

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Many people wish to live in the United States since it provides freedom, opportunity, and a better life than other nations. The nations, philosophies, and customs that make up American culture are patchwork. Though the country is beautiful on the outside, serious social, political, and economic problems harm its reputation. Differences in the treatment of people or groups according to arbitrary standards are known as discrimination (Pettigrew, 1998).

The unjust or discriminating treatment of people or groups because of particular characteristics, including color, ethnicity, gender, age, handicap, religion, or sexual orientation, which results in uneven chances, privileges, or results, is known as prejudice. Prejudice can make social injustice worse, especially for foreign nationals, adopted children, and members of other minority groups (Williams & Mohammed, 2009). Given these problems, rapid societal reform is urgently needed. Rapid social reform and deliberation are urgently needed as prejudice against foreign nationals, adopted children, and members of other minority groups may exacerbate these problems.

Despite the idea of justice is the foundation of social institutions, its implementation differs. The interests of justice should never be sacrificed for the good of the community at large, especially when systematic injustice targets underprivileged individuals. Aware of their own social and economic situations, all logical members of a society adhere to values they all share (Rawls, 1971).

Justice is required to ensure the well-being of every person in society, claims Rawls. He argues that these values usually give way to bigotry and harsh treatment of the marginalized.

The principle of inalienable rights life, liberty, and property was highly stressed by them. A civilization defends the inherent rights of every individual (John Locke, 1689). This mentality fits the challenges faced by adopted children and immigrants who struggle for acceptance and legal status.

Adopted children often face difficulties that can increase their likelihood of seeking mental health treatment. Overrepresentation will emphasize certain psychological requirements and the difficulties that adopted children face in adjusting to their new identity (Juffer & van Ijzendoorn, 2005). Apart from the difficulty of transformation, people also have to identify their identity in community life which usually highly values changes in behavior that is believed by the community. Due to the fact that, the history in the United States related to racism, colonialism, social exclusion, and discrimination, it is important to address these problems and change society's perspective on this matter.

One important psychological element that can influence people's lives is their self-concept (Rolf Muus, 1996). How well a person can integrate, set goals, and accept who they are influences how they handle obstacles in life. The community is given direction and goals as well as self-identity values in building an inclusive and healthy society.

According to Erik Erikson (1950), people have various choices to make important decisions regarding questions of identity. Psychosocial development

of humans occurs in eight stages, from conception to death. Every phase is a struggle between two opposing tendencies that the individual must overcome in order to achieve their highest developmental level.

The American film *Blue Bayou (2021)* had Antony LeBlanc portrayed the difficulties of an adopted child. Antonio was adopted when he was a baby by his American parents, but now he has to fight against injustice, self-discovery, and the immigration system he experiences. Antonio is threatened with deportation because of the negative impact of his legal violations, and he has also just discovered that his legal status is unclear. This also highlights the difficult reality that adopted children whose legal status is unclear must face.

The challenges faced by adopted children in the US are similar to Antonio's story. The issue of unfair immigration laws and discrimination experienced by people without legal status must be confronted and reformed. The film *Blue Bayou (2021)* shows the prejudice, trauma and identity problems that adopted children face. It also inspires demands for awareness, sensitivity and institutional change.

The main focus of this study is Antonio LeBlanc's struggle against injustice and the identity issues he experienced. In an effort to situate Antonio's struggles within an American cultural framework, this study investigates the relationship between legal issues and self-identity. As shown in this film, identity crises and an unjust justice system impact American society, but it is individuals who experience it.

B. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the justice and identity issues of the main character in the film *Blue Bayou (2021)*. In modern American society, it is important to know what problems and struggles the main character, Antonio LeBlanc, experiences. This study examines Antonio's identity crisis and questions of justice. This study also looks at how the American legal system affects immigrants and adoptees like Antonio. Shows the experience if an adopted child is never naturalized by his adoptive parents, resulting in him being deported. The aim is to make people more aware and sympathetic towards the situation experienced by Antonio and human rights. The study also looked at the larger social impact of his case on immigrants and other adoptees.

C. Problem Formulation

1. What are the characteristics of Antonio LeBlanc's experiences of injustice and his identity crisis in the film *Blue Bayou (2021)*?
2. How were the struggles Antonio LeBlanc faced with the identity crisis and injustice as seen in the film *Blue Bayou (2021)*?

D. Objectives of the Study

1. To describe the characteristics of injustice and identity crisis that Antonio LeBlanc had in the film *Blue Bayou (2021)*.
2. To analyze were the struggles Antonio LeBlanc faced with the identity crisis and injustice as seen in the film *Blue Bayou (2021)*.

E. Review of the Related Studies

The first study, Eleana Kim and Kim Park Nelson (2019), *Natural Born Aliens: Transnational Adoptees and US Citizenship*. This study investigates the relationship between adoptees who move abroad and their legal and cultural citizenship in the United States. This study emphasizes United States immigration laws, conflicts and tensions in adoptees' identities, legal status, and cultural belonging. The author presents the idea of immigration privilege, which states that adopted children are allowed to live in the United States with preferences depending on the citizenship of their adoptive parents. Adopted children deemed *naturally born* in America face legal challenges to their citizenship. The privileges they obtain create contradictions. Comparing the status of adopted children with other immigrant groups is where the racial implications of these differences are emphasized in this study. This study criticizes the legal system that recognizes adopted children as exceptional immigrants. The study calls for a review of United States immigration laws to address the difficulties experienced by people who adopt children from outside America. To encourage more recognition of their rights as full citizens.

Although this study has different points of view, both the study on the film *Blue Bayou (2021)* and the study on *natural born aliens* both raise the issue of injustice, deportation, and the identity crisis faced by transnational adopted children in America. The *natural born aliens* study offers more comprehensive historical information and policy background, by examining multiple case studies and larger patterns impacting adopted children in the United States. The

natural born aliens study draws attention to systemic issues such as the legal system in the 1950s onwards. The impact of the Trump administration's anti-immigrant stance, as well as the activism and lobbying efforts of communities adopting that legal system for legislative reform. In contrast, the film *Blue Bayou (2021)* focuses on the story of Antonio LeBlanc, a Korean adopted child, who is about to be deported. In this film, the depiction of Antonio's experiences is more dramatic and focuses on his personal story of dealing with the daily challenges he faces. Likewise, the psychological impact that fear of deportation had on him.

This study and the *natural born aliens* study raise the issues of injustice and deportation. Both show structural problems as well as the individual experiences of adopted children facing anti-immigrant feelings and legal uncertainty. The film *Blue Bayou (2021)* depicts Antonio and his family in a personal and emotional way, while this study addresses the broader issue of deportation anxiety impacting the adoptive community. Both studies address the identity difficulties experienced by adopted children due to their unclear legal status and ambiguous cultural identity. In the film, Antonio struggles with his identity as he negotiates his sense of belonging and the reality of his legal position. Concurrently, this study examines how adopted children experience the experience of being *between* American culture and the culture of their country of origin. There is also the psychological impact of living in legal uncertainty. Both studies emphasize how existing policies have cost many lives

and how laws must be changed to better recognize the rights of adopted children.

In the second study, *Differentiated Legalities: Understanding the Sources of Immigrants' Fear of Deportation*, by Roger Waldinger, Nathan I. Hoffmann, and Tianjian Lai (2023) examine varying levels of fear of deportation among various immigrant groups in the United States. The unjust status generated by the migration control system is reflected in the idea of *differential legality*. The second study used data from the Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS) collected in 2016 and 2017. The conclusion was that, compared to naturalized citizens, unauthorized immigrants, and those with temporary legal status were more afraid of deportation. Immigrants' views on deportation were also influenced by their personal networks and the language of their interviews. Existing immigration regulations and procedures affect immigrants' sense of security and fear of deportation.

The *differentiated legalities* study and this study on the film *Blue Bayou* (2021) both discuss the same thing, problems among immigrants related to institutional injustice, identity crisis, and fear of deportation. Using poll data from 1,976 immigrants as a sample, the *differentiated legalities* study examined differences in levels of fear of deportation among immigrants with different legal statuses. Introducing the concept of *differential legalities* to represent the varying unequal statuses produced by the migration control system, the system uses statistical methods to extrapolate findings about the United States

immigrant population. On the other hand, the film *Blue Bayou (2021)* highlights the legal and administrative difficulties experienced by Antonio LeBlanc. He is a Korean who was adopted as a baby and has lived in the United States for a long time. When he became an adult and faced the possibility of deportation he realized that he did not have the legal status clearly required to become a citizen. While the study provides in depth empirical data to identify common trends and components that impact fear of deportation, the film places emotional impact on character development and storytelling.

The *differentiated legalities* study and this study about *Blue Bayou* film both address the fear and anxiety associated with deportation, looking at how legal status and interactions with state entities feed these concerns. The *differentiated legalities* study illustrates how different legal statuses impact immigrants' sense of security and social integration, therefore addressing issues of identity and belonging. Similar strong foundations underpin Antonio's story in the film *Blue Bayou (2021)* as he battles his identity and his place in American society, his identity crisis made worse by the prospect of deportation. The structural injustices immigrants must face are also highlighted in both study. The film depicts the injustice experienced by adoptees like Antonio, who face deportation. The *differentiated legalities* study shows how legal stratification and state surveillance disproportionately impact non-citizens. Both studies emphasize social value. This study shows that personal and social networks influence the perception of uncertainty that immigrants who are more integrated into the system must face. The fear of deportation is exacerbated if one knows

people have been deported. Antonio's relationship with his family and environment is at the heart of this film. This study shows how his fear of deportation also impacts the people around him, such as his wife and step daughter, and how important community support is in his fight against deportation.

In this third study, Adam Joseph Beaupre's (2016) *Identities of Korean Adoptees: Adoptive Identity and Ethnic Profiles of Korean American Adoptees*. According to Beaupre (2016), the definition of Korean Adoptee Identity (KAD) is a social identity of individuals with an adoptive background that includes national and racial boundaries adopted from Korea. This study found that there are 6 unique identity profiles among adopted Korean-American teenagers, the KAD, Uncommit, Adoptee, Korean, KAD-Limited Commitment, and KAD-Strong Commitment identities. This study is based on ethnic commitment and adoption identity. In this study, the family has a more positive function, can facilitate better psychological adjustment, provide greater happiness in life, and better school adjustment is the result of a strong KAD identity. Strong ethnic identification Korean-American adopted adolescents exhibited higher levels of ethnic socialization activities.

Antonio LeBlanc's story in the film *Blue Bayou (2021)* and the study conducted by KAD Identity significantly contradict each other. In addition to examining the behavior of adopted Korean Americans in terms of psychological adjustment, well-being, and socialization, *KAD Identity* also discusses different identity profiles among adopted Korean Americans. Based on empirical studies

and a theoretical framework on identity, this study examines a larger group of Korean adoptees. In contrast, the film *Blue Bayou (2021)* emphasizes themes of justice and identity crisis only focusing on the personal and legal challenges of adopted children who are potentially deported from the United States. The film *Blue Bayou (2021)* focuses on the story of Antonio's experiences as an adopted child who struggles to avoid deportation and overcome issues of identity and family ties. The film *Blue Bayou (2021)* highlights systemic injustice and individual hardship in an effort to raise awareness and generate empathy for adopted children facing legal uncertainty. Concurrently, the *KAD Identity* study offers insight into how encouraging the development of ethnic identity and adoptive identity can improve the overall well-being of adopted children.

Even though there are differences in the themes of the *Blue Bayou* film study and the *KAD Identity* study, both studies focus on how Korean adopted children combine their ethnic and social identities. Both also discuss the mechanisms of identity development in these people. Notwithstanding that from different viewpoints, both emphasize the psychological and emotional challenges of being a Korean adoptee. Both studies emphasize that Korean adoptees must integrate culturally and socially either through family dynamics, community support, or official recognition. Furthermore, both stress the need to give adopted Koreans enough support networks to successfully manage their identity and well-being. They also recognize that Korean adoptees benefit from ethnic socialization programs that help them develop a stronger sense of ethnic identity. It is evident from contrasting these points how the study of *KAD*

identity and Antonio LeBlanc's story in the film *Blue Bayou (2021)* advance knowledge of the difficulties and requirements faced by adopted Koreans in various settings.

F. Research Methodology

1. Source of Data

The data for this study is from a combination of primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources is the *Blue Bayou* film (2021). Secondary sources including journals, articles, and online source are reviewed to get context and a variety of perspectives. The researcher seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of how the film addresses these concerns and improves scientific and public discourse with the aid of this study.

2. Technique of Collecting Data

The data collection process to examine the themes of injustice and identity crisis in the film *Blue Bayou (2021)* includes watching the film repeatedly, possibly more than 4 times, analyzing and categorizing scenes, dialogue and visual elements. And look for information from secondary sources, such as journals, articles, and online source. This data collection process provides more detailed information for researcher regarding the visual representation of the themes to be studied. By integrating various data sources, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the depiction of injustice and identity crisis in the film.

3. Technique of Analyzing Data

The researcher categorized this information into several main groups, including self-identity and social justice. This study used content analysis to obtain data from the film. Content analysis is a type of qualitative study that focuses on interpreting the meaning and significance of content to study what is in the film. Film scenes, dialogues, and interactions between characters relating to the ideas of injustice and identity crisis were used to collect data and then carry out the analysis.

G. Presentation

This undergraduate thesis is divided into four chapters, each serving a specific purpose. Chapter one serves as an introduction, providing the necessary background information for the study. It introduces the film *Blue Bayou (2021)* and outlines the study problem, objectives, scope, and methodology that will be used throughout the study. Chapter two focuses on the theoretical approach and framework that will be utilized in the study. Chapter three is dedicated to the analysis of the film, specifically exploring themes of justice issues and identity crises of the main character of the *Blue Bayou (2021)* film, Antonio LeBlanc. Chapter four consists of a conclusion and recommendation based on the study.