

Advancing Research Within Asian American Psychology Using Asian Critical Race Theory and an Asian Americanist Perspective

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Abstract

Research within Asian American psychology continually grows to include a range of topics that expand on the heterogeneity, hybridity, and multiplicity of the Asian American psychological experience. Still, research focused on distinct racialization and psychological processes of Asians in America is limited. To advance scientific knowledge on the study of race and racism in the lives of Asian Americans, we draw on Asian critical race theory and an Asian Americanist perspective that emphasizes the unique history of oppression, resilience, and resistance among Asian Americans. First, we discuss the rationale and significance of applying Asian critical race theory to Asian American psychology. Second, we review the racialized history of Asians in America, including the dissemination of essentialist stereotypes (e.g., perpetual foreigner, model minority, and sexual deviants) and the political formation of an Asian American racial identity beginning in the late 1960s. We emphasize that this history is inextricably linked to how race and racism is understood and studied today in Asian American psychology.

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Finally, we discuss the implications of Asian critical race theory and an Asian Americanist perspective to research within Asian American psychology and conclude with suggestions for future research to advance current theory and methodology.

Keywords

Asian American psychology, critical race theory, AsianCrit, Asian Americanist

Along with the start of the Asian American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and 1970s (Maeda, 2012), Asian American psychology has exponentially grown to include a range of topics that expand on the heterogeneity, hybridity, and multiplicity of the Asian American psychological experience (Leong & Okazaki, 2009; Lowe, 1991; Uba, 2002). Still, research focused on the distinct racialization and psychological processes of Asians in the United States is limited. To advance scientific knowledge of the impact of race and racism on the lives of Asian Americans, we draw on Asian Critical Race Theory (CRT; Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Museus & Iftikar, 2013) and an Asian Americanist perspective (R. M. Lee et al., 2016; Okazaki et al., 2007) to emphasize the unique history of oppression, resilience, and resistance among Asian Americans. First, we discuss the rationale and significance of applying these perspectives to the study of race and ethnicity within Asian American psychology. Second, we review the racialized history of Asians in the United States organized by the struggle with, and resistance against, the pervasive essentialist stereotypes of Asian Americans (e.g., perpetual foreigner, model minority, and sexual deviants) and the political formation of an Asian American racial identity beginning in the late 1960s. We emphasize that this history is inextricably linked to how we understand and study race and racism today, and future scholarship in Asian American psychology should be grounded in this history. Finally, we discuss the implications of Asian CRT and an Asian Americanist perspective on Asian American psychology and conclude with suggestions for future research to advance current theory and methodology.

Rationale and Significance

The history of Asian American psychology can be traced and tied to the birth of Asian American Studies and the Asian American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Leong & Okazaki, 2009). Since then, empirical

studies, focused on the role of race and ethnicity in the lives of Asian American youth and families, have grown considerably, particularly in the areas of acculturation, ethnic-racial identity, discrimination, and socialization (Kiang et al., 2016; Okazaki et al., 2007). Still, the broader literature in this area has a narrow conceptualization of Asian American experiences of race and ethnicity—often overrepresented in the psychological literature as examining the roles of traditions, values, and customs of Asian ethnic groups, and underrepresented in addressing the roles of racial formation and stratification of Asians in the United States and their unique racialized history of struggle, resilience, and protest (Juang et al., 2017; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2014; Yoo & Pituc, 2013). Moreover, recognizing unique experiences of power and privilege afforded by intersectional ties to race, class, gender, and sexuality is limited in the literature, including the frequent erasure of the distinct experiences of brown Asian Americans (e.g., South Asian Americans, Filipino Americans); multiracial and multiethnic Asian Americans; low-income Asian Americans; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other (LGBTQ+) Asian Americans; and religious minority Asian Americans.

While significantly contributing to the literature, this dominant recurrent theme of overemphasizing ethnicity and immigration over race may reinforce an Oriental, perpetual foreigner stereotype view of Asian Americans as stuck in an endless East-West binary (R. M. Lee et al., 2016; Okazaki & Saw, 2011). This narrow set of research inquiries restricts our understanding of what historian Erika Lee (2015) describes as “Twenty-First-Century Asian Americans,” who are transnational immigrants and global Americans, who share a common racialized history of adversity and agency, and who are characterized by their diversity in age, ethnicities, immigration history (e.g., refugees, transracial adoptees), class, gender, and sexuality. For these reasons, we draw on Asian CRT (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Museus & Iftikar, 2013) and an Asian Americanist perspective (R. M. Lee et al., 2016; R. M. Lee & Tseng, 2021; Okazaki et al., 2007) to critique and advance the current psychological literature on how Asian Americans experience and navigate race and racism.

Theory and Perspectives

Asian CRT (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Museus & Iftikar, 2013) or *AsianCrit* is a conceptual lens for understanding the unique ways in which race and racism shape the lives and identities of Asian Americans in society. It critiques and focuses in on the structural, institutional, and cultural aspects of White dominant society that utilizes unique racial stereotypes of Asian Americans—both past and present—to perpetuate racism and White supremacy. And, although Asian Americans are a diverse group with wide-ranging concerns,

with colorism often considered an underlying covariant of racism, we focus on the general recognition that *racism* is a system of dominance, power, and privilege attached to whiteness that is manifested through interpersonal, cultural, and institutional racial disparities in the United States. It builds on the work of CRT and its tenets, which seek to understand, critique, and change structural inequity and racism across societies, institutions, and disciplines (see Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, for key writings and the history of CRT).

AsianCrit is not a replacement of CRT and its tenets, rather it foregrounds the importance of the CRT tenets on the unique racial history, stratification, and formation of Asians in the United States. In particular, it offers an analytical lens for Asian American psychology to understand and critique how Asian Americans struggle with, are complicit in, and contest racism based on their distinct racialization relative to other racial groups. It also challenges mainstream psychological theories, policies, and recommendations for practice that emphasize color-blind or race-neutral viewpoints as these perspectives inevitably benefit whiteness and render invisible the material consequences of racism for people of color, including Asian Americans (R. M. Lee et al., 2016; Syed et al., 2018; Yoo et al., 2018). As readers learn more about AsianCrit in the following, we encourage them to juxtapose the new tenets of AsianCrit with the original tenets of CRT, such as the permanence of racism (racial realism), racism is ordinary (normative racism), and interest convergence, which are not discussed here but may still be applicable to Asian American psychology (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

AsianCrit holds seven tenets that form the core of its analytical lens. The first four tenets, (a) Asianization, (b) Transnational Context, (c) (Re) Constructivist History, and (d) Strategic (Anti)Essentialism, build on the original CRT tenets by adding more details of Asian Americans' unique racial realities and history, whereas the last three tenets, (e) Intersectionality; (f) Story, Theory, and Praxis; and (g) Commitment to Social Justice, are reiterations of original CRT tenets that are central in examining Asian American experiences (Museus & Iftikar, 2013). *Asianization* refers to how racism is supported by the unique racial formation of Asians in the United States as the *Oriental*, or an "alien body and a threat to the American national family" (R. G. Lee, 1999, p. 8). *Transnational Context* underscores the global impacts of imperialism, colonialism, and neoliberalism on Asian American identity and experiences with racism. *(Re)Constructivist History* foregrounds Asian American history to contextualize present-day experiences of race and racism for Asian Americans in a long-standing struggle for self-determination. Although Asian ethnic groups share experiences of racial oppression, *Strategic (Anti)Essentialism* articulates how Asian Americans are not a

monolithic group and that they enact agency by contesting stereotypes that essentialize their experiences and identities. *Intersectionality* draws attention to how racism is interlocked with other systems of oppression and power, including sexism, classism, heterosexism, and ableism, to better understand how the positionalities of Asian Americans differ based on their statuses in these systems. *Story, Theory, and Praxis* advocates to center the voices and lived experiences of Asian Americans, as well as their unique racial struggles and agency. Finally, *Commitment to Social Justice* highlights how Asian Americans are active agents who create their own narratives and direct the courses of their present and future lives. In summary, AsianCrit tenets offer important vantage points for understanding the unique racialized experiences and protestations against systemic racism of Asians in the United States. We contend that AsianCrit can also offer an important perspective on how Asian American psychology can improve the exploration and understanding of race and racism.

Drawing on CRT, ethnic studies, and postmodern psychology, scholars argue for an Asian Americanist perspective in psychology “to understand that the contemporary mentality and behavior of Asian American individuals and community are inextricably tied to what happens inside, outside, and across U.S. borders” (Okazaki et al., 2007, p. 39). Instead of applying psychological models developed mainly for Whites or adapting them to understand psychological processes in racial and ethnic minority youth and families, an Asian Americanist perspective is “questioning and deconstructing dominant paradigms and reconstructing, redefining, and reformulating the psychological experiences of Asian Americans” (p. 39). Asian Americanist perspective in research recognizes and encourages the study of heterogeneity, hybridity, and multiplicity in experiences of Asians in America, focusing on community strengths and structural change (R. M. Lee & Tseng, 2021). It emphasizes the need to dismantle and challenge the Orientalizing narratives common in psychological research that restricts Asian Americans’ experiences into the dichotomy of Asian versus White cultural adjustment, often overrepresenting or overinterpreting the roles of collectivism and Asian ethnic traditions/values (R. M. Lee & Tseng, 2021; Uba, 2002). Here, *Orientalizing* refers to the racist process in which Asian people are stereotyped as an exotic Other. An Asian Americanist perspective further argues for a more holistic approach to conceptualizing and investigating Asian American psychology utilizing more inter- and transdisciplinary scholarship and readings. It encourages interdisciplinarity and the employment of diverse methods by foregrounding history and current sociopolitical contexts to better understand unique racialized and intersectional experiences, as well as their psychological correlates among 21st-century Asian Americans.

History of Asian Americans as the Oriental

White supremacy, xenophobia, and anti-Asian violence sharply rose in the United States since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic began to be reported in early 2020 (Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism, 2021). The Stop AAPI Hate coalition (<https://stopaapihate.org>) documented 3,795 anti-Asian racism incidents between March 19, 2020 and February 28, 2021 (Jeung et al., 2021). More recently, there were two mass shootings in Atlanta, Georgia on March 16, 2021 and Indianapolis, Indiana on April 15, 2021. These acts of gendered, xenophobic, and racist violence targeting Asian Americans are not new nor isolated, but rather tied to a long-standing U.S. history that has racially stratified Asians in the United States to rationalize and maintain White supremacy (E. Lee, 2015; R. G. Lee, 1999).

Both AsianCrit and Asian Americanist psychology argue the need to center Asian American history to contextualize the present-day experiences of race and racism faced by Asian American youth and families. Understanding the history of how Asians in America are racially minoritized and pitted against other racial groups to maintain White supremacy is necessary to provide a more nuanced context in the study of their experiences with, negotiations of, and challenges to systemic racism. Asians in America are racially stratified and uniquely positioned between White and Black people, and, more specifically, White supremacy and anti-Blackness (e.g., Bonilla-Silva, 2004). Claire Jean Kim (2018) explicates that “from the arrival of the first Chinese immigrants during the Gold Rush to the present, Asians have been figured as not White but also, and primarily, as not Black” (p. 10). This differentiated racial positioning of Asian Americans (e.g., more foreign, meek, or hardworking), particularly its relation to anti-Blackness, then not only shapes and justifies the unique forms of White supremacy against Asian Americans (e.g., exclusionary laws), but it also privileges Asians as non-Black people of color in an anti-Black U.S. society. As both marginalizations and privileges are tied to being a non-Black person of color in the United States, an Asian Americanist perspective in psychology requires attention to how Asians in the United States (both past and present) can simultaneously challenge and be complicit in anti-Blackness (C. J. Kim, 2018; N. Tran et al., 2018). Moreover, three common stereotypes of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners, model minorities, and sexual deviants are not just simple, modern overgeneralizations of what it means to be Asian American. Rather, they are past emblems of the racialized construction of the “Oriental,” which rationalizes power and privilege attached to whiteness and has roots dating back to well before the U.S. Constitution was ratified. It is important to note that

Asians in the United States have long resisted and fought against White supremacy, often in collaboration with others across ethnic, racial, gender, class, and national lines (E. Lee, 2015; Takaki, 1989). The next section expands on the historical examples of these three common stereotypes, illustrating how both oppression and resistance are relevant to the development and well-being of Asian Americans.

Perpetual Foreigner Stereotype

The *perpetual foreigner stereotype* is the racial representation of Asians in America as foreign, regardless of their citizenship, generational status, or length of residency in the United States (Wu, 2002). A common question posed to an Asian American is “Where are you from?” and responses such as “Phoenix, Arizona, or New York City” are met with “No, where are you really from?” revealing the questioner’s assumption that an Asian American cannot possibly be “from the United States.” Asians Americans have always been viewed as outsiders since the beginning of U.S. history, when Congress passed the nation’s first Immigration Act of 1790 to restrict naturalized citizenship to only “free White persons.” It was formalized in the 19th and early 20th century, with the rise of Asian immigrants who provided exploitable and required labor to expand the capitalist economies of Hawaii and the West Coast (E. Lee, 2015). In the aftermaths of the Civil War and the shortage of cheap labor, following the emancipation of African American slaves, an influx of mostly male Chinese migrant workers fomented White anxiety over the rapidly changing social order, and these Chinese migrant workers were often met with racial violence, such as the 1871 massacre of 19 Chinese immigrants in a Los Angeles race riot (Jew, 2016). The growing population of Asians in America during that time were viewed as unwanted perpetual foreigners who could never fully assimilate into mainstream White American society (Maeda, 2009), a belief still held today (Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Devos & Banaji, 2005). Perceived as the Yellow Peril who threatened the White racial frame (Feagin, 2013), U.S. Congress subsequently passed a series of laws that banned Asian ethnic groups from immigrating into the United States, which remained effective until 1965, including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Asiatic Barred Zone Act of 1917, and the Immigration Act of 1924 (Takaki, 1989). It was not until the Immigration Act of 1952, when a select number of Asian immigrants could naturalize as U.S. citizens, and the Immigration Act of 1965, when Asians were once again allowed to enter the United States free from earlier racist quota systems (Takaki, 1989).

In contrast to this commonly held image of Asian Americans as foreign, Asians have been in America well before the United States became a republic, and they have significantly contributed to its economic success (E. Lee, 2015). The first Asian ethnic group to settle in the United States (in what would later become Louisiana) was Filipino sailors who escaped from Spanish ships during the 18th century, a period of Spanish colonization in the Philippines. Later, Filipino Americans would help the outnumbered White American forces defend New Orleans and the larger Louisiana Purchase from invading British forces in the War of 1812. Since then, Asian Americans have fought in every U.S. war, and the many Asian ethnic groups that followed continually contributed to the country's growth (E. Lee, 2015; Takaki, 1989). Despite encounters with countless exclusionary laws and systemic racism, Asian Americans routinely protested in the courts to achieve full citizenship; setting enduring, legal U.S. precedence on the right of entry and naturalization (e.g., Fong Yue-Ting on immigration, Wong Ark Kim on citizenship through birth, and Takao Ozawa and Bhagat Singh Thind on the right to naturalize), equal protection and economic rights (e.g., Yick Wo on equal protection, Toyota on land ownership), and the right to fully participate in U.S. society (e.g., Fred Korematsu on internment; Chan, 1991).

Of course, holding U.S. citizenship has not shielded Asian Americans from being viewed as perpetual foreigners, especially during times of perceived threat to U.S. national security, economy, or health. In one of the most egregious examples of the violation of civil rights, 110,000 Japanese Americans residing in the West—62% of whom were U.S. citizens—were incarcerated in internment camps because they were seen as posing threats of espionage and treason, resulting in intergenerational trauma (Nagata et al., 2019). In another example, Vincent Chin, a Chinese American draftsman in his 20s, was brutally murdered by two White autoworkers in Detroit in 1982 based on the autoworkers' racial animus toward the Japanese for the decline in the U.S. auto industry (Kurashige, 2002). Similarly, and following the terrorist attacks on U.S. soil on September 11, 2001, Arab, Muslim, and South Asian Americans have been racially profiled, surveilled, and criminalized as potential terrorists and sometimes murdered (Cainkar & Maira, 2005). Most recently, the political rhetoric concerning the Chinese origins of COVID-19 has fueled widespread anti-Asian discrimination and violence. Early media reports focused on hygiene at the wet market in Wuhan and the consumption of exotic animals, heightening the image of Chinese—and by extension—and other Asian Americans as foreigners who spread contamination and pose threats to public health (Tessler et al., 2020).

Model Minority Stereotype

The *model minority stereotype* is the racial representation of Asians in the United States as the most academically and economically successful racial minority group because of their hard work and belief in the “American Dream” (Yoo, Burrola, & Steger, 2010). The positive connotation of this racial representation serves to mask how the model minority stereotype has historically been used to maintain White supremacy by pitting Asian Americans against other racial minority groups (Wu, 2002). It was originally introduced shortly after the U.S. Civil War and the 14th Amendment in 1868, which extended naturalization to include only “persons of African descent” (Loewen, 1988). As aliens still ineligible for citizenship, Chinese coolies from the West Coast were brought to the Southern plantations as an alternative form of cheap labor to compete against Black people who protested their exploitation by refusing to work. The idea that Asians were more hard-working than other racial minority groups returned in the 1960s in efforts to minimize gains in the Civil Rights movement. Peterson (1966), a White sociologist, coined the term “model minority” to illustrate how Black people had nothing to complain about because Asians made it in this country through their own unaided efforts and belief in the American Dream. Thus, the model minority thesis never actually celebrated the values of Asian culture. It is a myth (see Wu, 2002; Yoo, Burrola, & Steger, 2010, for details) that emphasizes Asians’ success compared with Black and other racial minorities in the United States. It focuses on the individual efforts and mobility of Asian Americans to absurdly rationalize that systemic racism is not real, and that Black and other racial minorities are simply not working hard enough (Wu, 2002). The model minority stereotype denies the existence of the White racial frame through color-blind logic as Asian Americans serve as the exemplar case of “ethnic assimilation” and the model for nonpolitical upward mobility (R. G. Lee, 1999).

In contrast to the widespread myth of Asian Americans as docile hard workers who do not complain, Asian Americans have resisted this myth throughout U.S. history. To illustrate, at the height of Asian Americans being viewed as the Yellow Peril between 1850 and 1900, anti-Chinese purges and lynchings in the West Coast were common (Pfaelzer, 2007). However, Chinese Americans fought back by various means, including taking arms, organizing strikes, filing lawsuits, and by flatly refusing to leave. In the late 1800s, diverse Asian ethnic groups, including Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Filipino groups, farmed in Hawaii and the West Coast mostly as coolies and indentured servants. They organized some of the largest labor strikes of the era and used collective bargaining to fight for comparable wages and

working conditions, often across racial and ethnic groups (Takaki, 1989). In the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement helped pass the Immigration Act of 1965 that removed the racist immigration quota system and dramatically changed the demography of Asian Americans (Wu, 2002). In particular, it exponentially increased the number of diverse Asian immigrants and refugees entering the United States, with a wide range of traditions, customs, values, and languages, as well as socioeconomic statuses (E. Lee, 2015)—dispelling the myth that all Asian Americans are academically and economically successful. Importantly, Asian American students and community activists participated in the Third World Liberation Front strikes of 1968 and other civic acts of resistance, in coalition with other racial and ethnic minority groups, to protest racism and the exclusion of marginalized groups.

It must be acknowledged that some Asian Americans have embraced and internalized the model minority stereotype throughout history, most visibly in relation to affirmative action and admission to elite academic spaces, reflecting the ideological and political diversity of the population. Whereas an ethnically diverse coalition of Asian Americans have long supported the affirmative action policy (Ramakrishnan & Wong, 2018), a vocal minority of politically active, predominantly immigrant Chinese Americans have partnered with White opponents of affirmative action to file federal complaints and litigations against race-conscious, holistic review at elite institutions such as Harvard University (Poon et al., 2019). Research investigating the values and assimilation/aculturation of the various nationalities classified as Asian American and their ideology and politics may be of interest when seeking to learn more about racism. Poon et al. found that, whereas both Asian American supporters and opponents agree on the presence of U.S. racism against Asian Americans, there are a number of factors that seem to contribute to post-1965 Chinese immigrants being opposed to affirmative action and to hold anti-Black attitudes. The likely reasons for these anti-Black attitudes held by a vocal minority of Chinese immigrants include the fact that their social networks are limited to middle-class and upper-class Chinese Americans and Whites, and the proliferation of misinformation on WeChat (e.g., Muslim takeover of the United States, George Soros-funded Antifa, and the Black Lives Matter movement), a Chinese language social media platform (Zhang, 2018). The ongoing affirmative action debate suggests that, while no racial group is monolithic, an ideological divide within Asian Americans around whether they ally with or oppose White supremacy can easily be leveraged by powerful White interests to do what it is designed to do.

Sexual Deviant Stereotype

The roles of gender and sexuality are central to the racialized experiences of Asian American men and women, primarily for the purposes of maintaining racial, patriarchal, and class domination (Espiritu, 1992). The *sexual deviant stereotype* is the racial representation of Asian American men and women in extreme, often contrasting, forms of gender and sexuality that diverges from “normal” White male heteronormativity (R. G. Lee, 1999). On one hand, Asian American men are *emasculated* and assumed to be less “manly,” asexual, and unattractive—represented throughout history as both the aggressive “Fu Manchu” and passive “Charlie Chan” (Park, 2013). On the other hand, Asian American women are *hypersexualized* and assumed to be exotic, pleasers, and sexual objects—represented throughout history as both the aggressive “Dragon Lady” and passive “China Doll” (Park, 2013). As categories of difference, Espiritu (1992) asserts that “race and gender relations do not parallel but intersect and confirm each other, and it is the complicity among these categories of difference that enables U.S. elites to justify and maintain their cultural, social, and economic power” (p. 121).

The sexual deviant stereotypes of Asian American men and women started in the 1850s when America found itself in a bind between continually needing a cheap, exploitable labor force from Asia and feeling threatened that their alien existence would pollute the White racial frame (R. G. Lee, 1999). Gendered and racist U.S. exclusionary laws were passed in efforts to control the family formation and settlement of Asians in the United States. In fact, laws made it difficult for the existence of Asian American heterosexual families from 1850 until World War II (Park, 2013). For instance, the U.S. Congress passed the Page Act of 1875 to specifically ban Asian “prostitutes” from entering the country, in effect, restricting all Asian female immigration (E. Lee, 2015). Moreover, the Cable Act of 1922 stated that any woman marrying an “alien ineligible for naturalization”—which at the time included all Asian American men—would lose their U.S. citizenship (Takaki, 1989).

Despite institutional restrictions on Asian American family formation, Asian Americans have always navigated, challenged, and resisted the sexual deviant stereotype. Asian American men, for instance, worked in farming, gold mining, railroad construction, and other industries (E. Lee, 2015). When relegated to “effeminate” jobs because of their perceived threat to the White working-class heteronormative family, Asian American bachelors found new opportunities to survive and thrive, including opening laundries and restaurants (Park, 2013). In the early 1900s, when exclusionary laws prohibited Chinese immigration, Chinese business owners in the United States got creative and found exceptions to these laws that allowed them to get special

merchant visas to bring back employees from China. Opening a Chinese restaurant was a form of resistance to these gendered, racist exclusionary laws. The number of Chinese restaurants in the United States has doubled every decade since 1910 (J. B. Lee, 2008).

These Oriental stereotypes of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners, model minorities, and sexual deviants are not mutually exclusive from one another, or from other racial groups in framing White racism (R. G. Lee, 1999). Rather, they work in conjunction as illustrated in the racial stratification of Asian Americans between Black and White people in the U.S. racial hierarchy. For example, as Park (2008) argued, when Asian Americans fail to perform as the model minority (e.g., by failing to be submissive), they may be castigated as foreigners who do not belong in White spaces. Claire Jean Kim (1999) argued that Asian Americans are treated as honorary Whites, model minorities who are smarter and work harder than African Americans, while being perpetual foreigners who are unassimilable to (White) American identity and culture. Integrating theories of the racial stratification (i.e., Asian between Black and White; e.g., Bonilla-Silva, 2004) and racial formation (i.e., unique racialization and history; for example, Omi & Winant, 2004) of Asians in the United States, Kim illustrates the complex ways in which Oriental stereotypes and interracial group tensions are used to justify and frame White dominance, power, and privilege (Feagin, 2013). This has direct implications in Asian American psychology when considering new ways of how we conceptualize and study stereotypes and interracial group conflicts and tensions, as well as cross-racial group solidarity. Moreover, these areas could be studied beyond individual or interpersonal levels and include ecological, sociopolitical, and historical levels of analysis for Asian American racial experiences.

In conclusion, the explicit study of race and racism in Asian American psychology is still largely absent. To advance the field and stimulate more research in this needed area, we reviewed details of AsianCrit theory and an Asian Americanist perspective to provide a richer understanding of how Asian Americans have been minoritized as the Oriental—both in the past and present—to justify racism and imperialism. These perspectives, although not an alternate cultural paradigm, offer Asian American psychology a new vantage point in how Asian Americans endure and resist nativism and racism, which raises new questions. How does the study of acculturation, ethnic-racial identity, discrimination, and socialization account for the unique racial formation, stratification, and history of Asians in America? What are the psychological impacts and different ways in which Asian Americans challenge the perpetual foreigner, model minority, and sexual deviant stereotypes? How do research theory and methods account for the diversity of the 21st-century

Asian Americans who are transnational immigrants and global Americans? In this era of globalization, how do American racist ideologies manifest in a transnational context? How is anti-Blackness within Asian Americans and Asians abroad influenced by histories of U.S. imperialism? How does Asian American psychology address not only the agency and protest of Asian Americans but also how they may be complicit in supporting racism and imperialism (e.g., internalization of the model minority myth, anti-Blackness, and colorism)? To begin answering these questions, the next section applies AsianCrit and an Asian Americanist perspective in Asian American psychology, with suggestions for future research to advance current theory and methodology.

Research Implications for Asian American Psychology

The breadth of theories, research, and applications of Asian American psychology have burgeoned since the publication of one of the field's earliest articles in 1971 by Stanley Sue and Derald Sue in *Amerasia*, the first Asian American Studies journal. In the seventh annual review of research in Asian American psychology for the year of 2015, Kiang and colleagues (2016) reported 332 articles spanning more than 25 topic areas, with empirical studies focused on health and health-related issues, acculturation and enculturation, transracial adoptees, career development, counseling and clinical issues, educational experiences, families, immigrants and refugees, interpersonal relationships, LGBTQ, media, men and masculinity, psychopathology, racism, stress and coping, violence, and women—to name a few. Consistent with prior reviews (e.g., Juan et al., 2012; S. J. Kim et al., 2015), the field continually expands in breadth, depth, and rigor. Still, there are gaps in Asian American psychology that could draw more attention to the unique racial formation, stratification, and history of Asians in America to strengthen this area of research. In the following section, we briefly illustrate how an Asian Americanist perspective and the seven tenets of AsianCrit can be applied to advance the study of race and racism in Asian American psychology.

Integrating Asianization

Recognizing the process of Asianization encourages researchers to question how current theories and research in Asian American psychology may be extended by emphasizing the unique experiences of racial formation of Asian Americans, including the psychological impacts and different ways in which Asian Americans challenge the perpetual foreigner, model minority, and

sexual deviant stereotypes. Not capturing these unique experiences may underestimate or inaccurately reflect Asian American experiences with racism and its psychological correlates. More recently, there has been a growing number of empirically validated and reliable measures focused on Asian Americans (and Asian ethnic subgroups) that researchers could draw from to advance the field. For instance, there is the Internalization of the Model Minority Myth Measure (Yoo, Burrola, & Steger, 2010) focused on the false belief of Asian Americans' comparative success based on individual effort and mobility. The Foreigner Objectification Scale (Armenta et al., 2013) captures experiences with the perpetual foreigner stereotype for Asian Americans. The Asian American Racism-Related Stress Inventory (Liang et al., 2004) measures stress associated with sociohistorical racism, general racism, and the perpetual foreigner stereotype. The Scale of Anti-Asian American Stereotypes (Lin et al., 2005) measures others' perceptions of Asian Americans as unsociable or socially incompetent. More research on the prevalence and psychological correlates of these constructs are needed in the field.

Given the racial stratification of Asians between White and Black people, racial triangulation theory (C. J. Kim, 1999) may be useful to understand interpersonal processes and group relations between Asian American and other racial groups. For example, researchers can examine the psychological implications of how Asian Americans navigate and negotiate between being treated as both a model minority and perpetual foreigner in relation to Black people. More research attention is also needed to understand what it means for Asian American youth and families to be a non-Black person of color in an anti-Black society (C. J. Kim, 2018). Interracial group tensions and opportunities for collaborations, coalition building, and political organizing could also be explored from this framework. Future research needs to examine not only how Asian Americans challenge White supremacy, but also particularly how they may be complicit in supporting racism and imperialism, including nativism, racial color blindness, colorism, anti-Blackness, and internalization of the model minority myth. Although there are limited studies and measures focused on the critical reflection and critical action of Asian Americans, there has been recent development of internalized racism measures for Asian Americans. These include the Internalized Racism in Asian Americans Scale (Choi et al., 2017), with self-negativity, weakness stereotypes, and appearance bias subscales, and the Internalization of Asian American Stereotypes Scale (Shen et al., 2011), with difficulties with English language communication, pursuit of prestigious careers, emotional reservation, and expected academic success subscales.

Integrating Transnational Context

The Transnational Context tenet encourages researchers to contextualize research in Asian American psychology beyond the U.S. nation-state. Instead, Asian American identity and experiences may be better understood when connected to the far-reaching effects of globalization, imperialism, colonialism, and transnationalism (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Museus & Iftikar, 2013). Researchers for instance could investigate how acculturation, enculturation, and biculturalism are affected by a current era of increasing globalization and transnationalism (Okazaki et al., 2007). In advancing theory and methodology, R. M. Lee and colleagues (2019) argue for a more dynamic perspective of change in acculturation research. In particular, the temporal concepts of acculturative timing (i.e., beginning of acculturation process), acculturation tempo (i.e., duration of the acculturation process), acculturation pace (i.e., speed at which acculturation occurs), and acculturation synchrony (i.e., coordination of acculturation processes) as a means to systematically study in immigrant adolescents are introduced. Gee and colleagues (2015) advance the possibility of acculturation research by evaluating health and cultural outcomes before and after Filipinos immigrate into the United States, using a longitudinal, dual-cohort design. This transnational study of Filipino migrants is innovative as most studies in the area are retrospective reports collected after migrating to the new country.

The Transnational Context tenet also challenges the idea of a monolithic Asian American group by emphasizing how racial/ethnic identity and experiences are influenced by the unique impacts of immigration and imperialism for Asians in the United States and abroad. Future studies could empirically examine the meaning and correlates of “transnational identity” or “global Americans” as Asian American racial identity is grounded in transnational sympathies with culture and communities cutting across national boundaries (Maeda, 2009, 2012). Future studies could also examine the psychological implications of Western Europeans’ colonialist expansionism in Asia, and how American racist ideologies and anti-Blackness informs Asians in the United States and abroad. Finally, there is a lack of national conversations and research attention to the estimated 1.4 million Asian Americans with undocumented status (Waters & Pineau, 2016), with a few exceptions (Sudhinaraset et al., 2017; Yoshikawa, 2011), yet undocumented status is intimately tied to U.S. asylum and immigration policies for each nation-state’s geopolitical and economic conditions (Hsin & Aptekar, 2021) that necessitates a transnational lens. Recent sociological studies of undocumented East Asian youth and young adults (e.g., Cho, 2017; Hsin & Reed, 2020) have begun to uncover the role of well-established, capital-rich ethnic

enclaves on assisting undocumented youth access to educational and career resources. These ethnic enclaves are supported by middle-class co-ethnics and a steady flow of transnational investments, which offer a wealth of free or low-cost services (e.g., co-ethnic mentoring, supplemental education) to undocumented students to facilitate their class mobility. At the same time, emerging research speaks to the enormous psychosocial costs of legal violence (i.e., the criminalization of undocumented status) experienced by Korean undocumented youth (Cho, 2021) and Chinese undocumented migrant asylum seekers (Hsin & Aptekar, 2021). These recent studies point to the critical importance of understanding the full diversity of Asian American experiences within their transnational contexts.

Integrating (Re)Constructivist History

(Re)Constructivist History tasks the field and research with being more explicit about how histories of racial oppression and resistance connect to the current lived experiences and identities of 21st-century Asian Americans (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Museus & Iftikar, 2013). However, the majority of the empirical work on acculturation, ethnic-racial identity, discrimination, and socialization focused on Asian Americans does not adopt an Asian Americanist perspective nor does it account for their unique racial formation, stratification, and history (Juang et al., 2017; Schwartz et al., 2014). Instead, there is an overreliance on both theories and measures that are originally not from the perspective of Asian Americans (e.g., Ethnic-Racial Socialization Measure, Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, Phinney, 1992; Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity, Sellers et al., 1998).

While recognizing the advancement in the literature on the psychological implications of these constructs for Asian Americans (Gupta et al., 2013; Juang et al., 2017; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2014; Yip, 2018), future research could draw more on the history of Asians in America to understand their unique current experiences of racialized oppression, resilience, and protest. For instance, studies focused on acculturation and enculturation could account for the unique psychological implications of transnationalism and settler colonialism (Saranillio, 2013) among Asian immigrants and refugees (e.g., colonial mentality, David & Okazaki, 2006). Theories and measures of ethnic-racial identity could include the unique racialized history and collective power of Asian American racial identity as a political identity grounded in anti-racist views and anti-imperialism (Maeda, 2009). The literature on ethnic-racial socialization for Asian Americans could include more studies and measures of how Asian American youth are socialized to understand the unique racial formation, stratification, and history of Asians in America (Juang et al., 2017). By contesting the

erasure of Asians in American history, researchers are better equipped to understand how Asian Americans are connected to the United States' current sociopolitical climate and legacy of racism (e.g., family separation, 2017 Muslim Ban, support for Black Lives Matter, anti-immigration bills and policies, and capitol insurrection by White supremacists).

Integrating Strategic (Anti)Essentialism

Strategic (Anti)Essentialism extends Asian American psychology by critiquing research that masks the heterogeneity in how Asian Americans experience race and racism (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Museus & Iftikar, 2013). For example, the tenet may be used to identify limitations in the scope of present research, such as the overemphasis on cultural/ethnic processes among Asian Americans (e.g., ethnic identity, cultural values, and acculturation), and the lack of research on the unique *racialized* experiences of Asian Americans (Okazaki et al., 2007; Yoo & Pituc, 2013). The overemphasis on culture and ethnicity in Asian American psychology may inadvertently perpetuate color blindness in how researchers study Asian American experiences. Specifically, the emphasis on cultural values among East Asian ethnic groups narrows our understanding of what it means to be Asian American (Kiang et al., 2016), and invisibilizes the widespread diversity within the Asian American population. Strategic (Anti) Essentialism challenges the narrative that Asian Americans are all the same. Instead, research grounded in Strategic Anti(Essentialism) strives to develop theories and models that account for this heterogeneity within Asian American individuals and communities (Okazaki et al., 2007).

Consequently, more research is needed to capture the diverse racialized experiences and identities of 21st-century Asian Americans. Notable trends in the literature, however, includes a small but growing number of racial encounters focused on Asian American subgroups, including South (e.g., Asian Indian, Pakistani) and Southeast (e.g., Laotian, Hmong) Asian Americans (Juan et al., 2012; Kiang et al., 2016; S. J. Kim et al., 2015), Asian transracial adoptees (R. M. Lee, 2003), and Asian multiracials and multiethnics (Atkin & Yoo, 2019; Iijima Hall, 2004), to name a few. Theory and research implications of Filipino American psychology also continually grows (David, 2013; Nadal, 2011), with relevant measures unique to their history such as the Colonial Mentality Scale (David & Okazaki, 2006).

Integrating Intersectionality

Intersectionality encourages researchers in the field to interrogate how other systems of oppression and privilege (e.g., sexism, classism, heterosexism, and ableism) influence Asian American experiences of racism (Iftikar & Museus,

2018; Museus & Iftikar, 2013). For instance, how might the experience, process, and response to racism be different for a cisgender, first-generation Asian Indian male and a queer, third-generation Filipinx female? Central to Intersectionality is the belief that every person has a unique positionality of privilege and subordination based on their status in multiple systems of oppression. The shift from individual identities to systemic forces is crucial because it underscores how the racism Asian Americans experience is systemic and multileveled. Much of the existing literature on racism among Asian Americans focuses on individual or interpersonal racism (D. L. Lee & Ahn, 2011). Intersectionality challenges researchers to interrogate the role of institutional racism on Asian American mental health and to examine how racism intersects with other systems of oppression. The Intersectionality tenet also poses questions on how Asian American researchers can quantitatively measure intersectionality in ways that still capture meaningful differences in intersectional experiences, given the limitations of additive and multiplicative models in previous quantitative studies on Intersectionality (Cole, 2009).

Recent measures demonstrate that it is possible to capture the experiences and identity of multiple interlocking oppressions. For instance, there is the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale for Asian American Women (Keum et al., 2018), which measures encounters with ascribed submissiveness, Asian fetishism, media invalidation, and assumptions of universal appearance. The Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale for Asian American Men (Liu & Wong, 2018) captures experiences of psychological emasculation, perceived undesirable partner, and perceived lack of leadership. A growing number of qualitative studies also illustrate the complexity of Asian American intersectionality. Haavind et al. (2015), for example, found that the intersections of gender, ethnic identity, social contexts, and interpersonal interactions have important implications for the well-being of Chinese American girls even during elementary school years. Lu and Wong (2013) illustrate the unique stress of navigating between hegemonic masculinity and gendered racial stereotypes among U.S.-born and immigrant Asian American men. Nadal (2013) and Nadal and colleagues (2016) review and identify the unique and multiple interlocked microaggressions toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and genderqueer people. Still, more research is needed in examining intersectionality with diverse Asian Americans as their experiences of interlocked oppression do not operate in isolation.

Integrating Story, Theory, and Praxis

The Story, Theory, and Praxis tenet extends Asian American psychology by centering the voices and experiences of Asian American communities in

research (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Museus & Iftikar, 2013). To better understand the psychological process of Asian Americans, future research is encouraged to use interdisciplinary knowledge (e.g., Asian American Studies) and methods (e.g., qualitative), drawing on alternative theories of understanding truth, including postmodernist theory, postcolonial theory, and CRT (Okazaki et al., 2007). Wang and colleagues (2015), for instance, used a narrative approach to understand Asian American experiences, parenting, and child development. Kiang and Bhattacharjee (2016) used a narrative-linguistic approach to study the experiences of racial discrimination among Asian American adolescents. Future research could also conduct more community-based research, such as participatory action research, which includes communities in the research process as active coproducers of knowledge.

Moreover, the story, theory, and praxis tenet raises caution about the limitations of comparative work (particularly comparing Asian Americans with Whites or “Americans”) in psychology, which may only further codify and reduce the perspectives and experiences of Asian Americans. It also encourages researchers to critique how well Asian American psychology research reflects the lives and experiences of Asian Americans outside of the academy. Using this tenet, researchers may investigate how 21st-century Asian Americans embody and experience the racial stereotypes often studied in the field. For example, literature on the model minority stereotype may be connected to how the American news media and Asian Americans responded to the 2019 Harvard affirmative action case (Moses et al., 2019). Also, the literature on the sexual deviance may be connected to recent, high-profile examples of sexual violence against Asian American women, including the experiences of Chanel Miller and Rowena Chiu during the #MeToo movement.

Integrating Commitment to Social Justice

The Commitment to Social Justice tenet challenges Asian American psychology scholars with prioritizing social equity and change (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Museus & Iftikar, 2013), as both the field and racial identity were born as challenges to racism and imperialism. Under this tenet, research in Asian American psychology can be opportunities to influence social change in response to widespread social inequalities, including racism, sexism, and classism. This tenet encourages researchers to study how Asian Americans not only endure or cope with, but also actively challenge, resist, and create social change in response to the systems of oppression they experience. Currently, empirical work on acculturation, ethnic-racial identity, discrimination, and socialization largely focuses on health and health-related outcomes.

More research is needed to understand how these constructs relate to critical consciousness, or the ways in which Asian Americans understand interlocking structural inequities in society and develop adaptive frameworks to navigate and protest the color-blind, White racial framework. Collective action theory (Duncan, 1999, 2012) articulates how these life experiences and personalities (e.g., acculturation, ethnic-racial identity, discrimination, and socialization) predict collective action and cross-racial solidarity. J. Tran and Curtin (2017), for instance, found that internalizing the model minority myth predicted decreased activism among Asian Americans. Merseeth (2018) also found that “linked fate” with other racial minority groups predicted support for Black Lives Matter among a national sample of Asian American adults. N. Tran and colleagues (2018) further explicated the need for Asian Americans to support and stand in solidarity with Blacks in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Recent scholarship in both Asian American studies and counseling psychology speak to the importance of psychologists engaging in social justice activism as allies and accomplices. Within Asian American studies, efforts are underway to not only document but also to theorize about what is unique about Asian American justice movements (Fujino & Rodriguez, 2019). Given the pan-Asian coalition that emerged during the Civil Rights era to intentionally construct a political identity as Asian Americans in connection to the racial struggles of Black, Chicano/a, and Indigenous struggles at the time, and given the racial positionality and fluidity of identity formation, Fujino and Rodriguez contend that Asian American activists have always relied on solidarity-making across racial lines to accomplish their goals. In counseling psychology and articulating the responsible stewardship of the concept of intersectionality, Moradi and Grzanka (2017) drew on Black feminist scholarship to state unequivocally that psychological research must go beyond merely documenting the lived experiences of marginalized individuals and communities; they must also study and enact strategies of resistance and activism, including doing coalitional and ally work to counter systems of oppression. Indeed, we have seen increased engagement of Asian American psychology in social justice action within the past decade. The Asian American Psychological Association has engaged with public engagement (e.g., through social media and through creation of multi-language resources) and policy advocacy (e.g., through public statements and congressional testimonies) efforts on various matters of racial justice, and individual psychologists have written opinion pieces, appeared as experts on local and national media, and have participated as leaders or allies in various local actions that promote anti-racist goals.

Conclusion

A limitation in this article worth noting is often the aforementioned historical illustration centered on East Asian perspectives that continually makes invisible the diversity of Asian Americans, including brown Asian Americans (e.g., South Asian Americans, Filipino Americans), multiracial and multi-ethnic Asian Americans, low-income Asian Americans, LGBTQ+ Asian Americans, and religious minority Asian Americans. We encourage readers to further consider the heterogeneity of Asian American history and experiences, especially those from traditionally excluded groups.

The current anti-Asian racism and violence is situated in a long-standing system and history of White supremacy and imperialism. Asian Americanist psychology is an opportunity to re(imagine) a discipline and focus of research that centers Asian Americans in the multiracial pursuit of social justice (R. M. Lee & Tseng, 2021). Researchers in Asian American psychology are tasked with reformulating theories and methods in response to lack of research investigating the unique, historically informed, racialized experiences of Asian Americans. Framed by the seven tenets of AsianCrit and an Asian Americanist perspective, we illustrate new ways in which Asian American psychology can advance research on the unique experiences of racial stratification, formation, and history of Asians in the United States. In conclusion, it is our hope that this article can offer new directions in how Asian American psychology research can examine how 21st-century Asian Americans endure, navigate, and protest systems of racism and imperialism.

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