

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The 1984-1985 miners' strike stands as one of the most contentious industrial disputes in UK history, characterized by the intense conflict between Margaret Thatcher's conservative government and the National Union of Mineworkers. For the 165,000 miners involved, it was a year defined by economic hardship and poverty (Purnell, 2021). In response to the miners' hardships, a group of London-based lesbians and gay men established *Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners* (LGSM) to provide crucial support to the affected mining communities. This complex alliance between the miners' strike and the Lesbians and Gays community is shown in the 2014 film *Pride*.

The film "Pride" dramatizes the LGSM phenomena, providing a portrayal of the organization's formation and its evolving relationship with the mining community of the Dulais Valley in South Wales (Kelliher, 2014). The organization was formed after two gay men, Mark Ashton and Mike Jackson, collected donations for the miners at the 1984 Lesbian and Gay Pride march. The group maintained weekly meetings, raised money for the miners, and was involved in demonstrations, visits, and conferences (Kelliher, 2014).

In *Pride* (2014), two marginalized groups—the working-class miners, represented by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), and Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM), a group of urban middle-class lesbian and gay activists—come

together to form a powerful alliance during the miners' strike. The members of LGSM, based in London, had better access to education, professional opportunities, and cultural resources than the rural miners. The miners, who relied on physically demanding labor in the coal mining industry, experienced economic hardships due to their living conditions and the closure of their mines. This economic difference created a contrast in social classes: while the miners faced economic hardship, LGSM activists, who had better economic conditions, were fighting their own battle against discrimination rooted in sexual identity (People's History Museum, n.d).

Despite these social differences, both groups found common ground in their struggles against oppression. While lesbians and gays faced widespread societal exclusion, the miners faced economic exploitation. Their alliance, built on shared values of solidarity, exemplified the potential for cross-class unity. This bond persisted even after the strike ended, with miners showing continued support for Lesbians and Gays causes, such as opposing the discriminatory Section 28 legislation (People's History Museum, n.d.). The concept of class solidarity is essential for understanding this alliance. We closely relate to intersectional solidarity, which focuses on building connections between different social movements and communities. This concept fosters a shared struggle and empowers marginalized voices, ensuring the recognition of their experiences and perspectives. It also challenges power dynamics within coalitions and highlights the global interconnectedness of various forms of oppression and power imbalances (Tormos, 2016).

Literature is an expression of someone that is poured through a work both orally and in writing (Afrianto & Septina, 2023). Literature and film are powerful mediums for exploring and reflecting the complexities of the human condition, societal structures, and cultural dynamics. While literature engages readers' imaginations through novels, poems, and plays, film brings these themes to life with visual and auditory storytelling, providing audiences with immediate emotional and intellectual experiences (Lusiana & Chitra, 2021). Both forms not only entertain but also serve as lenses through which we can interpret social realities and moral complexities (Masyhur, Kasih, & Fithratullah, 2023). By intertwining narrative and artistic expression, literature and film complement one another in addressing historical events and social struggles, as exemplified by the 1984–1985 UK coal miners' strike, vividly portrayed in the film *Pride*.

This thesis examines the historical significance of the LGSM (Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners) movement, focusing on the intersections of class and sexual identity. The researcher employs a descriptive qualitative method within a sociological and historical framework, analyzing how solidarity between working-class miners and middle-class lesbian and gay activists created a model for cross-class alliance. The sociological approach will investigate the social processes and community contacts that offered this alliance, while the historical context will provide insights into the socio-political climate of 1980s Britain. Utilizing Karl Marx's Marxist theory, the study further investigates the economic forces and class struggles in the movie during this period.

1.2 Research Questions

To focus the study and maintain a clear analytical direction, this research seeks to address the following question: How are the phenomena of Lesbians and Gays Supporting the Miners (LGSM) in 1984 reflected in the film *Pride*?

1.3 Research Objective

Referring to the research question, the objectives of this study are to identify the LGSM phenomena from 1984 as reflected in the film *Pride* and to examine how the power of solidarity challenges oppression and discrimination in the movie.

1.3.1 Uses of Study

Any research must contribute meaningfully to the advancement of knowledge and have societal relevance. Therefore, the researcher should conduct the research with clear objectives and benefits in mind. This study aims to serve as a reference for other researchers interested in analyzing similar themes in different literary works. Consequently, this research offers two key contributions: both theoretical insights and practical applications.

1.3.2 Theoretical Use

Theoretically, this research aims to enhance our comprehension of solidarity as a social issue, not only depicted in the film *Pride* but also prevalent in real life. The researcher employs theoretical frameworks like Marxism to analyze the representation and function of solidarity within the movie's context. These theories form the foundation of the analysis, providing a scholarly basis for interpreting the depicted social dynamics.

1.3.3 Practical Use

Practically, this research aims to raise awareness among readers about the LGSM phenomena in 1984 and its relevance to social issues. By highlighting the film's depiction of solidarity and the challenges faced by the mining community and the lesbian and gay community, the study encourages readers to reflect on similar issues in today's society. This practical aspect aims to stimulate additional research in related fields and provide guidance for scholars studying solidarity, oppression, and social movements in historical and contemporary settings.

1.3.4 Scope of Study

This study focuses on the 1984–1985 Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) movement as portrayed in the film *Pride*, analyzed through the lens of Karl Marx's Marxism. The aim is to explore the various forms of solidarity that arise from the shared struggles between lesbian and gay activism and the mining communities, providing deeper insights into how these groups united against common social and economic challenges.