**Bayard Rustin’s Role in Changing Civil Rights History Amid Racism and Homophobia in Washington**

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***Abstrak -*** *Penelitian ini melakukan pemeriksaan mendalam terhadap peran penting yang dimainkan oleh Bayard Rustin dalam membentuk kembali sejarah hak-hak sipil di Amerika Serikat, khususnya dalam menghadapi tantangan rasisme dan homofobia yang ia temui di Washington. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif serta Teori Ras Kritis, analisis ini berfokus pada penggambaran Rustin dalam film "RUSTIN" sebagai sumber data utamanya. Film ini memberikan gambaran komprehensif tentang perjalanan Rustin sebagai aktivis Afrika-Amerika gay yang berperan penting dalam mengorganisir Pawai di Washington untuk Pekerjaan dan Kebebasan tahun 1963. Melalui lensa Teori Ras Kritis, penelitian ini menyelidiki sifat saling terkait antara rasisme dan homofobia serta pengaruh mendalamnya terhadap pekerjaan advokasi Rustin. Temuan penelitian ini menekankan bagaimana Rustin dengan cakap menghadapi tantangan diskriminasi ganda, sambil mempertahankan posisinya yang krusial dalam perjuangan untuk perubahan sosial. Karya ini secara signifikan memperkaya pemahaman kita tentang struktur kekuasaan dan perjuangan keadilan, sekaligus memperkuat pentingnya perspektif interseksional dalam kajian dan aktivisme hak-hak sipil.*

***Kata Kunci: Diskriminasi, Rasisme, Hak Manusia***

**Abstract -** The study conducts an in-depth examination of the pivotal role Bayard Rustin played in reshaping the history of civil rights in the United States, particularly addressing the challenges of racism and homophobia he encountered in Washington. By employing qualitative research methods alongside Critical Race Theory, the analysis centers on Rustin’s portrayal in the film "RUSTIN" as its main source of data. The film offers a comprehensive look into Rustin’s journey as a gay African-American activist who was instrumental in orchestrating the historic 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Through the lens of Critical Race Theory, this research investigates the intertwined nature of racism and homophobia and their profound influence on Rustin’s advocacy work. The study's findings underscore how Rustin adeptly managed the dual challenges of discrimination, maintaining his crucial position in the fight for social change. This work significantly enriches our comprehension of power structures and justice struggles, reinforcing the necessity of an intersectional perspective in civil rights scholarship and activism

**Keywords: Discrimination, Racism, Civil Rights**

**INTRODUCTION**

Discrimination has been a pervasive social phenomenon throughout human history, manifesting in various domains, including politics, economics, and culture. Despite the advancements of modernity and the evolution of civilization, discriminatory practices persist, manifesting in various forms and often in subtle ways. This phenomenon encompasses a range of discriminatory practices, including rejection, unfair treatment, and exclusion of individuals or groups based on various characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation and others. Discrimination results in the creation of unequal rights, opportunities, and treatment within society. It limits individual and group progress and undermines social harmony. In the Indonesian context, despite various legislative and advocacy efforts to combat discrimination, the challenge persists in various forms, demanding a profound understanding, critical action, and collective change to realize an inclusive and just society for all individuals.

Racism, rooted in the pernicious belief in the superiority of one race over another, has plagued civilizations for centuries. Its poisonous tendrils have woven themselves into the socio- political landscape, dictating who holds power, who is deemed worthy of opportunity, and who is relegated to the margins of society. Whether in the form of overt acts of violence or more subtle forms of exclusion, racism exerts its influence with devastating effect, fracturing communities and robbing individuals of their dignity and agency.

Homophobia is a reflection of deeply ingrained societal attitudes that seek to marginalize and silence those whose sexual orientation or gender identity diverge from heteronormative expectations. It thrives on the stigmatization of difference, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and fostering environments of hostility and distrust. From the playground to the workplace, from the halls of government to the sanctuaries of faith, homophobia permeates every facet of society, shaping interpersonal relationships, institutional policies, and cultural narratives.

The writer chose Bayard Rustin as the subject of their thesis due to his multifaceted significance within the civil rights movement, his pivotal role in organizing the historic 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, his commitment to nonviolent protest tactics and strategic activism, as well as his intersectional identity as an openly gay man in a movement often overshadowed by heteronormativity, all of which present a rich and complex framework for exploring the intersections of race, sexuality, activism, and social change.

This article therefore sets out to demonstrate how racism and homophobia not only affected the experiences of Bayard Rustin as an activist, but also influenced the course of history and the civil rights struggle in Washington. It thus provides a deeper insight into the challenges faced in the pursuit of social justice and equality.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

In writing the thesis, the writer used critical race theory. Critical race theory is an academic and legal theory that asserts that systematic racism pervades American society, from education and housing to employment and healthcare. Critical race theory acknowledges that racism is more than just a result of personal bias and prejudice. It is simply an academic rebuttal to the false claim that American society and institutions are "colorblind." Critical race theory acknowledges that racism is rooted in laws, policies, and institutions that perpetuate racial inequality. According to CRT, societal challenges such as Black Americans' higher mortality rate, disproportionate exposure to police violence, the school-to-prison pipeline, denial of affordable housing, and Black women's death rates during childbirth are not unrelated aberrations.

This research aims to explain the complexity of social dynamics in the context of racial crisis through a qualitative approach that utilizes racial crisis theory as the main analytical framework. Qualitative research methods are used to explore in-depth understanding of individual experiences, perceptions and responses to racial crises in a particular context, taking into account the historical, social and cultural contexts that surround them. Through this approach, this research aims to reveal the complex patterns, dynamics and social constructions underlying the racial crisis, as well as its implications for power structures, identity and social relations. Thus, this research is expected to provide in-depth and contextual insights into the phenomenon of racial crisis, as well as contribute to the understanding and efforts to overcome it.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Racism and homophobia had a significant impact on Bayard Rustin's role in the civil rights movement in Washington. Racial discrimination limited Rustin's access to leadership positions in the movement, despite his skills and dedication. As a black man, Rustin often faced prejudice and obstacles in the fight for racial equality. Homophobia also affected his role, as Rustin had to hide his identity as a gay man to avoid further stigma and discrimination. This made it difficult for Rustin to gain the full support of his fellow activists and brought additional judgment from the society of the time. As such, racism and homophobia not only directly affected Rustin's role in the civil rights movement, but also reflected the challenges faced by individuals seeking justice in a context filled with prejudice and discrimination.

Rustin faced various forms of discrimination, both racial and sexual. As a black man, he faced racial discrimination in the form of limited access to key positions in the civil rights movement, as well as prejudice and stereotypes related to his identity. In addition, as a gay man, Rustin faced homophobia that required him to hide his identity to avoid stigma and rejection within the movement and society at large. To overcome these challenges, Rustin used a multifaceted approach, including the use of diplomacy, education, and awareness strategies, while maintaining his integrity in the fight for civil rights and equality. By combining his political skills with his courage and moral strength, Rustin successfully navigated the complexities of the two forms of discrimination he faced while continuing to advance the goals of the broader civil rights movement.

The history and evolution of racial discrimination in Washington has had a profound impact on public policy and the social fabric of the city. Years of systematic discrimination affected many aspects of life, including housing, education, and economic opportunity. Discriminatory housing policies, such as redlining and residential segregation, resulted in unequal access to property and decent neighborhoods for the black community. In education, segregated schools and lack of resources for schools in minority neighborhoods exacerbate educational disparities. This discrimination also extends to employment, where black communities often face barriers to fair employment and opportunities for advancement. As a result, Washington's social fabric has become highly fragmented, with stark disparities between different communities. Efforts to address and remedy this legacy of racial discrimination through public policy reform continue, but the effects of this long history of injustice are still being felt today.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity has a significant impact on the social and economic lives of LGBT+ people in Washington. Many LGBT+ people face social exclusion, stigma, and rejection from family, friends, and co-workers, resulting in social isolation and severe emotional distress. In the workplace, this discrimination often takes the form of unfair treatment, denial of promotion, or even termination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Access to health services that are inclusive and welcoming to LGBT+ communities is also limited, resulting in disparities in health care and overall well-being. In addition, disparities in housing policies often make LGBT+ people more vulnerable to homelessness and unsafe living conditions. The cumulative impact of this discrimination exacerbates economic hardship, hinders social mobility, and reinforces existing inequalities in society. Continued legislative and advocacy efforts are urgently needed to address these injustices and create a more inclusive and equitable environment for all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Changes in D.C. government policy to address racial discrimination and homophobia have shown significant progress over time. Initially, government policies often explicitly or implicitly supported discriminatory practices such as housing and employment segregation and a lack of legal protections for LGBT+ communities. However, with increased public awareness and pressure from the civil rights movement and LGBT+ advocacy groups, the D.C. government began to adopt more progressive and inclusive policies.

For example, the adoption of anti-discrimination laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, sexual orientation and gender identity in the workplace and in housing has been an important step in correcting systematic injustices. In addition, initiatives to improve diversity and inclusion education and training in the public and private sectors have helped to reduce prejudice and increase social acceptance.

These policy changes reflect a greater commitment to social justice and human rights, although challenges remain. Despite the progress made, continued efforts are needed to ensure that all individuals, regardless of race or sexual identity, can enjoy equal rights and opportunities in Washington.

**CONCLUSION**

The film "Rustin" vividly depicts racism and discrimination through Bayard Rustin's struggle against systematic injustice in the United States. The story shows how racial prejudice and discrimination against Rustin's sexual identity affected every aspect of his life, from his career opportunities to his involvement in the civil rights movement. The film not only depicts the suffering caused by racism and discrimination, but also demonstrates the strength and resilience of individuals and communities in the fight against injustice. "Rustin" invites viewers to reflect on the profound impact of racism and discrimination and the importance of the ongoing struggle for equality and social justice.

As such, Rustin is a powerful reminder of the need for critical consciousness and collective action to confront and overcome injustice. The film emphasizes that social change requires not only individual courage, as demonstrated by Rustin, but also the solidarity and support of the entire community. Through its profound and emotional narrative, "Rustin" inspires viewers to continue the fight against all forms of racism and discrimination, with the hope that one day equality and justice will truly be realized for all people, regardless of race, sexual orientation, or social background.

Finally, "Rustin" emphasizes that the history of the civil rights struggle is a story that is still relevant and continues to this day. It reminds us that despite significant progress, the fight against racism and discrimination is not over. By highlighting the story of Bayard Rustin, the film shows that true change requires constant effort and an unwavering commitment to justice. Rustin became a symbol of resistance to injustice, inspiring a new generation to continue the legacy of fighting for a more inclusive and just society.

In conclusion, "Rustin" not only celebrates the legacy of an often forgotten civil rights fighter, but also reinforces the message that every individual has a role to play in the fight against racism and discrimination. Through its visceral and inspiring portrayal, the movie urges us to continue to fight injustice and work towards a world where equality and justice are real rights for all. "Rustin" reminds us that although the road to change is full of challenges, dedication and perseverance can bring us closer to a better and more just society

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