

RACISM REFLECTED IN BLACKKLANSMAN MOVIE (2018): ALLPORT'S SCALE OF PREJUDICE AND CONTACT HYPOTHESIS THEORY

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas tentang rasisme yang dilakukan oleh orang kulit putih terhadap orang kulit hitam dalam film "Blackkklansman". Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk: 1) mengidentifikasi ciri-ciri tindakan rasisme, 2) menjelaskan dampak tindakan rasisme terhadap korban, 3) mendeskripsikan Hipotesis Kontak mampu mereduksi rasisme. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Scale of Prejudice and Contact Hypothesis dari Gordon Allport. Penelitian ini termasuk dalam penelitian kualitatif dengan memfokuskan pada analisis rasisme dalam film Blackkklansman (2018). Sumber data terdiri dari data primer dan sumber data sekunder. Sumber data primer adalah film Blackkklansman dan sumber data sekunder adalah buku-buku dalam jurnal yang berhubungan dengan topik yang dibahas, referensi dari web dan sumber lain yang berhubungan dengan analisis. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan metode look-note. Teknik analisis data adalah analisis deskriptif. Dari penelitian ini, ditemukan tiga temuan berdasarkan pertanyaan penelitian. Pertama, ciri-ciri tindakan rasisme. Penulis menemukan lima ciri tindakan rasisme, yaitu antagonisme verbal, penghindaran, segregasi, serangan fisik, dan pemusnahan. Kedua, dampak dari tindakan rasisme. Ada dua tingkatan dampak terhadap korban, yaitu minor dan mayor. Ketiga, Contact Hypothesis mampu mereduksi rasisme, di Kepolisian Colorado Springs tidak melakukan penyerangan fisik dan pemusnahan terhadap sesama mitra meskipun berbeda ras karena menerapkan empat syarat yang diperlukan untuk mereduksi prasangka: status setara antar kelompok, tujuan bersama, kerjasama antar kelompok, dan dukungan dari otoritas.

Kata Kunci: Rasisme, Prasangka, Diskriminasi, Serangan, Kontak.

Abstract

This research discusses the racism by white people to black people in "Blackkklansman" movie. The objective of this research is to: 1) identify the characteristics of racist actions, 2) explain the impact of racist actions on victims, 3) describe the Contact Hypothesis is able to reduce racism. This research uses the theory of Scale of Prejudice and Contact Hypothesis from Gordon Allport. This research is included in qualitative research by focusing on the analysis of racism in the film Blackkklansman (2018). Data sources consist of primary data and secondary data sources. The primary data source is the Blackkklansman movie and the secondary data sources are the books in journal related to the topic discussed, references from web and other sources, which are have relation to the analysis. The data collection technique used the look-note method. The technique of data analysis is descriptive analysis. From this research, three findings were found based on the research questions. First, the characteristics of racist actions. The author finds five characteristics of racist action, namely verbal antagonism, avoidance, segregation, physical attack, and extermination. Second, the impact of racist actions. There are two levels impact on victims, namely minor and major. Thirdly, the Contact Hypothesis is able to reduce racism, in the Colorado Springs Police do not carry out physical attacks and exterminations against fellow partners even though they

are of different races because they apply the four conditions needed to reduce prejudice: equal status between groups, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and the support of authorities.

Keywords: Racism, Prejudice, Discrimination, Attack, Contact.

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is a way of life that develops and is shared by a group of people, and is passed down from generation to generation. One of the elements of culture is discussing the arts. Tylor (1929) states that culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. One of the works of art that is able to penetrate all elements of society is film. Film has become a popular medium for the society. Film is a form of electronic mass communication in the form of audio-visual media capable of displaying words, sounds, images, and combinations thereof. Tazakka, Dewa, & Putro (2020) stated that film can be used as a medium to reflect the reality that exists in society or to shape the reality desired by film producers. Apart from being a medium of communication, film is also an art medium for communicating. In a film there is a message that is conveyed by the film producer to the audience, implicitly or explicitly.

Film or also often called movie is a work of art that is expressed in the form of a story to convey messages played by humans or creatures and objects that are arranged or made by humans with various expressions recorded by cameras so as to display a series of scenes in a story. In a film, story packaging is equipped with sound settings, lighting, cinematography settings, place layouts and appropriate color settings to make the story more interesting and the audience can easily understand the story. According to Tazakka, Dewa, & Putro (2020) films contain elements of themes, stories from characters that are packaged in audio-visual format which ultimately communicates a message, either implicitly or explicitly. Film is also one of the most effective and popular media in cultural learning by the society. In films we can learn about the culture that lives around us which can be the same in other countries, or it can be foreign cultures that we have never had contact with. Meanwhile, according to Petrie & Boggs, (2008:3) consider film as a form of expression similar to other art media, such as painting, photography, drama, music, and even literary arts (poetry and novels). Therefore, nowadays many films are adapted from poetry, novels, biographies and other literary arts because both have the same elements (film and literary arts).

In this study, the author wants to study a film adaptation of a novel entitled *BlacKkKlansman*. *BlacKkKlansman* is an American crime comedy-drama biographical film directed by Spike Lee. The screenplay was written by Charlie Wachtel, David Rabinowitz, Kevin Willmott and Spike Lee based on Ron Stallworth's novel *BlacKkKlansman*. This film is

the true story of Ron Stallworth, the first black detective to serve in the Colorado Springs Police Department. Spike Lee, the director of this film cleverly chose the comedy crime genre for this film. Although the theme of racism seems serious, *BlacKkKlansman* is filled with satirical jokes. Making this film feel fun and also right in conveying the message.

BlacKkKlansman is the 41st film directed by Spike Lee. The film was released on August 10, 2018 in the United States. The release coincides with the first anniversary of the White Supremacist Unite the Right rally, but previously, this film was first released at the Cannes Film Festival, on May 14, 2018. The film was released in 2018, but the people behind the film purchased the film rights to the novel in 2015. Spike Lee signed an agreement to direct the film in 2017. Spike Lee, the director of this film chose the comedy crime genre for this film. *BlacKkKlansman* received one award at the 2019 Oscars for the best adapted screenplay category, but overall, this film entered six 2019 Oscar categories. The categories include, Best Picture, Best Supporting Actor (Adam Driver), Best Adapted Screenplay (Charlie Wachtel, David Rabinowitz, Kevin Willmott, and Spike Lee), Best Director (Spike Lee), Best Original Score Music, and Best Film Editing. In this film directed by Spike Lee, it is told to take place in 1972. In the true story, it takes place in 1979. Another difference between the film and the true story is that the figure of Philip Flip Zimmerman, is not his real name in the actual event and in the final scene of the tragedy of the bombing at this film is just to add tension and part of the dramatization in the film.

This film tells the story of Ron Stallworth, the first black detective to serve in the Colorado Springs Police Department, set in the 1970s. Ron is assigned by his superiors to the archives without knowing his abilities, where he is often subjected to racial slurs from his co-workers. He then asked his boss for a transfer because he couldn't stand working in that room. Ron gets a golden opportunity to be transferred to the intelligence investigation department, and meets his new partner, Flip Zimmerman. Ron is then assigned to infiltrate the location of a public meeting that features black civil rights leader Kwame Ture. At the meeting, he met Patrice Dumas, head of the black student organization at Colorado College who was frequently harassed by a white police officer named Landers. After the event, Ron found an advertisement in the newspaper about the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and finally Ron got an assignment from the police chief to disguise himself and join the KKK group, and was asked to uncover the crimes committed by the group. In the course of his assignment, it was not that easy, because he had to face the racism that was present throughout his assignment.

Racism is a popular problem not only in movies but also in real life, one of which is in America. There are many types of races in America. In America, there are many white

supremacist support organizations that spread hatred against black people, one of which is the Ku Klux Klan which is also told in the film *BlacKkKlansman*. The Ku Klux Klan in America has existed for a long time and still exists today. It made black people uncomfortable living in America. They want to fight but they are afraid of losing their honour, their jobs, and even their lives. Following the racism that occurred in the film *BlacKkKlansman*, the author uses the Scale of Prejudice theory and the Contact Hypothesis theory proposed by Gordon Allport.

Gordon Allport was a psychologist who spent his career developing theory, studying social issues, such as prejudice, suspicion, communalism, and developing personality tests. Gordon Allport was born on November 11, 1897 in Montezuma, Indiana. He was one of the main figures in the international movement that pushed for the establishment of the Department of Social Relations at Harvard University, in order to achieve a partial integration of psychology, sociology, and anthropology. In the field of sociology, to measure racism attitude or racial discrimination, in 1954, Gordon Allport analyzes about prejudice and discrimination. Allport explains the sequential steps by which an individual behaves negatively toward members of another racial group. Allport also found one of the most effective ways to reduce prejudice between members of the majority and minority groups, namely the Contact Hypothesis.

According to the researchers' reasons above, the researchers are interested in conducting research relating to the problem of racism based on Gordon Allport's Scale of Prejudice and Contact Hypothesis theory. In this research the author raised the title, namely "Racism Reflected In Spike Lee's *BlacKkKlansman* Movie (2018): Scale of Prejudice And Contact Hyphotesis Theory"

2. METHOD

There are several methods in this study, 1) specify the type of the research. This study uses a qualitative research approach with descriptive qualitative method. (Machmud 2016) revealed that qualitative approach is research aimed at describing and analyzing phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, thoughts of people individually or in groups. The data were collected with careful observation, including descriptions in a detailed context accompanied by notes from in-depth interviews, as well as the results of document analysis. According to (Moleong 2006:4) describe qualitative methodology as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of observed data and behavior. 2) specify the object of the research. The object that the author analyzes is the film *BlacKkKlansman* (2018) directed by Spike Lee. 3) specify the type of data and data source. The data in this study are in the form of film scripts and images featuring scenes of racism in the film *BlacKkKlansman*. There are two sources of data in this

research, namely primary data and secondary data. The primary data source is the film it self “BlacKkKlansman (2018)” directed by Spike Lee and the secondary data sources were taken from other sources related to the study that the author did: journals, e-books, websites, dictionary and other literature, that support this study. 4) specify the techniques of collecting data. The author uses documentation techniques by watching and reading the script on the film repeatedly, capturing parts of the film that will be used as the data, taking notes and classifying of important parts both primary and secondary data, then interpreting the data and connecting them to Gordon Allport’s Scale of Prejudice and Contact Hypotesis. 5) specify the techniques of analyzing data, which consists of selecting objects, focusing on the problem of study, namely racism, then being identified based on the theory of Scale of Prejudice and Contact Hyphotesis by Gordon Allport.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After the data was classified based on the types of racist actions, the impact of racist actions on the psychology of victims and the reasons Contact Hypothesis is able to reduce racism, the author found several findings on the answers to the research questions in this study.

3.1 The type of racist actions in the film BlacKkKlansman

Table 1. An analysis the type of racist actions in the film BlacKkKlansman

No.	The Type of Racism	Detail
1.	Verbal Antagonism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Mulaney assumed and said that Ron or other black people only liked the breasts of beautiful actresses. - The senior calls Ron not by his name but by the title "a toad" and treats Ron like an errand boy. - Landers told Ron to look up the criminal record of a black person with the "toad" sneer and called Ron a "cold fart." - Walker deluded and called black people “barbecued niggers”.
2.	Avoidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Officer Landers took evasive action by driving Kwame Ture out of Colorado Springs before dawn - KKK members walked away from Ron as if disgusted to see and close to Ron who was about to talk to David Duke. - Felix and Ivan hoe told Ron to stay in the front room of the meeting and could not enter the main meeting room even though Ron was Mr. Duke's bodyguard who was supposed to go into the main meeting room because it was his job.

3. Segregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ron is put in the file division, even though he has not been tested yet. - There is segregation from the government, police and KKK against black people in Colorado Springs.
4. Physical Attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landers calls Patrice a "black bitch" and sexually assaults Patrice by grabbing his butt. - KKK spread intimidating papers/brochures all over the neighborhood where black students lived at the University of Colorado, some were posted on cars, scattered on the streets and stuck on the walls of houses and windows. - Two policemen on patrol beat Ron with Tonfa bats and laid him on the ground.
5. Extermination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The KKK tried to scare the black people into not resisting by bombing Patrice and Odetta's residence.

All types of racism in Gordon Allport's theory are represented in various scenes in the film *BlackKlansman*. Scenes of types of racism, from verbal antagonism to extermination are displayed. As conveyed by (Taufik & Hasniar, 2016) which states that racism is one of the most popular topics that has regularly been handled in the film, which is based on a real-life reality. In the movie, black people who experienced racism from white people, including Ron, Patrice, and Hakeem, were meant to represent African Americans. After analyzing the film *BlackKlansman* (2018), the author finds the characteristics of racist actions, the impact of racist actions on victims, and the Contact Hypothesis is able to reduce racism.

First, the author finds the characteristics or types of racist actions. The findings in the film are based on the Scale of Prejudice theory. To measure racism attitude or racial discrimination, in 1954, Gordon Allport analyzes scale of prejudice. Allport explains the sequential steps by which an individual behave negatively toward members of another racial group, which are: verbal antagonism, avoidance, segregation, physical attack, and extermination. These five types of racism are reflected in the film *BlackKlansman* perpetrated by white people against black people in Colorado Springs. Ron, as the main character in the film, was the first black man to be recruited by the Colorado Springs Police Department in 1970. Ron received 3 types of racism from seniors, namely verbal antagonism, avoidance and segregation. With the support of Chief Constable Bridges and some of his senior friends, Ron received no form of physical attack. It's impossible to underestimate Ron's tenacity, sense of duty, and unyielding nature that allowed him to overcome these obstacles and prove that he is

a competent cop. But the five types of racism in Allport's theory were carried out by the Ku Klux Klan against black students at the University of Colorado.

3.2 The impact of racist actions on the psychology of victims

Table 2. An analysis the impact of racist actions on the psychology of victims

No.	Level	Type	Detail
1.	Minor	Low Self-Esteem	Patrice did not believe Ron's opinion that black people could change/reduce racism within the police.
		Loneliness	Ron felt lonely when all the KKK members forbade him to enter the main meeting room even though he was a bodyguard
2.	Major	Frustration	Landers is constantly racist Ron. As Landers left the room, Ron vented his frustration by hitting the wind like he was hitting someone.
		Fear	Patrice couldn't remember the name of the cop who harassed him when asked by Ron. Patrice told Ron with trembling hands and as she recalled the events she found everything to be terrifying.
		Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Black students are worried about the threat from the KKK - Hakeem fears the police may also be cooperating with the KKK.

Second, the author finds the impact of racism on victims depicted in the film. The impact of acts of racism, as is well known, is that these actions have many negative impacts on the person or victim who receives the treatment. Even racism has the power to alter the mentality or psychology of its victims. According to Rusnanila (2019:15) Regarding the individual, racial discrimination could lead to someone becoming depression, anxious, paranoid, helpless or hopeless, frustrated, low self-esteem, loneliness, sadness, fearful, humiliated, violent, and become object of humiliation.

The statement is in line with the author's opinion, but the author adds that racism's harmful consequences can lead authors to divide into two tiers. These tiers start from "minor" (small) to "major" (large). For the minor level itself, for instance: low self-esteem, making the victim feel uneasy in the neighborhood. reluctance to do so, feelings of loneliness, and withdrawal or alienation from society. At the minor level, the author found low self-esteem and loneliness on the victims which is reflected in the BlacKkKlansman movie. For major levels, for example, such as: causing depression, mental down, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and even up

to suicidal attempts because the racist treatment has had a very severe effect on the psychology of the victim. At the major level, the authors found frustration, fear and anxiety on the victims which is reflected in the *BlacKkKlansman* movie.

3.3 The reasons Contact Hypothesis is able to reduce racism

Third, the author finds that the Contact Hypothesis is able to reduce racism depicted in the film. According to Nickerson (2021) Contact hypothesis was proposed by Gordon Allport (1897-1967) and states that social contact between social groups is sufficient to reduce intergroup prejudice. However, empirical evidence suggests that this is only in certain circumstances. The contact hypothesis is the idea that intergroup contact under particular conditions can reduce prejudice between majority and minority group members. According to Palluck (2006), The original thought of the contact hypothesis was to provide optimal conditions so that individuals could learn about each other and target the factual knowledge of other groups as a way of reducing bias. Chavous (2005) also states that the contact hypothesis is that contact by different groups can have a positive effect on behaviors towards one another, especially if they meet the required conditions. Allport claimed that prejudice and conflict between groups can be reduced by having equal status contact between groups in pursuit of common goals. This effect is even greater when contact is officially sanctioned. This can be achieved through legislation, but also through local customs and practice (Janse, 2021). In other words, there are four conditions in which prejudice can be reduced. These are: equal status between groups, common goals, intergroup cooperation and the support of authorities.

The four conditions are reflected in the *BlacKkKlansman* movie. The contact hypothesis occurs when Ron as a minority group in Colorado succeeds in becoming the first black police officer in the Colorado Springs Police. This is in line with Afandi, Faturochman, Hidayat's opinion (2021:179) that if individuals from one group meet individuals from another group (involved in contact), then the degree of prejudice between these individuals will decrease, which in turn becomes the foundation for positive relationships. Racism within the Colorado Springs Police still exists but with the presence of these four contact conditions this type of racism does not reach the level of physical attack and extermination. There was one occasion in the scene where Landers could have physically attacked to Ron, but with the support of Chief Police Bridges and several of his senior police officers, this was resolved and it did not happen.

4. CLOSING

In this study, the author collects data from the film *BlacKkKlansman* (2018) and also the script. Then this data is processed and classified using Scale of Prejudice and Contact Hypothesis

theory by Gordon Allport. So that the findings are based on problem statement of the study, including the types of racist actions, the impact of racist actions on the psychology of victims and the reasons Contact Hypothesis is able to reduce racism. First, the types of racist actions. Based on the findings and analysis, the author found that there were 5 types of racist actions in the film *BlacKkKlansman*, namely (1) verbal antagonism (2) avoidance (3) segregation (4) physical attack (5) extermination. These five types of racism are reflected in the film *BlacKkKlansman* perpetrated by white people against black people in Colorado Springs. Second, the impact of racist actions on the psychology of victims. the author concludes and adds the opinion of Rusnanila (2019:15) that the dangerous consequences of racism can divide the author into two levels. These levels start from "minor" (small) to "major" (large). At the minor level, the author found low self-esteem and loneliness on the victims which is reflected in the movie. At the major level, the authors found frustration, fear and anxiety on the victims which is reflected in the movie. Third, the author found that the Contact Hypothesis is able to reduce racism depicted in the film. Contact between social groups is sufficient to reduce intergroup prejudice. There are four conditions which prejudice can be reduced. These are: equal status between groups, common goals, cooperation between groups and support of authority. The contact hypothesis occurs when Ron as a minority group in Colorado succeeds to become the first black police officer in the Colorado Springs Police. Racism within the Colorado Springs Police still exists but, this type of racism does not reach the level of physical attack and extermination with the presence of these four contact conditions. There is one scene where Landers could have physically attacked to Ron, but with the support of Chief Police Bridges and several of his senior police officers, this is solved and it does not happen. Thus, Allport's Contact Hypothesis theory can reduce racism.

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