

**RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND RESISTANCE IN  
*JUDAS AND THE BLACK MESSIAH* FILM**

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**Abstract:** *Judas and the Black Messiah* reflects the real events focusing on O’Neal’s betrayal to Hampton in the late 1960s directed by Shaka King. This research aims to determine the racial discrimination towards the black characters and resistance strategies in the *Judas and the Black Messiah* (2021). In this research, the writer applied a qualitative research method with a descriptive analysis technique in analyzing the data. Furthermore, in this research, the writer utilized Racial Discrimination theory proposed by Rebecca M. Blank and Marilyn Dabady to examine the racial discrimination against the black characters. The results show black characters facing racial discrimination on a daily basis in three forms, such as in Explicit Discrimination, Statistical Discrimination and Profiling, and Organizational Processes. The members of the Black Panther Party are labeled as a group of criminals by the government and stated as a threat to national security. Thus, this makes the black characters have to suffer on a daily basis through physical attack from the police and often receive racial slurs. Nevertheless, the result also portrays the black characters in utilizing the resistance strategies to fight against racial discrimination. There are several strategies utilized by the black characters, such as Political Education, Coalition Building, Direct Actions and Protests, and Empowerment Through Leadership. It attempts to fight back against injustice treatment and government oppression of minorities.

**Keywords:** *Black Characters, Racial Discrimination, Racism, Resistance Strategies*

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**INTRODUCTION**

Racism is a social issue that is intimately connected to a sense of superiority over other races (Adam, 2018; Buansari et al., 2021; Madula et al., 2017). The idea that one race is superior to another leads to injustice treatment of other races. Because of differences in skin tone and other physical traits, certain races underestimate or even bully others (Haryanti et al., 2019; Padma et al., 2020; Sutrisno et al., 2022). In real life, while everyone is born differently, there is no such thing as prejudice because we are all one unit, regardless of nationality or color. Nonetheless, many people continue to underestimate one another which leads to existing prejudice in daily life. Therefore, this situation arises a belief that there are various groups that deserve to be discriminated against. It results in various instances of racism across the world, such as in the United States.

America, as a diverse country, is intimately associated with racial discrimination. Racial discrimination is the unfair treatment of people based on their race or ethnicity

(Buansari et al., 2021; Haryanti et al., 2019; Lopez-Littleton et al., 2021). This can manifest itself in a variety of ways, such as unfair hiring practices, housing discrimination, police brutality, and unequal access to healthcare and education. Furthermore, minority groups often receive racist acts from the majority group. It is believed that minority groups such as black people are powerless than the whites. According to Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, racism is ordinary, it is a normal situation for people of color to experience everyday on a daily basis (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Moreover, racial discrimination disadvantages the minority groups in society. Racial discrimination is unequal treatment based on race that disadvantages a racial group, as well as treatment based on insufficiently explained grounds other than race that disadvantages a racial group (Blank & Dabady, 2004). A minority group may face injustice treatment from the majority group that seems powerful in society. An example of potentially unlawful disparate impact discrimination would be when an employer uses a test in selecting job applicants that is not a good predictor of performance on the job and results in proportionately fewer job offers being extended to members of disadvantaged racial groups compared with whites. African Americans and Latino/as continue to have lower opportunities to get employment, housing, and loans than whites with comparable skills (Tyson, 2006).

On the other hand, the whites are always portrayed as having power in society (Braveman et al., 2022). In addition, There is also a semantic phrase that distinguishes between black and white. Words like evil and threat are frequently associated with black people, whereas white people are associated with goodness and innocence (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In society, the blacks are seen to be interrelated with negative connotations, for instance criminal. According to Delgado and Stefancic, race is interconnected with social relations and assumptions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The whites assume the minority group is not as powerful as their race which confronts the root of racism. Furthermore, it then leads to stereotypes that might be beneficial or harmful for the blacks. Because the whites generate generalizations, both stereotypes have the potential to be detrimental for the black (Stamps, 2017). The stereotypes and assumptions then leads to construct race to differentiate the group based on their physical characteristics. The blacks, as minority group, often receive racial discrimination since they are interconnected with such negative stereotypes and assumptions which socially constructed by the whites, as majority group. Then, this stimulated many people in the creative industry to bring up the issue of racism in various literacy media.

The making of films featuring racial issues against black people is still a hot topic today. *Judas and the Black Messiah* is one of the films that portrayed the racism issue which was released on February 1st at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival, followed by a virtual and in-person showing on February 12th. Shaka King, a black American filmmaker, screenwriter, and film producer, directed the film. The film's enthusiasm and favorable reception were unstoppable. It is proven by the 97% rating on Rotten Tomatoes and 7.4/10 on iMDB. According to Rotten Tomatoes, *Judas and the Black Messiah* is an intriguing depiction of historical events, a strong criticism of racial injustice, and a wonderful achievement for the film's director and actors (Rotten Tomatoes, 2021).

The film *Judas and the Black Messiah* provides a powerful depiction of the pervasive racism and systemic oppression faced by the Black community in the 1960s. The film explores the story of Fred Hampton, the charismatic leader of the Illinois chapter of the Black

Panther Party, and William O'Neal, an FBI informant who infiltrates the party. Through its narrative and visual storytelling, the film sheds light on the FBI's manipulative tactics to dismantle the Black Panther Party while showcasing the resilience and determination of its leaders in their fight for racial justice and equality. Hampton and other Black Panther Party's member have to face racial discrimination while they are struggling to fight for their justice and equality. In everyday life, they suffer from police brutality, racial profiling and discrimination which lead them in a great danger. The FBI refers the community as a group of criminals (King, 2021).

The writer found several previous studies from other researchers to be used as consideration and comparison to this study. The first previous was a bachelor's thesis entitled "Revolution in Hollywood: An Analysis of *Judas and the Black Messiah* based on the Critical Theory" written by Kristian Willebrand Bunger. The result shows that the film follows a classic narrative structure that leaves no room for social criticism (Bünger, 2021). The second previous research is an undergraduate thesis entitled "Racial Discrimination in *Harriet* (2019)" written by Marcelina Gagermatahai. The results show that Tubman and the Black people in the film have to face racial discrimination in three different types, namely intentional and explicit discrimination; subtle, unconscious and automatic discrimination; and discrimination and profiling (Gagermatahai, 2022). The third previous research is an article journal entitled "An Analysis of Racism in the film *The Green Mile* by Frank Darabont" written by Nellu Atika and Rezky Khoirina Tarihoran. The results show that the minorities have to struggle in several kinds of racism, namely internalized racism, interpersonal racism, and institutional racism (Atika & Tarihoran, 2022). The last previous research is an undergraduate thesis entitled "The Struggle of African-American Against Racial Discrimination in Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give*" written by Christin Ayu Rizky. The research explored the racial discrimination of the characters and their struggles against racism. The writer also investigated institutional discrimination, individual discrimination and structural discrimination (Rizky, 2020).

In order to conduct this research, the writer propose two research problem based on the background study, those are how does the *Judas and the Black Messiah* film portray the racial discrimination, and how do the black characters utilize the resistance strategies in fighting racial discrimination. This research is intended to uncover the racial discrimination against black characters and the struggles to achieve the equality and justice portrayed in Shaka King's film *Judas and the Black Messiah* (2021). In addition, this research also investigates the resistance strategies depicted in the film in fighting racial discrimination.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the writer applies a qualitative research method with a descriptive analysis of the *Judas and the Black Messiah* film. As a result, by using the method, the writer tries to uncover racial discrimination issue in the *Judas and the Black Messiah* (2021) film by applying Character in film theory proposed by Dennis W. Petrie and Joseph M. Boggs, and Racial Discrimination theory by Rebecca M. Blank and Marilyn Dabady. The writer identifies and collects the data as in the scenes of action, script of dialogue (conversations among the character) or monologue (broadly speech by one speaker) that show the racism and the black strive for racism using the character and characterization theory. As a result, the

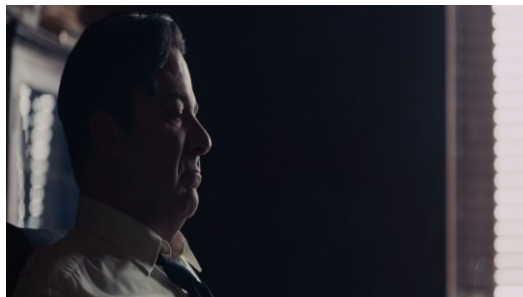
writer analyzes the data to find correlation between the data and the research questions which will be answered in this research.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Racial Discrimination Towards Black Characters

#### 1. Explicit Discrimination

The first racist act in the form of Explicit Discrimination is verbal antagonism. Verbal antagonism includes racial slurs and insulting racial comments, whether in or out of the target's presence (Blank & Dabady, 2004). These comments may not be considered serious enough to be illegal in and of themselves, but they do represent a clear form of antagonism. In the film, the black characters receive this verbal antagonism from the white people. The first case acts by an FBI agent to the Crowns Party (another black party movement) in creating fake news.



*Image 1. FBI creating fake news*  
(Judas and the Black Messiah 00.28.17 – 00.28.26)

FBI : *“These Crowns. Well, they ain’t nothin’, but a bunch of jive sissies.”* (King, 2021)

The FBI refers the Crowns Party with a phrase of *“a bunch of jive sissies”*. The phrase *jive sissies* is categorized as an insulting phrase which is used to make fun of an individual or group. When black men are represented as sissies, it becomes something of a nigger joke, and it can become a racial humiliation (Ross, 2022). Thus, the verbal antagonism in this case is categorized as an insulting phrase for the black people in the party. It may provoke their emotions for being insulted with such phrases. Although this discrimination is not in the target's presence, it is still considered to be a form of racial slurs.

Furthermore, on the other occasion, several comrades in the Black Panther Party also experience this verbal antagonism. This happens when they are visiting the Young Patriots headquarters in order to make a coalition. The Young Patriots consisted of mostly poor, white, Appalachian immigrants who experienced discrimination (Ponniah, 2021). This happens when Jimmy Palmer provokes the party with his speech about his uncle's death.



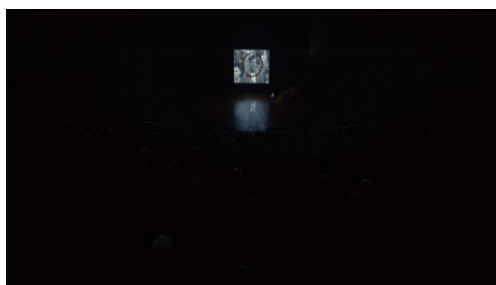
*Image 2. FBI creating fake news*  
(Judas and the Black Messiah 00.42.28 – 00.42.34)

Jimmy : *“When I look at that, I don’t see no flag hanging. I see my uncle hanging from a tree. And a bunch of white devils like y’all smiling around his body.”*

The White : *“Who the fuck you think you’re talkin’ to?”* (King, 2021)

The verbal antagonism can be seen through the word “*fuck*” when the white responses Jimmy while he was talking. It is categorized as a slur which can be insulting. Additionally, the white also raised his voice when he said that word which made this insulting the black. The word *fuck* refers to an offensive way when expressing extreme anger or to add force to what is being said (Cambridge Dictionary). Thus, this is one of the verbal antagonisms faced by the black character in the target’s presence. This insult provokes the emotion of Jimmy Palmer which is proven by his facial expression that seems to be mad.

Later on, in the minute 00.46.29 – 00.46.35, another case of verbal antagonism happened towards Fred Hampton by the head of the FBI. It happens when the head of the FBI orders to arrest Hampton no matter what it costs. It can be seen in the following dialogue below.

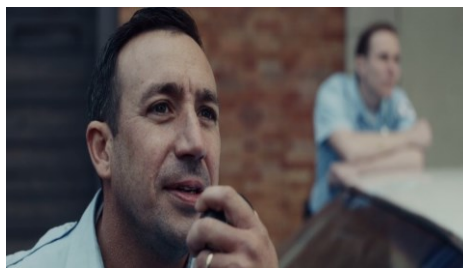


*Image 3. The order to arrest Hampton*  
(Judas and the Black Messiah 00.46.29 – 00.46.35)

FBI : *“Fred’s influence is growing. What happens next? I want him off the street. Charge him with something. Anything. But get his Black ass off the street.”* (King, 2021)

The FBI used the phrase “*Black ass*” which referred to Hampton as an African-American. It is considered to be insulting because referring to someone based on their racial background in a negative way. In that they disfavor the targets of such behavior and create a hostile environment, verbal abuse and nonverbal rejection are solid markers of discriminatory effects (Blank & Dabady, 2004). It is not something offensive if it is said by a person from the same racial background. Instead, it would be very offensive if the person who said it was from a different racial background. Thus, this can be categorized as a verbal antagonism since it can be insulting for the black character (Pradnyana, 2023).

Moreover, in the minute 01.39.11 – 01.39.51, there is another verbal antagonism in the film. It is when the police besiege the Black Panther Party’s headquarters after one of the BPP’s members is involved in a gunshot with the police. As it can be seen in the Image 4 and the dialogue below, the police besiege the BPP’s headquarters fully armed.



*Image 4. The Police besiege BPP headquarters  
(Judas and the Black Messiah 01.39.11 – 01.39.51)*

Police : “*Hey, Panthers! If you really give a fuck about these people out here, you’ll come down. You little motherfuckers think it’s cool to shoot a cop? Today’s the day! Either you fucks come down or we’re comin’ up!*” (King, 2021)

The verbal antagonism also can be seen in using the repetition of the word “*fuck*” by the police and a phrase “*little motherfuckers*” in order to get attention of the black characters in the Black Panther Party’s headquarters. As it is explained in the previous part, the word *fuck* refers to an offensive way when expressing extreme anger or to add force to what is being said (Suryanovika & Negara, 2019). They were outraged as a result of the gunfire, which severely wounded one of their partners. Furthermore, the phrase “*little motherfuckers*” is a vulgar slang. This phrase is usually considered highly offensive especially when it refers to an individual or group (O’Dea & Saucier, 2020). It is an incredibly insulting expression for someone you despise or for someone who has made you angry (Mastropierro & Conklin, 2021). Thus, this expression could be categorized as a verbal antagonism which is highly offensive for the black characters.

In the film, the black characters also have to face discrimination in the form of physical attack. According to Blank and Dabady, performing physical attacks based

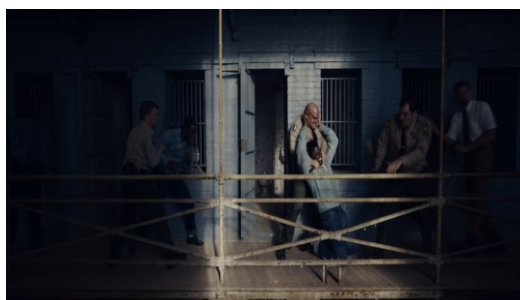
on race is one of the forms of explicit discrimination (Blank & Dabady, 2004). In the first appearance, O'Neal is being caught by the police and he was violently assaulted until his forehead ripped open. As it can be seen in the Image 5, as follow:



*Image 5. O'Neal interviewed by FBI*  
(Judas and the Black Messiah 00.06.38 – 00.09.02)

In the minute 00.06.38 – 00.09.02, O'Neal is being interviewed by an FBI agent. He was getting violently assaulted by the police after being caught stealing a car. O'Neal is being portrayed with his temple ripped open caused by the police brutality that commonly happens for the minority, especially black characters. The whites are often correlated with the blacks with poor and debased objects or with violence (Pakaya et al., 2021). Despite the fact that he was guilty of fraud and theft, the police not only intervened to arrest him but also used violence on him because he was black.

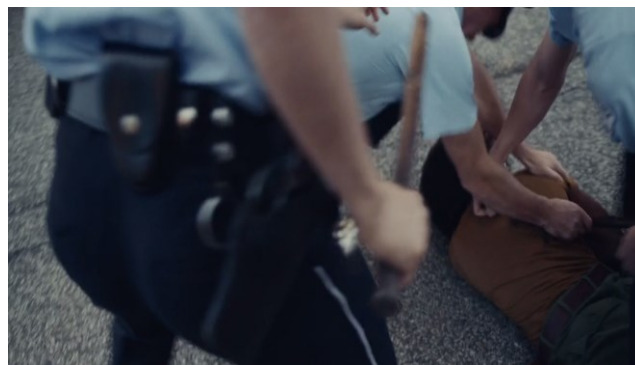
It can be seen in the Image 5 as O'Neal receives severe injuries on his forehead. When dealing with the police, black characters are frequently subjected to such violence (Mokodongani & Laya, 2022). Black people are constantly subjected to unfair treatment by white people, and as a result, acts of violence continue to occur and escalate in America year after year. The whites are always portrayed as having power in society (Braveman et al., 2022). They are not hesitant to employ excessive violence because they believe the black race is powerless in comparison to the white race. Moreover, Hampton as the leader of the BPP also receives physical attack by the police in the prison. It can be seen in Image 6, when the police assaulted Hampton until he became disabled.



*Image 6. Hampton being assaulted by the police*  
(Judas and the Black Messiah 00.55.11 – 00.55.18)

As a minority group, black characters are frequently subjected to injustice by a government ruled by the whites (Tyson, 2006). The whites believe they are more powerful than the blacks. The whites believe they are superior to black characters in many ways, including social life, education, economic status, and so on (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Because the whites have more power, this is what makes the blacks defenseless. In society, white is commonly connected with innocence and kindness, whereas black and colored are frequently associated with evil and violence (Cappiccie et al., 2012). In addition, violence is frequently the result of societal imbalance between Whites and Blacks.

Furthermore, on the other occasion, it can be seen in the minute 01.02.05 – 01.02.38 about physical attacks that happened to other Black Panther Party's member. It happened to a black woman in the Black Panther Party after the gunfight with the police. The police treated the black characters roughly even though they are not guilty.



*Image 7. Police brutality to BPP's member*

(Judas and the Black Messiah 01.02.05 – 01.02.38)

Discrimination in the form of physical attacks does not discriminate against victims based on their gender (Haryanti et al., 2019). Judy Harmon, a female BPP member who was courageous enough to resist this injustice, was one such example. Because of a previous firefight between one of the BPP members and police at the bakery, police at BPP headquarters in Chicago organized this siege. Members of the BPP were shot multiple times and were hospitalized due to their terrible injuries. This prompted the police to surround the BPP headquarters, resulting in a brief gunfight.

However, after the BPP surrendered, the police assaulted several members of the BPP before they were taken and imprisoned. They cannot resist and do anything to protect themselves. These physical attacks are considered as explicit acts of discrimination, according to Blank, since they are the outcome of bias, which most certainly disadvantages the target (Blank & Dabady, 2004). It can be seen in Image 7 when Judy Harmon is being assaulted by several policemen using a baton.

## 2. Statistical Discrimination and Profiling



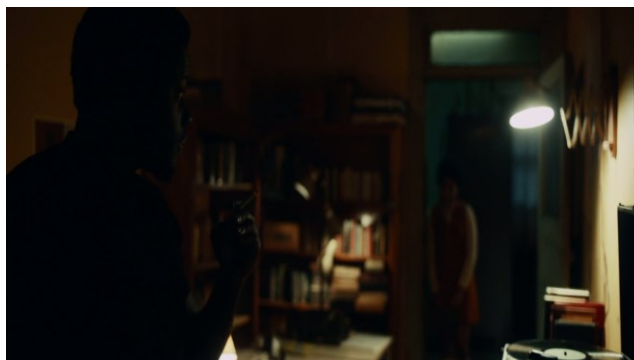
In this case, an organization or individual makes judgements about an individual from a group based on overall assumptions about that group. Statistical discrimination or profiling, properly defined, refers to circumstances of discrimination based on assumptions that reflect the actual distributions of different groups' characteristics (Blank & Dabady, 2004). This discrimination disadvantages minority groups that are stereotyped with negative connotations in the society. Furthermore, in the film, there is statistical discrimination towards the black characters in racial profiling.

According to Rebekah Delsol from the Centre for Crime and Justice (CCJ), racial profiling refers to the generalizations based on race, ethnicity, or religion rather than individual behavior that is used to specify suspect descriptions by the police (Delsol, 2015). In the film, it is portrayed incidents of law enforcement officials engaging in racial profiling. The police routinely target and harass black characters, including Fred Hampton and other members of the Black Panther Party, based purely on their color and political beliefs. This persistent surveillance and targeting exemplifies the everyday racism that black characters suffered at the time. In this case, it can be seen through several scenes that engage the racial profiling. The first case happens when the black characters in the Black Panther Party are assumed to be a threat. It can be seen in the minute 00.02.56 – 00.03.17, it is as follows.

FBI : *“The Black Panthers are the single greatest threat to our national security. More than the Chinese. Even more than the Russians. Our counter-intelligence program must prevent the rise of a Black Messiah from among their midst. One with a potential to unite the Communist, the anti-war, and the New Left movements.”* (King, 2021)

The Black Panther Party is stereotyped as a group of criminals. In the first five minutes, the FBI declares that the party must be disbanded and must prevent the rise of the new powerful leader. Racial profiling can occur whether it is an intentional policy of targeted minority groups or common institutional practices (Delsol, 2015). The FBI targeted the Black Panther Party which was assumed to endanger national security. It is because of their political belief that they opposed capitalism and desired to change it with socialism. In consequence, this belief leads the FBI to do racist acts towards the minority group, the blacks.

The black characters in the Black Panther Party have to deal with racial profiling from the statement. Racial profiles are both over-inclusive in the sense that many, indeed most, of those who fit the profile are completely innocent, and under-inclusive in the sense that many other criminals or terrorists who do not fit the description will go unidentified by authorities (Delsol, 2015). The statement is based on assumptions that the black are just the same, as criminals. This is detrimental for the black characters in the party who are fighting against injustice treatment from the FBI and the Police, since their movements become limited of this racial profiling.

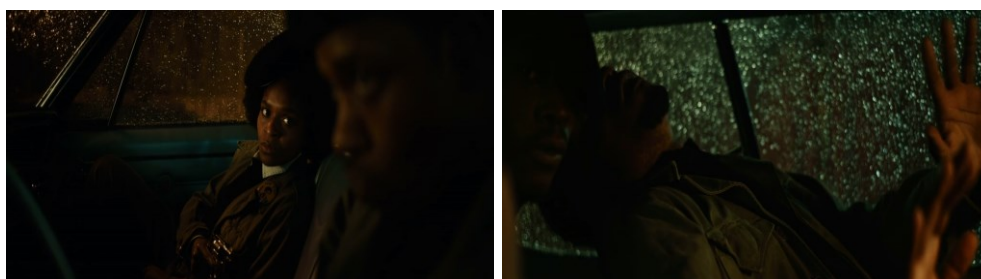


*Image 8. Hampton listens to vinyl*  
(Judas and the Black Messiah 00.37.20 – 00.37.31)

Ali : *“They don’t attack me because I’m a Muslim. They attack me ‘cause I’m Black. They attacked all of us for the same reason.”* (King, 2021)

In the minute 00.37.20 – 00.37.31, Hampton is shown listening to the vinyl. Muhammad Ali is giving a speech on the vinyl about how he deals with racism in his daily life. As seen in the dialogue above, he stated, *“They attack me ‘cause I’m Black”* (King, 2021). Through this statement, he implies the fact of facing racial discrimination in everyday life only based on his race, which is Black. No matter what religion you are, as long as you are Black, you will face racism on a daily basis. Racial discrimination is the act of discriminating against people based on their skin color, race, or ethnicity (Sholihati & Purnama, 2021).

This racial profiling leads to the black characters in the film suffering in an injustice treatment from the government. The whites as the superior often make bad assumptions to the blacks (Stamps, 2017). It is demonstrated in the film that this discrimination occurred for African-Americans by pointing out the facts that they struggled in their attempt for equality and justice. Furthermore, Ali added, *“They attacked all of us for the same reason”* (King, 2021), which means of their race. The stereotypes and assumptions then lead to constructing race to differentiate the group based on their racial background. In addition, the blacks, as a minority group, are often getting stereotyped as criminals in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Thus, the black characters are discriminated against by the police because of their race.



*Image 9 & 10. O’Neal get insulted by another black characters*  
(Judas and the Black Messiah 00.34.39 – 00.37.12)

In this case, the racial profiling not only occurred from the whites to the blacks but also within the black people itself. For instance, this happens when O'Neal gets insulted by other Black Panther Party members which he was getting recognized by a person whose friend's car got stolen. Judy Harmon threatens O'Neal with a gun in order to make him explain about the car. In this case, racism occurs within the race itself, the blacks. It is caused by the racial profiling which O'Neal is attached to something criminal. It presupposes that what a person did in the past will always be associated with that person, even if that person is no longer committing the crime in the present (Delsol, 2015).

This presupposition made O'Neal have to deal with acts of violence as Jimmy Palmer pulled his hair and made him terrified. It is proven that racist acts not only occurred between races but also within the race itself. O'Neal gets assaulted since he used to steal cars and pretend as an FBI agent, which is a criminal. Racial profiling stigmatizes whole communities, perpetuating and escalating racial tensions and contributing to ethnic minorities' over-representation in other areas of the criminal justice system (Delsol, 2015). This is attached to him and made him receive these racist acts from his people. This racial profiling affects him in the party as he is often assumed to be a criminal.

### 3. Organizational Processes

Structural discrimination may appear in locations and situations where individual discrimination does not exist. Structural discrimination is not always apparent and therefore cannot be simply regulated against (Ocran, 2022). As in the *Judas and the Black Messiah* film, the structural discrimination occurs when the government reinforces a negative stereotype of the Black Panther Party as a group of criminals. Furthermore, when structural discrimination promotes assumptions that give rise to forms of individual discrimination, it can also result in bad effects that are unrelated to the stigmatized trait (Blank & Dabady, 2004).

According to Delgado and Stefancic, race is interconnected with social relations and assumptions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Labels introduce stereotypes that might be beneficial or harmful. Because they generate generalizations, both stereotypes have the potential to be detrimental (Stamps, 2017). The stereotypes and assumptions then lead to constructing race to differentiate the group based on their racial background. In addition, the black characters, as a minority group, are often getting stereotyped as criminals in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

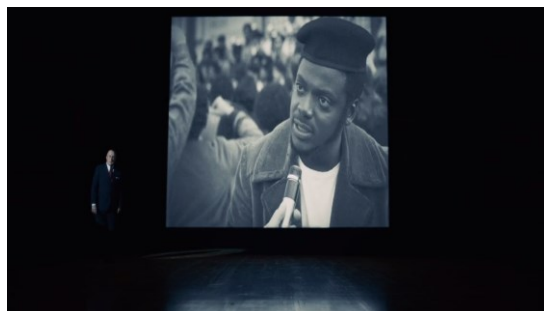


Image 11. The statement of the FBI to black characters

(Judas and the Black Messiah 00.02.57 – 00.03.28)

FBI : *“The Black Panthers are the single greatest threat to our national security. More than the Chinese. Even more than the Russians. Our counter-intelligence program must prevent the rise of a Black Messiah from among their midst.”* (King, 2021)

In the minute 00.02.57 – 00.03.28, the black characters in the Black Panther Party are stereotyped as criminals. Criminal racial stereotyping has been a persistent and terrible feature of American culture (Najdowski, 2023). Through this quotation, it implies that the government consciously constructs the black characters as a group of criminals who must be defeated. Black characters face biased judgment and treatment when they encounter police officers because of cultural assumptions that depict them as criminals. Thus, it may also make the black characters in the Black Panther Party more vulnerable to disproportionately negative law enforcement and criminal legal results as compared to White people, affecting their safety and well-being.

This uncomfortable and difficult psychological experience is influenced by culture, setting, and stereotypes (Najdowski, 2023). In addition, the government also associates them with negative connotations. People of color are often stigmatized as criminals, whilst white people always have power in society (Fazriyah, 2021). In this case, the structural discrimination leads to the minority groups having unequal treatment and injustice discrimination in society. Besides, the stereotype grows uncontrollably in society of the construction which emerges on how a group is labeled as either good or evil.

Furthermore, it is proved through the dialogue that stated the Black Panther Party as more dangerous to their national security even compared to the Chinese and Russians. It is assumed that someone’s race can be determined based on their looks and that there is a constant and statistically significant association between race and likelihood to commit crime (Delsol, 2015). In this case, the black characters in the Party are being generalized by the FBI based on their racial background that is commonly interconnected to criminals.

Moreover, it demonstrates how racist the American government system was towards black characters at the time, particularly those who were members of the BPP, by claiming that they *“...must prevent the rise of a Black Messiah from among their midst”* (King, 2021). The FBI implied they would do anything to prevent the rise of their new leader within the party. People who are culturally stigmatized are aware that negative stereotypes put them at risk of discrimination (Najdowski, 2023). As a result, Hampton was targeted by the FBI because he was considered to be highly dangerous and capable of stirring his people’s enthusiasm for upholding justice, which would lead to crime and endanger national security.

Hampton : *“We ain’t gonna fight capitalism with black capitalism, we gonna fight capitalism with socialism.”* (King, 2021)

In organizational processes, the film also portrays the systemic racism towards the minority group in the economic system. Capitalism is a system founded on private property, individual freedom, and the right to enter into contracts in which the market dominates the regulation of economic activities (Braveman et al., 2022; Zalesko, 2015). In the film, Hampton tries to change the system of capitalism to socialism which he means by the equality and equity between all races. There is no class distinction between the rich and the poor, they are just equal. Meanwhile, socialism is an economic system in which everyone has equal factors of production, based on equality and justice (Adler, 2022). Thus, there will be no monopoly in the market. Through socialism, Hampton and the other Black Panther Party members believe that this economic system could decrease the poverty of their group and other minority groups. There will no longer be a social gap between the rich (the whites) and the poor (the blacks and the minorities).

Furthermore, Hampton also stated that the only way to fight capitalism is through socialism, not black capitalism. Black capitalism is a strategy that encourages the development of new black profit centers and job opportunities while handing over control of ghetto businesses to the black community (Tolson, 1975). Hampton removes the concept that obtaining economic empowerment within the Black community, known as “black capitalism,” is an appropriate method for challenging and deconstructing capitalism itself. Instead, he recommends a larger strategy of combating capitalism with socialism. Hampton’s belief comes from the realization that capitalism, as an economic system, naturally produces inequality and exploitation.

Furthermore, Hampton contends that concentrating simply on wealth growth within the Black community does not substantially challenge the systemic structures and power dynamics that sustain racial and economic inequality. Instead, he suggests the importance of adopting socialist principles. Hampton states that solving structural inequality requires a more comprehensive and revolutionary strategy that goes beyond individual economic achievement by prioritizing fighting against capitalism with socialism. It entails opposing the current economic system and working toward a more fair that benefits all marginalized people, particularly the Black community.

According to Blank and Dabady, segregation occurs when members of a disadvantaged racial group are purposefully excluded from resource allocation and access to institutions (Blank & Dabady, 2004). Segregation can include the spatial separation of races as well as the obligatory use of various institutions, such as schools and hospitals, by individuals of different races. In the film, the blacks have to face the racial segregation in the form of segregated schools. The blacks cannot attend the same school as the whites. Thus, the Black Panther Party builds an educational program for black children to get a better education.



*Image 12. Segregated school*

(Judas and the Black Messiah 00.15.07 – 00.15.30)

In the minute 00.15.07 – 00.15.30, it can be seen that there is a segregated school. The black students cannot attend the same school as the whites. The native could unequally deliver prizes and put limits on Africans by removing others of their heritage and assigning them a color (race) (Smith, 2017). Even after the Jim Crow era ended, white people continued to refuse to attend schools with inferior races. In addition, they attended the same school but avoided them in society because the superior group believed that their group was not proper to socially interact with lower races (Pradnyana, 2023). This problem leads to the inequality of black students in achieving the same educational programs as the whites. In the film, the black students only learn from the black people with several limitations compared with the whites.

For example, in comparison to majority-White schools, segregated schools frequently have high teacher turnover, less experienced teachers, limited material resources, and crowded classrooms. As a result of inequitable school funding distribution, all of which can lead to poorer mental health management among children (Wang, 2022). The behavioral difficulties caused by school segregation can reinforce an adverse cycle of racial inequality in lifetime well-being. Through the scene, it demonstrates the systematic marginalization and discrimination faced by Black individuals, as they are denied equal access to education opportunities.

## **Resistance Strategies Utilized by the Black Characters**

### **1. Political Education**

In the film, the first resistance strategies utilized by the black characters in the Black Panther Party is through political education. Hampton, as the leader of the Black Panther Party, educates his comrades about politics. They conduct demonstrations, dialogues, and educational activities to educate people of the community about their rights, history, and the value of collective action (Ellefsen et al., 2022). Hampton, as the leader, tends to change what has been planted unconsciously inside the mindset of the black characters.



*Image 13. Hampton educating his people*  
(Judas and the Black Messiah 00.13.03 – 00.15.06)

Hampton : *“Because we’ve grown so accustomed to being poor, we think it’s normal for our kids to go to school hungry. We think it’s normal for us to go the hospital with a runny nose and come home in a body bag. So, our job as the Black Panther Party is to heighten the contradictions.”* (King, 2021)

In the minute 00.13.03 – 00.15.06, Hampton educated his people focusing on raising the contradictions. It is stated in the dialogue above that the minority group (black characters) have a mindset about what is supposed to be abnormal to be experienced but it becomes a normal situation. Black people face a much higher chance to be a target of discrimination (Delsol, 2015). It implies that just because they are living in poverty, it is still not normal for their kids going to school hungry. This mindset should be clearly omitted from their mind because it is not supposed to be that way. Additionally, this is then one of the Black Panther Party’s programs that feed children in schools (King, 2021).

Hampton declares the social condition between the black and the white which have different social classes. The whites have a better life which they can easily access to a better education, healthcare and employment, compared to the blacks which seem to have no idea about it (Haryanti et al., 2019; Tyson, 2006). In addition, they also think getting involved in violation which leads them to the hospital or even being found dead is normal. It is an injustice treatment that the black characters face on a daily basis. In this case, Hampton stated it is their job to heighten the contradictions. They feel normal for being a target for racism. Through this political education, Hampton intends to educate his people that being discriminated against is not normal.

## 2. Coalition Building

The second resistance strategy is through coalition building. In the film, in order to fight discrimination towards minority groups, the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, and the Young Patriots build a rainbow coalition. Leaning on the same group who gets discriminated against is a method of resistance strategies in dealing the same difficulties (Fazriyah, 2021). Hampton asked all members of the three parties to

strengthen solidarity among fellow oppressed people by the police and the government. The parties are also the minority groups who are seen to be having difficulties fighting against discrimination. They are also minorities from different racial backgrounds who receive racial discrimination.

Furthermore, Hampton stated that the presence of a coalition of people of color here would merge the disparities between people of different races into unity. It can be seen through Image 14 and the dialogue below.



Image 14. Hampton announcing the Rainbow Coalition  
(Judas and the Black Messiah 00.44.39 – 00.45.51)

Hampton : *“Chicago’s the most segregated city in America! Not Shreveport! Not Birmingham! But we here to change that. The Black Panthers, the Young Lords, and the Young Patriots are forming a rainbow coalition of oppressed brothers and sisters of every color!”* (King, 2021)

In the minute 00.44.39 – 00.45.51, Hampton stated firmly that Chicago was the most segregated city in America at the time. The statement depicts the segregation of people in Chicago at the time depending on their racial background. Racial segregation refers to the separation of the people based on their races in housing, education and other social economic areas (Fahle et al., 2020). Furthermore, people of color live in distinct areas than their white counterparts due to the fact they are more struggling to achieve equality in access to education, healthcare, and employment (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Tyson, 2006). Through the coalition, it is considered to be a great start for people of color in gaining equal access in all aspects of life and providing them with more power to fight against discrimination. This resistance strategy seeks to unite diverse communities against common oppressors.

### 3. Direct Action and Protests

The third resistance strategy is through direct action and protests. After building a Rainbow Coalition, the minority groups chant slogans and demand justice as they march through the streets. Reporting and protesting are fundamentally interconnected acts of resistance, and both are also retroactive and proactive (Ellefsen et al., 2022). They seek to affect broader cultural change while also strengthening victims of



racism's self-esteem and pride. While reporting was frequently met with disappointment, demonstrating was viewed to be essential for publicly and collectively combating discrimination. Furthermore, it can be seen in Image 15 and the dialogue below regarding the resistance strategy that is utilized by the minority group.



Image 15. Minority group protesting for injustice treatment  
(Judas and the Black Messiah 00.44.39 – 00.45.51)

Young Lords : *“Last week, our brother, Manuel Ramos, was shot in the head and killed by an off-duty pig. So, we caught the pig and turned him over to his fellow pigs. And for some reason, we expected justice. Well, let’s see what they do, now that we’re in front of the pigpen, and we demand an independent investigation! No more pigs in our community!”*

The Crowds : *“Off the pigs!”* (King, 2021)

An injustice treatment seems to be common for minority groups to experience in their daily life. It is explained that the police killed their people and already reported to the authorities, but still there is no justice for them. As a result, the coalition raised their voice, doing protests to the authorities in order to get justice. Racism, a lack of trust in reporting, and skepticism about public officials’ commitment to antiracism prompted social protest (Ellefsen et al., 2022). It is intended to raise solidarity among the people oppressed, especially people of color, to fight a discrimination towards minority people (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Young Lords, with the Rainbow Coalition, used this opportunity as a minority group in America to speak out against racism through protesting.

In Image 15, it can be seen that massive people from the minority groups gather around protesting about their rights and justice against discrimination. It is happening because even if they are already reporting the problem to the authorities, they are still not gaining the justice they should get. Reporting incidents to authorities, such as a police, or anyone in positions of authority, is a less common way of fighting racism (Ellefsen et al., 2022). Furthermore, through directly protesting, it required being flexible or capitulating in some form while immediately facing the cause of racism

and prejudice by fighting back deliberately and directly (Fazriyah, 2021). Therefore, they are directly protesting using their voice to speak out against racism which can be a great way and more powerful than just leaning on reporting them to the authorities.

#### 4. Empowerment Through Leadership

The last resistance strategy employed is through leadership. In the film, Fred Hampton is portrayed as a charismatic leader that could encourage members of his community and followers to take control of their problems and contribute to the movement. Through speeches, a leader could bring positive behaviors and promote the positive emotional exchange between the members and the leader (Xu & Zhang, 2022). The members in the Black Panther Party are motivated by his speeches and actions to join the fight against racist acts. It can be seen in the minute 01.15.03 – 01.16.37 when Hampton gives a speech on a podium.



*Image 16. Hampton welcoming speech*

(Judas and the Black Messiah 01.15.03 – 01.16.37)

Hampton : *“I’m free. I’m free, y’all! I need everybody to repeat after me! I am...”*

The Crowds : *“I am...”*

Hampton : *“...a revolutionary!”*

The Crowds : *“...a revolutionary!”*

Hampton : *“Drummer, lemme hear the people beat! This is what we call the people beat. Started in 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. It’s the beat that manifests in you, the people. They can’t never stop the party, unless they stop the people!”*  
(King, 2021)

The empowerment through leadership concludes that there is a power in his speech. A resistance strategy through empowerment leadership can influence the members of the party to join the fight of racist acts towards them. Through this leadership, it contributes to building resilience in the community (Xu & Zhang, 2022). By encouraging his community to address systemic racism and injustice, Fred Hampton’s leadership acts as a powerful resistance strategy. His leadership illustrates how a charismatic and powerful leader can be a catalyst for constructive change and encourage others to take action together to fight against discrimination. Their

dedication, passion, and vision serve as an example to others, motivating them to join the fight for justice (Chan et al., 2023).

Moreover, through this empowerment leadership, Hampton uses his voice in order to strengthen the solidarity of all the people of color. In the dialogue above, he also stated “*It’s the beat that manifests in you, the people.*” which can be inferred to the enthusiasm of the spirit within them. It then leads to unity among the people oppressed. Empowering leaders stimulate unity among different groups (Chan et al., 2023). They overcome racial, cultural, and socioeconomic barriers by highlighting shared goals and humanity. It is what makes them more powerful in facing the racial discrimination. It is not only for the black characters but also the people of color who also received oppression. This unity is crucial for resistance movements since it enhances their collective voice (Chan et al., 2023).

Empowerment through leadership can indeed be considered a powerful resistance strategy (Xu & Zhang, 2022). Additionally, through empowering others, it can be referred to as one way to give power to those who inherently have less power within a community. Thus, this strategy could embrace their power in fighting the racist acts towards them and become unity in solidarity. Furthermore, in the dialogue, Hampton continued his speech, “*They can’t never stop the party unless they stop the people!*”. It implies that no matter how hard the police and government attempt to prohibit the party, as long as the people believe in their beliefs, they cannot be defeated. This act could make them more powerful as oppressed people in fighting back against racial discrimination (Tran, 2023).

## CONCLUSION

Racism is still an intriguing issue to examine. *Judas and the Black Messiah* film explores racial discrimination towards the black characters who are members of the Black Panther Party, which focuses on Hampton’s life as an activist and a leader of the party. The result shows the black characters in the film facing racial discrimination in fighting for justice and equality in everyday life. To conclude, the black characters have to face numerous racist acts committed by the FBI and the Police as in the Racial Discrimination Theory, namely Explicit Discrimination, Statistical Discrimination and Profiling, and Organizational Processes. Furthermore, the racial profiling of black characters by the police makes them even more powerless because they are associated with radical groups that must be dismantled. This is what puts them at a drawback in the fight against racism. In addition, the black characters also employ resistance strategies through political education, coalition building and directly protesting in speaking out against discrimination. However, they have not succeeded in utilizing the resistance strategies to fight against racial discrimination as they were defeated and disbanded in 1982. Hampton, as the leader of the party, was also executed during the raid in his apartment.

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