

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Political and social movements are significant events in the United States in the late 1960s due to the Vietnam War. The longer the war lasted and the more American soldiers died, the greater the discontent among the public particularly among young people, students, and minority groups (Allo, 2023). Their opposition to the war at that time grew into a large anti-Vietnam War movement. These movements organized protests across the country. One of the most significant demonstrations was the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in August 1968 where thousands of demonstrators gathered to voice their opposition to the war and government policies. Schultz (2009) claims that the U.S. government regrets the critics about the war told by the opposing parties such as the activists. There is this contradiction when the government sees the war as the United States' fight for freedom and democracy when they are still ignoring and repressing the opposing viewpoint from the citizens.

The response of the U.S. government to the political opposition in this era of the Vietnam War demonstrates how they exercised their authority over their society (Lahav, 2000). Hegemony is a theory used to discuss power relations in society (Gramsci, 1971). One of the ways that a group maintains its hegemony is through domination. Domination can take many forms such as cultural or economic and political control. These forms of control are often seen in leadership

roles where those in power use their authority to maintain their position. Gramsci (1971) uses the terms hegemony to describe a situation when a dominating class working with other classes or class fractions, not only controls a society but also exercises intellectual and moral leadership.

Meanwhile, social conflict arises when a conflict involves groups, organizations, or communities rather than just individuals. Social conflict often involves actions that can cause harm or damage. Though this is not always the case, social conflict frequently involved potential to cause hurt or damage. The groups participating in the conflicts are seeking to weaken or eliminate their rivals and also achieve their goals (Coser, 1956). These social conflicts happen in many issues in society like class struggles, another case is about racial tensions or when religious disagreements occur it can also result in riots and revolutions, then protests.

According to Gramsci (1971), conflict between groups representing power and those represented can arise when the dominant group experiences a crisis of hegemony. This crisis occurs when the dominant group fails in a major political activity, such as war, or when previously passive groups in society become active and voice demands regarding the social and political conditions they face (Gramsci, 1971). Under these conditions, the relationship between the government as the dominant group and the society as the subordinate group can develop into a social conflict that indicates a crisis of authority within the state.

The movie *The Trial of the Chicago 7* (2020), directed by Aaron Sorkin, portrays this historical event by retelling the trial that took place after the protests

following what happened in the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The film depicts the trials of the leaders of the protests that followed the 1968 Democratic National Convention, it shows the interaction of the defendants, the judges, and also the government officials. The film offers material for analyzing the relationship between the protest movement and the U.S. government authority through its depiction with the theories that the writer uses.

Based on these arguments, this study focuses on the social conflict between anti-Vietnam War activists and the U.S. government and the hegemony as depicted in *The Trial of the Chicago 7* (2020). The research examines how this conflict reflects the activists' struggles under the government's authority during the Vietnam War era, and also using social conflict theory and hegemony theory as analytical frameworks.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the backgrounds of the study, the research problems are divided into two primary problems, which are:

1. How is the intrinsic element portrayed in *The Trial of the Chicago 7*?
2. How is the social conflict between anti-Vietnam War activists and U.S. government power portrayed in *The Trial of the Chicago 7*?
3. How does the concept of hegemonic authority shape the portrayal of the U.S. government's response to social conflict in *The Trial of the Chicago 7*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study are:

1. To comprehend how the intrinsic elements are portrayed in *The Trial of the Chicago 7*.
2. To understand how the social conflict between anti-Vietnam War activists and U.S. government authority are portrayed in *The Trial of the Chicago 7*.
3. To comprehend how hegemony shapes the portrayal of the U.S. government's response to social conflict in *The Trial of the Chicago 7*.

I.4 Scope of The Study

This study focuses on analyzing the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the film *The Trial of the Chicago 7* (2020). The study explores intrinsic elements, such as theme, plot, characters and characterization, camera distance, and sound. This study focuses on the analysis of social conflict and hegemonic authority portrayed in *The Trial of the Chicago 7* (2020). The social conflict between anti-Vietnam War activists and the U.S. government is analyzed using Lewis Coser's theory of social conflict, particularly the concepts of realistic conflict and nonrealistic conflict. Meanwhile, the portrayal of the U.S. government's hegemonic authority is analyzed using Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, focusing only on the concepts of consent and coercion to explain how authority is maintained in response to social conflict. Therefore, this study does not discuss all aspects of Gramsci's theory of hegemony, but specifically examines the mechanisms of consent and coercion represented in the film. Thus, the social conflict portrayed in the film is understood as a reflection of hegemonic authority, as the conflict reveals the relationship between dominant and subordinate groups

and the government's efforts to maintain its authority through hegemonic practices.

1.5 Previous Studies

To understand social conflict and hegemony in *The Trial of the Chicago 7* there are previous studies that also analyzed these themes. This section summarizes the findings of the previous studies and also the gaps that this thesis aims to fill.

Annie Stockmal's master's thesis entitled "*I Don't Have Time for Cultural Revolution. It Distracts from Actual Revolution*": A Rhetorical Analysis of Aaron Sorkin's *The Trial of the Chicago 7* (2024) employs rhetorical analysis to examine how the Chicago 8 are remembered and represented in Aaron Sorkin's film *The Trial of the Chicago 7* (2020). Stockmal argues that the film promotes a liberalized memory of the 1968 Democratic National Convention and the subsequent conspiracy trial by reducing the radical political stance of the activists. The writer further contends that the film presents the law enforcement and criminal justice systems as redeemable institutions and reshapes the historical narrative in ways that diminish its revolutionary dimension. This thesis suggests that the film reconstructs the historical memory of the Chicago 8 in a manner that softens its political intensity.

An undergraduate thesis titled "*Hegemony, Counter-Hegemony, And Domination In Social Group Relations Between Apes And Humans In The Movie Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes (2014)*" by Lailatul Fadhillah in 2024. They identified hegemony into four forms: hegemony of power, hegemony of ideology,

hegemony of culture, and hegemony of morality. Also counter-hegemony they divided into three categories: violent resistance, humanistic resistance, and passive resistance.

The third one is an undergraduate thesis titled "*American Hegemony In Outer Space: Analysing Power Dynamics In The Martian Film (2015)*" by Aginta Alfadara Restiana in 2023. The thesis examines how the film depicts Western, especially, American, dominated over the non-Western countries in the story using Edward Said's Orientalism theory. There were several types of hegemony based on Edward Said's Orientalism theory in this thesis, such as technological and resource dependency, political influence, and economic control.

Another study is titled "*Overcoming Social Conflict in the Movie Little Women (2019): A Sociological Approach*" by Titis Setyabudi and Anggraini Aliffatul Laili in 2021. This research describes the types and positive functions of social conflict as presented in the film directed by Greta Gerwig. Using a sociological perspective, they analyzed the film using the Miles and Huberman technique, which includes data reduction, presentation, and verification. The study identifies realistic conflict in *Little Women*, which is categorized into hostile feelings and hostile behavior. The next study is titled "*An Analysis of Social Conflict in the Movie 'Bohemian Rhapsody'*" by Rieka Endah Purnam and Budi Rachmawati in 2020. This research explores the types and sources of conflict faced by the main character in the film. The researchers conclude that conflicts can arise in various forms, including accommodation, avoidance, collaboration, and compromise.

The gap identified in these previous studies is by combining Coser's social conflict theory and Gramsci's hegemony to analyze both social conflict and ideological dominance within a historical political context whilst other studies have explored social conflict or hegemony, they often examine these concepts separately.

1.6 Research Methods

In this section, there are three important aspects dealing with research methods:

1.6.1 Data and the Sources of the Data

The primary data source is the film *The Trial of the Chicago 7* itself, which is analyzed for its intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The secondary data sources include books, articles, and journals related to social conflict and hegemony theory and anti-Vietnam War Movement contexts. These sources provide background information and theoretical framework that help grasp better understanding of the film's analysis. This study uses library research in its analysis. According to Mary W. George (2008) library research is a method of data collection using sources that offer facts or scholars opinions related to the research questions and objectives that are being sought. This type of research helps researchers gather appropriate information to support their research.

1.6.2 Method of Data Collection

The study analyzes a literary work in the form of a movie using a qualitative methodology. According to Creswell (1994), qualitative research is a data collection method that is taken by understanding the meaning of an object that can

be interpreted in a social phenomenon, so that the findings are descriptive rather than statistical results. Data collection for this research is conducted through several steps: the first one is observation, which is done by watching *The Trial of the Chicago 7* (2020) several times, second step is transcribing the dialogues and scenes from the movie, and last step is categorization of these data into the fitted arguments. These data that have been categorized are then supported with secondary sources from books, journals, and articles to strengthen the arguments and the analysis of the research.

1.6.3 Method of Approach

This research applies two approaches: objective approach and sociological approach. This study uses the objective approach proposed by Abrams in *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1953) to analyze the intrinsic aspects of the film. Abrams stated that “The objective orientation, on the other hand, regards the work of art in isolation from all these external points of reference, analyzes it as a self-sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their internal relations” (p. 26). This approach is used to analyze the intrinsic elements of the film, namely theme, plot, characters and characterization, setting, cinematography through camera distance, and sound. Meanwhile, the sociological approach proposed is used to analyze the extrinsic aspects or social content represented in the film. According to Wellek and Warren in *Theory of Literature* (1949) sociological approach explains that the study of literature and society examines “the relations of literature to a given social situation, to an economic, social, and political system” (p. 89). Therefore, literary

works can be analyzed to understand how they represent social conditions and issues within a particular society.

1.7 Organization of The Writing

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This section consists of seven sub-chapters: background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, scope of the study, previous study, research methods, and lastly organization of the writing.

CHAPTER II INTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter provides theoretical frameworks for the film's intrinsic aspects.

CHAPTER III EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter provides theoretical overviews of the film's extrinsic aspect.

CHAPTER IV DISCUSSION

The fourth chapter of this study consists of the analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic aspect in the movies.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

The last chapter contains a summary of the analysis and argument.