserts his stance firmly, before ultimately inviting them to resolve the issue through discussion and dialogue.
Denotative:

Kaka Boss arrives at the location and explains that they are officially employed to secure the land. The residents remain distrustful and issue challenges. Kaka Boss responds in a firm tone, stating that he is not afraid of confrontation, but emphasizes that his purpose is not to provoke conflict. He then invites the residents to engage in discussion and seek a mutual resolution. Following this statement, the residents' attitude begins to shift, and they become willing to engage in dialogue.
Connotative:

Kaka Boss's firm tone in responding to the residents' rejection can culturally be interpreted as a symbol of power and courage, which in social perception is often associated with threat or violence. This interpretation aligns with stereotypes frequently attached to Eastern Indonesians as being tough and easily provoked. However, this meaning shifts when Kaka Boss immediately clarifies that his primary intention is not to create conflict, but to initiate dialogue. This transition transforms the emotional meaning from one characterized by fear and suspicion into one of openness toward peaceful resolution.

Myth:

Through this scene, the film challenges the social myth that courage and a loud or firm voice are inherently linked to violence. In societal perception, physical and verbal expressions are often used as the basis for judging a person's intentions. *Kaka Boss* subverts this assumption by portraying a main character who is both courageous and assertive, yet prioritizes peaceful conflict resolution. Kaka Boss represents the idea that true strength lies not in the ability to fight, but in the willingness to engage in dialogue and seek collective solutions.

Figure 4. Scene from the film Kaka Boss
(01:34:13–01:35:10)

Kaka Boss retreats to his room after arguing with Angel, feeling disappointed and hurt upon realizing that everyone, including his own daughter, has been dishonest about his singing ability. In his room, Kaka Boss expresses his sadness by crying, and his wife later comes to comfort him and provide emotional support.

Denotative:

At the denotative level, this scene depicts Kaka Boss feeling disappointed after an argument with Angel, upon discovering that he has been deceived regarding his singing ability. Following the confrontation, Kaka Boss goes to his room and expresses his disappointment by crying while lying on the bed. Shortly afterward, his wife enters the room, approaches him, and attempts to comfort him while offering emotional support.

Connotative:

Kaka Boss's tears evoke a strong emotional meaning as they contrast with his outward image, which has been consistently portrayed as firm, tough, and authoritative. This scene reveals a vulnerable and human side of a figure often perceived as a "strong man." His sadness does not merely stem from personal failure, but from his desire to be acknowledged and appreciated by his daughter. His tears symbolize an emotional expression that has long been suppressed by expectations of masculinity and prevailing social stereotypes.

Myth:

This scene challenges the social myth that men, especially those who appear tough and masculine, should not display sadness or cry. Within common cultural constructions, men are often expected to maintain emotional strength and suppress their feelings. *Kaka Boss* deconstructs this myth by portraying crying not as a sign of weakness, but as an expression of emotional honesty.

Kaka Boss is depicted as a strong man who nonetheless possesses feelings and a need for love and recognition, thereby reinforcing the idea that humanity is not constrained by gender stereotypes or social identity.

Figure 5. Scene from the film Kaka Boss (01:40:35–01:41:43)

In this scene, a conversation is shown between Kaka Boss and Gofur, one of his subordinates. Gofur tries to persuade Kaka Boss to resolve the problem peacefully, without emotion or violence. After initially refusing, Kaka Boss eventually agrees to talk and listen to Gofur's explanation.

Denotative

The denotative meaning of this scene shows Gofur calling Kaka Boss from outside and asking him to resolve the issue through calm conversation without violence. The conversation is brief but tense, with Kaka Boss initially rejecting the suggestion. Gofur then asks Kaka Boss to speak without emotion and without physical action. After that, Kaka Boss allows Gofur to enter his room. The two then sit down and discuss the matter in a more controlled tone.

Connotative

Gofur's invitation to speak calmly suggests that violence is often perceived as a likely response from a figure like Kaka Boss. This perception reflects a stereotype that men with assertive and firm characteristics tend to resolve conflicts in an emotional and aggressive manner. However, Kaka Boss's decision to yield and listen demonstrates self-control and openness to dialogue. This meaning emphasizes that peaceful conflict resolution is not determined by personal closeness, but by individual awareness and the choice of attitude.

Myth

In social life, there is still a prevailing assumption that conflicts involving assertive and authoritative male figures tend to lead to emotion and violence. Figures like Kaka Boss are often positioned as individuals who are difficult to engage in dialogue and who rely more on dominance in resolving problems. Through this scene, the film *Kaka Boss* shows that this assumption is not always true. Kaka Boss's willingness to control his emotions and listen to Gofur demonstrates that peaceful conflict resolution can occur through awareness and self-restraint, rather than violence. This scene reinforces the idea that emotional maturity is not determined by appearance or a tough character, but by the choices one makes in dealing with problems.

Deconstruction of Stereotypes toward Eastern Indonesians

Based on the results of a semiotic analysis using Roland Barthes' framework, interpreted through the concepts of stereotypes and representation theory, it can be seen that the film *Kaka Boss* does not portray stereotypes of Eastern Indonesians as behaviors inherent to or justified by them. Instead, it presents these stereotypes as social constructions imposed by the surrounding environment on the main character. Stereotypes of violence, harshness, and criminal tendencies are not depicted as inherent traits of Kaka Boss, but rather emerge through the prejudices of others, both in everyday social interactions and personal relationships.

Conceptually, stereotypes are understood as social generalizations that simplify the identity of a group based on certain characteristics assumed to represent the whole, even though they do not necessarily reflect the reality of individuals within that group. In line with representation theory proposed by Stuart Hall, media does not merely reflect social reality, but actively constructs and produces meaning about certain groups through systems of signs, language, images, and symbols. Within this framework, the analysis at the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth shows that the representation of Eastern Indonesians in this film is not constructed as a natural or inherent identity of the main character, but as a meaning shaped by the social perspectives of the surrounding environment. Thus, the film positions stereotypes as something to be questioned and critiqued rather than reinforced.

The first scene demonstrates how social prejudice operates through jokes and seemingly harmless assumptions. A sarcastic remark from a man who assumes Kaka Boss's office is an interrogation room reflects societal perceptions of a firm and masculine figure. Such prejudice is often reproduced through humor, satire, or casual remarks that appear trivial but unconsciously normalize stigma toward certain groups. In the Indonesian cultural context, particularly toward Eastern Indonesians, a strong physical appearance is often associated with violence or illegal behavior. However, Kaka Boss's calm and professional response subverts these expectations.

This scene emphasizes that stereotypes do not always arise from real experiences, but are formed through socially mediated processes that are continuously reproduced in everyday life. In other words, social judgments about the character do not stem from actual interaction, but from meanings that have already been collectively constructed. Stereotypes do not emerge naturally or instinctively, but develop through indirect interethnic experiences, such as information from family, social environments, and media representations. Therefore, judgments about Kaka Boss reflect pre-existing social constructions rather than actual personal interactions, allowing stereotypes to persist even without real evidence.

In this context, stereotypes operate not only at the level of individual perception but also as symbolic mechanisms that maintain certain social structures. More broadly, stereotypes can function to preserve social hierarchies by positioning certain groups as inferior through repeated negative labeling. They regulate how society defines who is "normal" and who is considered "the other." In this case, Eastern Indonesians are often positioned as deviating from dominant norms, where attributes such as a loud voice, strong physique, and assertive expression are interpreted as threats. The film illustrates how this mechanism operates subtly in everyday interactions, while also showing

that stereotypes are not objective truths, but products of unequal power relations in the production of social meaning.

The conflict between Kaka Boss and Angel reveals deeper impacts of stereotypes, as stigma not only comes from society but also affects family relationships. Angel's rejection of her father's presence at school reflects how stereotypes can create shame and emotional distance. Discussions about skin color and facial expressions highlight how physical identity is still used as a basis for moral judgment. When stereotypes are continuously repeated and accepted as social truth, they can shape how individuals see themselves and their relationships, aligning with the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy. Negative stereotypes can also cause serious psychological harm, including reduced self-confidence and reinforced prejudice.

In multicultural societies, prejudice often arises when intergroup interaction is limited and lacks equal communication, leading individuals to be judged based on group images rather than actual behavior. This pattern is reflected in the conflict with residents at an empty lot, where accusations of thuggery emerge before any dialogue. Kaka Boss's assertiveness initially reinforces suspicion, aligning with the myth that loudness and bravery equate to violence. However, his shift toward dialogue marks a reversal of meaning, showing that assertiveness can lead to rational and peaceful conflict resolution. At this point, the film clearly deconstructs the assumption that Eastern Indonesians tend to resolve problems through violence.

This deconstruction is further reinforced through Kaka Boss's emotional vulnerability in the scene where he cries. This contradicts traditional constructions of masculinity, especially within ethnic stereotypes. The film shows that strength does not mean suppressing emotion, and that sadness is not something to hide. Kaka Boss's vulnerability stems not from weakness, but from his desire to be accepted and valued by his child, thereby challenging the myth that men must always be emotionally strong.

From a semiotic perspective, the myths attached to Eastern Indonesians function as second-order meanings that naturalize social prejudice. These myths obscure their historical and social origins, making stigma appear natural. By presenting contradictions between appearance and action, the film exposes the artificial nature of these myths and opens space for more critical interpretations.

Interactions between Kaka Boss and Gofur also show that even those close to him are aware of social expectations of aggression. Gofur's appeal for peaceful resolution reflects these assumptions. However, Kaka Boss's willingness to listen emphasizes that behavior is shaped not by stereotypes, but by conscious choices. Emotional maturity and dialogue emerge as more meaningful forms of strength.

Overall, the analysis shows that *Kaka Boss* represents stereotypes of Eastern Indonesians not as accepted reality, but as socially constructed meanings that are questioned through the narrative. The film presents a complex character who is firm yet humane, authoritative without violence, and strong without denying emotional depth. In doing so, it encourages audiences to view Eastern Indonesian identity in a more just and humanistic way, while also opening broader social reflection.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of selected scenes, the film *Kaka Boss* does not present stereotypes as inherent truths attached to Eastern Indonesian characters, but as perspectives constructed by the social environment. Stereotypes of violence and harshness emerge from prejudice that precedes

dialogue and understanding.

Through the responses of Kaka Boss in various conflicts, the film demonstrates a reversal of social myths linking assertiveness and physical appearance to violence. Assertiveness is expressed through self-control, communication, and dialogue rather than aggression. Furthermore, the film shows that stereotypes affect not only social interactions but also personal relationships and emotional well-being. The portrayal of vulnerability challenges the myth that men must always be emotionally strong. Overall, *Kaka Boss* represents stereotypes as social constructions shaped by prejudice and long-standing myths. Through its narrative, the film deconstructs these stereotypes and offers an alternative perspective, encouraging audiences to reflect more critically and humanely on Eastern Indonesian identity.

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