

CHAPTER III

EXTRINSIC THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the theoretical foundation and social context that guide the analysis in the subsequent chapter. Centering on Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, this chapter explores how individual and group identities are shaped by social structures—particularly through mechanisms such as categorization, social comparison, and in-group vs. out-group dynamics. These concepts are essential to understanding how social class dominance is constructed and portrayed within cultural narratives.

3.1 Extrinsic Elements

3.1.1 Social Identity Theory (SIT)

According to Tajfel (1981:255), social identity is “that aspect of a person’s sense of self that comes from an understanding of the involvement in a social group along with the importance to that membership.” According to Tajfel (1978), social identity theory is the result of the fusion of two lifestyles in the study of beliefs and actions between groups: social comparison and social categorization. It implies that people classify themselves as belonging to several groups of people, such as a group of professionals, a particular pop band’s fan base, or people with the same social class. Along with classifying oneself, people also assess which groups they consider to be a part of (in-groups) and which they do not (out-groups). People constantly classify their own, evaluate in-groups and out-groups, and compare their values to determine their worth.

The Social Identity Theory (SIT) developed by Henri Tajfel concentrates on how people describe themselves in connection to belonging to a community of people. Tajfel created the hypothesis to address behaviour among groups, namely the dynamics of bias against out-groups and in-groups. Henri Tajfel's theory of in-group favouritism and out-group behaviour analyses how people classify themselves and others into distinct social categories, expanding on his more thorough theory of social identification. As an outcome of this grouping, members of the same group (in-group) enjoy benefits, while members of other groups (out-group) face discrimination or prejudice.

People define their selves as social groupings, and these associations are meant to preserve and reinforce individual identity, as defined by social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978:278). Both categorizing one's "in-group" against an "out-group" and having a tendency to look upon one's group constructively against the out-group are somewhat components of forming identities of in groups. Despite the lack of contact with other group members or a history of rivalry or disagreement among the groups, the results offered a compelling example of how simply placing people into random, different social categories could result in ingroup-out-group prejudice and discrimination.

The ability of we-them differences to result in differing opinions, preferences, and behaviours toward other people based on whether or not they are classified as belonging to the ingroup category was successfully confirmed by these studies. It is evident from laboratory tests with restricted intergroup circumstances that ethnocentric bias and commitment are not dependent on kinship or a long

history of interpersonal connections among those in the group. Instead, they can be easily manipulated by figurative modifications that suggest shared characteristics or a shared destiny.

It is currently possible to propose the following speculative theories about disputes between groups in stratified societies: conflict between dominant and subordinate groups is fostered by a disparate allocation of goal resources, so long as the latter group begins to strive for the creation of an advantageous social identity and refuses its previously received and widely held negative self-image and the status quo. In response to these developments, the dominant group may try to discover and generate new distinctions that benefit it or do everything in its power to preserve and defend the status quo (Tajfel, 1986).

Many studies have also been conducted on social identification, including what groups people belong to, when they choose to affiliate with a particular group over another, and how long-lasting and stable these relationships are. The groups that a person ties to must be complemented with information to determine which groups are psychologically connected at a specific moment and why, as an individual, could be a member of a family, community, city, nation, etc.

By identifying prejudice, bias, and conflict between groups as the product of group-oriented categorization and self-enhancement motivations, SIT provides a significant understanding of the social identity basis of these events. However, the theory's historical development also presents an intriguing example of how intergroup disputes are reframed as facets of personal identity.

3.1.1.1 Social Categorizations and Discrimination

The tendency to favour the in-group over the out-group in decisions and actions is known as in-group prejudice, and it is the experimental counterpart of ethnocentrism in everyday life (Tajfel, 1986:281). According to the data, in-groups, prejudice is a remarkably common aspect of interpersonal connections. The in-group can engage in prejudiced or aggressive behaviours between groups simply by being conscious that there is an out-group; thus, only the notion of a connection between two separate groups, or social categorization, is enough to cause intergroup discrimination favouring the in-group.

Nevertheless, social categorizations are not restricted to establishing the social space; they also provide a framework for self-reference, establishing and determining the individual's place in society. In these circumstances, social categorizations are understood as cognitive tools that divide, classify, and arrange the social environment, helping the individual to engage in different kinds of social activity (Tajfel:281).

It can occasionally be seen how interactions with other people form an individual's perspective, and other times from a communal perspective. Furthermore, the groups of people who are employed for social classification are subject to shifts throughout time and in various contexts. The groups can develop biases, which are unwarranted judgments toward people of an out-group, alongside our preconceptions. Distaste, wrath, fear, repulsion, discomfort, and even hatred are ways that prejudice can appear.

Tajfel claims that people occasionally classify themselves based on the similarities and distinctions between the groups, which results in a subjective prejudice that makes the two lines appear more dissimilar than they actually are.

3.1.1.2 Social Identity and Social Comparison

As it describes intergroup relations, many conventional explanations for “social groups” are overly restrictive. Intergroup behaviour in the ordinary sense of the word is evident, for instance, when members of two national or cultural communities communicate based on their shared views about their respective groups and their general linkages. In this instance, a group is defined as a collection of individuals who believe they are part of identical societal categories, participate emotionally in these common perceptions of oneself and achieve a certain degree of social consensus in their attachment to and evaluation of their group (Tajfel, 1986). Social groupings in this situation give people a unique social identity. These traits are mostly connected and comparative in nature, designating a person as distinct or identical, “better” or “worse” than the people in other groups. Because of these factors, the phrase “social identity” is employed in a very limited sense. The larger scheme of this discussion relates to the aspects of an individual’s self-perception that originate within the social categories that they believe they belong to.

The basic concept of social comparison is that groups of people attempt to differentiate themselves from others due to demands to strongly value the group they belong to through comparing the in-group and the out-group (Tajfel, 1978a; 1975b).

Maintaining or achieving superiority over an outgroup on specific characteristics is the aim of differentiating. This kind of conduct is fundamentally competitive. A setting of reciprocated contrast and discrimination on a shared value dimension is necessary for full-fledged group competition. The first expects competitiveness between groups in these situations, even if it is not connected to the groups' value connections.

The scenarios that can be made based on the repercussions of winning or losing for future intergroup behaviour also vary between societal and actual competition. The defeated groups should feel antagonistic toward the out-group winners following genuine rivalry, both because they have not received a reward and because their interactions have only been confrontational. Nevertheless, if the rivalry regulations are viewed as valid, then the outcomes for the losing groups (determined as being of real worth to the subjects) would not have led to a distinction in the split of choices involving the out-group. This is because winning and losing create shared group evaluations regarding comparable superiority as well as inferiority (Tajfel, 1986:283).

3.1.1.3 Status Hierarchies and Social Change

Tajfel (1986) assert that it is now necessary to make clearer the prior attempts at rethinking social rank. Here, status is the result of intergroup comparability rather than being viewed as an intangible asset or commodity like wealth or power. It shows the relative standing of certain groups on a few critical comparison parameters. Social identity processes moderate the effects of weak objective status on intergroup behaviour; they do not encourage intergroup rivalry.

A group's ability to contribute to favourable social identity decreases with its perceived socioeconomic position relative to pertinent comparative groups.

Power interactions frequently regulate social hierarchies among species. Social hierarchies among individuals can take many different shapes and do not always depend on power ties because there are many culturally significant axes of distinction. As a result, people go through several social fields or relative positioning. Social ties among people and groups are described by social hierarchies, which are essentially latent processes. According to this interpretation, social hierarchies are fundamentally socio-relational; a person cannot hold a high position despite possessing a lower-ranking companion.

Using a type of social exchange, the people in a group may grant reputation to individuals who reflect a specific socially acceptable trait (or attributes), showing deference to the person in question in the hopes that it would aid in accomplishing personal objectives. These objectives may be linked to aspirations to improve a person's status and access subject matter, social, or knowledge-based assets or to safeguard one's personal goals and welfare. People's views on people typically align due to their education and decision-making processes.