Creating a panethnic identity: The Asian American movement's vision of racial and political solidarity

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CREATING A PANETHNIC IDENTITY: THE ASIAN AMERICAN
MOVEMENT'S VISION OF RACIAL AND POLITICAL
SOLIDARITY

by

Rosette Ho Wirtz

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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in
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The Asian American movement occurred in the late 1960s when America was being criticized as a land of inequality where racial discrimination degraded all people of color. Asian American activists participated in the effort to achieve social, political, and economical equality with the larger White dominated society. Answers will be sought for three questions one should ask when confronted with the problem of analyzing a minority movement. The questions are: 1) What are the goals of the movement?; 2) What forces initiate and propel the movement into existence?; and 3) How does the movement attain its goals? Lastly, this thesis determines the outcome of the Asian American movement of the late 1960s and 1970s and its effect on society.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

We seek ... simply to function as human beings, to control our own lives. Initially, following the myth of the American Dream, we worked to attend predominantly white colleges, but we have learned through direct analysis that it is impossible for our people, so-called minorities, to function as human beings, in a racist society in which white always comes first ... So we have decided to fuse ourselves with the masses of Third World people, which are the majority of the world's peoples, to create, through struggle, a new humanity, a new humanism, a New World Consciousness, and within that context collectively control our own destinies (mimeograph in Umemoto, 1989, p.15).

- Philippine-American Collegiate Endeavor

The above statement of goals and principles of Philippine-American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE) captures the vision of a generation of some Asian American activists who became aware of their second-class minority status during the civil rights struggles and the militant Black Power movement of the 1960s. This awareness gave rise to the Asian American movement which gained popularity during the latter 1960s. Such
views shocked many Americans, much to the chagrin of conservative Asian communities. As in most social movements an outspoken radical group, which is quoted frequently in this study, initiated the movement for liberation from and equality in the dominant society by Asian Americans who felt disenfranchised. They strove to form a pan-ethnic identity that would give Asian Americans pride in their heritage and the numerical clout needed to gain equal access to opportunities afforded to members of the dominant society. The Asian American movement also molded the consciousness of a generation of Asian Americans. The movement strove to release concerned Asian Americans from the confines of existing American cultural conformity. Movement activists liberated themselves by confronting the historical forces of racism, poverty, war, and exploitation. The Asian American community was changed through the creation of numerous grassroots organizations, an extensive network of student organizations, and Asian American Studies programs. The movement also recovered buried cultural traditions and produced a new generation of writers, poets, and artists. But most importantly, the Asian American movement redefined racial and ethnic identity, promoted new ways of thinking about communities, and challenged the current ideas of power and authority.

The following study provides an analysis of the Asian American movement based on social movement and race relations.
theories. Those concepts specifically examined are: 1) that a social movement, based on a combination of collective action, social psychological, and rhetorical definitions, is an organized uninstitutionalized collectivity, acting with some continuity, performing persuasive functions for the purpose of opposing or proposing societal change while encountering some opposition; 2) that minority movement's goals are based on either the cultural pluralism, assimilation, melting pot, or bicultural models; and 3) that minority movements are formed as the result of a catalytic event.

Numbering roughly 7.3 million individuals in 1990, Asian Americans make up slightly less than 3% of the United States population (US Bureau of the Census, 1990). According to a report from the US Census Bureau, the Asian American population more than doubled in the 1980s. The report states that the Asian American population grew by 108%, "twice as fast as the Hispanic population, which grew by 53%, 8 times as fast as the Black population, which grew by 13%, and 15 times as fast as the White population, which grew by 6%" (1990). Furthermore, the Asian American population is expected to continue to grow rapidly with a projected growth increase of approximately 145% by the year 2020 (Ong & Hee, 1993). In certain regions, Asian Americans comprise a larger portion of the population than their national percentage. Honolulu, Hawaii is 60% Asian and 10% of the population of California
traces its roots to Asia. In Boston, Massachusetts, Asian Americans comprise nearly 3% of the total population, and politicians now consider them to be an important voting bloc (Aguiar-San Juan, 1994). The 1990s is witnessing the rise of a new demographic reality: a nation with no majority race although whites continue to control a disproportionate amount of power in the United States.

The increase in the number of Asian Americans is but one sign of the growth of a multiethnic society in America. The United States is a nation of immigrants so that all groups, with the exception of the Native American Indian, immigrated or were brought to this country. In addition, a steady flow of new immigrants continue to enter the country. The United States, therefore, is an active mixture of generations of immigrants from different nations comprising a multiethnic society. The cultural richness resulting from the various ethnic groups and native populations represent a diversity and vitality lacking in homogeneous societies. There still remain in various parts of the world, some limited islands of homogeneity, but on the whole the process of civilization, through conquest and migration, is leveling them. This richness, though, can also create harmful divisions because race, nationality, and ethnic affiliation can be used to divide as well as enrich. America must be constantly alert if a democratic society is to be maintained in the face of divisiveness (Kitano, 1991). One way in which divisiveness can
be prevented is through understanding the history and struggles of ethnic groups.

An ethnic group who "because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination" is a minority group (Wirth, 1945). The existence of a minority implies that there exists a dominant group which enjoys higher status and greater privileges. Having minority status excludes one from full participation in the life of the society. Also, those who have minority status regard their position in society as different and inferior to others.

A minority is distinguishable from the dominant group by physical or cultural marks. Without such identifying characteristics a minority blends into the rest of the population over time. Minorities occupy a disadvantageous position in society. By being restricted from economic, social, and political opportunities, minority individuals are deprived of freedom of choice and self-development. Members of minority groups are held in lower esteem and may be objects of hatred, ridicule, contempt, and violence. Generally socially isolated and geographically segregated, the subordinate position of a minority group is manifested by its unequal access to educational opportunities and restricted occupational and professional advancement.
Aside from these characteristics which distinguish a minority group from the dominant group and partially as a result of them, minorities often develop a set of attitudes, forms of behavior, and other subjective characteristics which tend to further set them apart. By discriminating against them, the dominant group generates in minorities a sense of isolation, persecution, and a conception of themselves as being more different from others than in fact they are. As a result of this differential treatment, minorities tend to suffer from a sense of their own inferiority or develop a feeling of being unjustly treated which may lead to a rebellious attitude. Driven by a sense of frustration and unjustified subordination, minorities are likely to refuse to accept their position without some effort to improve their status.

When members of such a disadvantaged group become conscious of their deprivations and see themselves as persons having rights, and when they vocalize their desire for freedom and equality, a movement against the precepts that set them apart from the dominant group ensues. During the 20th century, America has witnessed many movements by minorities to secure their constitutional rights as American citizens. Examples of such movements are the Black, Chicano, American Indian, and Asian American movements for civil rights and ethnic identification. Although barriers to equal opportunities to all facets of society still exist, these movements have
garnered American minorities more rights than previously held, thereby encouraging greater acceptance by the dominant white society. This study examines the search for a pan-ethnic identification by the Asian American movement as a prerequisite for equality and acceptance in society.

The term Asian American refers to persons having origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and the Pacific Islands. Specifically Asian Americans are immigrants from countries such as China, Japan, Philippines, India, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and 36 other Asian and Pacific Island localities (US Census Population, 1990). The term was redefined in the latter 1960s and through the 1970s by the Asian American movement which argued that Asian Americans were bound together by a common history. The United States' anti-Asian immigration laws and other racist regulations did not recognize ethnic differences within the Asian American community. Their common history became something that Asian Americans defined and learned about. Asian American activists realized that they must not reject that history for it binds the different Asian ethnic groups together.

The reconceptualization of the term Asian American was based on an attempt to create a new identity that was neither purely Asian nor purely American but one that encompass the experience of Asians in American history. The Asian American
movement was an attempt to bring linguistically, culturally, and geographically diverse Asian American groups together to create an Americanized pan-Asian identity. As minorities, Asian Americans often suffered from economic and social insecurities resulting from nonacceptance by others in society. Those Asian Americans involved in the Asian American movement felt these insecurities. They created a collective force to advocate economic, social, and political parity with mainstream society.

During the 1960s the United States experienced civil rights struggles, the 1965 Immigration Law, the Vietnam War, race riots, and the growth of ethnic conscious movements that emphasized ethnic-group interests, ethnic slogans, and ethnic-group membership. Some Asian Americans began to question whether they wanted to become acculturated and assimilated into a society that previously displayed anti-Asian attitudes manifested by laws barring them from naturalization and other rights enjoyed by the dominant society. Those individuals felt that rather than become part of a homogenized, bland, conformist society, they would turn to ethnic diversity as a better definition of American culture. These Asian Americans encouraged cultural pluralism which fostered ethnic studies programs, ethnic consciousness, ethnic pride and ethnic dignity as a first step in the process of gaining greater acceptance in American society.

Many Asian Americans fought in World War II and the
Korean and Vietnamese wars in the belief that their behavior and attitudes formed their American identity, only to find that their racial and ethnic features were more important than their actions in the view of some members of American dominant society. Kitano (1991) argues that some Asian Americans realized "that they could never achieve an American identity based on Anglo conformity, especially if psychological features were to remain a priority" (p.90). Thus, according to Wei (1993), Asian American critics set out to develop "a new identity by integrating their past experiences with their present conditions and to raise group esteem and pride, for it was only through collective action that society's perception of the Asian American could be efficiently altered" (p.46). The Asian American movement became a means for accomplishing this.

The Asian American movement was not a civil rights movement though it developed about the same time as the civil rights movement. The Asian American movement is a movement for ethnic solidarity and panethnic identity. One reason for its obscurity is the dichotomous nature of race relations in the United States. Even though America has four major racial minorities with similar histories of oppression, Asian American, Hispanic, Black, and American Indian, the question of race has been addressed traditionally as a black and white issue. African Americans have received the most attention because of their large size, 12.1% of the American population.
compared to 9.0% Hispanic, 2.9% Asian American, and 0.8% Native American (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990), the widespread public awareness of their history of subjugation as slaves, and their long and visible struggle for equality. African American issues have been taken more seriously than those of other minorities because their large numbers and powerful dissent seem to threaten the dominant society (Wei, 1993). Asian Americans, by contrast, have been ignored because of their small numbers and little known history of remarkable acts of resistance as plantation workers, farmers, garment workers, railroad crews, miners, factory operatives, cannery workers, shop keepers, and union organizers. Many American history books give Asian Americans little notice or overlook them entirely. For example, a survey of American immigration in 1924 by Edith Abbott excluded Asian Americans because "the study of European immigration should not be complicated for the student by confusing it with the very different problems of Chinese and Japanese immigration" (Daniels, 1988, p. 5). Daniels states that "all but a tiny handful of scholarly works have treated Asian immigrants as faceless, nameless groups, mere pawns in the hands of others..." (1988, p. 6).

A consequence of their invisibility has been that most literature on social movements has overlooked the Asian American movement. One reason for its absence from social movement literature is timing. Since the Asian American movement emerged only in the late 1960s, it was too late to be

Nevertheless, recent books on Asian American history address certain aspects of the movement. For example, Asian Americans: An Interpretive History by Sucheng Chan discusses recent political activism; The Chinese Experience in America by Shih-Shan Henry Tsai discusses student strikes in the 1960s and 1970s; and Asian America by Roger Daniels addresses economic and social factors that led to a desire for ethnic identity.

Aside from books, a number of articles have focused on the Asian American movement. Amy Uyematsu, in her essay, "The Emergence of Yellow Power in America" in Roots: An Asian American Reader, discusses reasons for a "yellow power" movement and its relation to the "black power" movement. Uyematsu encourages Asian Americans to participate in the movement to challenge two common assumptions: "first, that the Asian Americans are completely powerless in the United States; and second, that Asian Americans have already obtained 'economic' equality" (1971, p. 12). Uyematsu argues that Asian Americans constitute a "solid yellow voting bloc [that] could make a difference" (p.12) and that "the use of yellow ... power is valid, for Asian Americans do have definite economic
and social problems which must be improved" (p. 13). Ron Tanaka's (1976) article, "Culture, Communication and the Asian Movement in Perspective" contends that the movement is an intermediary stage for Japanese American integration into American society. Richard J. Jensen and Cara Abeyta, in "The Minority in the Middle: Asian American Dissent in the 1960s and 1970s" propose a "refinement of theories on social movements through the addition of a pre-inception stage to current theories" (1987, p. 402). They argue that Asian American activists first had to create a sense of awareness in their community before they could progress to a period of inception where a formal movement begins. Nevertheless, as the study contends, the movement created an effective Asian American consciousness, especially among young people.

The study of the Asian American movement would not be complete without reference to additional books and articles addressing social movement theory and race and ethnic issues. Social movement literature that contributed to understanding social movement phenomena include articles by James Darsey (1991) and Charles Stewart (1980) and books by Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian (1972) and Charles Stewart, Craig Smith, and Robert Denton (1984). Darsey (1990), writing on gay movement rhetoric, develops a methodology which uses catalytic events as indicators for rhetorical eras. A catalytic event is any significant occurrence that spawns action to oppose or propose societal change. The Asian American movement occurred
partially as a result of the catalytic event called the civil rights movement. Stewart (1980) asserts that social movements are required to perform various persuasive functions in order to affect target audiences. Turner and Killian (1972) present various aspects of collective behavior and look for commonalities in political, religious and minority movements. Stewart et al. (1984) discuss the role of persuasion in social movements, provide frameworks for studying social movement persuasion, and present five studies of social movement persuasion.

Because the Asian American movement encompasses the Asian minority group, literature on racial and ethnic issues provides a better understanding of the social dynamics involved between majority and minority groups. Harry Kitano (1991), in Race Relations discusses how minority groups achieve identity, the relationship between minorities and the dominant society, and the role of prejudice and discrimination. Asian Americans felt a need to form a pan-ethnic identity because of their perceived second-class status in American society. Movement members felt that a pan-ethnic identity would empower them to fight prejudice and discrimination against Asian Americans.

Movements are characterized by recurrent rhetorical patterns not found in other types of persuasion. Otherwise, according to Zarefsky (1980), there would not be a need to distinguish movements as a separate category. From this
perspective, the Asian American movement will serve as a case study to test general movement concepts which not only explain persuasion in the past but also encourage predictions about the future.

In this thesis, the Asian American social movement is studied from the perspective that the movement is a collectivity made up of minorities from different Asian ethnic backgrounds striving for intergroup solidarity and outergroup acceptance. Answers will be sought for three questions one should ask when confronted with the problem of analyzing a minority movement. The questions are: 1) What are the goals of the movement?; 2) What forces initiate and propel the movement into existence?; and 3) How does the movement attain its goals? The cultural pluralism, assimilation, melting pot, and bicultural models are four different goals from which a minority movement chooses. Catalytic events offer one explanation as to why minority movements come into existence. Stewart's social movement model placing emphasis on transforming perceptions of history and altering perceptions of society is used to explain how such movements are maintained.

Chapter Two identifies the essential characteristics of social movements and develops a definition that distinguishes social movements from other collectivities. Chapter Three provides and answers three major questions one should ask when studying a minority movement. Chapter Four provides a brief
history on how the dominant European American society treated Asian Americans and the synthesis of the Asian American movement. Chapter Five applies the questions from Chapter Two to the movement. Lastly, Chapter Six determines the outcome of the Asian American movement and its effect on society and discusses implications for further research.
CHAPTER 2
DEFINITION OF A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

The Asian American movement is but one of the myriad of movements, protests, and struggles that have shaped the political, social, and economical landscape of America. The following chapter distinguishes a social movement from other uprisings and collectivities that have occurred in America in recent decades. In addition, this chapter incorporates definitions of social movements based on collective action, social psychology, and rhetoric to form a new social movement definition.

Since the 19th century, America has witnessed struggles to free the slaves; to improve working conditions and compensation for workers; to improve the treatment and living conditions of immigrants; to reduce (and later to prohibit) the selling of alcoholic beverages; to gain equal rights for blacks, the multiethnic immigrant groups, and women; and to return religion to the fundamentals of the Bible. But at no time in American history have there been more people seeking to change their culture and social structure or redistribute the power of control than in the latter half of the 20th century (Cameron, 1966). Stewart et al. (1984) have called that period "the age of the social movement" (p. 1). Women,
the aged, gays, prison inmates, workers of all varieties from the farm to the corporation, students, Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian Americans and other disadvantaged ethnic groups have demanded rights, equality, and identity. Others have organized to protest United States involvement in wars, pollution and destruction of the environment, nuclear power, violence and sex on television, legalized abortion, marijuana laws, centralized power in corporate, governmental and educational bureaucracies, the American way of dying, and changes in the American social structure and values (Stewart et al., 1984).

To understand and to explain the variety of protest movements and their demands during the past two centuries of American history, writers have attempted to define the term "social movement." Those definitions have been based on collective action, social psychology, and rhetoric. As an illustration of a collective action definition Cameron (1966) says "a social movement occurs when a fairly large number of people band together in order to alter or supplant some portion of the existing culture or social order" (p. 7). Turner and Killian (1972) define a social movement as "a collectivity acting with some continuity to promote or resist change in the society or group of which it is part" (p. 246). The weakness in this approach is that the terms used are ambiguous and the definitions appear to pertain to all collective actions such as civil wars, political campaigns or
fads instead of distinguishing the social movement as a unique phenomenon.

Social psychological definitions of social movements deal primarily with the position of the member in the social movement (McLaughlin, 1969). Hans Toch (1965) places emphasis on the psychological dimension in stating that a social movement is "an effort by a large number of people to solve collectively a problem they feel they have in common" (p. 5). Herbert W. Simons (1970) defines a social movement as an "uninstitutionalized collectivity that mobilizes for action to implement a program for the reconstitution of social norms or values" (p. 3). Toch's and Simons' definitions address what a social movement is rather than how a social movement achieves its goals.

Rhetorical definitions of social movements have been presented by Charles Wilkinson (1976) as "languaging strategies by which a significantly vocal part of an established society, experiencing together a sustained dialectical tension growing out of moral (ethical) conflict, agitate to induce cooperation in others, either directly or indirectly, thereby affecting the status quo" (p. 91). Wilkinson's definition prescribes how a social movement achieves its goals but not what a social movement is or is not. A definition that comes closer to identifying both how and what is Robert Cathcart's definition: "A social movement can be said to emerge when the languaging strategies of a
change-seeking collective clash with the languaging strategies of the establishment and thereby produce the perception of a group's operating outside the established social hierarchy" (in Stewart et al., 1984, p. 2).

The variety of definitions used to explain social movements lends credence to the belief characterizing social movements as a dynamic and changing phenomenon and that the essence of a social movement is change. In addition, it appears that there is no single form a social movement must take. Some social movements consist of small intimate groups of persons who congregate in a small area and are in constant direct communication. Others consist of widely-scattered persons who rarely meet face to face. Many variations exist with labels such as political, historical, rhetorical, reform, revisionary, nationalistic, resistance, conservative, and individualistic. There also is a tendency to attach the name "movement" to all collective events such as civil wars, trends, fads, panics, internal change within groups, social movement organizations, campaigns, and violent revolutions (Cameron, 1966; Stewart et al., 1984). This diversity has confused those who are trying to understand social movements because not all collective events are social movements.

Despite the disparity among social movement definitions, each does make important but partial contributions to understanding this phenomenon. All the aforementioned definitions make reference to an organized uninstitutionalized
collectivity acting with some continuity, that proposes or opposes societal change while encountering some opposition. What needs to be added in order to provide a complete definition of a social movement is that it must also be significantly large in scope and that persuasion is essential for the success of the movement.

As an organized uninstitutionalized collectivity, a social movement is a group with minimal organization whose leaders, members, and organizations are identifiable. The degree of visibility depends upon whether the movement employs public demonstrations thereby attracting media coverage or chooses to operate through the courts, in small groups, or within the social movement community. It is important to note that a social movement does not come into existence with an organization already established. Instead, its organization and its culture are developed over time (Blumer, 1969). Leadership positions are determined more by the informal response of members than the formal procedures for legitimizing authority, thereby distinguishing the social movement as not part of an established order that governs and changes political, social, religious, or economic norms and values (Stewart et al., 1984; Turner & Killian, 1972).

In order to be called a social movement the actions of members must arise more than once and be repeated in some organized fashion. This trait distinguishes a social movement from other collective behaviors such as riots, lynch mobs,
panics, and walkouts, all of which are temporary or spontaneous and frequently are not planned events but "just happen." Sustainment or continuity is essential for developing objectives and strategy. Likewise, leadership and other roles within the movement create stability and continuity. There is also continuity in the group identity of the movement, so even with a turnover in membership the sense of group is sustained (Cameron, 1966; Turner & Killian, 1972).

A social movement proposes or opposes some kind of change in societal norms, values, or both. The three types of social movements distinguished by the nature of change advocated are the innovative, revivalistic, and resistance social movement. An innovative social movement seeks limited (reform) or total replacement (revolutionary) of the existing norms or values. Stewart (1980) states that an "innovative movement may portray the present as the result of or a continuation of an intolerable past and argue that the future will be bright only if the movement is successful" (p. 302). A revivalistic social movement seeks a limited (reform) or total replacement (revolutionary) of existing norms or values with ones from an idealized past. Members may view the past as a "paradise lost" and desire its recreation at any cost. A resistance social movement seeks to stop changes in norms and values because members see nothing wrong with the status quo. Members believe that society has evolved to a high state and see efforts by social movements and the established order as threatening to
return society to a primitive past or to carry it into a future "devoid of all that is sacred" (Stewart, 1980, p. 302).

While both revolutionary and reform movements seek to influence the social order, the two movements differ in the scope of their objectives. A revolutionary movement seeks to reconstruct the entire social order while a reform movement seeks to change a limited area of society. This difference in objective is linked with a different point of attack. A revolutionary movement always challenges existing values and proposes a new scheme of moral values. By contrast, the reform movement accepts the existing mores and uses them to criticize the social defects they are attacking. Another difference between the two movements is respectability. A reform movement, according to Blumer (1969), has by virtue of accepting the existing social order and of positioning itself with respect for the social order, a claim to existing institutions. In contrast, the revolutionary movement in attacking the social order and in rejecting its mores is blocked by existing institutions.

Change proposed by a social movement threatens a established order in some manner. Stewart et al. (1984) contend that this perceived threat produces dialectical tension thereby provoking a clash between the social movement and the threatened established order. Social movement members who purport change or resistance use rhetoric that tends to be ethical and moral in tone because they have become frustrated.
to the point of being resentful with the established order and institutionalized means of change and control. Established orders, perceiving the social movement as a threat to legitimate social order, employ various agencies, agents, and beneficiaries to directly or indirectly counter the social movement.

A social movement must be significantly large enough in geographical area, events, and participants and have sufficient time in order to carry out the program of the movement. A movement that is small in numbers and isolated in scattered regions of the country has difficulty attracting attention, maintaining interest, and persuading audiences to take it seriously. Those institutions that movement members oppose go to great lengths to characterize movement members as small groups of radicals, traitors, cowards, racists, and degenerates who are not representative of the great "silent majority" of citizens (Stewart et al., 1984).

The final aspect of the social movement definition states that persuasion is essential for success. A social movement must satisfy a number of functions to succeed in changing societal norms or values. The persuasive functions employed are used to transform perceptions of history and society, prescribe courses of action, mobilize for action, and sustain the movement (Stewart, 1980). Social movements satisfy these functions by using a combination of strategies: coercion, bargaining, and persuasion. Coercion and bargaining are
typically resisted by established orders. Established orders doubt the capability of social movements to bargain effectively and often the movement has nothing to offer in a bargaining exchange. Coercion of people to join the movement or of the established order to surrender to demands usually fail because the typical uninstitutional, minimally organized social movement has few means of reward or punishment. Because of the constraints under which social movements must operate, persuasion is the primary strategy for accomplishing goals. Stewart et al. (1984) define movement persuasion as "a communication process by which a social movement seeks through the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols to affect the perceptions of audiences and thus to bring about desired changes in ways of thinking, feeling, and for acting" (p. 11).

By incorporating definitions based on collective action (Cameron, 1966; Turner & Killian, 1972), social psychology (Toch, 1965; Simmons, 1970), and rhetoric (Wilkinson, 1976; Cathcart, 1984) a new social movement definition is formed. A social movement, then, is characterized by a significantly large organized uninstitutionalized collectivity, acting with some continuity, performing persuasive functions for the purpose of proposing or opposing societal change while encountering some opposition. This definition answers what a social movement is and how it accomplishes its goals and thus, will be the definition used in this thesis. In understanding that a social movement is a unique collectivity where
persuasion is prevalent provides a foundation from which the following chapters will be based.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

As a social movement the Asian American movement can be studied from a number of perspectives because, according to Cameron (1966), a "social movement is determined by so many variables that its success or failure, the speed of its growth or decline, the consistency or inconsistency of its operations will not fit any a priori formula" (p. 27). Thus to prescribe a method of analysis suitable to all social movements is filled with dangers but not necessarily futile. "The effort can be productive," as noted by Stuart et al. (1984), "if the life cycle is constructed with the full realization that social movements alter, change, and develop to varying degrees of sophistication and at varying speeds" (p. 37).

This chapter provides answers to pertinent questions a scholar should ask when confronted with the problem of analyzing a minority movement. When analyzing a minority movement there are three major questions: 1) What are the major goals of the movement?; 2) What forces initiated and propelled the movement into existence?; and 3) How does the movement attain its goals?

Before these questions can be answered, two caveats are in order. First, the method of analysis prescribed in this
chapter is by no means absolute. The dynamic, complex, and evolving nature of social movements discourage any method of analysis from being absolute. Rather, this method is one way of analyzing a type of social movement with hopes that in the occurrence of future like movements one will better understand the dynamics involved. Secondly, it is important to understand that any distinctive characteristics, such as the physical marks of race, or language, religion, and culture can be a criteria for membership in a minority. These characteristics may at one time and under certain circumstances serve as marks of dominant status while at another time and under another set of circumstances serve as criteria for minority status. For example, the European immigrants to America from dominantly Catholic countries such as Italy and Poland found themselves reduced from a dominant to a minority group in the course of their immigration. Eventually, through the process of assimilation, by intermarriage and social intercourse, these ethnic minorities were absorbed by the dominant group. There still remain in various parts of America ethnic enclaves whose inhabitants are European in origin (e.g., from countries like Poland, Ireland, Italy, and others). European ethnic enclave inhabitants whose physical traits blend into the dominant society differ from Chinatown, black ghetto, and Latino barrio inhabitants in that it is easier for them to choose to remain or leave. On the other hand, racial minorities, notably Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, whose physical traits are
easily recognizable have had a harder time blending into the
dominant Caucasian American society. Therein lies the problem
of groups who are ethnically American but racially non-
Caucasian. They are relegated, as visible minorities, to the
margins of society while the dominant group enjoys higher
status and greater privileges.

Members of minority groups, driven by a sense of
frustration and unjustified subordination, are likely to
refuse to accept their position without some effort to improve
their lot. The goals toward which the ideas, sentiments, and
actions of minority groups are directed can be clustered into
four categories: 1) cultural pluralism, 2) assimilation, 3)
melting pot, and 4) bicultural model.

A pluralistic minority is one which seeks toleration from
the dominant group for its cultural, religious, and/or
ideological differences. In the quest for toleration of their
group's differences is the idea that different cultures can
coexist peacefully side by side in the same society. Cultural
pluralism is considered to be one of the preconditions
necessary for a rich and dynamic civilization. It has been
said that "tolerance is the suspicion that the other fellow
might be right" (Wirth, 1945, pg. 355). Tolerance requires
that the dominant group feel secure enough in its position to
allow minorities the same liberties that they enjoy.

The range of tolerance sought by a pluralistic minority
may at first be small but eventually grows so that the
minority wants toleration for all of its cultural idiosyncrasies. Furthermore, a pluralistic minority resents and seeks protection from efforts by the dominant group at assimilation. Above all, a pluralistic minority wants to maintain its cultural identity.

The pursuit for cultural autonomy is often coupled with struggles for economic and political equality or at least the right to equal opportunities. Although a pluralistic minority does not want to merge its culture with the dominant society, it does demand for its members economic and political freedom or at least civic equality. The economic and political rights of minorities are not only "inherent in the 'rights of man'" but are necessary in the struggle for cultural freedom (Wirth, 1945, p. 356). Supporters of cultural freedom seek freedom of choice in occupations, entry into the civil services, rights of land ownership; access to universities and the professions; freedom of speech, assembly, and publication; and equal representation of minority voices in government.

The first stages of pluralistic minority movements are characterized by cultural renaissances. The emphasis in this stage is on accentuating the religious, linguistic, and cultural heritage of the group and obtaining recognition and tolerance for these differences. This movement goes hand in hand with the demand for economic and political equality. During these movements marks of inferiority such as an alien
religion, different facial features, strange foods, and eccentric dress are transformed into objects of pride and positive group values. Intellectuals and activists among the minority group take an interest in promoting these items which set them apart from the dominant group. The goal of a pluralistic minority is achieved when it has succeeded in gaining from the dominant group total economic and political equality and the right to maintain its cultural idiosyncracies.

Kallen (1974) argues that America benefits from the existence of ethnic cultures which enrich and stimulate the nation through competition and interaction among themselves. Most importantly, Kallen holds that equality is imperative if cultural pluralism is to flourish. Unfortunately the stratification system in the United States has prevented many ethnic groups from achieving equality which in turn has affected their perceptions of the desirability of their own culture (Kitano, 1991).

It is important to realize that because of the dynamic nature of social movements, the pluralistic minority goal is just a way station on the road to other social structures. Minority goals move on to other stages where new types of social structures emerge. Unlike the pluralistic minority, which is content with toleration and cultural autonomy, the assimilationist minority wants full participation and incorporation into the life of the dominant society. Those
belonging to an assimilationist minority movement seek complete acceptance and a merger with the dominant group.

Whereas a pluralistic minority, in order to maintain its group integrity, will generally discourage intimate social contact and intermarriage with the dominant group, the assimilationist minority encourages the blending of cultures. Assimilation is a two-way process in which there is give and take. The mergence of an assimilationist minority depends upon the willingness of the dominant group to absorb and of the minority to be absorbed. The ethnic differences that exist between the minority and the dominant group are not an obstacle to assimilation as long as the cultural traits of each group are considered compatible and that their blending is desired by both.

The height of the assimilationist movement occurred during World War I, when immigrants were stripped of their native culture and were made Americans. Patriotism, political loyalty, the teaching of American history, and Americanization classes reflected the feelings of the country and culminated in the restrictions of the Immigration Act of 1924. "Desirable" and "undesirable" races and nationalities were distinguished in this law. There were, as quoted by Kitano (1991), "no immigration for Asians, low quotas for southern Europeans and other 'less desireable' races, and a high quota for those of Anglo Saxon background" (p. 20).

Assimilation into Anglo Saxon confines was successful
among certain European groups. By the second generation, they discarded their previous culture, learned English, and were patriotic. They fought for the United States in wars against their ancestral homelands and became the new American.

Racial minority groups have also gone through the same process. Some have successfully acculturated and culturally assimilated by discarding their native cultures and acquiring the ways of the dominant group. But, they have encountered difficulties at their attempts at structural assimilation. According to Kitano (1991), structural assimilation allows one "to enter into the more intimate circles of the majority" (p. 20). Structural assimilation and its variations - integration, amalgamation, and fusion - have been much slower to occur for racial minority groups (Kitano, 1991).

Another goal for minority groups in America lies in the theory of the melting pot. This concept proposes that cultural elements from all the ethnic groups in the United States would blend and form a new American culture. Fredrick Jackson Turner (1973), presents the thesis that the major influence in American institutions was not its European heritage, but rather the experiences created by the ever-changing American frontier. The frontier attracted the various ethnic groups which were victims of the Anglo separatist system. Therefore, the new immigrants would eventually merge to produce a new American culture.

In 1908 Israel Zangwill produced a drama entitled "The
"Melting Pot" which brought attention to the role of the United States as a haven for oppressed and poor Europeans. The theme of the play was how the entrance of a myriad of races and nationalities would mix to form new individuals. Critics attacked Zangwill for romanticizing the ability of America to assimilate inferior peoples. He was also criticized by Jewish intellectuals who opposed the loss of ethnic identity (Meister, 1974).

The melting pot philosophy in the United States applies to ethnic minorities but not racial minorities. The reality in America is that only those who can blend into Anglo conformity can become Americanized while those whose skin color and facial features clash with the Anglo Saxon model are deemed inferior and separate from the larger society.

The bicultural model has appeal among racial minority groups as a more realistic goal to strive for than the melting pot model. The bicultural model requires that an individual become familiar with his/her ethnic culture and the culture of the larger society. Accordingly, Chinese Americans would be familiar with the Chinese language and culture and also be comfortable with the American language and culture. The same would be true for the Japanese, Vietnamese, Mexicans and other ethnic groups. They would have friends, acquaintances, and familiarity with both the ethnic and dominant culture. This model is similar to that of cultural pluralism in they both must compete for power and priority in the Anglo system.
Generally, it is those groups with less power to adapt to changing times that have chosen the bicultural model.

The justification for singling out the two minorities, ethnic and racial, described above is that their characteristic set of collective goals are a result of the responses of the larger society. A minority movement, as with other social movements, is initiated when changes in the values of people occur. These changes, called cultural drifts, demonstrate a general shifting in the ideas of people, particularly of the conceptions people have of themselves, and of their rights and privileges (Blumer, 1969). As in the case of minorities, they may begin to develop a new view of what they believe they are entitled to possess. Their view, largely made up of desires and hopes, signifies the emergence of a new set of values which influence people in the way they view their own lives.

The development of the new values brought forth by cultural drifts result in psychological changes which provide the motivation for social movements. The psychological changes mean that people have formed new conceptions of themselves which do not conform to the actual positions which they occupy in society. They acquire new dispositions and interests and they experience dissatisfaction where they previously had none. These new images of themselves, which people develop in response to cultural drifts, are indefinite and vague. Accordingly, the behavior in response to such images is
uncertain and without a definite direction (Blumer, 1969). Nevertheless, a movement of some kind develops as people are dissatisfied with their present status in society.

Another marker for emerging social movements is catalytic events. Catalytic events, according to Darsey (1991), "are moments in the life of a movement that provide the appropriate conditions for discourse" (p. 46). They are events that are: 1) historical; 2) occur outside of the movement in origin, spontaneous in origin, or both; 3) achieve significance for the movement; and 4) precede rhetorical responses manifested by an emerging movement. Examples of catalytic events are the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* which fueled a desire for women's liberation, and Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus which encouraged Black rights and later civil right for all people of color. A catalytic event awakens the motivation of dissatisfaction, hope, and desire and the focusing of this motivation on some specific objective. Cultural drifts and catalytic events go hand in hand as reasons for the emergence of a movement. A catalytic event would unlikely occur without the presence and motivation of cultural drifts.

Once a minority develops a new set of values, brought forth by cultural drifts, their thinking accordingly changes to parallel those new values. Likewise, during cultural drifts, catalytic events are most likely to occur because of changes in society. Thus, minority actions will likely be
encouraged by a catalytic event. Once a collectivity is formed, as a result of this new behavior, for the purpose of opposing or proposing societal change, then that collectivity, now a social movement, has the task of persuading society to listen to their demands.

Because of the depressed status a minority holds in society their movements are likely to be an effort to raise their status to that of being at least equal to that of the dominant group. Stewart (1984), building upon the foundations laid by social movement theorists, devised a scheme focusing on perceptions as tools for persuasion in social movements. Stewart's functions of transforming perceptions of history and altering perceptions of society are appropriate tools for minority activists seeking the goals of equality with and acceptance from the larger society.

By transforming perceptions of history, activists are altering ways audiences perceive history and to convince them that an intolerable situation exists and that it warrants action. When a social movement is just starting out, target audiences may be unaware of the problem or refuse to accept its existence, believe that the problem is not severe or warrant urgent action, believe that the problem does not affect them, or that the problem should be and will be handled by appropriate institutions through normal procedures. According to Stewart (1984):

A variety of institutions (schools, governments, courts,
labor unions, social and professional groups, religious organizations, political parties, and the mass media) foster and reinforce these perceptions. Thus, a major persuasive function of social movements is to alter the ways audiences perceive history - the past, the present, and the future...(p. 76).

In addition to transforming perception of history, minority activists must also transform perceptions of society by altering perceptions of the opposition and altering self-perceptions. The opposition are those individuals and groups that movement activists feel are opposing societal changes needed to alleviate intolerable conditions and those who are responsible for allowing these conditions to develop. Activists may try to strip opponents of their legitimacy by portraying them as powerful, demonical, conspiratorial forces or by ridiculing them as disorganized, pathetic, and incompetent.

By altering self-perceptions minority movements create a new personal identity. Stewart (1984) contends that supporters and potential supporters of a minority movement must:

Come to believe in their self-worth and ability to bring about urgent change. Efforts such as replacing old labels attached to groups by their oppressors... instill feelings of pride and power, to help audiences to discover themselves as substantial human beings, and to encourage them to question social relationships and
coalitions (p. 78).

Thus, when confronted with the task of analyzing a minority movement one can apply: 1) cultural drifts and catalytic events as markers for the emergence of the movement; 2) the pluralistic, assimilationist, melting pot, or bicultural model as the reason d'etre or goal of the movement; and 3) the persuasive techniques of transforming perceptions of history and altering perceptions of society as tools used by the movement for attaining one or more of the aforementioned goals. In the next chapter, a brief history is given of the treatment by American society toward Asian Americans from the 1840s until the 1960s, the start of the Asian American movement. A synopsis of the Asian American movement follows. In Chapter 5, the Asian American movement will be analyzed from the above perspective.
American identity in colonial America was based more on ideas such as liberty, equality, and a belief in the republic, than on any particular religion, language, nationality, or ethnic background. Despite these idealistic abstractions a two-tiered system developed in America. One system was open and reserved for whites while the other, a step below, was for American Indians and Blacks. Only those belonging to Caucasian ancestry could become part of mainstream society in spite of the American Indians' and Blacks' belief in liberty and justice. Asians were soon to become part of the non-white second class section in American society (Kitano & Daniels, 1988).

Although the Filipinos were the first Asian Americans to arrive in any significant number to the United States during the years of the Spanish exploration, it was not until the 1850s that Asians arrived in larger numbers and began to settle in the United States. Chinese immigrants, lured by the news of mining successes, came at a time when racial stereotypes were popularized. The Chinese were quickly categorized as an inferior race by Western theorists and these concepts were furthered by industrial nations who viewed their
economic achievements in racist terms. As a result, throughout most of their history in America, Asians have been victimized by discriminatory naturalization and immigration laws, anti-Asian bigotry and violence, and state and local anti-Asian laws. The anti-Asian sentiments stem from the nativist tradition in America. Nativism is a feeling of intense opposition to a minority because of its foreign and unAmerican ways.

The founders in America sought to restrict eligibility for citizenship in 1790 when Congress passed a law limiting naturalization to "free white persons" (US Commission on Civil Rights, 1980). In 1870 the law was modified to include "aliens of African nativity and persons of African descent" (Daniels, 1988, p.43). Congress rejected the idea of extending naturalization rights to Asians, thus making Asians the only immigrant group not eligible for naturalization. Because the 14th amendment, adopted in 1870, granted citizenship to all persons born in the United States, the American born children of Asian immigrants were citizens. Not until 1952, with the McCarren Walter Act, was naturalization eligibility extended to all races (Daniels, 1988).

Despite anti-Asian naturalization laws, Asian immigrants came to the United States in the 1850s to work in the California gold mines and spread to other Western states to work in the mines. Later, they played an essential role in building the transcontinental railroads. In 1869, after the
railroads were completed, jobs became scarce on the West Coast, and American worker resentment of the low wage rates accepted by the Chinese intensified. Anti-Chinese sentiments of Western workers erupted into violence in the 1870s when roughly 20 Chinese were massacred in Los Angeles by a white mob who also looted and burned their homes and stores. Pressure built to limit the immigration of Chinese. Congress enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 restricting the immigration of Chinese laborers for 10 years. The 1892 Geary Act extended the immigration ban for 10 more years and required the Chinese already living in the United States to obtain certificates of residence to prove that they were legal residents. In 1904 the Chinese immigration ban was extended indefinitely (US Commission on Civil Rights, 1992).

After the Chinese Exclusion Act, which ended Chinese immigration, Japanese immigrants came to the United States in the 1890s. The Japanese worked predominantly in agriculture. Pressure from American workers soon developed on the West Coast to restrict Japanese immigration as the Japanese were monopolizing jobs. However, the Japanese government feared a loss in international prestige if United States immigration laws banned Japanese immigration. The Japanese government and President Theodore Roosevelt negotiated the Gentleman's Agreement in 1907 which would restrict the emigration of unskilled Japanese to the United States. In return, the parents, wives, and children, of Japanese already in the
United States would be allowed entrance (Daniels, 1988).

The Immigration Act of 1917 further limited Asian immigration except for people from the Philippines, a United States territory, and Japan. Japanese immigration was halted by the Immigration Act of 1924 which imposed the national origins system on all nonwestern hemisphere immigrants. This quota system, in one form or another, prevailed until 1965 (Daniels, 1988).

Filipino immigration to the mainland began after 1900. The Filipinos, largely laborers, increased in population in the 1920s as the demand for their labor increased, in part as a result of the exclusion of the Japanese (Takaki, 1989). Many Filipinos worked in agriculture and in domestic service. A steady flow of Filipino immigrants continued until the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, which gave the Philippines commonwealth status and defined Filipinos not born in the United States as aliens. The Tydings McDuffie Act also placed a quota of 50 immigrants per year from the Philippines and restricted family members of resident Filipinos from joining them (US Commission on Civil Rights, 1992).

The discriminatory immigration laws loosened up in 1943 when the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed and an annual quota of 105 Chinese was set. The 1945 War Brides Act allowed the immigration of Asian spouses and children of servicemen. It was not until 1952, with the passage of the McCarren-Walter Act, that Asian immigrants were given naturalization rights.
Furthermore, in 1965 an annual quota of 20,000 Asians per country of origin was allowed to immigrate to the United States. As a result the United States experienced a large influx of Asian immigrants, many of whom were educated professionals. The 1970s and early 1980s saw an increase in Southeast Asian refugees due to the Vietnam War. This second wave of Asian immigration consisted primarily of Filipino, Korean, and Southeast Asians, and to a lesser extent Chinese, Indian, and Japanese. The effect of changing immigration and naturalization laws toward Asians is that some Asian Americans have resided in the United States for generations and thus, are ethnically American, while the newer Asian immigrants are still ethnically Asian. This disparity has made it difficult for Asian Americans to achieve solidarity in forming a pan-ethnic identity encompassing all Asian ethnic groups.

Bigotry and violence against Asians began as early as the late 1840s with the Know-Nothing party, a militant anti-Catholic and anti-foreign organization, which promoted anti-Asian sentiments. Even before the Chinese Exclusion Act, many unions and political parties adopted anti-Chinese platforms. In 1870 "anti-oriental" mass meetings were held in San Francisco, and several California unions "organized on an anti-Chinese basis" (Daniels, 1988, p. 38). The anti-Asian sentiments turned violent causing Chinese and later Japanese and Filipinos to be massacred. In the 1880s there were anti-Chinese riots in Denver and Rock Springs, Wyoming. The cities
of Tacoma and Seattle, Washington, chased their Chinese residents out of town and looted and burned their stores and homes. In 1887, 31 Chinese miners were "robbed, burned, and mutilated" in the Snake River, Oregon, massacre (Daniels, 1988, p. 64). After the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, anti-Asian sentiments were directed against the Japanese and Filipinos. In 1905 the Asiatic Exclusion League stated in their constitution that "the preservation of the Caucasian race upon American soil... necessitates the adoption of all possible measures to prevent or minimize the immigration of Asiatics to America" (Takaki, 1989, p. 201). Thus, the yellow peril was created, instilling fear in Americans who believed that the United States would be invaded by Asians.

United States immigrants from all different ethnic groups have also experienced bigotry and violence similar to that experienced by Asian Americans. A report of the Commission on Civil Rights states that "Asian Americans share with American Blacks the distinction of having been the targets of widespread legal discrimination that hindered their ability to participate fully in the American dream" (1992, p.6-7). In addition, the report states that strong anti-Asian sentiments in the Western states "led to the adoption of many discriminatory laws... similar to those aimed at Blacks in the South [and] segregation in public facilities, including schools, was quite common until after the second World War" (p.7).
In the 1850s, discriminatory laws against the Chinese were enacted in California. A three dollar tax on foreign miners was required for any miner who was not a citizen. Passengers disembarking at California ports who were ineligible to become citizens were charged $50 (Chan, 1991). In 1862 Chinese living in California were required to pay $2.50 per month head tax (Takaki, 1989).

In 1880, California passed an anti-miscegenation law prohibiting whites from marrying, as stated by Takaki, "negro, mulatto, or mongolian" individuals (1989, p. 102). John F. Miller, a Californian, warned that if the Chinese were "to amalgamate at all with our people, it would be the lowest, most vile and degraded of our race... the result of that amalgamation would be a... mongrel of the most detestable that has ever afflicted the earth" (Takaki, 1989, p. 101). Laws prohibiting whites from marrying Asians and Blacks were enacted in 38 states. It was not until 1967 that all anti-miscegenation statutes were repealed.

The 1913 Alien Land Law, targeted at Japanese farmers, prohibited non-citizens from purchasing land in California and limited lease terms to three years or less. Many Japanese got around this law by purchasing and leasing land in the name of their American-born children. In 1920, a stricter law prevented Japanese immigrants from acting as guardians to minors in matters of land ownership and prohibited them from leasing land (Daniels, 1988). Other states had similar land
Local laws were also discriminatory. For example, San Francisco passed the Cubic Air Ordinance which required that living spaces have at least 500 cubic feet of space per person. This law was only enforced in Chinatown (Daniels, 1988). In 1860, Asians, Blacks, and Native Americans were barred from attending public schools in California. In 1884 the California Supreme Court held that the 1860 law was unconstitutional so the State created "Oriental" schools in 1885. The US Supreme Court, in 1902, upheld the constitutionality of separate but equal schools for Asian students (US Commission on Civil Rights, 1992).

One of the most disgraceful incidents in the history of discrimination against Asian Americans is the World War II evacuation and internment of Japanese Americans. On February 19, 1942, two and a half months after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 "authorizing the Army to evacuate any persons from sensitive areas for reasons of national defense" (US Commission on Civil Rights, 1992, p. 9). As a result of Executive Order 9066, over 100,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated in relocation camps although, according to Chan, "a very large percentage of draft-age Nisei [second generation Japanese Americans] served with distinction in the Army and died for their country" (1991, p. 121). Eventually they were officially released on January 2, 1945 (Chan, 1991). The Japanese American
incarceration was largely due to paranoia among military personnel fearing that resident Japanese Americans posed a threat to national security. Paradoxically, no similar evacuation was ordered for persons of German or Italian descent.

Redress for the Japanese Americans interned during the war came in 1948 when Congress passed the Japanese American Evacuation Act which gave only 10 cents on the dollar of actual losses. In 1976, President Ford issued Presidential Proclamation 4417, which rescinded Executive Order 9066. Finally, in 1988 Congress passed the Civil Liberties Act Authorizing $20,000 for living survivors of the internment camps (US Commission on Civil Rights, 1992).

This brief summary on the history of American anti-Asian practices and policies can be understood in light of the nativist tradition in America. Throughout history, Americans have often been hostile towards groups whose cultures and traditions were different from the mainstream. Before the arrival of Asians, this nativism was directed towards Catholics and immigrants from Europe. Milton Gordon (1964) noted that "during the colonial times, suspicion of those who were 'foreigners' either through religion or national background, or both, was not uncommon" (p. 89).

From this perspective, Asians were not the only victims of American nativism. However, anti-European sentiment has never been as violent as that which Chinese experienced in the
1870s and 1880s (US Commission on Civil Rights, 1992). The Asian American struggle to overcome prejudice and barriers to equal opportunity is part of the larger struggle in America to rid itself of various exclusionary and nativist barriers. In striving to develop a society where groups live in harmony and cooperation, some Asian Americans participated in a movement that emphasized power through the formation of a pan-ethnic identity during the turbulence of the 1960s and 1970s.

During the latter 1960s Asian American activists throughout the country encouraged their fellow Asian Americans to get involved in anti-war protest which for some was their first experience in political protest. Involvement in the anti-war movement convinced many community and campus activists that if they ever were to have a voice in America, then they would need to work together as Asian Americans.

The goal of creating a pan-Asian community became the reason d'être for activists. They believed that only through forming an Asian American identity that encompassed all Asian ethnic groups could Asian Americans gain the political and social clout needed to combat racism. The major tenants of racism: economic exploitation, political powerlessness, geographic ghettoization, and cultural contempt have been thrust upon Asian Americans throughout American history. By making others aware of this history of anti-Asian sentiment, Asian American activists hoped that their shared experiences of racial oppression would encourage collective action to
combat racism and to gain equal status with the larger society. Activists participated in national campaigns demanding justice for individual Asian Americans, mobilized support for bicultural education, immigration reform, and redress and reparations for Japanese Americans interned during World War II.

Asian Americans seeking a pan-ethnic identity were predominantly second and third generation since the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and subsequent acts restricted Asians from entering the United States. Thus, there were few Asian American families until 1943 when the Exclusion Act was repealed. Subsequently, the 1960s witnessed an emergence of second and third generation Asian Americans who, according to Lyman (1977), have become so diffused into American culture that they are "not adequately equipped to return to their native identity" (p. 284). Also, with the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act, intellectuals from Asia came to study at American universities. Second and third generation Asian Americans, educated in American schools, learn US history. As a result, they know almost nothing of Asian history or culture. Lyman explains that "it is an embarrassment which I often see in young Asians when they ask me to teach them [about their] history" (1977, p.284). An American education also instills the American ideals of independence, equality, and national self-determination. Second and third generation Asian Americans sought to obtain these ideals, which have been
elusive for many of their number, by reclaiming a tradition of struggle by earlier generations, embracing questions of oppression and power, and seeking liberation from the confines of American society.

Activists adopted the term Asian American in order to achieve political identity and group solidarity. The Asian American movement took the term "Oriental" (a term activists thought derogatory), used to describe the group and converted it to "Asian" to create a collectively conscious group consisting of diverse Asian American ethnics.

Aside from the emergence of college age second and third generation Asian Americans, the 1960s witnessed the Vietnam War, the murders of President John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King Jr. and numerous movements emphasizing ideologies such as: anti-war, civil rights, welfare rights, women's liberation, American Indian and Puerto Rican rights, and Black power. Perrow (1977) contends that America "had a multicolored dreamcoat of diverse causes and selfless and courageous youths risking lives and careers... we had hunger marches, riots, bombings, and official murders in extravagant numbers" (p.192). Asian American activists participated in many of these movements organized to change the country. However, it was mainly through participation in the civil rights, Black power, and anti-war movements that Asian American activists realized that they too had experienced racial injustice. This new awareness, according to Wei (1993),
"generated not only ambivalence about their own identity but also disillusionment with a society that failed to live up to its principles of equality and justice for all" (p. 13). Asian American activists believed that only through forging a pan-ethnic identity could they gain the numerical clout needed to secure their right to full participation in American society.

Asian American activism began when Asian American community dissenters focused attention on the abject conditions in the San Francisco Chinatown, and campus activists at San Francisco State and the University of California at Berkley protested the absence of their history in college and university curricula by participating in the Third World strikes. On the East Coast, Asian American activists developed radical ideologies based on the emphasis on identity of the Black Power movement. In the Midwest, Asian American college students from Ann Arbor, Michigan and Chicago came together for support and collective action. Many Midwest Asian American activists left college to go to an Asian ethnic community in search of their roots.

Asian American community activists, on the West Coast, tried to get the San Francisco government to address the wretched conditions of Chinatown. Activists held a series of forums at Commodore Stockton Auditorium and Portsmouth Square to focus public attention on community problems. One such forum, held on August 17, 1968 at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in San Francisco by the Intercollegiate Chinese for
Social Action, was designed to educate people about poor housing, poor health, and unemployment in Chinatown and the fact "that her poor, 80 per cent of the population, needed help" (Wei, 1993, p.13). A protest march down the main street of Chinatown proceeded. L. Ling-chi Wang, a graduate student at the University of California, Berkely, and a community activist, recalled that "it was quite a political event in Chinatown... for the first time problems were articulated beyond Chinatown youth problems which were publicly aired before" (Wei, 1993, p.14).

These "youth problems" made the public aware of the problems in Chinatown. The influx of immigrants after the 1965 amendment permitting 20,000 Asians, per country of origin, to immigrate to the United States and an increase in birthrate among Asian Americans caused an increase in the number of youths. These youths, some of whom lived in Chinatown, became dissatisfied with the unpleasant and unproductive life often found in Chinatown (Daniels, 1988). Some Chinatown youths gravitated toward gangsterism while others joined Leway (short for legitimate way), a local self-help group started by some American-born Chinese youths.

Leway sought to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents and combat the social causes of their delinquency. Also Leway tried to find jobs, college admittance, and draft counseling for its members. Leway, though, was never able to build community support. The Chinatown community blamed Leway
members and other youths for the increase in violence. In addition, Leway was not able to establish a working relationship with the police. As a result, Leway was forced to close its doors in the summer of 1969.

Meanwhile, West Coast Asian American student activists, inspired by the Black Power movement, began addressing the lack of ethnic studies programs for the minority groups represented in the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), a coalition of African American, Latino, American Indian, and Asian American campus groups (Umemoto, 1989). Asian American student activists were particularly impressed with the Black Panther Party which traced all oppressed people's problems to American imperialism and "thought it imperative that people of color and progressive European Americans joined together in what they believed was a movement for their common liberation" (Wei, 1993, p.15). Asian Americans and other minority students began striking at San Francisco State College (6 November 1968 to 27 March 1969) and the University of California, Berkeley (19 January 1969 to 14 March 1969). The San Francisco State strike was the first campus uprising involving Asian Americans as a collective force. As part of the TWLF, student activists went on strike to "achieve self-determination for themselves and their communities, to eradicate individual and institutional racism" (Wei, 1993, p.15). Strikers wanted ethnic studies programs because, they claimed, university courses "suppressed the social and political consciousness of
[minority students] by denying or distorting their historical experience and by Eurocentric ideology that denigrated other cultures" (Wei, 1993, p.15). As a result, the Third World strikes contributed to the formation of ethnic studies programs on campuses across the nation.

Though the TWLF strike was successful in creating new classes and getting new faculty hired, its importance lies in the fact that it also transformed the consciousness of its participants who, in turn, altered their communities. Through their participation in the strike, a generation of Asian American activists reclaimed a heritage of struggle by earlier generations of Filipino farm workers, Chinese immigrant miners, garment and restaurant workers, and Japanese American relocation camp resisters (Omatsu, 1994).

Asian American students sought community support for their organizations such as the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA), the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA), and the Philippine American College Endeavor (PACE). These Asian American students and their community supporters created numerous grassroots projects that empowered previously ignored and deprived sectors of society. Some community leaders, though, especially conservatives in the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), opposed the actions of the students. Since World War II, when JACL leaders cooperated with American authorities by convincing Japanese Americans to go quietly into the relocation centers, the JACL had advocated
that "Japanese must 'prove' themselves as Americans by solidly integrating with the larger society" (Wei, 1993, p.16). Some Nisei, however, supported the students.

The ICSA, PACE, AAPA were committed to improving their communities and providing community services. ICSA established a youth center in Chinatown which, during the Third World strike, attempted to teach local youth about the history of the Chinese in America with the purpose of politicizing them. But neither a revolutionary ideology nor a political organization emerged from it because its focus was on the oppressed Chinatown community, rather than racism as a larger social phenomenon.

Like the San Francisco State and the University of California at Berkley ICSA and AAPA organizations, PACE also was a member of the TWLF during the late 1960s. Their membership was mainly to ensure that the proposed School of Ethnic Studies would teach Filipino American culture, language, and history. PACE was also committed to working with youth from low income families and actively recruited and tutored Filipino American college applicants. Its political goal was to organize Filipino American students to oppose racism and internal colonialism. Most Filipino American students were uninterested in the political perspective of PACE. Rather, its members concentrated on the educational and socioeconomic plight of Filipino Americans.

The AAPA shared a desire with ISCA and PACE to provide
community services but its main interest was creating a collective identity that encompassed all Asian ethnic groups in America. AAPA members, feeling alienated from an Asian culture with which they had little contact and an American culture that excluded them, wanted to unify Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, and other Asian American ethnic groups to form a pan-Asian ethnic identity. AAPA held consciousness-raising sessions at San Francisco State in the late 1960s dealing with Asian American identity as an introduction to political action. Its focus on action, according to Wei (1993), was the reason that AAPA attracted people with previous involvement in social movements, making this group among the most militant of the Asian Americans involved in the TWLF. Wei argues that the Third World strike at San Francisco State on November 6, 1968 to March 27, 1969, "symbolized the potential of Asian American activism. On the basis of a shared identity and history, the students coalesced into an inter-Asian coalition" (1993, p.20).

The Berkeley AAPA was created after an Asian American caucus that was open to all Asian Americans, rather than a single ethnic group, to discuss issues of mutual concern. The appeal to all Asian Americans reflects a recognition of their similar history in America and a recognition of strength through numbers (Wei,1993). Berkeley AAPA members recruited ex-farm workers, ex-detainees from the Japanese American relocation centers, progressive Chinese Americans, and anti-
Marcos Filipino Americans (Tanaka, 1976). Their main purpose was to bring about social and political change in America that would result in self-determination for all people of color. At one AAPA meeting the issue of the internment of Japanese Americans surfaced. Many older Japanese Americans sought to forget about their World War II internment but after the experience was revealed to Sansei (third generation Japanese Americans), the internment during World War II became the major issue among Japanese American activists, and for many the sole reason for being involved politically.

One of the first Asian American organizations on the East Coast was Asian Americans for Action, or Triple A. It was founded in 1968 in New York City by two Nisei women who admired the emphasis by the Black Power movement on ethnic identity and pride. Concerned about their college-age children, who were losing their cultural identity, Kazu Iijima and Minn Matsuda decided that what was needed was a pan-Asian organization to which their children and other young adults could belong. On April 6, 1969, at the first meeting of Triple A about 18 people attended. Most of whom were Chinese American college students. The attendees, most of whom had participated in the Black Power movement, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), or other New Left student organizations, wanted to establish a political voice for the Asian American community rather than solely addressing cultural and identity issues. The primary political concern of Triple A was opposition to
the Vietnam War. Those who were uncomfortable with its political ideology dropped out, while those who stayed felt as though they had finally found a group that they could identify with racially and relate to politically (Wei, 1993).

Triple A and other Asian American activists believed that the Vietnam War was the result of American imperialism and racism. They reasoned that because American government leaders considered Asians biologically and culturally inferior, an Asian nation was invaded to satisfy an appetite for resources. Furthermore, Triple A believed that American foreign policy was controlled by a military-industrial complex that sought profits from vulnerable Third World countries like those in Southeast Asia. Triple A opposed the United States-Japan Security Treaty as they believed that both countries were imperialist partners. In November 1969, Triple A staged a rally and marched to the Japanese embassy in Washington, DC to present a petition, against the treaty, to the Prime Minister. About 29 demonstrators were arrested. The demonstration, as a media event, was successful as it received front page coverage in the Washington Post and Washington Star, and was reported by journalists from Japan.

Internal dissension weakened Triple A. Older members (mostly Japanese Americans) advocated working on the "anti-imperialist front" while younger members (mostly Chinese Americans) were interested in working in the New York Chinatown and accused those unwilling to organize in Chinatown
insufficiently political. In addition, older members wanted to tone down its rhetoric in order to obtain the support of more people. But, the younger members preferred the rhetoric and style of SDS and the militant African Americans. The conflict within Triple A was the result of the generation gap between those who lived through World War II and the Japanese internment and those who were born after the war. Also, it was an era when the young distrusted anyone over 30 years of age.

Those remaining in Triple A continued to be active in the New York area. Triple A, along with other New York area Japanese Americans, initiated a plan for an Asian community center to include a day-care center and a multilingual informational hot line. In December 1972, the United Asian Communities Center opened its doors in New York City and quickly became a hub of Asian American social and political activities. Eventually the center was forced to close due to inadequate financing. Triple A disbanded soon after because its members began to disagree over the issue of Soviet socialist imperialism.

Midwest Asian Americans found it difficult to start and sustain an ethnic-consciousness movement because of their sparse population and geographic isolation. Except in the Chicago Chinatown, Asian American groups had a hard time recruiting and retaining members.

Despite these problems, during the 1970s there was significant Asian American activism in the Midwest. There were
two Midwestern Asian American conferences in Chicago (April 12-14, 1974) and Madison, Wisconsin (September 26-29, 1974), and a Midwest Regional Conference on Asian American Mental Health in Chicago (May, 1974). In addition, Asian American groups were started on college campuses. Of central concern to the campus Asian American groups was personal identity. For example, the University of Illinois Asian American Alliance (organized in 1971) strove to "create a new sense of awareness and identity, to derive some sense of belonging, and to provide a deeper and broader understanding of our Asian Heritage" (Wei, 1993, p.30).

One of the largest Midwest centers for Asian American activism was at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, home of three successive groups: the Ann Arbor Asian Political Alliance (APA), Yisho Yigung, and East Wind. The main agenda of the Ann Arbor APA called for members to oppose the Vietnam War. A few members went to Washington, DC to participate in the 1971 May Day Tribe demonstrations to try to stop the federal government from conducting "business as usual" while Americans and Asians were dying overseas. But the political agenda was secondary to its role as a support group to Asian Americans who felt alienated from American society (Wei, 1993).

The desire for a support network became so great that in 1972 the Ann Arbor APA changed its name to Yisho Yigung, a combination of Chinese and Japanese terms meaning "one life
together," to express solidarity as Asian Americans. Yisho Yigung had no leaders and no ideology but continued to maintain a political direction and engaged in anti-war activities. The group started a course entitled "The Asian American Experience" at the University of Michigan. Students in the course, most of whom were Asian American, discussed the anti-Asian movement in America and the issue of identity. The emphasis on interpersonal relations by Yisho Yigung weakened the group, for members began to resent having their lives scrutinized. By the Spring of 1972, Yisho Yigung disbanded making way for another Asian American organization, East Wind, to take its place.

East Wind members, most of whom were underclassmen, had little experience with the past Ann Arbor groups and could start fresh. East Wind became mainly a service and educational organization. It sponsored steamed dumpling dinners to attract students, organized an Asian Awareness Week, and conducted Asian American orientation programs. Of importance to East Wind members was the education of Asian Americans about their own history and culture. They thought it essential to focus on identity and to teach history as prerequisites to the development of an Asian American community.

By stressing that the history of Asian Americans is similar to that of other minorities, East Wind felt it imperative that Asian Americans join hands with other minorities for their "eventual liberation (Wei, 1993). East
Wind and other campus minority groups organized the Third World Solidarity Conference on February 1974, which featured Angela Davis, Clyde Bellacourt, Ramsey Muniz, and Pat Sumi as speakers. Sumi, an Asian American activist, endorsed political revolution and advocated socialism as the only solution to the problem of racism in America.

Eventually, the Ann Arbor East Wind became less interested in politics and more interested in culture. East Wind leaders left Ann Arbor to participate in political struggles elsewhere. A few of them went to Chicago to work at the New Youth Center (NYC) in Chinatown. Founded in the Fall of 1971 by a group of Chinese Americans and overseas Chinese students, NYC provided community services and advocated political involvement to secure democratic rights for Asian Americans.

Asian American activists hoped that through the process of politicizing anti-imperialism, organizing grassroots programs to help degenerated ethnic neighborhoods, and teaching Asian American history and culture, the Asian American community would achieve solidarity and acceptance and liberation from the dominant society. Mura (1994) aptly portrays the Asian American activists' mindset when he points that:

The colonized, educated in the lore of the colonizer, reverencing the colonizer as master, suddenly sees the colonizer not as something to be aspired to or emulated,
as a superior being or the center of attention, but as a human being, a product of history, someone whose power is temporary and unjustly held. What happens then is a turning inward, a discovery and a creation... and a history that has been occluded or ignored (p. 204).

Their "turning inward" to discover "a history that has has been occluded or ignored" led to the creation of a new Asian American consciousness. Why Asian Americans felt a need to create a new consciousness is explained in the following chapter which looks at factors such as the state of America during the 1960s, Asian American goals of assimilation and cultural pluralism, and transforming perceptions of history and society.
CHAPTER 5
ANALYSIS

This chapter provides answers to the following questions: 1) What forces initiated and propelled the Asian American movement into existence?; 2) What were the goals of the Asian American movement?; and 3) How did the Asian American movement attempt to attain its goals?

During the 1960s, the decade from which the Asian American movement emerged, America experienced changes in the social values and a general shifting in the ideas of people. Particularly, changes in the conceptions people have of themselves, and of their rights and privileges. This cultural drift was brought on by changes in society. Examples of changes are the surge in the youth population and the location of that population in colleges, the 1965 amendments permitting sizable immigration to all peoples around the world, the Vietnam War (which intensified Asian immigration in the 1970s and early 1980s as Southeast Asian refugees came to America to escape the upheavals brought on by war), and the murders of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 and Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 which sent Americans into a state of shock, the rise in affluence for the middle and upper class which contributed money into public activities, and
inflation. From these major occurrences, came movements against
the Vietnam War, multi-issue student movements, Puerto Rican
and welfare rights, and ecology, teachers, farm workers,
peace, American Indian, civil rights, and Black power
movements. The Asian American movement was a direct result of
two major catalytic events, the anti-war and civil rights
movements. For some of the more radical Asian American
activists, their inspiration came from the Black Panther Party
and Black Power Movement. Demographic changes within the Asian
American community also contributed to the emergence of the
Asian American movement.

The anti-war movement united Asian Americans along racial
lines. For many Asian American activists, the American
participation in the Vietnam conflict raised questions of
racism directed against Asian people (Kwong, 1987). While
watching images of the war on the evening news, Chan (1991)
contends that "an increasing number of Asian American college
and high school students realized with a shock that the
'enemy' whom the American soldiers were maiming and killing
had faces like their own" but ignoring that more Asians were
being killed by other Asians than by Americans (p.174). These
images angered young Asian Americans and according to Espiritu
(1992), moved them to "protest the prevailing assumption that
Asian lives were cheap" (p. 43). Instead of using the popular
slogans of "give peace a chance" and "bring the GIs home,"
Asian American protestors yelled "stop killing our Asian
brothers and sisters" and "we don't want your racist war" to emphasize the racist nature of the war (Wong, 1972, pp. 35-36).

In some instances, Asian American soldiers endured anti-Asian racism because of their racial similarity to the enemy. Regardless of their ethnic background, these Asian American soldiers were called Gook, Jap, Chink, or Ho Chi Minh by their superior officers and fellow GIs (Espiritu, 1992). The Gook stereotype, according to Tachiki (1971), "portrays Koreans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, and other Asians as subhuman beings who do not value individual human life and who all look like the treacherous Chinese Communist enemy" (pp. 2-3).

The question of race alienated many Asian Americans from the majority of anti-war protestors. In 1971 an anti-war march in Washington, DC, lacked an Asian American contingent because the coordinating committee for the march failed to adopt the anti-racist statement of the contingent. Soon after, Asian American activists became estranged from the anti-war movement, which treated their issues and concerns as just symptoms of the war in Asia (Wei, 1993). Asian American activists realized that a movement of their own was needed for social change.

The civil rights movement of the 1960s encouraged Asian Americans to stand up for the elimination of bias against any race or nationality. Instead of a land of equality where a person could achieve success through individual effort, the
United States was criticized as a land of inequality where racial discrimination degraded African Americans and other people of color, and relegated them to being second class citizens. Those African Americans who confronted authority and fought tradition, like Rosa Parks who refused to leave a bus seat reserved for whites, the four college freshmen who asked for service at an all white lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, and many other similar incidents, encouraged Asian Americans to embrace the ideal of equality to all people regardless of race, creed, or color (Wei, 1993). They began to join organizations such as the Free Speech Movement at the University of California at Berkeley in 1964-1965, Students for a Democratic Society, and the Progressive Labor Party (Espiritu, 1992). However, Wong (1971) contends that the activists "had no organization or coalition to draw attention to themselves as a distinct group" (p. 33). Asian Americans participated on these organizations as individuals invited by their white or black friends (Chin, 1971). While Asian Americans believed in the integrationist ideology of the 1960s civil rights movement, they felt powerless and alienated, there was no system to uphold their own identity. Asian Americans realized that the effort to gain social justice was more than an African and European American concern. They became aware of situations where Asian Americans also experienced social injustice and that they composed a racial society where race based policies and practices separated them
from the dominant society.

To understand why the Asian American movement became pan-ethnic, one must not only look at societal developments but also the underlying social and demographic factors that allowed pan-Asianism to develop in the 1960s but not earlier. Before World War II, pan-Asianism was not possible because the largely foreign-born Asian population did not share a common language. Another obstacle was that each ethnic group held on to old national rivalries, just as with many early Asian immigrants, the political hostilities and memories of their homeland were still strong. For example, the occupation of Korea by Japan resulted in anti-Japanese sentiments among Koreans in the United States. These historical animosities and linguistic and cultural differences reinforced divisiveness among Asian American ethnic groups before 1940 (Espiritu, 1992).

During the postwar period, due to immigration restrictions and the growth of the second and third generations, American-born Asians outnumbered immigrants. As the Asian population became an American-born community, cultural and linguistic difficulties began to blur. By 1960, persons from different Asian backgrounds were able to communicate with each other in English. In doing so, they created a common identity associated with an American experience in the United States. Moreover, unlike their immigrant parents, native-born and American educated Asians
did not hold loyalties to old world ties. Historical hostility between their mother countries became less important (Wong, 1972). Takaki (1989) states that second generation Koreans, having grown up in America, "had difficulty feeling the painful loss of the homeland and understanding the indignity of Japanese domination" (p. 292). Thus, while the older generation of Koreans were antagonistic to all Japanese, their children were less hostile or held no concern at all (Melendy, 1977).

As national differences became less important, generational differences widened. For the majority, American born Asians believed that they had more in common with other American born Asians. Their foreign colleagues, whom American born Asians had less in common with, were not as likely to participate in the Asian American movement which focused on participants' shared American history. A third generation Japanese American who is married to a Chinese American believes that:

As far as our experiences in America, I have more in common than differences with a Chinese American. Being born and raised here gives us something in common. We have more in common with each other than with a Japanese from Japan, or a Chinese from China (Espiritu, 1992, p. 27).

The muting of cultural and historical divisions for Asian Americans in the 1960s facilitated their effort to create an
Asian American identity encompassing all Asian ethnic groups in order to gain the numerical clout needed to acquire equal access to all aspects of American society.

The pluralistic goal of the Asian American movement was to be separate from but equal to the dominant society. In order to understand their goal of pluralism one must look at the historical occupational and residential segregation that resulted in their seclusion from the American mainstream. A brief history on the Chinese and Japanese experiences in the New World provides an overall picture of how the other Asian immigrant groups were received and why movement activists favored cultural pluralism instead of assimilation and the melting pot model. A bicultural model was adopted later as discussed in the next chapter. The melting pot model was never a reality for Asian Americans as their apparent racial minority status prevented them from "melting" into white America.

During the 1850s, the first Asians to arrive in America were the Chinese, most of whom voluntarily came to work in the California gold mines. As sojourners, many men left their wives in China for their goal was to make money in America and return to China as wealthy men. Thus, they did not intend to become Americans. They wanted to remain Chinese. American society, at first accepting of the newcomers, soon became hostile. The Chinese were willing to work for long hours and for less money than American workers which resulted in the
Chinese monopolizing jobs. The Chinese, by law, were unable to become American citizens and had to endure second class treatment. Feeling unwelcomed, many Chinese wanted to return home. But because of their low wages, many could not afford the return fare or they had little money left over and would not return to China as poor men and be regarded as failures. As a result these early Chinese immigrants were forced to remain in a hostile environment and as such became socially selective. Many lived in Chinatowns because the cost of living was low, the Chinese community provided emotional security, and Chinatown was one of the few places in America that welcomed them. Many remaining Chinese were bachelors, primarily as a result of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which prevented Chinese immigration. Secluded from the American mainstream, very few cross-ethnic alliances were formed between the Chinese and their non-Chinese counterparts, whether owners, entrepreneurs, or laborers; the Chinese socialized among themselves. Antagonism and discrimination reinforced this (Chan, 1991; Daniels, 1988; Takaki, 1989).

Like their Chinese predecessors, Japanese immigrants came to America as single males, were employed at physically difficult, low prestige, and low paying jobs, and were victims of prejudice, discrimination, and racism (Takaki, 1989; Kitano & Daniels, 1988). Most Americans could not tell the Japanese apart from the Chinese. Kitano (1991) contends that the Japanese "were denied entrance into the mainstream because of
their [Asian] race" (p. 209). But unlike the Chinese, many Japanese immigrants came to America intending to stay. The bulk of their immigration took place between 1870 and 1924, after which time the US immigration laws prohibited immigration of all Asians. The Issei (first generation Japanese Americans) sent to Japan for women in order to marry and raise children. This practice made their communities in America more permanent. Most of the Issei acquired just enough knowledge about America in order to function and left the task of assimilation to their children.

The Issei hoped that their children "would no longer be forced to be 'strangers'" in America and that education was "the key to overcoming the 'handicap' of discrimination and 'the racial mark of the Mongolian face'" (Takaki, 1989, p. 213). Through education, many Nisei hoped they would be able to become socially and economically secure. Their desire to succeed and become assimilated into American society was fueled by the equality of opportunity denied their parents. Nisei, according to Takaki (1989), were determined to "prove their worth and force whites to accept them" (p. 218).

The Nisei soon discovered that citizenship and education did not immunize them from racial discrimination. Like their parents and the Chinese, they, too, were unwelcomed and discriminated against. Though most Nisei were college graduates, many found it difficult to obtain a job commensurate to their education (Hurh & Kim, 1989; Der, 1993).
Like their Chinese American counterparts, Nisei found themselves trapped in an ethnic labor market. They worked in laundries, hotels, fruit stands and produce stores (Takaki, 1989). Though the second and later generations of Japanese and Chinese Americans moved away from their immigrant parents' world towards more American models, as is common with most immigrant groups, the fact remains that they still retain the features of their racial group which sets them apart from the white dominated mainstream society (Kitano, 1991).

Asian American movement activists were American in every aspect except in appearance. Because of this difference, many Asian Americans experienced discrimination and prejudice from many members of mainstream society. Activists had embraced the American ideals of equality, justice and dignity to all peoples regardless of race, creed, or color. They believed, as generations of American school-children have been taught, that they had an inalienable right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Activists soon discovered that the American constitution applied only to white Americans. Wei (1993), a former Asian American movement activist, contends that many Asian Americans felt that America had deceived them and had betrayed its commitment to racial equality and justice. Asian Americans who tried to assimilate into mainstream culture but were rejected as inferior, sought alternatives. According to Wei (1993):

instead of seeking to be integrated into the institutions
and processes of the wider society, many [Asian Americans] realized that a more attainable aim was to make a place for themselves in America's ethnic pluralist society through the development of a unique ethnic identity" (p.45).

Many Asian Americans felt confused and inferior about who they were because American society had forced the European dominated culture on them and prevented them from forming an identity of their own. They believed that without a self-defined identity they were vulnerable psychologically and politically. Therefore, they set out to develop a new identity that was neither purely Asian nor purely American but an identity that encompassed both cultures. After all, Asian Americans were ethnically American and racially Asian.

Asian American activists wanted their new-found identity to give them cultural autonomy from the larger society. They wanted acceptance for their differences and equal opportunities to all things political, social, and economical. In essence, their goal was cultural pluralism; to be free from but equal to the dominant society. Activists accomplished their goal by transforming perceptions of history and society.

By altering perceptions of history, activists altered the ways Asian Americans perceived their history in America. Many Asian Americans were unaware of their immigrant ancestors' ordeals such as the Chinese legacy of exclusion, the Japanese trauma of the relocation camps, and the Filipino hardships of
migrant work. Also, the efforts of Asian American activists to reclaim their history led to their participation in the Third World strikes at San Francisco State and the University of California, Berkeley as described in the previous chapter.

By learning of their histories in America, Asian American activists hoped that others would come to see that the United States was not the land of opportunity that welcomed all races, religions, and nationalities. Activists convinced many Asian Americans that their depressed status in society was a continuation of an intolerable past and in order to be free from their legacy of harsh and unequal treatment Asian Americans must take action.

Activists urged Asian Americans to solve the problems of their communities by providing community services such as free English classes to immigrants and youth centers that provided recreation and history classes. Asian American activists also participated in housing and anti-eviction campaigns, union organizing drives, efforts to defend educational rights, campaigns for jobs and social services, and demands for democratic rights, equality, and justice (Omatsu, 1994). Asian Americans became active participants in the making of history by reversing accounts that treated them as marginal objects.

By imbuing Asian Americans with knowledge of their history, activists automatically altered self-perceptions and perceptions of the larger society. By making audiences aware of their shared history of struggle and imposed subordination,
a collective identity based on common experiences was formed. This new collective identity encompassed all Asian ethnic groups who felt that they were cheated out of achieving their share of the American dream by those members of the European American dominated society who thought that people of color were inferior and therefore not worthy of participation in mainstream society.

The Asian American movement came to fruition in America during the turbulence of the 1960s. The civil rights and Black Power movements, and the Vietnam War acted as catalytic events which propelled those Asian Americans who felt jilted by the dominant society into action. Asian American activists formed the Asian American movement to fight those powers in society that held their community at second class status. Activists sought cultural pluralism as their main objective which included gaining acceptance by the larger society and the right to equal access to all things social, economical, and political. The goal of the Asian American movement was sought by transforming perceptions of history and society which instilled in activists a collective identity that encompassed all Asian ethnic groups. The movements strength to counter the racist ways of the dominant society came from their new found pan-ethnic identity which provided them with the psychological power needed to rise above the constraints that prevented them from ever achieving equal footage with the larger society.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

The preceding pages illustrate one way of analyzing the Asian American movement during the late 1960s and 1970s. Has the movement endured three decades of cultural drifts and catalytic events?

The Asian American movement did not die or fade away due to the lack of a charismatic leader, prophet or spokesperson or because the movement had an unclear ideology - usual reasons for social movement decline espoused by social movement theorists (Stuart et al., 1984). Instead, the Asian American movement, in all its urgency, changed as a result of the simple fact that the new generation of Asian Americans, born during the 1960s, were not caught up in the fury of the civil rights era and its accompanying movements for democracy, rights, and equality to every disenfranchised sector of society. The new generation of Asian Americans had other pressing issues to contend with, issues that arose due to inevitable changes in society at large.

Omatsu (1994), a participant of the Asian American movement, argues that the decline of some of the radical aspects of the movement was due to the Conservatives' rise in power culminating in the Ronald Reagan Presidency and the
corporate offense of the 1970s. Omatsu (1994) contends that the Reagan Presidency "promoted economic recovery by getting government 'off the backs' of business people, reducing taxation for the rich, and cutting social programs for the poor. Meanwhile, racism and exploitation became respectable under the new mantle of patriotism and economic recovery" (p. 36). Omatsu (1994) calls this period the "winter of civil rights" because the liberation movements of the 1960s had to alter the major focus of their activity to issues of day to day survival. His views, like many other activists of the 1960s, reflect the concerns and values prevalent during the 1960s. Asian American concerns and values in the 1990s have changed from those of the civil rights era. However, some of the major issues that Asian American movement activists dealt with then, are still being addressed by the Asian American community today.

The issues that Asian American movement activists addressed were: 1) Majority-minority relations, as evidenced by their participation in the TWLF to counter what they called the imperialist ways of the dominant society; 2) Cultural pluralism, so as to retain their "Asianess" in the midst of Anglo-conformity while still retaining their right to equal access to opportunities afforded to the dominant group; and 3) Transforming perceptions of history and society, as seen by their attempts to create a pan-Asian identity and their attempts to raise political consciousness about the problems
in Asian ethnic communities by examining their historical roots at the university and community level (Omatsu, 1994; Omi, 1993). The relevance of these issues to Asian Americans in the 1990s remains, however, the problems and situations encountered have changed. The inevitable occurrence of new cultural drifts and new catalytic events has changed the make-up of the Asian American community which in turn, alters and shapes their concerns and values.

The cultural drifts and catalytic events that have occurred in the last three decades that directly affected the Asian American community were the rise of young professionals and the 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act (Omatsu, 1994; Hing, 1993). These events set the stage for the development of the Asian American community today, and the issues faced.

The rise of Asian American young professionals benefited from the struggles of the previous decade. Struggles that expanded job opportunities for people of color in fields such as law, education, and medicine and the removal of quotas in colleges and professional schools made it easier for a new generation of Asian Americans to enter professional fields. Asian Americans entered professions such as law, medicine, psychology, education, social work, business, journalism, and arts and culture. Omatsu (1994) labels these young professionals as neo-conservatives because they were raised in the "Reagan-Bush era of supply-side economics, class and
racial polarization, and the emphasis on elitism and individual advancement" (p. 43). Omatsu (1994) further contends that young Asian American professionals, having gained from affirmative action, now believe that America has become a society where people of color can advance through their own qualifications. Young Asian American professionals represent a legacy from the Asian American movement: They are proud to be Asian; They speak out against racism against Asian Americans; They express concern for Asian American issues; They oppose quotas blocking admissions of Asian Americans to colleges and universities; and they acknowledge the continuing discrimination against other people of color. Asian American young professionals, through their penchant for self-organization, combined forces with grassroots organizations of the Asian American movement to win redress and reparations for Japanese Americans interned during World War II.

The professional and socioeconomic gains made by Asian Americans during the 1980s have led to widespread acceptance of the model minority stereotype (Der, 1993; Omatsu, 1994). According to Der (1993), the term "model minority" has been used to chide African Americans and other racial minorities for their supposed failures "to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps" (p. 218). Asian American success is attributed to their culture which emphasize education, family cohesion, and traditional values. Those Asian American who do not conform to the model minority stereotype are invisible in
mainsteam society. Also, according to Kim (1994), the model minority stereotype "fuels resentment from all sides: white resentment and fear of yellow peril takeover and black and brown resentment because of the perception that Asian Americans are honorary white people unconcerned about social justice" (p. 91). Ironically, widespread usage of the model minority stereotype occured with the influx of new Asian immigrants. The post-1975 refugee Asian American population have a 60% unemployment rate (Odo, 1993). Also, the newer Asian groups are more likely to be employed as blue-collar laborers who receive low wages and have substandard working conditions. Acquisition of basic English and technical and occupational skills would improve their economic status. In contrast, the established Asian groups - Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Asian Indians, and Koreans - tended to occupy white-collar professions and technical and administrative support jobs. It would appear that the goal of the Asian American movement of access to equal opportunity and the race-based affirmative action policies implemented in 1965 under the Johnson administration benefited these Asian Americans. But, according to Der (1993), the race-based affirmative action employment policy "has not been used consistently and effectively to advance [Asian Americans] into promotive positions" (p. 219). Frustrated that they are not receiving promotional opportunities commensurate with their educational background in the workplace, some Asian Americans argue that
cracking the "glass ceiling" is their civil rights issue of the 1990s (Der, 1993; Hurh & Kim, 1989). Also, Asian Americans, in response to their being labeled a model minority, point out that their per capita income is lower than that of whites and their poverty and unemployment rates are higher (Bennett, 1992). Nevertheless, Asian Americans now possess the educational and occupational background to carry the Asian American and civil rights movements to the next phase of achieving full integration of leadership positions in the workplace (Der, 1993).

In addition to the rise of young Asian American professionals, who suggest that the 1990s and beyond may constitute a new era of civil rights activism, the last three decades witnessed major demographic changes within the Asian American community. An increase in the number of foreign born Asian Americans occurred. Of the nine million Americans of Asian ancestry, over 65% are foreign born (Yoshitomi, 1993). The 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act and the 1975 and 1980 refugee Acts enabled Asian immigrants and Southeast Asian refugees to enter the United States in record numbers (Hing, 1993). The demographic shift within the Asian American community created new concerns. These concerns deal with some of the same issues Asian American activists of the 1960s and 1970s addressed. Only the participants and situation have changed. The issues Asian Americans are addressing in the 1990s, as a result of their community's demographic changes,
are redefining Asian American panethnicity, reaffirming cultural pluralism, and creating minority-minority relations (as opposed to majority-minority relations of the civil right era).

Asian American panethnicity, created in the late 1960s by the Asian American movement, linked together distinct Asian ethnic groups into an Asian American panethnic label. This label reflected a similar historical experience of restrictive naturalization laws, exclusionary immigration laws, labor market segregation, and ghettoization by a bureaucracy and culture which treated all Asians alike (Omi, 1993). Through historical rooting, Asian American activists transformed the consciousness of a generation of Asian Americans by teaching them of their common history in America. A different reality exists today. The post-1965 Asian immigrants, encompassing a diverse range of ethnic identities and class origins, and political orientations make it increasingly difficult to express a "shared" experience (Omi, 1993). For most recent Asian immigrants the term "Asian American" is a foreign concept. A Korean immigrant, when asked what he is will reply Korean. Likewise, when asked who he is, a Vietnamese refugee will reply Vietnamese. Exacerbating the move toward panethnicity are anti-immigrant sentiments among American-born Asians. These Asian Americans resent being lumped together with "foreigners" with whom they have little in common and no contact with. It bothers these American born Asians when
whites comment that they speak such good English, as if they were foreigners. Some immigrants, on the other hand, think of certain Asian Americans as "bananas" - yellow on the outside, white on the inside.

The diversity between and within Asian American ethnic groups makes it difficult for community representatives and advocates to define the needs and concerns of the Asian American community. Issues that have relevance for all Asian ethnic groups, such as redistricting and reapportionment, Asian American admissions in higher education, and anti-Asian violence have the potential for panethnic unity and a panethnic agenda. On the other hand, class, nativity, and generational differences lead to distinct agendas. Many foreign-born Asian Americans need programs, such as basic English skills and job-training programs which can ease their transition into American life. The established Asian American groups are less concerned with basic "survival issues" but instead emphasize "mobility issues" such as the "glass ceiling" in professional employment (Omi, 1993, p. 208). The career advancement concerns for many Asian American professionals seem irrelevant to many Asian immigrants and Southeast Asian refugees living in low-income housing projects and caught in a world of gangs, drugs, and violence. Omi (1993) though, believes that in spite of these differences a "panethnic consciousness will be an enduring feature of Asian American organization in the coming decades as political
elites attempt to wield a range of disparate interests into a coherent political force" (p. 208). Also, Asian Americans, when divided by ethnic origin, comprise a small group. But, when combined, make a formidable group.

The goal of Asian American activists towards ethnic pluralism is a social reality for the 1990s multiethnic American society. The new wave of post-1965 Asian immigrants have had an unconventional opportunity to develop "private cultures" within the larger American culture. Such situations contrast with the pre-1965 Asian immigrants who were more divorced from their homelands and were faced with forced assimilation after World War II. In contrast to the pre-1965 Asian immigrants, newer Asian immigrants have been able to maintain links with their homelands through Asian American video stores and ethnic television and radio programs which keeps them au currant in news and popular culture. Also, quick and affordable air travel has bridged the boundaries which separate Asia from the United States. New Asian ethnic communities are emerging throughout the United States. According to Omi (1993) these communities are not the product of restrictive contracts or other systems of ghettoization but "are a product of the demands for ethnic goods and services, and, in many instances, are testimony to the infusion of Asian capital here in the U.S." (p. 202). The multitude of Asian "private cultures" surfacing amidst the larger American culture suggests the proliferation of biculturalism. Asian
ethnics want the opportunities of socioeconomic and political success found in American culture and at the same time want to retain their special cultural traits.

The majority-minority paradigm of the 1960s addressing White-Black (and later other people of color) relations is not a pressing issue for the 1990s Asian American community. Less anti-Asian violence by Whites is occurring. However, anti-Asian violence by other people of color have increased. Thus, the need for minority-minority relations to promote harmony between all ethnic and racial groups. The Los Angeles riots on April 29, 1992 where Korean and other Asian Americans were targets of Black rage as a result of the acquittal of Los Angeles police officers who beat a black man, is testimony to the escalation of inter-ethnic violence in America. The demographic shifts in America have increased tensions and polarizations among different ethnic and racial groups. African Americans feel that the increasing numbers of immigrants from Latin America and Asia are forcing them out of their residences, jobs, education, health, and social welfare programs (Chang, 1994).

African Americans, contends Chang (1994), are worried that they are losing the economic and political gains they made during the 1960s civil rights struggles. South Central Los Angeles, where the riots took place, was predominantly black. Now the area consists of Latino immigrants and Korean and other Asian American shop owners and restauranteurs.
Fights have occurred between the Latino and African American communities over the redistricting for city council. Asian Americans have also taken part in the political process. The Korean American Victims Association held a daily month long protest in front of City Hall demanding compensation for Koreans who lost their businesses during the riots.

The Los Angeles riots raised questions about the capability of Asian American coalitions. Not only did Korean American businesses suffer losses ($400 million) but Chinese ($53 million), Japanese ($3.2 million), Filipino ($7.5 million) and other Asian American owned businesses perished as well (Chang, 1994). Elaine H. Kim, a Korean American advocate in the Los Angeles area, believes that "the police and fire departments, black and white political leaders [and] the Asian and Pacific advocates...[disassociated] themselves from us because our tragedy disrupted their narrow risk-free focus on white violence against Asians" (pp. 71-72). A Los Angeles Times article (July 13, 1992) claimed that Asian Americans have failed to adopt a common agenda but that the riots "gave new urgency to the fight against anti-Asian violence" (p. A20). At a time when Asian American communities are growing faster than at any time in history and are being primarily composed of first generation immigrants, advocates must ask "whom are these Asian American organizations representing, and to whom are they accountable" (Kim, 1994, p. 92). The Asian American organizations of the 1960s and 1970s are outdated in
their agenda for they are not rooted deeply enough in each specific ethnic community to have an approved political agenda or social program. Input from the new immigrant and refugee communities can help produce an Asian American coalition advocating issues relevant to all Asian Americans.

The Asian American movement of the civil rights era left a legacy of community building through collective action, participatory democracy for empowerment and social change, and self-awareness through historical rooting. Activists raised the consciousness of a generation of Asian Americans by transforming perceptions of history and society. Will the Asian American activists of the 1990s be able to unite their diverse community through historical rooting? Will they be able to address the issue of their communities through collective action based on a panethnic identity? Will they be able to uphold cultural pluralism as being a strengthening situation instead of divisive? Asian American activists of the 1960s and early 1970s must now pass the torch of inter-ethnic and political solidarity to a new generation of Asian Americans whose problems and concerns are different. Further research must be done in regards to the new Asian immigrants and the problems they face in American society. Will these new Asian immigrants start a movement in reaction to their experiences in America? How will they be received by the more established Asian Americans? Where will the next Asian American movement come from?
BIBLIOGRAPHY


