CHAPTER III

EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 The Concept of Race

The concept of "race" has a long, complex, and troubled history that dates back many centuries (Montagu, 1962). Over time, the term has evolved but retains much of its problematic legacy. Even today, the average person on the street often uses "race" in a way that closely mirrors how it was understood in the 19th century (1962). In this outdated view, the idea of "race" is an amalgamation of various elements, such as physical appearance, heredity, bloodlines, cultural background, nationality, personality traits, intelligence, and even individual achievements (1962). These diverse aspects are often mixed together into a single, oversimplified concept that shapes the popular understanding of what "race" means. As a result, biologists should exercise greater caution when addressing the topic of race, being mindful of the broader social and historical context in which the term is used, and the potential consequences of their statements (1962).

When the term "race" is mentioned, many people assume that a profound truth has been stated, while in reality, it only reveals that there are many echoes and few original voices. The word "race" is so commonly used that uncritical thinkers often assume their personal interpretation of it is universally understood, rarely considering the need to question such a fundamental concept in the language (Montagu, 1962).

3.2 The History of Asian American

Over the past several decades, the United States has experienced a substantial influx of tens of millions of immigrants, which has dramatically reshaped the country's demographic profile (Junn and Masuoka, 2008). This massive wave of immigration has not only increased the population size but also enhanced the racial and ethnic diversity within the nation. The growth in minority populations, both in terms of numbers and diversity, has been particularly noteworthy (Junn and Masuoka, 2008). In examining the sociopolitical dynamics of the United States, especially in the context of how ethnic groups are racialized, it is generally observed that there are five primary racialized groups. These groups include Latina/o, Black, white, Asian, and indigenous peoples, each with distinct experiences and histories within the broader framework of American society (Omi & Winant, 1994). The recognition and categorization of these groups reflect the complex and evolving nature of racial identities in the United States.

According to Hinkle in 1944, Hinkle readily embraced the stereotypes that the West had long associated with Asians. His portrayal of the Japanese in 1860 aligns with the dualistic framework historians have noted as shaping Anglo attitudes toward Asians in the Americas. They are depicted as both an alien "yellow peril" which is portrayed as pushy, cunning, with protruding teeth and strange attire, busily imitating American ship designs and altering American guns and as a model minority, characterized as polite, hardworking, modest, and possessing an engineering mind. On the other hand, the San Francisco press recognized their Japanese visitors as fellow

human beings, capable of forming bonds with both Anglo Americans and other Asians, at only one point in the article (Jenks, 2014).

Meanwhile, the Chinese migrants seemed to land in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century (Jenks, 2014). According to Hinkle's article, it clearly shows how Anglo San Franciscans struggled to perceive the Japanese independently, often interpreting them through a Chinese lens. In certain instances, the supposed link was used as an excuse to demean the Chinese by association. For example, letters and editorials in the San Francisco Bulletin defended the preferential treatment of the Japanese, citing their relative intelligence and lack of Chinese's trickery and double-dealing (Hinkle, 1944:340-344). At other times, the two cultures and nationalities were merged, as when voters from mining districts opposed funding a reception for the Japanese because they hated the Chinese and believed there was no significant difference between the two (1944:344).

According to the 2013 American Community Survey (ACS), about 19.4 million of the 320 million people in the United States were identified as Asian American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013A). The six largest Asian American ethnic groups were of Chinese descent (4.3 million, excluding Taiwanese), Filipino (3.6 million), Asian Indian (3.5 million), Vietnamese (1.9 million), Korean (1.8 million), and Japanese (1.4 million). Other significant groups included Pakistani (409,000), Cambodian (276,000), Hmong (260,000), Thai (237,000), Laotian (232,000), Taiwanese (230,000), Bangladeshi (147,000), and Burmese (100,000). The 19.4 million Asian Americans counted include those who reported being at least partially of Asian descent from one or more of the 24

ethnic groups categorized under the Asian American label. Additionally, the Census noted that over 15% of Asian Americans identified as being of "mixed race" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), a term sometimes referred to as "Hapa." More than 60% of Asian Americans were born outside the United States, the highest percentage among any racial group. The 10 states with the highest Asian American populations, according to the 2013 ACS, were California (6.1 million), New York (1.8 million), Texas (809,000), New Jersey (743,400), Illinois (592,000), Florida (547,000), Hawaii (531,000), Washington (516,300), Massachusetts (455,000), and Pennsylvania (358,000) (Chang, 2017).

3.3 The Concept of Social Movement

According to Wirtz (1995:16), the Asian American movement is just one of the many movements, protests, and struggles that have influenced the political, social, and economic landscape of America. This may happen due to the racial bullying towards minority ethnics in America. Although America has four major racial minorities; Asian American, Hispanic, Black, and American Indian, each with similar histories of oppression, the issue of race has traditionally been viewed primarily as a black and white matter (Wirtz, 1995:9).

To understand and explain the variety of protest movements and their demands throughout the past two centuries of American history, scholars have sought to define the term "social movement." These definitions have typically focused on aspects of collective action, social psychology, and rhetoric. For example, Cameron (1956)

defines a social movement as occurring when a significant number of people unite to change or replace a part of the existing culture or social order. Similarly, Turner and Killian (1972) describe a social movement as a collective effort that acts with some continuity to promote or resist change within the society or group to which it belongs.

Social psychological definitions of social movements focus mainly on the role of the individual within the movement (Wirtz, 1995). Hans Toch (1965) emphasizes the psychological aspect by describing a social movement as "an effort by a large number of people to collectively solve a problem they perceive as shared" (p. 5). Herbert W. Simons (1970) defines a social movement as a "noninstitutionalized collectivity that mobilizes for action to implement a program aimed at reshaping social norms or values" (p. 3). Both Toch's and Simons' definitions describe what a social movement is, rather than how it accomplishes its objectives.

3.4 Activism and Advocacy

Asian Americans are the most educated group yet occupy the fewest executive leadership roles in the United States (Gee & Peck, 2018). The situation is particularly complex because 44% of Asian Americans hold a bachelor's degree, compared to 26% of the White population (Economist, 2015). Despite their high education levels, there are very few Asian Americans in executive positions. As the U.S. becomes more ethnically diverse and better educated, one might expect corporations to advance more minorities into executive roles. However, the issue of Asian American representation

in leadership remains underrepresented and often overlooked in mainstream social justice discussions (Gee & Peck, 2018).

According to Bruckmüller & Branscombe (2011), Asian Americans make up 12% of the workforce, despite representing only 5% of the general population. However, diversity initiatives often overlook issues faced by Asian Americans, as they are not seen as underrepresented. Studies show that in Silicon Valley, Asians are more likely to be hired for tech jobs but less likely to be promoted to management compared to Black and Latinx individuals (Gee & Peck, 2018). This trend extends beyond tech, as similar disparities have been observed on Wall Street, where Asians are well-represented in associate roles but not in partner positions (Gee & Peck, 2018). Over the last 15 years, the Asian population, which includes Chinese, Indian, and Filipino communities, has grown by 72% (DeWolf, 2017). Due to limited research on these specific groups, the term "Asian American" will be used to encompass them.