

## **RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN A PRACTICE OF HEGEMONY AS PORTRAYED IN SOLOMON NORTHUP'S *TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE***

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### **Abstract**

In this research, the researchers discuss racial discrimination in a practice of hegemony. The main purpose of this research is to portray racial discrimination in a practice of hegemony as portrayed in *Twelve Years A Slave* novel written by Solomon Northup. The researchers apply qualitative descriptive method in doing this research. The object of this research is *Twelve Years A Slave* novel. The researchers analyze this research by using the concepts of hegemony that developed by Antonio Gramsci and racial discrimination theory. The researchers collect the data by reading, understanding, taking note the data and then classifying the data that is appropriate the main issue of the research. The researchers find several points about racial discrimination in practice of hegemony. It can be found by applying three concepts of hegemony they are consent and coercion, moral and intellectual reform, and common sense. The researchers conclude that there are two form of racial discrimination in practice of hegemony those are; Slavery in consent and coercion, prejudice in moral and intellectual hegemony, and slavery in common sense.

**Key words:** Concept of Hegemony, Prejudice, Racial Discrimination, Slavery.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Hegemony is the position of being the strongest and most powerful and therefore able to control others. Hegemony is the interest of particular group or dominance group in society who want to have certain social status so that other group can marginalize by have the status of common sense that become an ideology, in other respect hegemony is a useful concept for analyzing the dominant structure of ideas and practice surrounding bias incident response. Hegemony is a big word for a fairly simple idea. When socially powerful people use their influence (Gulö, 2014a), (Ambarwati & Mandasari, 2020), (Saifuddin Dahlan, 2013), (T. D. R. Sari & Sukmasari, 2018), to convince less powerful people it is in their best interest to do what is actually in the most powerful people's best interest (Pustika, 2018), (Meliasari et al., 2018). When a group of people has more perceived the authority than regular everyday people, and the group of people impose their world view (Yulianti &

Sulistyawati, 2021), (Mulyasari & Putri, 2020), (Handayani & Aminatun, 2020), (Yulianti & Sulistyawati, n.d.), (F. M. Sari & Putri, 2019). Therefore, make people believe that the particular person's world view was correct it is known as Hegemony. Hegemony influences many aspects in society such as people (Eklesia & Rido, 2020), social class, race, activities (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2019) and other things.

Hegemony influences point of view of people about race and racism because hegemony is one of the cause racism appear in society. Hegemony is the cause racism appear social surrounding, because racism appears from the imparted of mindset or belief (Berlinda, 2015), (Muliyah & Aminatun, 2020), (Mandasari, 2016), (Mandasari, n.d.), system which believe the dominate race are higher and powerful than others. Racialized of inequity cannot appear by itself but appear from the sustaining of ideology or mindset that become idea or notion about culture (Lusa et al., 2020), (Oktaviani et al., 2020), (Qodriani & Kardiansyah, 2018) and biology inferiority. Race and racism is the effect of hegemony itself. Racism appears from the ideology or discourse how a group of people gaze other group of people by culture or physical condition. Race discrimination and hegemony are correlating each other, because race is one of the social aspect which influenced by hegemony. Race is a grouping based on biological features not based on sociocultural characteristics (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2021), (Gulö, 2014b), (Rido & Sari, 2018). Race means a class of population of an area that has the features of certain derivatives which are different from people in other regions. Race is a signifier indicating categories of group of people based on alleged biological or physical characteristic such as skin color, eyes feature, hair texture.

Race refers to biological distinctions, phenotypes or cultural characteristics that are believed to be the basis for the creation of racial groups. Human life are different each other that visible from the skin color, head shape, hair color and others, this case that make race formed to distinguish a group with other group in society. The differences of race itself influence the point of view of a group of people toward other group that make people underestimate other group of people in social environment it cause oppression toward a group of people who have been underestimated by other group of people. Race is one of opinions of a group of people that they think that their race is greater than other. It causes people to have different treatment and attitudes (Sinaga & Pustika, 2021), (Muliyah et al., 2020), (Puspaningtyas

& Ulfa, 2021), (F. M. Sari, n.d.), (Puspita & Pranoto, 2021) toward other people because of the different skin color for example the bad treatment of white people toward black people in form of oppression, violence (Evayani & Rido, 2019), slavery and other thing the segregation between white people and black people known as racial discrimination. Racial discrimination appears on multiple level including the individual workplace, neighborhood and social levels. It has been associated with negative psychological consequences like depression and anxiety (Damayanti & Listyani, 2020), (Mahfud & Gumantan, 2020).

Racial discrimination in a practice of hegemony as portrayed in one of popular literary work which written by Solomon Northup entitled *Twelve Years A Slave*. After reading the Solomon Northup's novel the researchers gets interest to analyze racial discrimination in a practice of hegemony in Northup's *Twelve years A Slave*, the novel depict about the domination of white people who maintain their power by discriminate people race. The literary work which written by Solomon Northup is the novel that show racial discrimination that done by dominant group which is white people as the way they maintain their power so that the dominant group can have control toward subordinate group which is black people. The story of the tell about black freeman name Solomon Northup who kidnapped by white people and sold into slavery in New Orleans in 1841, it is the first beginning Solomon live in bondage and it snatch Solomon's liberty as freeman. Solomon live under control of white people as long as twelve years, and he have to obey all the rule that has been made by white people. White people as dominant group make the rule so that they can limit the movement of black people so that white people can control black people it is the way white people as dominant group maintain their power by doing discrimination toward black people by involve black people in bondage.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Hegemony**

Hegemony is the process of making and maintain and reproducing this authoritative set of meaning, ideologies and practice that done by ruling group by using an agreement or constant. Constant a social agreement which is won by ruling groups in society and then forms a universal form of thinking which accordance with the point of view that implanted by the ruling class. The discussion about concept of

hegemony is deals with Antonio Gramsci. Antonio Gramsci is Italian Marxist and philosopher well known as his concept of hegemony. Gramsci's concept of hegemony rose out of this concern and he asserted that the ruling class in advanced capitalist societies rule by constructing their ideological and moral leadership over the subordinate classes which made their rule non-coercive for most of the time. Gramsci uses the concept of hegemony to define the modern state, and its distinctive nature rooted in modern society. Gramsci assigned the modern state a distinctive role and saw it as an organized (centralized) control mechanism that allows the dominant class to control subordinate classes.

For Gramsci, in modern societies, the dominant class perpetuates its dominance in different ways through the agency of the state. Thus understanding the role of the state in different societies plays a key role in interpreting the different types of dominance. Hegemony is the power or the effort that do by the class domination or ruling class to subordinate class in an effort to dominate or maintain the power in a state. Futhermore, Gramsci state that Hegemony, is a term referring to the dominance of one state within association, is now generally understood to mean domination by consent rather than coercive power. It can be said that indirectly, the hegemonic power is used to maintain the interests of the ruling class toward the hegemonized.

### **Consent and Coercion**

As stated before hegemony is the maintain power and stability of group of people through domination that done by force, or by agreement or persuasion. Based on hegemony, ideology of dominant group can be conveyed, it is including moral, intelectual, value and belief. Therefore hegemony seen as something that common because people accept it without compulsion. Hegemonic power works to convince individuals and social classes to subscribe to the social values and norms of an inherently exploitative system. It is a form of social power that relies on voluntarism and participation, rather than the threat of punishment for disobedience. Basically hegemony is a process to influence the human thinking in order to make them follow what have been given by the dominant group to the subordinate group.

### **Moral and Intellectual**

Moral hegemony is subtly dictating the hegemonized in determining what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong, what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. Morality tend to maintain the hierarchical structured of society, which put the superior class continues to dominate the inferior class. The inferior realized that they not feel hegemonized again but by consciously doing voluntarily. According to Gramsci's intellectual concept is that everyone has the function as organizers in the areas of production, as in the political and cultural. Cultural region involves dictating process of thought and mastery of the ideas that are common to associate cause and effect. Thus, in spreading hegemony does not happen by itself, but rather through certain social institutions that become the center, such as schools and other forms of teaching, maturity and the relative immaturity of the national language (Rido, 2020), the properties of the dominant social group.

### **The Maintenance of Hegemony**

Hegemony in society have to maintained, therefore the ruling elites or dominant group have to maintaining the value and ideology that have been implanted, because if hegemony not maintained the power will be loosen and disappear over the time. The dominant group have to keep and maintain hegemony despite holding power in a society, but hegemony must be maintained because hegemony can not be taken for granted but must be fight therefore hegemony can be accepted by society. If hegemony is not maintained then the power of the dominant group will fade and disappear over time.

### **Ideology**

The dominant ideas in society are the idea of the ruling class, in maintaining the power of ruling class, hegemony is spread and dictated to the hegemonized. The ruling class spread the ideology toward the ruled class in order to be followed and received as a common sense. In this condition the hegemonized will interest consciously or unconsciously follow the hegemonys. The hegemony can be ideology, thought, believes, and many kinds of interests. These kinds of interests is voluntarily followed by the hegemonized. The hegemonized who less interesting above all the strong interesting dominant.

### **Definition of Racial Discrimination**

Discrimination is the bad treatment of an individual based on their membership in a certain group in society. It involves the actual behaviors towards groups such as excluding or restricting members of one group from opportunities that are available to another group. The act of discrimination could cover all aspect of life, because everybody could be discriminated no matter who ever and where ever. The dominant group becomes the superior class and holds the minority group with their own ideas and regulation. Basically, similar to prejudice, discrimination could happen to everybody in any part of the world, no matter who they are and where they are.

Racism cannot be defined without defining race. Race is that signifies and symbolizes social conflict and interest that refers to the different type of human bodies. race is generally understood as a social construct. Although biologically meaningless when applied to humans physical differences such as skin color have no natural association with group differences in ability or behavior race nevertheless has significance in structuring social reality. Race has always existed as groups of people living in certain areas. There are various race in each countries in the world. Those various races can be a power for the dominant race in the countries. On the other hand, it also can cause a big problem if they cannot regard one to another. This condition happened in United States which had various races. The White people created a new kind of understanding and interpretation of human differences that gave bad effects and sufferings towards black people. White people cannot accept the existence of black people, as consequence they never treat black people as the true human beings due to the different types of physical characteristics.

## **METHOD**

To undergo this research, the researcher employs descriptive qualitative method. Its refers to research about person's lives, live experiences, behaviors, emotions and feeling as well as about organizational functioning, social movement, cultural phenomena, and interaction between nations. Qualitative research involves purposeful use for describing, explaining, and interpreting collected data. The research started with reading the novel that written by Solomon Northup entitled *Twelve Years A Slave*, after that, find issue inside the novel and search the

supporting data which correlate with the discussion in this research through journal or some website since it contains about race discrimination and hegemony. In solving the problem occurs in this paper, the researcher must have the data and data source to support the explanation of the paper. The data in this paper are from the text narration and the dialogues about racial discrimination in practice of hegemony which taken from the novel written by Solomon Northup *Twelve Years A Slave*. The data source is the novel entitles *Twelve Years A Slave*.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Portrayal of Racial Discrimination in Practice of Hegemony in Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years A Slave*.**

Hegemony is the process of making and maintaining and reproducing the authoritative set of meaning, ideologies and practice that done by ruling group by using an agreement or consent. They ruled and control the subordinate classes by constructing ideology that can be accepted and carried out by the subordinate class. Hegemony power is used to maintain the interests of the ruling class toward hegemonized or subordinate class. Gramsci explain that the meaning of hegemony is a way of life and the way of thinking that dominant, hegemony is the power or domination over life value, norm and culture of a group of people who eventually becomes the doctrine of the other communities. Hegemony can influence many aspect in society, and race is one of the affected by hegemony. Hegemony can influence the point of view of a group of race toward other race and its bring impact toward subordinate race, therefore hegemony is one of the cause of racial discrimination that exist in social surrounding. *Twelve Years A Slave* is the novel that the story of the novel portrayed hegemony as the cause of racial discrimination. There are three concept of hegemony that influenced the society that portrayed in the novel *Twelve Years A Slave* as followed: consent and coercion, moral and intellectual, and common sense.

#### **Slavery in Consent and Coercion**

Hegemony is the maintain power and stability of group of people through combination domination that done by force or by agreement or persuasion, by the hegemony ideology of dominat group can be conveyed. Therefore hegemony seen as

something common because people accept it without compulsion. Basically hegemony is a process to influence the human thinking in order to make them follow what have been given by the dominant group to subordinate group, it portrayed in the novel *Twelve Years A Slave*, it can be seen in the dialogue below:

This gentleman was Mr. Theophilus Freeman. Reading from his paper, he called, "Platt." No one answered. The name was called again and again, but still there was no reply. Then Lethe was called, then Eliza, then Harry, until the list was finished, each one stepping forward as his or her name was called.  
"Captain, where's Platt?" demand Theophilus Freeman.  
The captain was unable to inform him, no one being on board answering to that name.  
"who shipped that *nigger*?" he again inquired of the captain, pointing to me.  
"Burch," replied the captain.  
"your name is Platt you answer my description. Why don't you come forward?" he demanded of me, in angry tone.  
I informed him that was not my name; that I had never been called by it, but I had no objection to it as I knew of  
(Northup, 2014:46)

From the dialogue above show that the consent that made by slaveholder that is Mr. Burch and Mr. Freeman change the name of Solomon Northup without tell first to Solomon Northup if his name was changed by them. It show one the example of white people grab the liberty of black people, this is the consent that made by white people but accept by black people as coercion. Mr. Burch and Mr Freeman change Solomon Northup name because they will sent Solomon Northup to slave dealer to sell as a slave. Not only change the original name of Solomon Northup but also they grab the freedom and liberty of Solomon Northup.

### **Prejudice in Moral and Intellectual Hegemony**

Moral hegemony is subtly dictating the hegemonized in determining what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong, what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. Morality tend to maintain the hierarchical structured of society, which put the superior class continues to dominate the inferior class. Moral and intellectual reform in hegemony one of the cause the racial discrimination happen in society. Moral and intellectual reform is one of way changing mindset or



ideology Even though, it is the reform of good or bad habit that is applied in that society. In *Twelve Years A Slave* novel show the moral reform that portrayed by Epps character, one of white man who has slaves but he treat his slaves inappropriate it shown in the dialogue between Epps and Bass white people who didn't agree with slavery.

"I tell you what it is, Epps," It's all wrong-all wrong, sir there's no justice nor righteousness in it. I wouldn't own a slave if I was rich as Croesus, which I am not, as is perfectly well understood, more particularly among my creditor. There's another humbug the credit system humbug, sir; no credit no debt. Credit lead a man into temptation. Cash down is the only thing that will deliver him from evil. But this question of slavery; what right have you to your nigger when you come down to the point?"

"what right" said Epps, laughing, "why, I bought them, and paid for them".

"of course you did" the law say you have the right to hold a nigger, but begging the law's pardon, it's lies. Yes, Epps, when the law says that it's a liar and the truth is not in it.

Is everything right because the law allows it? Suppose they'd

pass a law taking away your liberty and making you a slave?

"oh, that ain't a supposable case," said Epps, still laughing;

"hope you don't compare me to a nigger, Bass." (Northup, 2014:190)

From the dialogue above Bass a white man from Canada who didn't agree with slavery tried to give explanation to Epps that Epps has been took nigger's liberty and nigger's right and its opposite the law, but Epps believe that he has been bought and paid for his niggers so that he has right to hold his niggers into slavery, that he think is what he did to his niggers is already right, he determining what he think about his treatment toward his niggers is right, this is the portrayal of moral reform that portrayed by one of the cruel master named Epps. In the last dialogue Epps think that he better than his niggers, he wants to Bass know that niggers are worst human that proper to get bad treatment and proper to become slave, therefore Epps did not want to be equated with niggers, in the dialogue portrayed that Epps tend to maintain the hierarchical structured of society, which put the superior class continues to dominate the inferior class, this is the kind of morality that appear in the novel

*Twelve Years A Slave*. The dialogue above not only portrayed the moral reform but also intellectual reform as Gramsci states intellectual concept is that everyone has the function as organizers in the areas of production, as in the political and cultural. Cultural region involves dictating process of thought and mastery of the ideas that are common to associate cause and effect. From the quotation above also portray that Epps character dictating the process of thought and mastery the idea that are common associate cause and effect.

### **Slavery in Common Sense**

Gramsci used the term common sense to denote this uncritical and partly unconscious way in which people perceive the world. Common sense is the site on which the dominant ideology is constructed, but it is also the site for the resistance to that ideology. In the way or the process of the maintaining the power the dominant group should be created some idea and rule so that the dominant group can controlling subordinate group. *Twelve Years A Slave* is the novel that portrayed common sense that use in influencing subordinate group thinking so that the dominant group can have control toward subordinate group by implanted ideology of dominant group. It portrayed from dialogue below:

“well, my boy, how do you feel now?” said Burch, as he entered through the open door. I replied that I was sick, and inquired the caused of my imprisonment. He answered that I was his slave that he had bought me, and that he was about to send me to New Orelands (Northup, 2014:20)

From quotation above common sense can be shown in the sentence *He answered that I was his slave that he had bought me*, from this sentence portrayed that the dominant group try to implanted and constructed the ideology that emphasis Northup is his slave that he had bought, so that he has right to control Northup as his slave. It is the way and the process of maintaining the power of dominant group, the dominant group created some idea and rule so that dominant group can control subordinate group. The dominant group use common sense in influencing the subordinate group so that the idea that has been created by dominant group can be followed by subordinate group. The dominant group has to make some regulation or rule so that they can push the movement of subordinate group with the aim to maintain their

power. The rule that has been made by dominant group (white people) is ban subordinate group (black people) to have education.

## CONCLUSION

After doing the analysis, here the researchers draws the conclusion of this research. This research is to answer the problem of formulation which is how does racial discrimination in practice of hegemony as portrayed in Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years A Slave*. To find the answer, the researchers uses sociological approach and hegemony theory from Gramsci and racial discrimination to analyze the literary work, and the researchers takes the data from dialogues and narrations related to issue. Referring to the explanations which have been stated before, the researchers concludes that there are two forms of racial discrimination in practice of hegemony those are slavery and prejudice, the researchers analyzes it by applying three concept of hegemony that developed by Antonio Gramsci. The concepts of hegemony are consent and coercion, moral and intellectual, and common sense.

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