CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Throughout history, society has undergone constant transformation, impacting the lives of individuals in diverse ways. These changes, driven by both individual choices and collective actions, have shaped the intricate social systems that govern human interactions, leading to the creation of layered social structures. Prior to the seventeenth century, inequality and poverty were significant problems, contributing to a deeply stratified society that determined people's life chances at birth (Beeghley, 2016:47). However, societies have been transitioning into modern societies associated with industrialization. Beeghley (2016) believes that while modern societies offer opportunities for economic development, they also exhibit a strong tendency to improve socioeconomic status and reduce poverty rates. Modern society has transformed cultural norms and values, shifting towards a culture of capitalism, characterized by a focus on career advancement, self-reliance, and wealth accumulation (Beeghley, 2016:48). Therefore, these characteristics change the opportunity of each individual within the society. Society promotes the idea that anyone can achieve success through hard work, there are hidden obstacles that prevent fair competition, these limitations mean that the race to get ahead isn't truly equal for everyone.

The social inequalities evident in the United States, it reflected by the society's tendency to position people based on their backgrounds. As highlighted by Doob (2019), in the United States, wealth and social gap in the U.S. have led to a stratified society with apparent social inequality. Cited from Cole (2019), the findings of the study conducted by the Federal Reserve in 2019 shows that a small group of people hold most of the money in the country, while the vast majority of people have very little wealth. The unequal distribution of wealth in the U.S. economy has led to various social problems. This economic inequality can contribute to societal instability and cultural shifts, ultimately resulting in a stratified society characterized by a significant gap between the rich and the poor.

Social stratification categorized people based on many characteristics. Weber (1978) refers it as a hierarchy system of classifying different types of people into different kinds of groups in society based on three characteristics, social class, status, and power (Weber, 1978). It appears as a social inequality background that differentiates people's social rank. Cole (2019) states stratification is the consequence of socioeconomic status derived from the top group of people in hierarchy position to gain privilege. Also, Doob (2019) declares that the impact of social layers also includes inequality of gender, race, status, power, and class, which are being concerning problems in society because people of lower classes do not have as much opportunity as people of upper classes. The hierarchical system influenced people's opportunities for upward mobility and a better life. Therefore, this social hierarchy system embeds injustices towards people of lower classes,

making them easier to use as a tool of the upper classes for gaining power and wealth.

Social phenomena such as social stratification frequently appear in movies as an intriguing topic to investigates. Moreover, this study focuses on examine intrinsic characteristics of the movie *The Holdovers* (2023), and also examining extrinsic aspect as how it reflects social stratification through the lens of Max Weber's theory. By exploring these analytical frameworks, the research aims to uncover the intricate connections between cinematic representation and societal structures.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How are the setting, characters, and conflict depicted in *The Holdovers* (2023) movie?

2. How are the three characteristics of social stratification represented in *The Holdovers* (2023) movie?

3. How does social stratification impact the characters in *The Holdovers* (2023)?

1.3 Scope of The Study

As for the scope of the study, I analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of *The Holdovers* (2023), a comedy and drama movie produced by Alexander Payne and David Hemingson, released for the first time in 2023. This study focuses on analysing social condition that appear in the movie, as it exhibits the society of

Barton Academy located in Massachusetts, 1970. I analyze narrative elements such as setting, characters, conflict, and cinematography as part of the intrinsic aspect of a movie. Moreover, for the extrinsic aspect, I analyze the social stratification reflected in *The Holdovers* (2023).

1.4 Aims of the Study

1. To identify the setting, characters, and conflict depicted in The Holdovers (2023) movie.

2. To comprehend the three characteristics of social stratification represented in The Holdovers (2023) movie.

3. To discern the impact of social stratification towards characters in *The Holdovers* (2023)

1.5 Previous Study

To deepen my understanding of social stratification and ensure academic integrity, I have reviewed several existing studies on the topic. The first research, conducted by Sulastri Manurung and Mutia Ilma Sari, titled *The analysis of racial discrimination and social stratification in solomon northup's 12 years a slave* (2017) explores the theme of racial discrimination and social stratification based on the movie *12 years a slave*. The study focuses on the main character's experiences, Solomon Northup, who endures harsh realities as enslaved. Researchers employed a qualitative method to analyze the various forms of discrimination and social stratification these characters face and the acts of resistance they undertake.

Furthermore, the researcher found that racial discrimination causes several types of social stratification, including slavery, caste, and class.

The second research, written by Chinta Putri, Indah Damayanti, and Mei Hardiah, investigates the portrayal of social classes in the *Snowpiercer* movie. The study *An analysis of values in social life in Snowpiercer movie* (2023) uses a library research method and a descriptive qualitative method to examine the movie. Findings reveal that the lower and upper classes are symbolically represented as a shoe and a hat, respectively, in two scenes. Eight scenes depict the neglect of justice values in social life, while one scene showcases friendship values among the lower class. However, harmony between the lower and upper classes is absent based on the character's social life representation.

The third study developed by Chang Liu, entitled *Analysis of Social class inequality based on the movie Parasite* (2020), examines the wealth disparity portrayed in the movie *Parasite*. Furthermore, the article investigates the real-world impact of this wealth gap, particularly in education and employment. Findings suggest that the rich possess the most high-quality resources, creating challenges for the poor to ascend to a higher socioeconomic class independently. The research concludes that societal resources perpetuate social class distinctions and an increasingly evident wealth gap across generations.

The fourth analysis, written by Siti Kofifah, entitled *The struggle of pursuing the American Dream under social stratification as reflected in The Hunger Games and Mockingjay part 1 movie* (2023) explores the concept of the American Dream

and its interaction with social stratification, as portrayed in *The Hunger Games* and *Mockingjay Part 1* movies. The American Dream, seen as a value providing equal opportunities for success, is contradicted by the reality of social stratification, where societal systems divide people into classes with distinct roles and struggles. The study reveals that the movies illustrate individuals' challenges in pursuing an ideal life, particularly addressing the inequality between districts and the Capitol, representing the bourgeoisie. The conclusion emphasizes the existence of a significant gap between the lower and upper classes, impacting equal opportunities in the pursuit of an ideal life.

The fifth research, titled *Social stratification in The Notebook movie* (2018) conducted by Rizky Safé, discusses social stratification depicted in an American film, *The Notebook*. Focus on analyzing scenes containing economic class, prestige, and power elements, drawing on Max Weber's theory. This theory connects to the conditions of societal stratification in America. To obtain and analyze data, the author employs a literature review with a sociological literary approach. This research aims to understand the concept of stratification and social differences within the American community portrayed in the movie, aiming to enhance sensitivity and wisdom in addressing similar issues.

The sixth study, written by Yuni Cinthya, entitled *Max Weber's concept on social class as reflected in Crazy Rich Asian movie* (2020) focuses on the film *Crazy Rich Asians*. The analysis examines social class differences in America, categorizing them into upper class, middle class, working class, and the lowest class. Utilizing Weber's theory and employing library research for data collection,

the study identifies three social classes depicted in the film, with the lowest class absent. This observation aligns with Max Weber's theory, which includes four social classes, highlighting scenes featuring characters from the lower class in the film.

The last study, *Social stratification reflected in the movie The White Tiger (2021): sociological perspective* (2022) by Gemilang Anodya Winantu, explores the factors leading to social stratification. He analyzes its characteristics and examines the class distinctions between the protagonist, Balram, and the landlord in the movie *The White Tiger* (2021). Focusing on Pitirim Alexandrovich Sorokin's social stratification theory, the research adopts a qualitative approach, examining and understanding the formation and characteristics of social stratification. The study identifies three key findings: the fundamental causes of social stratification, including cohabitation, inherent individual differences, and environmental disparities; characteristics of social stratification in the landlord, physical inequality, differences in vitality and health, and variations in intellectual and mental traits; and the protagonist's social status, distinguishing between upper and lower classes.

This study distinguishes itself from previous research by examining the social conditions within the prestigious Barton Academy boarding school through the lens of Max Weber's social stratification theory.

1.6 Method of the Study

1.6.1 Data and the Source of Data

This study is analyzed based on two databases: primary and secondary data. According to Lune and Berg (2017), primary data refers to original documents directly linked to the research result. The primary data must be analyzed and observed, and this will ensure that accurate and relevant data for the study are obtained. Therefore, this study employs secondary data to examine primary data collection. Secondary data, according to Lune and Berg (2017: 161), is a pile of information that "represent secondhand or hearsay accounts of someone, some event, or some development." in which to deliver strong proof of the preceding data given. The preliminary data for this research is found in *The Holdovers* (2023) movie through dialogues, acts, and visualization to achieve the social stratification of social diversity represented in the movie. Meanwhile, the secondary data in this study relies on tools such as books, articles, journals, and theses to provide precise details to support the findings from primary data.

1.6.2 Method of Data Collection

This research uses library research and qualitative methods to assess the study of the movie's intrinsic and extrinsic elements. George (2008) claims that the library research method is a technique for finding trustworthy sources that provide accurate information from experts to address research issues. Qualitative research involves "the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things" (Lune & Berg, 2017:12). Therefore, the data collected by watching, reading, gathering, transcribing, observing, and analyzing to meet the goals of the research questions as stated before. Therefore, this study also examines The Holdover's (2023) movie's intrinsic aspects, including setting, character, and

conflict. Also, this study examines the social stratification aspect for the extrinsic element based on Max Weber's theories in *The Holdovers* (2023).

1.6.3 Method of Approach

This study applies an exponential approach to examine the object. This method can uncover the symbolic significance of elements in the text and connect them to the central ideas it conveys (Guerin, 2005). By employing this approach, it focuses on analyzing specific intrinsic aspects of the text to support the study's objectives of examining setting, characters, and conflict. This analysis can help to symbolize the underlying themes of social stratification represented in the movie.

Moreover, the next approach in this study is the extrinsic aspect based on the social stratification approach. Social stratification emphasizes the social layers that create imbalances towards individual in society (Weber, 1978). In social stratification system, individual from lower ranks face social struggles and injustices because of the oppression from the higher rank groups. This social difference builds broad gap between the higher ranks and the lower ranks, thus it affected how people are being treated in society. This study focuses on social stratification theory based on Max Weber to analyze the injustice behavior towards lower-class characters represented in *The Holdovers* (2023).

1.7 Organization of the Writing

This thesis is organized into four chapters.

CHAPTER I   **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the phenomenon that happens in U.S. society and explains the correction between the purposes of this study.

CHAPTER II   **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section talks about the fundamental theories applied to conduct the study.

CHAPTER III   **DISCUSSION**

This chapter analyzes the resource of the data using the theories that have been mentioned before.

CHAPTER IV   **CONCLUSION**

The last chapter explains the final result and summary of the study.