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**Comparative Immigrant &
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Ethnic Studies Review (ESR) is the journal of the National Association for Ethnic Studies (NAES). ESR is a multi-disciplinary international journal devoted to the study of ethnicity, ethnic groups and their cultures, and inter-group relations. NAES has as its basic purpose the promotion of activities and scholarship in the field of Ethnic Studies. The Association is open to any person or institution and serves as a forum for its members in promoting research, study, and curriculum as well as producing publications of interest in the field. NAES sponsors an annual spring conference.

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ETHNIC STUDIES REVIEW

The Journal of the
National Association for Ethnic Studies

Volume 33, Issue No. 1

Comparative Immigrant and Gender Considerations

Editors: Larry J. Estrada and Midori Takagi

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Editor's Notes

As a nation there is probably no greater dividing point for most Americans than the topic of immigration. For the past eight years the American Congress has sought to establish a comprehensive immigration policy and pass sweeping legislation that seeks to define who is eligible to be an American citizen and resident and who will be ultimately included or excluded in terms of naturalization and citizenship. Recent failed attempts to pass a "Dream Act" to legitimate scores of immigrant children and young adults who have resided in the United States nearly all their lives, and in many cases have no conception of any other culture or national entity, illustrates both the urgency and complexity of projected legislation. Millions will ultimately be affected in terms of their status and identity.

Immigration has mushroomed as a public concern and governmental priority not only in the United States, but throughout the world. The implications of immigration policy are further impacted by the forces of economic globalization, nationalism, nativism, identity and gender politics, which complicate the previously understood patterns of "national integrity" and the notion of citizenship into the twenty first century.

What constitutes the roles and responsibilities of recently arrived immigrants, and in turn the role of host governments and societies to both new arrivals and long standing ethnic minority population groups, remains both a debatable matter and one fraught with economic, political as well as racialized overtones.

The selections for this particular edition look at the interplay of the issues of gender, identity, trans-nationalism and ethnicity within a comparative perspective. These are important questions that cross international boundaries and that need both collaborative and on-going examination by a host of scholars. The role of global

trans-national capitalism has brought about ever increasing changes and dynamic forces that continue to redefine national identity as well as economic and cultural sustainability.

Vernon Damani Johnson in his discussion “Immigration and Domestic Politics in South Africa: Contradictions of the Rainbow Nation,” offers an historical and political economic analysis of immigration policy and national racial polity in South Africa as they interface with the daunting socioeconomic problems facing that country. Johnson addresses immigration from a global-system perspective and responds to the overriding questions facing the newly defined nation state: What role has immigration played in the country’s economic and political development? How do we explain post-apartheid waves of xenophobic attacks on African immigrants? What has been the response of government and progressive actors in civil society to xenophobia? What are the prospects for enlightened immigration policy as South Africa moves forward?

David Aliano looks at the role that nation states have towards diasporic emigrants and in turn their overall economic and political utility to their former homeland. By looking at a recently changed Italian law granting its citizens living abroad the right to elect their own representatives to the Italian parliament, he explores the multiple ways in which citizenship and national identities are being redefined in an increasingly globalized world. In particular, his article explores both the problems and possibilities posed by transnational and extraterritorial citizenship law, placing the Italian case in a comparative perspective.

In Midori Takagi’s “Orientals Need Apply: Gender-based Asylum in the U.S.” recent court cases brought by Fauziya Kasinga and Rod Alvarado Peña are examined that have made genital mutilation and domestic violence possible bases for asylum. Although this can be viewed as a positive movement within asylum law, she projects that

judges, lawyers and social service providers are more apt to grant asylum if they stereotypically believe the victim's culture is somehow "barbaric" and "backwards," thereby allowing the U.S. to be the colonial saviors of the women. She further contends that within the U.S. asylum process, participants "orientalize" Asian women and their cultures as a way of seeing them as being "worthy" of being rescued. This more than often works to the disadvantage and denial of asylum to victims seeking asylum whose cultures are not viewed as "exotic" or "backwards."

In his analysis of the American job market, Chang Won Lee concludes that Asian Americans, specifically Chinese and Japanese Americans, are often stratified in particular fields and occupations that can be classified as Asian-Overrepresented (AO) and White Overrepresented (WO). Fields such as computer science healthcare and engineering tend to be overrepresented by Asian Americans while management, sales, and education tend to be the purview of "White" or majority group Americans. The implication of his findings seem to suggest that Asian Americas as a whole are selectively assimilated into the labor marked by occupational fields and by ethnicity.

Bill Hug's assessment of the work of Jacob Riis and *Double Consciousness*, looks at the contributions that the immigrant, photojournalist Riis made in exposing the early living and working conditions among the recently arrived immigrants and tenement poor in New York City during the nineteenth century. Unlike some earlier takes on Riis' work, Hug suggests that Riis, who worked within contexts later defined by the likes of W.E.B. DuBois and Mikhail Bakhtin, was a canny "ethnic rhetorician" who addressed genteel Anglo-Americans in terms of their own nativist assumptions so he could set about subverting them.

In their work "Women without a Voice" Sharon Wilson and Pelgy Vaz focus on the themes of self discovery and resiliency and how they are conveyed through images of

silence, loss of voice, confinement, and alienation. In their examination of female characters contained within the writings of Sandra Cisneros, Sashi Deshpande and Azar Nafisi, they discuss the socio-cultural and historical context in which the characters function. They further illustrate how the characters must often transcend traditional cultural and ethnic boundaries to reach their own self-fulfillment and actualization while at the same time risking their own familial and community ties that largely frame their identity.

As a group, these articles encourage readers to consider the past, present and future of immigration, ethnicity, and identity as affected by (inter)national racial policies, voting rights, gender-based issues, and the agency of the individual.

Larry J. Estrada and Midori Takagi,
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Immigration and Domestic Politics in South Africa: Contradictions of the Rainbow Nation

**Vernon D. Johnson
Western Washington University***

The region of Southern Africa has been part of the global capitalist system since its inception in the late 15th century, when Portugal incorporated Angola and Mozambique into its empire. In 1652 the Dutch East India Company established a “refreshment station” at the Cape of Good Hope for ships travelling between Europe and the Far East.¹ From that time the region has experienced several periods of deepening incorporation into the global system.

Since the dismantling of the system of white supremacy known as apartheid in 1994, The Republic of South Africa’s historic position as the hub of the regional economy has continued, and today it is also vying for economic leadership of all of sub-Saharan Africa. A system of migratory labor which operated throughout Southern

* Acknowledgements are due to Alexandra Wiley (Master’s candidate) and Teadora Mladenovich (undergraduate) for their labor as research assistants on this project.

Africa was central to the developing of both mining and agriculture in South Africa. With the demise of apartheid, as the strongest economy on the continent, South Africa has now become a magnet for immigrants from all over Africa. Yet, as a country that went through a long struggle to end white supremacy and bring democratic rule, the post-apartheid South African government had the huge responsibilities of uplifting the Black majority from poverty and constructing a political mythology that would unite citizens of all races around that project. During the recent World Cup Soccer tournament, the country received a great deal of positive publicity for its pursuit of a “Rainbow Nation” embracing the identities of its most important constituent groups (Africans, Europeans, Coloureds, and Asians). The broad humanism symbolized by Nelson Mandela, that had characterized the anti-apartheid struggle, seemed to be on a firm footing in the post-apartheid era.

Contradicting this image, however, were the xenophobic attacks on African immigrants that occurred in May, 2008. During this tragic episode 62 people were killed, hundreds were injured and over 30,000 displaced from their homes amidst widespread looting and destruction of homes and businesses. And in July 2010, as the Western press waxed euphoric over the human and administrative successes of the World Cup², renewed attacks on African immigrants immediately following the tournament were reported in the African and online media.³ These events raise questions regarding the limits of inclusivity for this nation which owes so much to the world for its ability to bring about political transformation. This article offers an analysis of immigration policy and politics in South Africa as they interface with the daunting socioeconomic problems inherited by the African National Congress government. With its role as a regional and continental economic hub, how are we to understand the xenophobia gripping South Africa? The article will address this question from a global-system perspective. Subsidiary

questions to be addressed are how has South Africa been structured into the evolving world system been since the 17th century? What role has immigration played in the country's economic and political development? How do we explain post-apartheid waves of xenophobic attacks on African immigrants? What has been the response of government and progressive actors in civil society to xenophobia? What are the prospects for enlightened immigration policy as South Africa goes forward?

The Global System Paradigm

The analytical framework utilized here is indebted to the world-system paradigm developed most notably, by Oliver Cox⁴, Andre Gunder Frank⁵ and Immanuel Wallerstein.⁶ These scholars saw nation-states as part of an evolving world-system which was fundamentally capitalist. Their analyses were insightful, but they were criticized for being economic determinists. Led by Robert Cox a group of scholars (including this author) began to posit that there is a global system with several interconnected and overlapping spheres.⁷ In a vein very similar to Sklair, I argue that the global system is composed of three spheres: a global economy, which originated in the late 15th century, a global polity, or system of states, established after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, and a global civil society emerging during the British anti-slave trade movement of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The three spheres of the global system are material and institutional structures, but they are also ideological structures, because actors in each sphere are animated by values and principles. The ideology of the global economy is capitalism. It operates to permit the "private accumulation of wealth via the trade of goods and services in the market."⁸ The ideology of the global polity is realism. The global system of states is anarchical. Therefore, states are preoccupied with security: the maintenance of control over their populations and territories. It is for this reason that states traditionally have been preoccupied with maintaining

large military establishments. But as we shall see from the present analysis, security often derives from humane policy outputs rather than force.

The ideology of global civil society is humanism, or human rights.* “Global civil society is the sphere in which private interests are aggregated into social values, ideologies and political alliances transnationally. It is based upon private nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operating across national boundaries.”⁹ Bowles and Gintis (1986) have argued that liberal discourse for over 200 years has involved antagonism between two sets of rights: property rights and personal rights.¹⁰ “Global civil society, as configured here, includes (value-based) interests and movements associated with capital” and property rights, and social movements arrayed against it. We often associate human rights discourse with support for the downtrodden and the marginalized, but capitalists and their allies are human too. What Bowles and Gintis see as a clash between poles within liberalism can also be viewed as a clash between “differing kinds of human rights.”¹¹

The foregoing discussion was necessary to serve as a theoretical backdrop to understanding South Africa’s progressive incorporation into the global system over the last three and a half centuries. The country’s experience of initially being on the periphery, and then the semi-periphery of the global economy, then a player in the global polity of states, and finally, the focal point of clashing interests in global civil society illustrates the utility of

* This is a revision of my previous work in which I have argued that the ideology of global civil society is liberalism (Johnson, 1993, 2003). The humanism I refer to here is derived from Renaissance humanism which began to articulate a secular sphere, and also a civil society of associational life not dictated by the state. It was humanism because the individual and human values, not religious doctrine, were of central importance. Enlightenment liberalism promoting individual rights (and by the 20th century, human rights) is the progeny of Renaissance humanism (see Hankins, 2000; 3-4, 277-78 for a critical discussion of this view).

the tri-partite global system as an analytical device.* The South African liberation movement was able to mobilize actors from global civil society around humanist ideology to pressure Western states and capitalist multinational corporations to compel the South Africa government to end apartheid. Tri-partite global system theory is also useful in explaining historic South African immigration and the shifting responses of the country toward the issue; as the following narrative will show.

South Africa's Structuration into the Global System

The Global Economy

In 1679, the Dutch East India Company began to grant land to European settlers to stabilize the colonial holding and stimulate commodity production for trade with ships passing through. Forced immigrants in the person of slaves were also critical to the workforce of the Cape, and the trade in slaves was a significant element in the region's ties to the emerging global economy. That rudimentary incorporation at the periphery of the world economy was deepened with the discovery of diamonds in the Orange Free State in 1867, and more profoundly, of gold at Witwatersrand in 1886. Although the gold was plentiful the grade of the ore was relatively low. Though thousands of British and other European immigrants arrived, the poor grade of the ore made the deposits most profitable if worked by the cheaper African labor. Thus, as Leonard Thompson reports, "by 1899, the industry, in which 60 million pounds had been invested, was producing 27.55 % of the world's output of gold, Johannesburg had 75,000 White residents, and the gold-mining companies were employing 100,000 Africans."¹² Buoyed by the

* In Wallerstein's (1974) model for the world-system core countries are the most advanced economically. Peripheral areas are incorporated into the system by core states to be exploited for primary products in agriculture and mining. The semi-periphery is an intermediary stratum of states that become semi-industrialized, export manufactured goods to the periphery, and continue to produce primary goods for core.

accumulation of capital from mining, European settlers began to industrialize South Africa over the next generation. The country moved from the periphery to the semi-periphery of the world economy, but the critical dependency on African labor to realize European goals would plague the country throughout the twentieth century.

The Global Polity

South Africa's early involvement in the global polity of states was similar to that of any colonial area. It was not an actor in its own right, but merely a pawn in inter-imperialist struggles. As a result of the Napoleonic Wars Great Britain took control of the Cape of Good Hope from the Netherlands in 1806. The next century was dominated by Dutch migrations away from the Cape and British interventions, at first to secure the frontier vis-a-vis the Africans, and finally to control diamond and gold production. British-Dutch conflict over the mineral industries culminated in the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), in which Britain emerged victorious and took control over the entire region paving the way for the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1909. The Union became a self-governing dominion of the British Empire.

The twentieth century history of race and class antagonism and capitalist industrialization in South Africa is beyond the scope of this article, but it has been amply chronicled by others.¹³ South Africa went from being a respected second tier player in the power politics of the two world wars to being a pariah state under relentless human rights pressure because of its white supremacist system. The Southern African region as a whole was the land of intransigent white settler colonialism. During the 1960s and 70s African guerillas won their self-determination against white rule through a combination of war and diplomacy in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe. Allied with other states in the region, they formed the Frontline States, a diplomatic bloc advancing the cause of African majority rule in South Africa (and its Namibian

colony). As each of those states gained their independence, whether by war or peaceful means, their transfer of immigrant workers to South Africa tended to drop precipitously.* Thus, in terms of the narrative offered here, the growing pressures emanating from the global polity problematized South Africa's access to the foreign black labor upon which it had become so critically dependent.¹⁴

Global Civil Society

Following the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre in which 69 peaceful protesters were killed international human rights-oriented pressures against South Africa emanating from global civil society increased. Over the next three decades trade unions, artists, students, the sporting community, and finally multinational capital would become activated on a global scale against apartheid.

Against the foregoing backdrop, contemporary South Africa can profitably be understood as a product of the conflicting ideologies defining the activity at the three spheres within the global system. Humanist values emanating from global civil society were able to successfully compel Western states who professed to support human rights to adopt economic sanctions against South Africa. In doing so humanism trumped the logic of profit animating corporate actors in the global economy. South Africa is deeply indebted to foreign publics and states for their role in its political transformation. It owes a particular debt to the African bloc of states at the UN and the Organization of African Unity for their diplomatic support in international forums over the decades. That debt is perhaps most profound to the states of the Southern African region who braved South African destabilization as they aided and abetted exiled guerrillas of the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress. Global civil society has a deep psychological investment in a post-apartheid South Africa in which the races can live togeth-

* Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, the last two virtual economic satellites of South Africa, bucked this trend.

er in harmony and prosperity. Africans fleeing political instability and economic dysfunction in home countries have more immediate material needs, and it should come as no surprise that they have been flocking to this nation with the strongest economy on the continent. Thus, in the post-apartheid era South Africa continues to be challenged by its location in the three-tiered global system.

Post-Revolutionary South Africa's Development Strategy

In the time between the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 and the first democratic elections in 1994 the global system experienced historic structural changes, as the socialist bloc evaporated and market capitalism reigned supreme. With no possibility of allying with a statist socialist bloc available the ANC had no choice but to fall in line with the "Washington consensus" of neoliberalism, if it hoped to return foreign investment to the economy after the imposition of sanctions in the previous decade. Accordingly, the government enunciated its "Growth, Employment and Redistribution: A Macroeconomic Strategy" (GEAR). GEAR emphasized containing government expenditure, lowering fiscal deficits and inflation, deregulation, privatization and a generally minimalist approach to state intervention in the economy.¹⁵

South Africa's economic performance as it relates to improving the quality of life of the poor majority since the end of apartheid is mixed. Economic growth rates steadily improved from an average of 2.9 % per annum (1994-2000) to 4.3% (2001-07), with rates for the last three of those years at 5% or better.¹⁶ After rising sharply under free market policies in the late 90s, unemployment has dropped more recently; and poverty rates have decreased steadily since 1995. Moreover, per capita incomes have increased. Still, South Africa's Gini coefficient score (measuring income inequality) of 0.679 in 2010 made it "the most unequal country in the world."¹⁷ This indicates that, although the poor have gradually been doing better,

the rich have been doing better still. The HIV/AIDS epidemic also remains stubbornly high. Over 20 percent of the adult population is HIV positive, a big reason why life expectancy has dropped to around 50 years. After a halting start under Mandela, the Mbeki administration finally began to make headway in the provision of key services such as housing, electricity, clean water and access to sanitation after the millennium.¹⁸ Inequity in the manner of delivering education, however, remains a big issue. And the unemployment and poverty rates, at 26.8 and 43 percent respectively, remain far too high to give comfort to political elites.¹⁹ By many standards South Africa could be seen to be making satisfactory progress in the years after apartheid, but the country is suffering from a revolution of rising entitlements, in which the long-suffering masses are impatient and increasingly restive.

Constructing the Post-Revolutionary South African Nation

Successful modern nation-states require a national cultural myth to provide a sense of peoplehood that can galvanize the population for the task of socioeconomic development. Revolutionary regimes usually come to power with such a myth, and seek to use it to provide social glue as they try to transform society. In the case of South Africa, the most complex revolutionary society in Africa, the question of the myth upon which post-revolutionary society would proceed was left unsettled. From the 1940s successive discourses on African nationalism, nonracialism, multiracialism, and Black Consciousness have been advanced. In the tumultuous decade before transformation in 1994, and for all of the time since then, each of them can be heard in the public discourse.²⁰ After the emotionally wrenching process of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Archbishop Desmond Tutu declared that South Africa was the “Rainbow Nation.” This updated version of multiracialism was compelling and came to be used commercially and in official public relations

(i.e., its ubiquitous presence during the World Cup Soccer Tournament).

In popular parlance, none of these three projects has much to do with immigration in particular, or South Africa's relationship with the outside world in general. Non-racialism, to the extent that it is associated with human rights and the equality of all in the constitution, taps into global norms and expectations. The African Renaissance includes an argument for South Africa's political, economic and cultural leadership in Africa. Arguably, the Rainbow Nation is the most popular of the three, but it is a South African-centric notion. Though these national myths may be in contention, commentators use each of them to excoriate the government for not living up to its historic, moral, or even constitutional obligations concerning the rights of immigrants.²¹ The problem is that poor Black South Africans are not primarily concerned about foreigners. They want post-revolutionary South Africa to deliver the goods to them. Yet, for an emerging economy like South Africa, the in-migration of both skilled and relatively cheap lesser-skilled labor is also crucial to its overall development prospects. The next section will discuss post-apartheid immigration policy.

Emigration and Immigration in Contemporary South Africa

European settlers brought self-conscious modern statecraft to Africa, and South Africa is the place witnessing the most numerous and dynamic industrializing settlers in Africa. As a consequence, South Africa represented 22.7% of Africa's total Gross Domestic Product in 2006.²² Add to this the fact that it is a functioning democracy, and it is no wonder then that the country has become a magnet for people seeking economic opportunity or political refuge from all over the continent.

As I have tried to demonstrate, South Africa was beset with domestic challenges at the inception of its democracy in 1994. Given its history as the centerpiece of a

system of regional migratory labor and the progressive ideology of its rulers, one might have thought that the country would see more opportunities than challenges in its position as a magnet economy for the African continent. For nearly a decade after that the ANC government continued to operate under the Aliens Control Act of 1991, often called “Apartheid’s last act,” because it was designed in the interests of the old regime, not those of one with progressive aspirations like the ANC.²³ Sally Peberdy trenchantly summarizes the state of affairs at the millennium.

The Act remains (in the words of its principal drafter) “a negative piece of legislation” (Tredoux, 1997). Although the procedures for immigration to South Africa have not changed radically since 1994, barriers to entry have been raised. Legislative amendments, new regulations and a computerized National Movement Control System are all designed to build higher and stronger hurdles and control. New categories of permanent and temporary residence have been introduced in an attempt to gain better control over the kinds of immigrants and migrants entering South Africa. Restrictive policies have been accompanied by an unwelcoming attitude to immigrants and migrants, particularly those from the SADC region and the rest of Africa.²⁴

Exceptions were made via amnesties in the mid-nineties granted to contract miners, and also undocumented workers from member states of SADC and Mozambican refugees. These last two groups had to have lived in South Africa for at least five years.

The posture toward undocumented workers from elsewhere, however, was more repressive and focused almost exclusively on Black Africans. For the rest of the decade a variety of measures were taken “to raise the rates of identification, arrest, detention and repatria-

tion of undocumented (im)migrants” and” deny access to services like health care, education and utilities to undocumented (and other) migrants.”²⁵ It is noteworthy that before 1994 Europeans dominated legal immigration into South Africa, and they continued to do so until 1998. Since then legal immigrants from Africa, and to a lesser extent Asia, have dominated, and simultaneously, harsh measures against illegal immigrants have become more salient. From 1990 to 1999 we see an increase in the numbers of deportations from approximately 50,000 to nearly 200,000. After a drop around the millennium, deportations spiked again reaching over 250,000 by 2006.²⁶

Sometime after the millennium, with economic growth stagnant and a growing skills gap apparent, the ANC elite began rethinking the barriers to immigration inherited from the old regime. The Aliens Control Act came under increasing criticism as elements of it were judged unconstitutional over the years.²⁷ The brain drain was also being recognized as a significant problem for South Africa. Skilled professionals began to leave the country in the 1980s, as the levels of unrest grew. After apartheid emigration continued “for an array of reasons including job opportunities, wage differentials, working conditions, crime, and as a side-effect of affirmative action policies that are perceived to limit career prospects for the country’s White minority”.²⁸

With this new awareness of its slipping position among the emerging economies, South Africa began to move in a more aggressive and enlightened manner on both domestic and regional immigration policies. A new Immigration Act was passed that accepted South Africa’s role in the “age of globalization,” placing greater emphasis on admitting skilled workers, while continuing to crack down on illegal entrants (*Immigration Act, 2002: 2-3*).²⁹ South Africa was still trying to keep certain classes of immigrants out of the country, but it did need to retain its own skilled labor force and attract such workers from other countries. The 2004 amendment to the Act placed

added emphasis on economic growth, and the need for “exceptionally skilled” foreign labor.³⁰ Despite this desire for skilled labor, the preoccupation of both acts with controlling both permanent and temporary residency was also apparent. As Crush and Dodson observe:

The main categories of temporary residence are: work permits, treaty permits, corporate permits, business permits, student permits, retirement permits, exchange permits, asylum seekers permits, visitor’s permits, cross-border passes, and relative permits.³¹

Four of the categories listed allow employment (work, treaty, corporate, and business), while “most of the other categories prohibit employment altogether.”³²

Although exact numbers are impossible to ascertain the government arrived at a figure of 322,499 South Africans leaving the country from 1970-2001.³³ This has led to concern over an emerging skills gap. Predicting a 1.2 million person skills-shortage by 2014, the government established the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) in 2006. This “initiative identifies five areas where skills were in short supply: engineering; city, urban and regional planning; artisan and technical skills; management and planning skills in education and health; and math, science and language teachers” (Landau and Kabwe-Segatti: 25).³⁴ JIPSA signaled that South Africa was coming to grips with its position in the global economy.

When we examine South Africa’s stance on immigration within the Southern African region we see a similar trajectory of gradual movement from defensive to more enlightened policies. The mission statement of the Southern African Development Community committed member states to all of the central principles of the age of globalization.

The SADC Mission is to promote sustainable and equitable *economic growth* and *socio-economic development* through efficient productive systems, deeper co-

operation and integration, *good governance*, and durable peace and security, so that the region emerges as a *competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy* (emphasis added).³⁵

Leadership in the advancing and accelerating regional economic and political cooperation within SADC should have been a “no-brainer” for South Africa. It should have been poised to play a role in the region similar to that of Brazil in the evolution of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), which envisions an integrated South American economic community. But as South Africa took its seat as a full member of SADC following its liberation, it sent chilling messages to fellow community members regarding its willingness to accept freer movement of peoples across the region. In fact, until 2006 the ANC government did not explicitly link immigration from anywhere to its overall development strategy.³⁶ South Africa, who’s liberation leadership was most renowned globally for its human rights rhetoric and, who owed the global community perhaps the most for aiding in its liberation; and who also has been most dependent on migratory labor, was opposed to the free movement of peoples in the SADC region after 1994. The government saw its first responsibility as the advancement of South Africans. In that regard, it should be noted, South Africa differed little from other governments in the region, who, “with the possible exception of Botswana,” were also not immigrant-friendly in their policies.³⁷

The SADC Secretariat, attempting to create momentum around comprehensive regional integration, produced a Draft Protocol on Freedom of Movement within Southern Africa in 1995. Crush and Dodson report that

...The response to the Protocol was swift and immediate. South Africa vociferously declared its opposition and found allies in Botswana and Namibia. The Protocol was quickly rejected because of South Africa’s opposition. The same fate befell a much meeker 1997

Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons in Southern Africa. The SADC Summit of September 1998 effectively put all discussions related to the Protocol indefinitely on hold on the grounds that the provisions of the Protocol went beyond the mandate given to its drafters.³⁸

The transformationalist regime in South Africa seemed to be abdicating its historic responsibilities toward the region.

With its economy stagnating, South Africa's initiatives within SADC and other international forums during the first years of the new millennium began to reflect new thinking. "After a decade (of) opposing ... the Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons, South Africa was among the first to sign the amended protocol in 2005."³⁹ It also threw its weight behind the African Union's efforts linking continental immigration to development, and opened a "dialogue" with the European Union on immigration.⁴⁰

Still, significant obstacles remained in executing an effective immigration strategy. The labyrinthine procedures required to parse desirable skilled immigrants from undesirable unskilled ones, and bureaucratic incapacity and ineptitude plagued the public administration even after more flexible policies were established.

Notwithstanding its institutional inefficiencies, the biggest hurdle facing South Africa as it grapples to advance in the world economy is contradictory forces emergent in its domestic polity and civil society. Key decision makers at the apex of state institutions may have become attuned to its role in the global community and what constitutes an economically rational relationship with neighboring countries, but many mid and lower level bureaucrats and the impoverished African masses have not. Even at the cabinet level Zulu leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, in his capacity as Minister of Home Affairs, impeded the development of sounder immigration poli-

cies for nearly a decade in league with white holdovers in the ministry.⁴¹ Accurate data collection was also a big problem. Early post-apartheid estimates of the number of immigrants in the country were based upon a series of surveys done by the South African Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), which asked respondents how many non-South African citizens lived in their surrounding community. The methodology used for the sample was roundly criticized by regional immigration specialists at the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) for relying too much on conjecture. As a result, in the series of four polls conducted from December 1994 to March 1996 estimates of the total number of foreigners living in the country fluctuated wildly from just over five million to over nine million. That latter figure would have been nearly a quarter of the population of just over 40 million at the time.

The HSRC eventually admitted that these polls were methodologically flawed and disavowed their accuracy. But the damage had already been done, as government officials cited the studies in public statements for years to come and media coverage of the data whipped up public paranoia of being inundated by desperate foreigners.⁴² In their study of coverage of immigration in the print media in the 1990s Danso and MacDonald concluded that press coverage of the issue “(did) little to inform readers about the complexities of migration, or how it fits with the broader social, political and economic development in the country or region.” They found that three common stereotypes of immigrants were as “job stealers ...criminals ... and illegals.”⁴³

SAMP conducted a more rigorous survey of attitudes toward immigrants in 1997. Among its findings were ...

...that 25% of South Africans wanted a total prohibition of migration or immigration and 22% wanted the South African government to return all foreigners presently living here to their own countries. 45% of the sample

called for strict limits to be placed on migrants and immigrants and 17% wanted migration policy tied to the availability of jobs. In the same survey, some 61% of respondents agreed that migrants put additional strains on the country's resources. These findings suggest that levels of xenophobia or at the very least, anti-immigrant sentiments were very high.⁴⁴

Nearly a decade later, public attitudes had not changed much. In another SAMP poll in 2006 "more than two-thirds" of respondents "said that foreigners used up resources such as water, electricity and health care destined for citizens. Two-thirds ... felt that foreigners from other African countries committed crimes and ... 49% said that foreigners brought diseases such as HIV to South Africa."⁴⁵ As was noted earlier, the reality was that South Africa had clamped down on legal immigration, even before 1994, as the demographic of potential immigrants shifted from white to black and the attitude toward black immigrants soured (See Table 1).

In the midst of this low-level hysteria the problem of reliable data regarding immigration remained. Official estimates, which continued to be based on the flawed HSRC studies, estimated that four to eight million immigrants were in the country at the millennium. The 2001 Census reported 1,025,072 foreign born among the population, of which 729,495 were said to be from elsewhere in Africa. SAMP estimates more recently are that there are approximately 500,000 undocumented workers among that number (Crush, et. al.: 12-13).⁴⁶

Table 1: Legal immigration to South Africa, 1990-1999

<u>Year</u>	<u>Legal immigrants</u>	<u>African immigrants</u>
1990	14,499	1,628
1991	12,379	2,065
1992	8,686	1,266
1993	9,824	1,701
1994	6,398	1,628
1995	5,064	1,343
1996	5,407	1,601
1997	4,102	1,281
1998	4,371	1,169
1999	3,669	980

Source: Jonathan Crush, Vincent Williams and Sally Peberdy, *Migration in Southern Africa*. Global Commission on International Migration. <http://www.gcim.org>. p. 9.

Adapted from South Africa, Department of Home Affairs annual reports, Statistics South Africa conducted a Community Survey in 2007. It placed the number of immigrants (legal and illegal) in the country at 1.2 million. This is less than three percent of the population of over 45 million. Yet other government officials and media sources continued to make exaggerated immigrant estimates and agitate the public imagination. The economic crisis in neighboring Zimbabwe has caused an influx of refugees from that country and made it a favorite target for wild assertions. Public officials and newspapers have stated that there were anywhere from two to three million Zimbabweans in South Africa without any empirical evidence to back up these claims.⁴⁷

Perceiving that the “liberation” of 1994 was for citizens only, periodic physical attacks on foreigners began to take place shortly after the elections of that year. By 1998 enough attacks had occurred that the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) collabo-

rated on a Consultative Conference on the issue. Out of that meeting the Braamfontein Statement was issued declaring that

...(The) manifestation (of xenophobia) is a violation of human rights. South Africa needs to send out a strong message that an irrational prejudice and hostility towards non-nationals is not acceptable under any circumstances. Criminal behavior towards foreigners cannot be tolerated in a democratic society.⁴⁸

The “Roll-Back Xenophobia Campaign” was a longer-term initiative growing out of the conference. It developed a Plan of Action “designed to ensure that the basic rights of non-South Africans are valued, protected and promoted as outlined in the South African Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the country’s international obligations.”⁴⁹ The Plan focused on educating government employees (including the police) and civil society “on the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in South Africa with a view to reducing negative perceptions of, and hostility towards foreigners.”⁵⁰ We can see that progressive elements from global and domestic civil society were becoming sensitive to the plight of immigrants in South Africa and were beginning to mobilize to protect their human rights.

How to Understand the Xenophobic Violence

Up to this juncture we have illustrated how desperate economic conditions in South Africa under a Black government with transformationalist ambitions has created a particularly robust revolution of rising entitlements in an era of neoliberal globalization, in which governments are not expected to intervene in the economy in the name of social welfare. We have also shown how the various discourses on South African identity and development advanced since 1994, have been focused on delivering well-being to South African citizens. Yet af-

ter a period of recalcitrance, the top leadership of the country has slogged its way toward a set of immigration policies that at least on paper, are inclusive. Many of the top leaders of the African National Congress spent years in exile and are cosmopolitan intellectuals socialized in a global civil society and polity rife with human rights discourse; but the masses of South Africans were effectively isolated from global affairs by the rigidity of the apartheid system. The leaders they had contact with during the years of struggle emphasized what a Black government would do for them and talked less about South Africa's debt to global allies or the fact of its structuration into regional and global economies. The isolation of South Africans from the world extended to the rest of Africa. South Africa was a pariah state that treated Black people as sub-humans. As we have seen, there were always significant levels of foreign migratory laborers in the mines, farms and in domestic service before and during the apartheid years. Still, their numbers peaked at around 600,000 in the early 1950s, a figure which is about half of the best estimates for immigrant Africans in the country by Statistics South Africa in 2007. Moreover, foreign Africans before 1994 were primarily seasonal workers from neighboring countries. Since then, people from all over Black Africa have been arriving, and staying, and causing heightened social tensions.

Those social tensions came to a head in May of 2008 when attacks on foreign Africans exploded across the country. Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative (CRAI), an African continental NGO, sent a mission to South Africa "to investigate and document" the events during August of that year. The CRAI Report, published in July, 2009 summarized the episode thusly.

The violence started in poor neighborhoods of Alexandra in Johannesburg and quickly spread to other cities, including Cape Town and Pretoria. By May 31 2008, the death toll had risen to 62, the vast majority of

whom were in Gauteng province, where the country's economic capitol, Johannesburg, and administrative capitol, Pretoria, are located. Thousands of migrants and South Africans were victims of criminal violence; women and children were attacked and raped, and thousands had their houses and belongings looted and destroyed. The most severely affected groups were Africans from neighboring states, such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique, but migrants from more distant African countries, such as Nigeria and Somalia, as well as a significant number of South Africans, also became victims of violence.⁵¹

Estimates of those displaced from their homes ranged from 33-50,000 people. The displaced made their way to "temporary shelters, churches and police stations."⁵² In the weeks following the conflagration an estimated 40,000 foreigners left the country. In response to the attacks the governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe sent busses and trucks to the border to receive their nationals and set up emergency encampments nearby. Mozambique reported repatriating some 20,000 people.⁵³

President Thabo Mbeki finally deployed the South African Army to quell the violence, but that was after it had gone on for eleven days. And he took three more days before making a nationally televised speech condemning the atrocities. One leading newspaper called on him to resign. Politicians from all the major parties engaged in finger pointing, and Mathews Phosa, Treasurer-General of the ANC, also suggested that Mbeki step down.⁵⁴

The introduction of regular army troops was effective in controlling the violence, which was over by the end of May; but the government response to the broader humanitarian crisis was inept. There were jurisdictional battles between the city of Cape Town and the Western Cape province over who should administer refugee camps. Around the country numerous camps housing thousands of people were opened, but by August when

the CRAI mission was touring, many of them had been closed, leaving the displaced to uncertain futures. The camps that remained open were overcrowded and poorly run.⁵⁵ Civil society-based organizations, however, seemed to be more effective in their responses.

...Standard Bank and the Nelson Mandela Foundation and its affiliates were among the many institutions that donated funds. UNHCR provided 2,000 tents, 7,000 blankets and 2,000 sleeping mats. A number of organizations provided humanitarian assistance such as potable water and blankets at different camp sites. While some provided food, others provided food, others such as Medicines Sans Frontiers provided medical clinics. A number of religious institutions of different denominations housed and provided for victims.⁵⁶

In Gauteng and the Western Cape Provinces the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) held meetings with a range of community-based (CBOs) and faith-based (FBOs) to share experiences growing out of their efforts in response to the upheaval. The Gauteng meeting “mandated the Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation to coordinate CSO efforts on behalf of the displaced.” In the Western Cape “a Task Force was formed between the Western Cape provincial government and the national government and CSOs to prevent violence against foreign nationals, and to provide humanitarian and other forms of assistance where necessary.”⁵⁷ Under the crisis conditions actors from domestic civil society and the state demonstrated their commitment to human rights principles.

In June and July of 2010 South Africa hosted the World Cup Soccer tournament. There was much speculation, positive and negative, regarding the prospects of holding such a large-scale event on African soil for the first time. Would there be sufficient accommodations for visitors? Would the high speed trains and airports be ready

in time? Could the authorities control crime with tourists from all over the world in attendance? Would potential visitors stay away? Though most of the tourists would be from the White world, and the attacks of 2008 were directed at Black people, the xenophobia sent a disturbing message to the global community. Happily, the World Cup came off without any sensational moments of violence. “40,000 extra police” were employed during the tournament, and “special courts” were constituted, “meting out swift---and often harsh---sentences, in contrast to South Africa’s usually glacial pace of justice.”⁵⁸ South Africans of all races had benefitted from the influx of tourists and the pulling together to make the event come off smoothly. The international goodwill of the 1980s and 90s was recaptured, and South Africans basked in the euphoria.

But even as the tournament was winding down there were signs that the euphoria might be unjustified. Ten people were killed in several incidents in the two weeks following the tournament. The largest scale attacks took place in the Western Cape. On the night of the World Cup final in Mbekweni Township near Paarl 250 immigrants were “escorted to safety by police officers when locals began looting their shops.” Two Somali shopkeepers were killed in nearby Worcester.⁵⁹ And Somali shops were also targeted in the sprawling Khayelitsha Township in Cape Town as the attacks spread locally (Prince and Jassiem, 2010).⁶⁰ There was also unrest at the Kya Sands township of Johannesburg. The worst incident there involved a Malawian man being killed “and having his genitals cut off.”⁶¹ Wary of a repeat of the atrocities of 2008, many Zimbabweans fled for home, despite the fact that many may have been refugees escaping from the Mugabe dictatorship. In partnership with the UN-based “International Organization for Migration ... Mediciens Sans Frontieres and World Vision,” Zimbabwe set up tents at the Beitbridge and Plumtree border crossings with supplies of blankets, laundry soap and buckets for those coming across. Nationals from Zambia and Malawi were also reportedly,

among those fleeing.⁶²

The immediate state response was mixed. The army was quickly sent into Johannesburg to control disturbances there, and as we have noted, the police responded swiftly to the larger scale rioting in the Western Cape. Still, President Jacob Zuma led a chorus of high officials who initially denied that the attacks were xenophobic. The government referred to see them simply “as criminal acts.”⁶³ However, in Gauteng, where Johannesburg houses the most dense population of Black immigrants in the country, the provincial Premier, Nomvula Mokoyane “has set up a team to deal with the threat of xenophobic attacks.”⁶⁴ And at the national level Western Cape Premier Helen Zille announced that the government was planning to invite the UNHCR to assist it in addressing xenophobia. In contrast, forces in global and South African civil society were immediately activated at the first signs of trouble in 2010. Three CBOs in Cape Town that had been conducting educational workshops in Khayelitsha in the wake of attacks there, implored President Zuma to acknowledge the xenophobic character of the violence as he waffled in July. The South African Human Rights Commission criticized the government for its lack of response to its report on xenophobia which had been released in March.⁶⁵ Simultaneously, the Western Cape Religious Leaders Forum, led by Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Dr. Thabo Nakgoba was convening a “special consultative forum” about community and government responses to the attacks.⁶⁶ The South African state, still basking in its World Cup triumph, had not wanted at first, to admit that such horrific events were once more unfolding in its Rainbow Nation. But a forceful reaction from a civil society committed to human rights compelled the state to act, so as not to be seen as tepid in its own human rights ethos.

Conclusion

Since the early years after transformation, South African scholars have lamented the seeming contradiction

between a revolutionary state and a constitution with a robust human rights regime and that state's harsh treatment of African immigrants. This analysis has attempted to demonstrate that over time the South African state has consciously worked to close the gap between its constitution, its historical debts and its practices in the area of immigration policy. It has also depicted the daunting social problems the country faces. There has not been the space to discuss the massive strikes and social protests that go on constantly in the country, as citizens grow impatient over the delivery of services. Given the mounting domestic problems with unemployment, crime, education, housing, HIV relief and health care in general, it is not surprising that South Africa took awhile to address the issue of immigration policy.

Since the collapse of communism and totalitarian states a generation ago, a debate on state-society relations has grown up, and within it the issue of state capacity has become salient.⁶⁷ Among the central capacities of effective states are effective economic growth and development and addressing social welfare. For developing countries at the periphery or semi-periphery of the global system, the ability to deliver these policy outputs is circumscribed by the neoliberal dictates coming from the core countries of the global North. The global economy demands free markets and states that protect the sanctity of private property rights. If the faceless actors, speculating from their desktops everywhere, see signs of state-interventionist economic development, they will put their money someplace else. The masses of poor in South African domestic civil society, still mobilized by the ideals of the revolution, are demanding sweeping state intervention into market freedom to direct resources decisively toward their social welfare. If they continue to be ignored, the country could be headed toward its second revolution. And in the midst of all of this ideological combat, other forces emanating from global and domestic civil societies are exhorting South Africa to pro-

tect immigrants in the name of universal human rights principles. At this point in history the South African state lacks the institutional capacity and the political will to pursue social welfare and immigrant rights in a concerted way. Among the three spheres of the global system, the global capitalist economy reigns supreme. States today operate outside of neoliberal dictates, only if they are big enough, like China, or stubbornly stuck in the past, like North Korea, or Cuba. For all of the sensationalism around human rights, in global power politics today, Northern capital and its concomitant capitalist states will almost always back capital over human rights in a given Southern country.

South Africa's rulers understand their impotence before the might of global capital. It is true that the ANC elite spent too many years "buying big cars and getting their hair done" after their historic triumph in 1994. They have made more serious efforts to deliver over the last half decade or so. The state does lack the trained personnel to follow through on its policies, but it also lacks the leverage to tax big capital and deficit spend in a way that might jumpstart true societal transformation. So South Africa's rulers are muddling through. I predict they will continue to do so, unless they are hit by a second revolutionary upheaval. If that moment comes to pass, I am afraid the issue of the human rights of immigrants will be swallowed up in the wrath of the South African people.

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Citizenship and Belonging: The Case of the Italian Vote Abroad

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The ease in which people are able to travel and communicate with one another across national boundaries is challenging the way in which we identify ourselves and define our place in the world. In an increasingly globalized world the very concept of a national identity is itself being redefined as multiple identities and dual citizenships have become more common than ever. This process of global interconnectedness has progressed so rapidly in the past few years that many are beginning to question how we define national models. The European Union, NAFTA, MERCOSUR, multi-national corporate affiliations, and virtual communities over the internet are all fast creating new collective forms of identity filling a role traditionally associated with the nation-state. These new realities test the limits of traditional citizenship models and challenge us to rethink national identities that transcend borders.

In December 2001 the Italian Parliament passed a law granting Italian citizens living abroad the right to not only vote in Italian elections but to also elect their own

specially designated representatives to the Italian Parliament. Many of these new voters were second and third generation children of emigrants who had only recently attained their Italian citizenship. These new citizens played a decisive role in their ancestral homeland's political process and in so doing provoked no small amount of debate over extraterritorial citizenship. This article uses the example of the recently changed Italian law to explore the complex ways in which citizenship and national identities are being redefined. I focus particularly on the relationship between citizenship laws and the broader issue of being identified with and accepted as a member of a nation. Placing the current Italian case in a comparative context, I argue that Italy's new law and the complex problems which have arisen as a result serve as an important model for other nations to examine. It is a model which is especially relevant for many nations in Latin America and Asia whose current migration patterns share a number of similarities with Italy's historical migration experience.

Towards a Transnational Understanding of National Identity

For many the possibility of dual citizenship and voting from abroad is a sign that globalization is rapidly undermining the traditionally defined nation-state. In this context, the new Italian law could be viewed as a harbinger of a new transnational world in which individuals across borders would share a similar set of rights in the past reserved for citizens living within a given territorial state.

In recent years scholars have begun to adapt transnational theoretical frameworks which reflect these changing global realities. Within the field of Italian migration studies, the historian Donna R. Gabaccia highlighted the limits of national frameworks for understanding an historical phenomenon which by its nature is transnational. In her article, "Is Everywhere Nowhere? Nomads, Nations, and the Immigrant paradigm of United States His-

tory” (1999), Gabaccia calls on scholars to move beyond “the tyranny of the national in writing history,” by studying migration and national projects from a transnational perspective.¹ Applying this perspective to the question of citizenship challenges us to re-think our very understanding of a concept inextricably linked to the nation-state model of national identity.

In assessing the possibilities presented by a new transnational model of citizenship, Irene Bloemraad, in her article, “Who Claims Dual Citizenship? The Limits of Post-nationalism, the Possibilities of Transnationalism, and the Persistence of Traditional Citizenship” (2004), recognizes that new laws allowing for dual citizenship normalizes the transnational lives of many migrants. Relying on an empirical analysis of Canadian census data, she argues however that these new trends actually appear to reinforce, rather than undermine, the traditionally defined nation-state. This is the case because migrants are still granted their citizenship status from nation-states and are more likely to become naturalized in their new nation if they can also maintain their original citizenship.²

Rainer Bauböck in his article, “Expansive Citizenship—Voting Beyond Territory and Membership” (2005) in turn identifies voting rights for non-citizen residents as the “complementary phenomenon” to voting rights for non-resident citizens. Bauböck maps out four contrasting arguments for and against both cases. For Bauböck, the ideal principle for resolving the question of resident and expatriate citizenship is “stakeholdership,” which he explains makes “an individual’s fundamental rights dependent on protection by a particular polity and ties the individual’s well-being to the common good of the polity.”³ This new conceptualization would encompass immigrant residence as well as expatriates with continued ties to the country. Individuals who had never resided in the country would however be excluded. This solution addresses the new realities of overlapping citizenship in a new globalized world, but continues to place impor-

tance on the role of residence in defining an individual's relationship to the nation-state.

Many of the theoretical issues raised by this recent scholarship on transnational citizenship are illustrated by the case of the Italian vote abroad. This article examines how one nation in particular has grappled with the transnational dimensions of its national identity both in the past as well as in the present in order to illustrate the fascinating problems and possibilities posed by extraterritorial citizenship. The Italian government by granting voting rights to the children of Italian emigrants recognized the value of a citizen's extra-territorial links to the nation, and in so doing challenges us as scholars to re-think what it means to belong to a nation.

Italy and Italians Living Abroad

The question extraterritorial citizenship and the rights and obligations which it entails is not a new one for the Italian State. For over a century the Italian government has played an active role in cultivating transnational relationships with its emigrants. The recent Italian electoral law is in fact a logical culmination of a policy long in the making. It is therefore essential to study the historical contours of the debate over Italian citizenship abroad in order to understand and evaluate the current law and its implications. These historical experiences also highlight the limitations and contradictions inherent in the implementation of national policies across territorial borders.

Between 1875 and 1975 over 25 million Italians emigrated out of Italy. Emigrating primarily out of socio-economic necessity, many Italians traveled back and forth between Italy and their new adopted homes, influencing in the process both their new nation as well as Italy. Through their investments and remittances, consumption and cultural assimilations they created their own unique transnational identity. As Gabaccia in her groundbreaking study, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (2000) explained, "Migration made transnationalism a normal dimension of life

for many, perhaps even most, working class families in Italy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Family discipline, economic security, reproduction, inheritance, romance, and dreams transcended national boundaries and bridged continents.”⁴ With its citizens already leading transnational lives by the late-nineteenth century, the Italian government responded early to the new realities posed by migration.

More active than most governments of the time, the liberal regime in Italy (1870-1922) attempted to maintain formal connections with its emigrant communities abroad by investing state resources in services for its emigrants. According to the historian Mark I. Choate in his work, *Emigrant Nation, The Making of Italy Abroad* (2008) the liberal regime’s active involvement with its emigrant population represented a conscious effort to “nationalize its emigration by intervening transnationally, leveraging diplomatic resources to influence international travel, the dissemination of media, transnational religious activity, and ethnic economic activity abroad to achieve specific national benefits.”⁵ If viewed in this context, liberal Italy’s overtures towards its citizens abroad was as much as reflection of a traditional national agenda as it is an innovative response to a transnational reality.

To maintain influence over its transnational citizens, the liberal state created a special commission to deal with emigrant affairs. The *Commissariato Generale dell’Emigrazione* was founded in 1901 with the task of providing services to Italian emigrants abroad. The *Commissariato* compiled vital statistics about the various countries of immigration. It published numerous manuals and handbooks for emigrants. These works provided travel information, compared the labor markets of various countries provided data on salaries and job opportunities abroad as well as collected foreign legal codes relevant to emigrant laborers. The main organ of the *Commissariato* was the monthly *Bollettino dell’Emigrazione*, which provided readers with reports and telegrams from the

various Italian embassies, legal codes, travel advisories, parliamentary debate, and statistical information on Italian migration as well as feature length articles on important international political developments.⁶

During this period, Italy's transnational claims over its citizens abroad created diplomatic conflicts in an age prior to dual citizenship. Based on *Jus Sanguinis*, the ethnic blood-based concept of citizenship, Italians living abroad and their children maintained their legal rights, protections and obligations to the State even while abroad. Many nations however followed the principle of *Jus Solis*, citizenship based on residence and place of birth, and accordingly new residents were obligated to fulfill their duties as citizens of their new nation and were offered the same protections as other citizens in the national territory. International law and the national sovereignty ensured that the receiving nations had the upper-hand in responding to Italy's competing claims over its citizens abroad.

Two specific issues highlighted the limitations of applying a citizenship law outside the nation territory: the obligation of military service and the extra-territorial legal protections of citizens residing abroad. In Brazil these issues were especially problematic given its policy of automatic naturalization after six months of continuous residence. Italian consular officials were therefore limited in their ability to protect its emigrants from Brazilian laws which ran contrary to their own.⁷ Further complicating the issue of contested citizenship issue was the fact that the vast majority of Italian emigrants at the time expressed little interest in passing on their Italian citizenship to their children, who by right of birth were automatically granted an American citizenship. This was especially the case in the United States. For example, for the 1907 calendar year in the City of New York, a city with millions of Italian immigrants and their children, only three births were reported to the Italian Consulate so that their children's Italian citizenship would be rec-

ognized.⁸ Without the possibility of dual citizenship, liberal Italy's extraterritorial claims on its emigrants was no match for the allure of attaining citizenship in the land in which emigrants lived, worked, and raised their families.

During the fascist period (1922-1945), Mussolini promoted a more ambitious nationalist agenda which attempted to reclaim Italian emigrants for Italy's national project. In the early 1920s this meant promoting emigration as a form of Italian national expansion.⁹ In 1923 Mussolini placed the *Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione* under the direct authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Such a move demonstrated the political and diplomatic importance of emigration at the time. With emigrants viewed as potential political capital for the regime, close and more direct coordination between the government through its embassies and consular services was essential.¹⁰

In 1924 Mussolini convened the first International Conference on Emigration and Immigration in Rome. The stated goal of the conference was to establish an international accord to regulate the flow of immigration and standardize legal protections and services for immigrants. Mussolini's ulterior motive, soon apparent once the conference began, was in fact to attain formal international recognition for Italy's legal claims over its emigrant citizens abroad.¹¹

The Italian delegation at the conference pushed an ambitious emigration agenda: insisting that emigrants and their children, wherever they may be, legally remained subjects of their nation of origin. They attempted and failed to pass proposals which would have given its consular officials the power to intervene in domestic trials involving emigrant nationals, would have required emigrants to serve in their birth country's military while exempting them from military service in their new nations, and finally would have allowed government-sponsored 'patriotic organizations' to operate unhindered in other nation-states.¹² Taken together, these proposals re-

defined traditional notions of citizenship by giving priority to the emigrants' nation of origin over their nation of residence and would have done nothing less than deterritorialize the nation-state.

Seen as clear violations of their national sovereignty, it is easy to understand why most nations rejected these proposals. The delegations from all of the nations in the Americas rejected the Italian definition of citizenship. They argued that once emigrants chose to live and have children in a new nation, they became citizens of that nation. No longer obligated to serve their former nation, nor under its protection, these immigrants had the same rights and duties of all other citizens living in their adopted nation.¹³ With two fundamentally different and irreconcilable definitions of citizenship on the table, any agreement between Italy and the nations which received its emigrants was unlikely. In the end few resolutions of substance were passed at the conference. Only those resolutions which affirmed immigrant laborers' human rights were approved, while those that attempted to promote Mussolini's expansive citizenship agenda were not.¹⁴

The social realities of emigration along with international resistance made it readily apparent to Mussolini that his expansive stance on emigration was no longer tenable. In 1927 the regime declared that emigration was now a loss to the nation, it was no longer the expansion of Italy outside its borders but instead "de-nationalization."¹⁵ Although the Italian foreign minister, Dino Grandi, maintained that the government through his ministry would continue to promote Italian identity among Italian citizens living abroad, emigration as a national policy was now a dead issue. He declared that "From now on there will no longer be *emigrants*, only *Italians abroad*"¹⁶

Grandi's reference to "Italians abroad" provided a new impetus to the regime's efforts at promoting Italian citizenship outside the nation state. In fact, with the issue of Italian identity abroad no longer linked to the

debate over emigration, the regime's outlook was broadened rather than diminished. With the mass migration of Italians now over, the possibility remained of establishing a new relationship between Italian collectivities abroad and fascist Italy. Preserving Italian citizenship abroad and winning the support of Italian collectivities for fascism's international policies characterized the fascist regime's new interest in its emigrants. Piero Parini the new Director of Italians Abroad, demonstrated the possibilities created by the fascist regime's new approach. Separating Italian identity abroad from the emigration debate, he explained that, "If there is a sector in which fascism has radically renovated a mentality and consciousness, it is undoubtedly that of Italian-ness outside of its borders... across the world there are eight million Italians; *a nation outside of the Nation.*"¹⁷ These lines suggest that the regime while rejecting emigration continued to encourage and promote the idea of a new Italian citizenry outside of the borders of the nation-state.

During the 1930s Italian fascists had hoped that by promoting Italian identity in the Diaspora they would be able to garner support abroad for the fascist regime and its political agenda, in this they failed abjectly. They did however succeed in provoking a debate at home and abroad over the question of transnational citizenship and the potential political roles that citizens living abroad could play in their country of origin.

After the Second World War the new Italian Constitution approved in 1948 granted all Italian citizens equal rights and protections under the law and granted suffrage to all adult men and women over the age of eighteen for voting in members of the Chamber of Deputies, and men and women over the age of twenty-five for the Senate. The new constitution rekindled the debate over the rights of Italian citizens abroad. Since all citizens are equal under the law, dual citizens who live abroad should have the same rights of citizens living in Italy, including the right to vote. According to the law, Italian citizens

abroad in order to vote were required to return to Italy to vote and vote as members of their local town/*comune* of origin.¹⁸ This presented three problems: 1) the expense and inconvenience of returning to Italy prevented most Italians abroad from voting and 2) Italian emigrants living abroad equaled or outnumbered the actual number of current residents in many small local districts; and lastly 3) the needs and concerns of Italians outside of Italy were different from those of the their ancestral communities in Italy.

The Making of an Italian Constituency Abroad

Recently, many Italian emigrants and their children have taken advantage of an Italian citizenship law from the early twentieth century which stated that any individual who could show a direct line of blood descent from an Italian citizen who did not renounce his citizenship inherited Italian citizenship and could petition to have it recognized by providing proper documentation. These documents include birth, marriage, and death certificates for parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Citizenship by descent can be demonstrated through a paternal link or maternal link if after 1948.¹⁹

Earlier in the century few if any Italian immigrants had applied to have the Italian citizenship of their children recognized, but as Italy prospered economically many Italian emigrants and their children especially those living in Latin America took advantage of the existing law. Changes in national laws over the past thirty years allowing for dual citizenship along with European integration and socio-economic change in Italy and abroad has made the idea of attaining Italian citizenship more attractive than ever before. Many of these emigrants and their children have now obtained dual citizenship, established new links with Italy and lobbied for a greater voice in Italian politics making the issue of the vote abroad especially pressing.

In 2001 during the economic crisis that gripped Argen-

tina, thousands lined up with applications in hand around the Italian Embassy in downtown Buenos Aires hoping to take advantage of the Italian citizenship law. Skeptical Italian commentators at the time were suspicious of the motivation behind those Argentine applicants who had conveniently rediscovered their Italian identity in the midst of an acute economic recession and rising unemployment. Whatever their motivations may have been, these newly recognized Italian citizens chose to identify with the nation of their ancestors and were once again able to participate fully in Italy's national life. Though they had no way of knowing it at the time, they soon played an important part in Italian national politics.

The New Law Granting Italians Abroad the Vote

On December 27, 2001 Italian Parliament ratified law number 459 recognizing the right to vote for Italians living abroad as well as granting Italians abroad the right to elect their own deputies to Italian Parliament.²⁰ The law provided a structure for mail-in voting for all Italian citizens abroad registered through AIRE (Anagrafe degli Italiani Residenti all'Estero). Italians abroad were given twelve seats in the Chamber of Deputies (out of 630) and six seats in the Italian Senate (out of 315) representing the "Foreign Constituency." This constituency was divided into four parts: Europe; North and Central America; South America; and Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Antarctica. The seats were apportioned in the following way: Europe with 2,072,410 Italian Citizens Abroad was given six seats in the Chamber and two in the Senate; South America with 1,017,776 Italians was given three seats in Chamber and two in the Senate, North and Central America with 359,852 Italians was given two seats in the Chamber and one in the Senate, and Africa-Asia-Oceania-Antarctica with 199,339 was given one seat in each house. The number of Italian Citizens Abroad totaled 3, 649, 377.²¹ With the passage of this law Italy became one of a select few nations which have allotted separate specially des-

ignated seats in parliament for its citizens abroad, other nations include France, Portugal and Colombia.²²

Mirko Tremaglia a member of Gianfranco Fini's *Alleanza Nazionale* the right-wing successor to the fascist party, was the architect of the new law. Tremaglia had an ulterior political motive for promoting the new law. He assumed that the inclusion of Italians abroad with its appeal to Italian nationalist sentiments would deliver more votes to the right. On the eve of the 2006 election Silvio Berlusconi's center-right coalition anticipated a boost from the vote abroad. The election in April produced the exact opposite result. Italians abroad voted overwhelmingly for Romano Prodi's center-left coalition. It was a devastating blow to the Right since these votes from abroad were what tipped the balance in one of the closest elections in Italian history. The political significance of the vote from abroad renewed concerns over the question of Italian citizenship abroad.

The New Law and Its Implications on Identity and Belonging

The importance of the vote abroad in determining the election magnified a number of troubling implications of the debate over the new law. A recent scandal just this past year has heightened criticism over the law. One of the Italian Senators Abroad, Nicola Di Girolamo was removed from office after widespread voter fraud and corruption was uncovered. While some political commentators used this as an excuse to question the honesty of the Italian vote abroad it has led others to call for reforming the voting process rather than repealing the law. According to the prominent Italian journalist Sergio Romano the very nature of the vote abroad lent itself to this fraud. In a recent editorial for *Corriere della Sera* he writes, "the law does not interest the majority of Italian emigrant communities, especially those outside of Europe and there is a close connection between this lack of interest and fraud."²³ Defenders of the new law were

quick to point out that fraud is just as prevalent in election results within Italy, as the Secretary General of Italians Abroad insisted, such isolated cases of election fraud “have never cast doubt on the legitimacy of the right to vote within Italy and should not serve as an alibi to call into question the vote abroad.”²⁴

The concern over the integrity of voting outside of the nation’s supervision speaks to the broader issue of the foreign context of the vote and the influence of foreign governments and local interests in the election. The Argentine election experience is a case in point. Counting 496, 000 Italian citizens, Argentina had the second largest number of Italians living abroad behind only Germany.²⁵ On the surface, the case of Italian Argentine participation in Italy’s recent elections is evidence that Italian identity has persisted in Argentina into the twenty-first century. But the question of these Italian Argentines’ national identity is still more complex. While I was in Buenos Aires just after the election of 2006 I had the opportunity to speak with an international news correspondent who had followed the Italian vote in Argentina. He suggested that one of the reasons why Prodi had won so many votes in Argentina was thanks to Néstor Kirchner, Argentina’s left-wing president, who used his own political machine to support Prodi’s campaign and mobilize the vote. In addition to supporting a fellow traveler on the Left, Kirchner had a concrete interest in supporting the left-center economist since Prodi’s economic platform was favorable to Argentine interest. This suggests that the Italians in Argentina in deciding how to vote were influenced as much by Argentina’s national politics as by Italian politics and indicates a much more intricate relationship between these individuals and the two nations with which they have chosen to identify.

Another concern that has been raised is over the influence residents living outside of the national territory should have in national elections. Although some citizens abroad have relatives still living in Italy and/or own prop-

erty and pay taxes, many do not. This has led some Italians, both in Italy as well as abroad, to question the new laws validity.²⁶ As Romano again writes “those who maintained their citizenship should enjoy the right to vote not those who have been bestowed that right because they have an Italian grandfather and have even forgotten the language.”²⁷ This criticism is not entirely fair, since citizens abroad who went through the trouble of having their citizenship recognized have voluntarily demonstrated their loyalty to Italy and their interest in the nation’s well-being. Furthermore, many Italians living abroad have spent years studying the Italian language and culture from abroad, and can at times be even more well informed than many of their compatriots within Italy. In fact, the effort involved in registering to vote abroad demonstrates an interest in Italian politics that all but ensures their making an informed choice.²⁸

While Italy has a relatively open policy towards its emigrant compatriots who have had their citizenship recognized, it has much more stringent naturalization policies towards its new immigrant residents. Over the past thirty years Italy has gone from a nation of emigrants to a nation of immigrants. Millions of immigrants from Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia are arriving in Italy today. An adult non-European Union national must reside in Italy for a minimum of ten years before they can apply for citizenship and children of immigrants born in Italy have to wait until their eighteenth birthday before they can attain Italian citizenship.²⁹ This raises the question of who therefore is more deserving of citizenship, those residents directly impacted by Italian laws making direct contributions in terms of labor, consumption, and taxes to the Italian nation or Italian citizens abroad, who may be ethnically Italian but may or may not be affected directly by Italian government policies.³⁰

In this regard, the Italian government’s position most closely fits with Bauböck’s concept of an ethnic nationalist citizenship which supports voting rights for citizen

expatriates but opposes those rights for non-citizen residents. As Bauböck explains, “It conceives of the nation as a community of culture, imagined descent, and destiny that has a right to self-determination ...It is therefore imperative to include external citizens in national self-government and legitimate to exclude non-citizens who have not assimilated into the national community.”³¹

While the Italian experience is relatively new, the case of France demonstrates the disparity between citizenship and belonging. Algerians and West Africans are able to attain full French legal citizenship but have faced a tremendous amount of prejudice and racism and have difficulty integrating themselves fully into the French nation.³² Even after generations of living in Italy it is unlikely non-European Italian citizens will ever be fully accepted as Italian. New racial tensions have arisen in Italy sparked by the recent influx of non-European migrants which many see as a threat to Italy’s national and cultural identity as a nation. Even once attaining legal citizenship these new immigrants and their children will have a difficult time being fully accepted as Italian.³³ Many Italian citizens abroad are similarly viewed skeptically as outsiders or “fake” Italians, a term I have heard often in discussing the vote and citizenship abroad in Italy. These objections and concerns raised by Italians both at home and abroad are a reflection of an alternative citizenship argument discussed by Bauböck which supports voting rights for residents but questions those of citizens abroad, who “should not be able to influence the making of laws to which only internal residents will be subjected.”³⁴

In both the cases of immigrants in Italy as well as Italians abroad these assumptions do not seem well founded. Immigrants who live and work for years in Italy share the experiences of their fellow native Italian residents, while many Italians abroad in addition to sharing a common cultural heritage have in fact maintained or re-established connections with their ancestral homeland. Both populations therefore have to a greater or lesser degree

something similar to what Bauböck has defined as “stakeholdership,” whether it be material in the case of the immigrants or cultural in the case of the emigrants.

The participation of Italians abroad in both the voting process as well as in the ensuing debates it inspired also confirms Bloemraad’s assertion that rather than weakening the traditional nation-state, transnational citizenships can actually reinforce its relevance in the world today. This experience, however, also leads us to question the importance we instinctively place on geographical space in delimiting the nation since a citizen’s physical presence within the nation-state is not required to be actively engaged in its political life. It is a fascinating point that the Italian State has been quick to embrace.

In welcoming Italians abroad to the Italian Parliament’s website the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Gianfranco Fini writes “You already know that the internet is an important instrument, because it allows you to establish a solid, continuous and immediate contact with the Republic’s institutions. It is a more modern, more efficient way to be closer to Italy.”³⁵ His comments allude to an intriguing aspect of the issue of the Italian vote abroad: The role of new technology and media in connecting Italians abroad to the nation. With the internet, satellite television, world phones, podcasts, etc. it is now possible for Italians abroad to not only be informed but to be immersed in Italian politics and culture.³⁶

In nations such as Argentina the Italian state-sponsored RAI television network is broadcasted throughout the day in Italian, and Italian products and advertising are a common sight in Buenos Aires. Italians living in Argentina would have been able to read Sergio Romano’s editorial questioning their knowledge of Italy and the Italian language both in print from any local newsstand or online. In fact in today’s digital age it is possible to be an even more actively involved and informed citizen than many of the citizens living within the Italian state. Furthermore the relative ease and low cost of travel and in-

ternational financial transactions has made it possible for citizens abroad to be contribute significantly to the Italian economy. These global innovations therefore make it theoretically possible for an Italian citizen who has never resided in Italy to be as well informed and to have as much a stake in the Italian political process as someone living within Italy.

The Italian Case in a Comparative Perspective

Italy's new law and the issues it entails is an especially relevant model for the nations of Latin America today. Many of these nations' migration patterns mirrored the Italian historical migration experience. Latin American migrants today are leading even more transnational lives than the Italian emigrants of the past. As more and more Latin Americans migrate to the United States and Europe, attain dual citizenship, send remittances back to their home country, and establish business and familial links across borders Latin American governments are now faced with the same constitutional dilemma faced by Italians.³⁷ This is especially true in nations with large numbers of emigrants who have made significant financial contributions to home countries economy, not to mention the cultural impact they have had through the transfer of consumer goods and return travel. The political role these citizens abroad could play through voting abroad is therefore potentially even more impactful than the Italian case has already proven to be.³⁸

Proportionally as well as financially the number of citizens abroad in some nations is even more significant than those of the Italian case, making their impact that much more important. In a small nation like El Salvador, with over 25 percent of the population emigrating, remittances from relatives living in the United States is actually the leading source of export earnings and over 16 percent of the nation's gross domestic product.³⁹ Just as the Italian liberal regime had done over one hundred years ago, the government of El Salvador has created

state agencies to preserve and foster links with its community abroad. The Salvadoran *Dirección General de Atención a las Comunidades en el Exterior* bears a striking resemblance in its functions to Italy's *Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione* by providing its emigrants with legal and social counseling and information services. El Salvador's Foreign Ministry is also advocating for the rights of its citizens abroad as well as reaching out to its communities in much the same way as Italian governments in the past.⁴⁰

The Philippines represent another fascinating comparison to the Italian case. Similar to El Salvador, the Philippine government takes an active interest in its citizens abroad. Since the 1970s it has in fact not only promoted emigration but actually brokered overseas labor arrangements, providing institutional training, support and research for its migrant workers.⁴¹ Robyn Rodriguez in her recent work, *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor with the World* (2010), argues that this labor export apparatus has redefined notions of citizenship in the Philippines. According to Rodriguez, these migrants, far from being considered less worthy of citizenship, are actually exalted as national heroes and are expected to fulfill their obligations of citizenship by sending home remittances to support the national economy and returning home at the end of their labor contracts. For this process to work, maintaining linkages with the home country and instilling patriotism in its emigrants is essential.⁴²

The Philippine and Salvadoran cases are both modern manifestations of many of the processes which historically have affected the debate on Italian citizenship abroad. In both instances we see attempts by the nation-state to create an extraterritorial citizenry who remained actively engaged in the welfare of their nation of origin. As Salvadoran emigrants and Philippine migrants become more and more involved politically, it will be interesting to see how the citizenship question and the debates it

engenders play out making Italy an especially relevant point of reference.

Conclusion

The debate over the Italian vote abroad questions traditional models of citizenship and points towards a new transnational model. Given our new interconnected world and the new needs of the individual citizen and the nation-state we need to re-examine exactly how we define citizenship and ask ourselves what ties an individual to a nation and who should be given a right participate in that nation's political process. Furthermore, we must ask who are impacted more by a nation's laws? Are those citizens living within the nation necessarily more impacted than those living abroad?

As this article has demonstrated, the question of Italian citizenship abroad has deep roots in Italian history. The recent Italian law granting its citizens abroad the right to elect their own representatives to Parliament is however not only the culmination of a long developing historical process, it is also one of many new responses that have to be considered in order to adapt traditional models of citizenship to the realities of a new globalized world. As such, it serves as an important model which highlights many of the problems and limits to transnational approaches to citizenship today. While the debate will continue over the merits of the new law, there is no doubt that it has already played an important role in changing the way we define citizenship and belonging in the twenty-first century.

Notes

- 1 Donna Gabaccia, "Is Everywhere Nowhere? Nomads, Nations, and The Immigrant Paradigm of United States History," *The Journal of American History* (December, 1999).
- 2 Irene Bloemraad, "Who Claims Dual Citizenship? The Limits of Postnationalism, the Possibilities of Transnationalism, and the Persistence of Traditional Citizenship," *International*

- Migration Review*, (Vol. 38, No. 2, 2004), pp 420-422.
- 3 Rainer Bauböck, “Expansive Citizenship—Voting beyond Territory and Membership,” *Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 38. No. 4 (October , 2005).
 - 4 Donna Gabaccia, *Italy’s Many Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 9, 11.
 - 5 Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 18.
 - 6 Commissariato Generale dell’Emigrazione, *Il Bollettino dell’Emigrazione, 1922-1927*.
 - 7 David Aliano “Brazil through Italian Eyes: The Debate over Emigration to São Paulo during the 1920s,” *Altreitalia*, Number 31, July-December 2005. São Paulo (Estado) *Mensagem apresentada ao Congresso Legislativo em 14 de Julho pelo Washington Luis Pereira de Sousa, 1922*, 50.
 - 8 Italian Consulate records for New York City housed in the Farnesina Historical Archive in Rome.
 - 9 Emilio Gentile, “L’Emigrazione italiana in Argentina nella politica di espansione del nazionalismo e del fascismo” in *Storia Contemporanea*, 17 (3), 1986, 355-396.
 - 10 Benito Mussolini, “Per il Consiglio Superiore dell’Emigrazione,” 245, 1923, *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, a cura di E. e D. Susmel, vol.XIX Firenze: La Fenice, 1957.
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 - 12 Conférence Internationale de l’Emigration et de l’Immigration= Rome 13-15 Mai 1924 Acte Finale, (Rome : Commissariat General Italien de L’Emigration, 1924); Aliano, 103-104.
 - 13 Ibid.
 - 14 Ibid.
 - 15 Gentile, 355-396.
 - 16 Dino Grandi, “Discorso alla Camera dei Deputati,” March 31, 1927, in *La politica estera dell’Italia dal 1929 al 1932*, Paolo Nello ed., (Roma: bonacci Editore, 1985) 132.
 - 17 Piero Parini, *Gli italiani nel mondo*, (Roma: Fasci all’Estero, 1935).
 - 18 Camera dei Deputati, *Manuale Elettorale: Il Voto degli Italiani all’Estero* (March 18,2008).
 - 19 Italian Consulate General of New York, Information kit on Italian Citizenship Jure Sanguinis.
 - 20 Legge 27 dicembre 2001, n. 459 “Norme per l’ esercizio del diritto di voto dei cittadini italiani residenti all’ estero,” published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* n. 4, January 5, 2002.

- 21 Camera dei Deputati, *Manuale Elettorale: Il Voto degli Italiani all'Estero*, March 18, 2008.
- 22 Bauböck, (2005), 683.
- 23 Sergio Romano, "Il voto italiano all'estero una legge da cambiare" *Corriere della Sera*, March 5, 2010.
- 24 "Italiani all'Estero—Di Girolamo-Voto All'Estero," from www.italiannetwork.it, March 1, 2010.
- 25 *La Repubblica*, December 20, 2001.
- 26 Elisa Arcioni, "Representation for the Italian Diaspora" *Democratic Audit for Australia*, December, 2006, 1-8.
- 27 Romano, op. cit.
- 28 Rainer Bauböck, "Towards a Political Theory of Migrant Transnationalism," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (Fall, 2003) pp 700-723.
- 29 Arcioni, op. cit.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Bauböck, (2005), 683-686.
- 32 Paul A. Silverstein, Paul A, "Kabyle Immigrant Politics and Racialized Citizenship in France," in *Citizenship, Political Engagement, and Belonging*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008) 23-42.
- 33 Flavia Stanley, "On Belonging in/to Italy and Europe" in *Citizenship, Political Engagement, and Belonging*, (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 2008) 43-59.
- 34 Bauböck, (2005), op. cit.
- 35 Gianfranco Fini, "Messaggio di benvenuto del Presidente della Camera," www.camera.it/_votoitaliani/.
- 36 Bauböck, (2003), 714.
- 37 Cristina Escobar, "Extraterritorial Political rights and Dual Citizenship in Latin America," *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 42 No. 3, October 2007.
- 38 Escobar's article (op. cit.) provides an excellent comparative analysis of voting and extraterritorial citizenship in Latin American today.
- 39 Sarah Gammage, "Exporting People and Recruiting Remittances, A Developmental Strategy for El Salvador?" *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 151, Vol. 33 No. 6 (November, 2006) 75.
- 40 Gammage, 89-92.
- 41 Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
- 42 Rodriguez: 2010, 92.

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Orientalists Need Apply: Gender-Based Asylum in the U.S.

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Every other year I teach a course entitled “The History of Asian Women in America,” which focuses on the experiences of East, South and Southeast Asian women as they journey to these shores and resettle. Using autobiographies, poetry, journal writings, interviews and academic texts, the students learn from the women what political, social, cultural, economic and ecological conditions prompted them to leave their homelands and why they chose the United States. We learn of their rich cultural backgrounds, their struggles to create a subculture based on their home and host experiences, and the cultural gaps that often appear between the first and subsequent generations. And we also learn how patriarchy affects their lives transnationally. In spite of all this information, inevitably one student always asks “why are Asian cultures so oppressive to women?”

I always cringe when this question is asked because it reveals, among other things, the pervasiveness of “Orientalism:” an ideological view of the East as being dark, mysterious, chaotic, feared, and in need of governance;

and the persistence of American Exceptionalism: the notion of a U.S. that is civilized, powerful, and has the “God-given” right to govern the East.¹ No matter what or how I teach, it is very difficult to dislodge these ideological, ethnocentric, and racialized patriarchal beliefs.

As a result, I find myself struggling to write this article on Asian women and asylum, as I reflect on concepts of *nonrefoulement* (not being forcibly returned to one’s country of origin if it is unsafe), universal human rights, and providing protection to vulnerable groups, alongside the occurrences of honor and dowry killings, forced abortions, female genital mutilations, and domestic violence. I believe if I were to write about gender-based asylum solely within the context of these categories, I would inevitably reinforce the notion of America as the bastion of liberal freedom, and of Asia as a fortress of tradition and hierarchy.

A simple reading of Aruna C. Vallabhaneni’s asylum case, for example, can easily serve as damning evidence of an allegedly callous and misogynistic Indian culture. Vallabhaneni sought asylum in the United States after suffering fourteen years of abuse at the hands of her husband, which included two attempted murders and “repeated blows to the stomach which resulted in a hysterectomy.” The one time the husband was arrested, Vallabhaneni’s father arranged for his release, cancelled his daughter’s complaint and forced her to return home to her abuser. Not only did Vallabhaneni’s parents know of the abuse, and refused to help they also warned should she contact the police again, “their reputation would be ruined...and they would commit suicide out of shame.”²

If I were writing the legal brief, I would certainly emphasize the cruelty of Vallabhaneni’s husband and of her family, but also the depraved indifference of the state and societal norms. And in examining the legal documents of other notable asylum cases, I find these very tactics have been used to prove gender-based persecution. *In Re: Fauziya Kasinga*³ (1996), for example, the case concern-

ing an eighteen-year old West African native who fled to the United States to escape forced female circumcision, attorney Karen Musalo presented U.S. State Department reports to demonstrate how commonplace it is for Togolese women to “suffer extensive discrimination,” from the cruel local practices such as forced marriages and female genital mutilation (FGM).⁴

I find no fault with Musalo or any other attorney who works to protect women seeking safety from violence. I believe that in nearly all countries, including the United States, beliefs and practices are used to undermine, if not negate, ideals of gender equality and deny women the ability to control their bodies and their labor. I also believe the women who flee their abusers have suffered extreme violence at the hands of their families and of the state. But I also know that non-western cultures, and specifically Asian cultures (for the purposes of this article) are not necessarily antithetical to individual rights and gender equality. Yet an examination of the asylum process—and perhaps immigration adjudication overall—demonstrates there is little room for any other reading aside from indicting Asian cultures and lauding the freedoms of American life and its supposedly moral superiority.

This article examines gender-based asylum cases to demonstrate how the very process itself is structured by ethnocentric and racialized gendered ideals that are rooted in assumptions about the “Orient” as monolithic and motivated solely by dangerous religious and cultural identities, and the U.S. as rational, constitutionally-bound, with a clear separation between church and state. And with every new successful gender-related asylum case, these ideals and assumptions become further entrenched.

A person who applies for asylum must meet two basic requirements: they must be on U.S. soil and they cannot return to their homelands for fear of persecution based on “reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion....”⁵ The lat-

ter asylum requirement is actually the legal definition of a refugee originally adopted from the 1951 United Nations *Refugee Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and the 1967 Protocol.⁶ The former requirement was created in 1952 through the Immigration and Nationality Act, to help shield refugees already present on U.S. land from being deported.⁷ While the definition and requirements seem simple and straightforward, applying them to real-live cases has proved to be very difficult; gender, for example, is never mentioned, which made it extremely problematic for women to demonstrate gender-related persecution, which will be discussed shortly.

Little changed in the asylum process since the 1950s until Congress passed the 1980 Refugee Act, which is the foundation for the present program. This new act created a “systematic procedure” with “comprehensive and uniform provisions,” for the admissions of asylees.⁸ Petitioners, regardless of how they arrived to the U.S., meet with an asylum officer who has the ability to approve their application. Should the officer deny the application, which places the petitioner in jeopardy of being deported, the case is then referred to an Immigration Judge (IJ) who can decide to withhold removal and grant asylum. Should the petitioner still be denied, they can appeal their case to the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) and if necessary have it reviewed in a U.S. Court of Appeals.⁹

It was not until 1995 did the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) acknowledge that women refugees have experiences that are particular to their gender and recommended changes.¹⁰ That year they introduced new guidelines to help asylum officers evaluate claims. These guidelines included information on rape, mass rape, sexual abuse, domestic violence and on societal conditions that make women vulnerable to abuse. They also posted reasons as to why women might not speak of their experiences or may be reluctant to disclose information to male interviewers. Finally, the guidelines reminded officers

to be sensitive to cross-cultural differences particularly when assessing the credibility of the applicant in terms of demeanor and speech; women who have experienced great trauma may not maintain eye contact, may suffer from memory loss or show no emotion.¹¹

These guidelines signaled a significant change in attitudes that gave hope to immigrants', women's and human rights' organizations internationally. Applicants and their attorneys, along with activists took this opportunity to help push the guidelines into standard practices through case law. In 1996, for example, Fauziya Kasinga helped set the standard for asylum cases based on female genital mutilation.¹² That same year, a petitioner from China helped pave the way for women seeking safety from forced abortions and sterilizations.¹³ And in 2009, after a lengthy legal battle, Rodi Alvarado Peña helped clear a path for applications based on domestic violence.¹⁴

But even with these new guidelines, the chances of women receiving gender-related asylum have been extremely unpredictable. Rodi Alvarado Peña, mentioned above, endured a thirteen-year legal battle before she was granted asylum. In her case, the IJ, in 1996, decided in her favor, but INS appealed the case and the BIA reversed the judge's decision. Later, Attorney General Janet Reno vacated the decision and remanded the case back to the BIA, pending the Department of Justice issuing a proposed rule on asylum and domestic violence. Reno, however, left office and the case was handed to John Ashcroft who also failed to decide on Alvarado's case and never made a final proposed rule. Altogether, Alvarado's case sat in the hands of three different Attorney Generals (AG) without a final ruling, until the Obama administration granted her asylum in 2009.¹⁵

Although Ms. Alvarado suffered through years of legal uncertainty on top of ten years of violent abuse at the hands of her husband, she is one of the luckier ones. Case summaries posted on the Center for Gender and Refugee

Studies website indicate a number of domestic violence-asylum petitions having been denied despite the viciousness of the attacks on the women and the clear human rights violations. One such case concerns a Pakistani woman whose suffering most people would agree is extraordinary. Not only did the husband regularly beat her, including shortly after she had given birth, but she also had to ward off sexual advances made by her father-in-law. Her mother-in-law, in the meantime, did nothing to assist her and in fact, further urged the husband to beat her. Even after the woman divorced her husband, her ex-husband arranged for two policemen to rape her for several hours while he and the mother-in-law watched and egged on the officials. Her case was reported in the local newspapers, investigated by Amnesty International, and even received attention from the then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and yet she was denied asylum in the United States.¹⁶

The lack of predictability in gender asylum cases can be attributed to several factors. First, the gender guidelines are not policies or regulations so there is no one standard; officers and judges decide cases based on their own judgment and interpretation. Case law certainly helps, but it does not guarantee consistent outcomes. Second, while officers and judges are encouraged to be sensitive to gender issues, they must do so “within the [existing] framework,” which is difficult because the structure was created with no mention or recognition of women and their unique experiences in the original definition of a refugee.¹⁷ Third, neither Congress nor INS have given specific directions on exactly how female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and domestic violence, for example, qualifies as persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. As a result, attorneys and petitioners have been trying to find the best way to fit their case into the existing categories. A frequently successful approach has been to argue gender-based persecution claims un-

der the “particular social group” and “political opinion” categories, but who constitutes a social group and what is a legitimate political opinion are still highly contested by immigration judges and members of the BIA.¹⁸

In 2002, for example, M-L-C- petitioned for asylum having been persecuted as a member of a particular social group: she was a victim of forced marriage. M-L-C- is a young Chinese woman who was forcibly sold to the village director for the purposes of marriage by her father. At first she refused to comply with her father’s wishes, and was beaten and imprisoned for three days without food or water. Afterwards, the village director kidnapped her, coerced her to participate in a wedding ceremony and then raped her. Later that very night, M-L-C- escaped and made her way to the United States. During her hearing, M-L-C- argued that she met the definition of a refugee by having “suffered past persecution on account of her membership in the social group of Chinese women who have been forced through physical and sexual abuse into marriage, and who live in a part of China where forced marriage is considered valid and enforceable by the governing authorities.”¹⁹

The IJ rejected this argument in spite of the fact that seventeen years earlier, the BIA had established an interpretation of “membership in a particular social group” that could include women (*Matter of Acosta*). Members of a social group, according to the decision, must “share a common, immutable characteristic, i.e., a characteristic that either is beyond the power of the individual members of the group to change or is so fundamental to their identities or consciences that it ought not be required to be changed.” This case, then, made it possible to view sex as an immutable characteristic.²⁰

While it appears that the IJ ignored the BIA’s decision, it must be recognized that the guidance given in *Acosta* is “incomplete,” according to legal scholar T. David Parish. There is still plenty of murkiness in the definition; *Acosta* “sets an outer limit, [but] it fails to describe the

characteristics by which a cognizable social group may be recognized as such.”²¹ So even with *Acosta*, a judge can apply their own interpretation and apparently, the IJ did not believe that M-L-C’s characteristics—that of being a Chinese woman who had been sold into marriage—was immutable enough.

The “incompleteness” of *Acosta*, however, became a favorable condition for Hong Ying Gao just four years later in 2006. Her case, *Gao v. Gonzales*, was hauntingly similar to M-L-C-. Gao, like M-L-C-, had been sold to a local man by her father and went to live with her future spouse, Chen Zhi. Upon arrival, she found him to be “bad-tempered” and physically abusive and “when Gao tried to break their engagement,” according to case records, “Zhi threatened her” and warned that his uncle, “a powerful local official, would arrest her.” Gao had heard that Zhi’s uncle did arrest people for “personal reasons,” so the threat seemed quite possible. Gao escaped from Zhi and moved an hour away by boat, but he harassed her family and eventually found her. Gao realized that her only hope was to leave China altogether.²² In contrast to M-L-C-, the Second Circuit took the definition of a social group from *Acosta* and found Gao to be a part of a group of “women who have been sold into marriage (whether or not that marriage has yet taken place) and who live in a part of China where forced marriages are considered valid and enforceable.”²³ This ruling did not mean that all women in China were automatically eligible for asylum, but coupled with the fact that the Chinese government was unable to protect Gao from forced marriage, and that she could not relocate anywhere else in China without being in danger, altogether served to satisfy asylum requirements.

Gao v. Gonzales became an important landmark case that widened the definition of a “particular social group” and has had a significant impact on women’s opportunities for asylum. It is important to note, however, that in spite of its success, this decision has only opened the

door for women who are or have been sold into marriage, not any other situation. It will take more case law to truly expand the category for women who are persecuted on other (gender-based) grounds.

The fact that the asylum process must continuously be amended to recognize the specific needs and experiences of women means advancement will take time. Some scholars, however, believe it will take more than time, but a serious paradigm shift; from a male-oriented system (often described as gender-blind or neutral) to a system of gender equality. According to these scholars, not only is the original framework organized around the experiences of men, but the process is often adjudicated by men (and women) who fear or are resistant to fundamentally changing the current system. Regardless of what they fear, the asylum process is, as Jane Freedman argues, “undermined by deeply gendered practices,” or worst, as Connie Oxford explains, a “gender regime structures asylum practices.”²⁴

Manifestations of how asylum is either structured or undermined by gendered practices is most evident in the way that INS (now called USCIS, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) must constantly develop new guidelines and case law to accommodate women’s experiences. The original framing of the asylum law was based on the experiences of men, which were considered to be the “norm.” Women’s experiences tended to be seen as outside of immigration law or rendered invisible. Male-oriented notions of who is a political agent and what encompasses political opinion pervaded the process and severely limited women’s chances because they were not recognized as political agents.²⁵ Historically states, like the United States, have recognized the overt (public) political activities of men as being vulnerable to persecution by ruling governments. In contrast, women’s activities have often been dismissed because they are not public, but hidden and indirect, such as refusing forced marriage or resisting rape.

Furthermore, there is evidence that some officers and judges do not recognize certain forms of violence against women as ever reaching the level of persecution. Connie Oxford, in her work on gender-based asylum, presents a horrifying quote from an immigration attorney who found some judges did not consider rape a political act under any circumstances. “We would present evidence about women who were raped by Haitian soldiers and how the military is used in Haiti,” stated the attorney, “but the gut reaction of the immigration court of the BIA or the circuit court was that it’s personal, it’s a terrible thing, but it’s a personal problem, you’re a victim of crime.”²⁶ In other words, sexual violence, regardless of the persecutor or his motivations, is considered to be a “private” matter.

This reluctance or refusal to see women who are attacked within the private realm as “targets of persecution” is not solely the fault of individual judges, however. Traditionally, matters within the family and private sphere, including abuse, were considered beyond the scope of a state’s powers.²⁷ Many governments, including the United States, were (and to some extent still are) hesitant to “interfere” and adjudicate in matters that do not directly involve the state claiming there is a divide between the private and the public that cannot be breached.²⁸ As Kathryn Libal and Serena Parekh explain:

Human rights discourse, since its modern beginnings in the 17th century, has been predicated on the division between the public and private realm. This division separates the realm of the political, the government or state, and the economy from the real of the household, the family and private affairs. The private realm was largely considered apolitical; it was thought to be devoid of power relations...²⁹

Over the past century, the work of feminists, activists, and women who have been victimized, has significantly

helped move the state into the private sphere. The fruit of their efforts can be seen in the declarations made by the U.N. such as the “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women” (CEDAW). CEDAW adopted in 1979, has been dubbed as the international bill of rights for women and urges all signers to “ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises,” with no distinctions made between the public and private realms.³⁰ This momentous document was followed by additional guidelines released in 1985 and 1991 by the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights that identified refugee women and girls as experiencing “special problems” resulting from sexual and physical abuse, exploitation and sexual harassment and called for reorienting “existing programmes” to address them.³¹

The expansion of American case law to recognize gender-based asylum, though uneven, is yet another example of eliminating the private/public division. But there are indications that the U.S. government is still uncertain when acts of violence move from the private to the public sphere and become acts of persecution. The INS 1995 gender guidelines discussing domestic violence, for example, specify that it “cannot be purely personal... The harm feared must rise to the level of persecution... [that] denotes extreme conduct and does not include every sort of treatment our society regards as offensive, unfair, unjust, or even unlawful or unconstitutional....” And finally, “In order for an applicant to meet the definition of a refugee she must do more than show a well-founded fear of persecution in a particular place or abode within a ‘country’ - she must show that the threat of persecution exists for her country-wide...³²

One way officers and judges measure if the violence goes beyond being offensive or illegal is by examining the impact it has had on the petitioner. More specifically, judges are looking for the extent of suffering, and/or the petitioner’s refusal to conform or submit to the harm as

an indication of whether the harm has reached a level of persecution. Many scholars have been quick to note how this standard discriminates against women who do not or cannot show the level of suffering judges are expecting. As Helen Grant points out, “a woman who suffers psychological abuse alone, who suffers minor physical abuse at the hands of a husband, or who is required to conform to his ideals without an overriding threat of serious physical harm will be unable to successfully seek asylum and avoid deportation under U.S. asylum law.”³³

The adjudicators’ demands for proof of severe harm and suffering reveal more than a limited method of separating acts of crime from persecution, they also demonstrate ethnocentric and racially gendered attitudes. The proof demanded is generally based on white western cultural standards of how people (e.g. men) should behave towards maltreatment. Behaviors that fall below these standards are considered suspect or worst, they become proof that no violence has occurred at all. Women from non-western countries are at a profound disadvantage because they were socialized to respond in culturally specific ways that are not like how white Americans would behave. As a result, women from Asia, Africa, Central and South America find themselves being doubly harmed: at the hands of their persecutors and at the hands of the U.S. asylum system.³⁴

Yan Xian Zhu, for example, suffered great humiliation, shame and physical harm as a result of being beaten unconscious and raped by her boss back in China. Her sense of humiliation was no doubt heightened when the IJ rejected her testimony based on the fact that she did not seek medical help immediately after being assaulted. Though Zhu explained she did not contact a doctor because she felt shame and that her “mother also told [her] what happened to her was ‘shameful to us [parents],” the judge responded that the petitioner’s reason was “obviously the testimony of someone who has never been knocked unconscious, nor raped.”³⁵ The judge had

no sense about or sensitivity to how patriarchal ideology in China controls women's behavior and political power by forcing them to keep silent about sexual abuse and exploitation. The judge also had no understanding of how, in many Asian countries, the entire family can reinforce the subordination of women by demanding she not publicize her harms or else she will bring shame to all of them.³⁶

Su Chun Hu was also scoffed by an IJ after she described having been forced to undergo an abortion by Chinese government officials. After hearing her testimony, the IJ accused Su Chun Hu as being "someone who has never experienced an abortion procedure and [that it] was more akin to a routine gynecological 'pap smear' check-up, rather than a life-altering traumatic experience" based on the mere "demeanor and the timbre of her voice."³⁷

A similar situation happened to another Chinese applicant when she disclosed she had been forced to undergo four abortions. Apparently she did not "behave" within the norms of western cultural ways. In the oral decision, quoted by Connie Oxford in her work, the judge declared, "The Court finds it incredible that the applicant had four abortions. The Court does not believe that any woman would suffer through four abortions. The Court believes that this woman would say anything to remain in the country."³⁸

At the same time that judges and officials demand that female petitioners behave and respond in ways familiar to their western sensibilities, they conversely require a non-western cultural explanation for the actions of the persecutors. In other words, adjudicators are more likely to find the petitioner believable if their stereotyped, cultural assumptions about non-western countries and how they treat women are confirmed. Anita Sinha, in her examination of asylum cases, makes an even stronger argument, "Asylum applicants who flee from non-Western countries because of gender-related violence find that

their cases often turn on whether they can show that the persecution they suffered is attributable to the cultural ‘backwardness’ of their home countries.”³⁹

Sinha comes to this conclusion through her examination of *In re Kasinga* (a case concerning FGM) and *In re R-A-* (a case concerning domestic violence). In the former case, which was successful in a timely fashion, she finds that references to female genital mutilation were consistently associated with the term “practice” or “tribal custom” thereby linking the violence against Kasinga to a cultural ritual rather than a form of violence against women to control their sexuality. Moreover, Sinha believes that the indictment of the Togo culture helped Kasinga’s case, whereas Alvarado (*In re R-A-*) was less successful because judges did not find domestic violence alone (e.g. no “culture hook”) to be a compelling argument.⁴⁰

The officers and judges’ approval of cultural explanations for harm and persecution has not been lost on petitioners and their attorneys. The attorney for the case of “Client,” a Mongolian woman petitioner, included cultural data to demonstrate the status of women in that country. The brief for this case included the proverb, “If a husband does not beat his wife once a month, he is not a man,” and a quote from the United Nations, “women are slaves for men and servants for the home,” to show the connection between the Mongolian culture and the abuse of women.⁴¹ In *Gao v. Gonzales*, the record indicates that Gao’s abuse is because of customary practices in China where “parents routinely sell their daughters into marriage.”⁴²

Another immigration attorney interviewed for this article explained that he too provided information about the respondent’s culture and country of origin to help explain the context of her persecution. In his two cases involving “honor killings,” where the death of the female is required to restore honor to the family, he utilized materials from the U.S. State Department and human rights organizations to support his case. A quick examination of

the State Department and Amnesty International's materials concerning Pakistan (one of the respondent's country of origin), yields authoritative-sounding information on the poor human rights record in that country and the traditions and "tribal culture" that is the supposed basis for these killings.⁴³

Perhaps even more astonishing are the instances when petitioners are encouraged to structure their applications on claims that exploit the "cultural hook." Oxford, in her interviews with petitioners, found they had been persuaded by attorneys and service providers to discuss their experiences with forced circumcisions instead of the non-FGM reasons that had prompted them to flee. The attorneys believed the petitioners' cases would be better received if they exploited the fact that the women had been circumcised because judges seem to agree that the procedure constituted persecution.⁴⁴

The role that officers, judges, the BIA, attorneys and even petitioners play in perpetuating ethnocentric and racialized gendered practices in the asylum process is quite apparent. The dangers of essentializing and "othering" non-western cultures and demanding petitioners present themselves as "worthy" victims are just as clear. And the calls from scholars, attorneys and activists to end such practices are urgent and understandable; but uprooting or correcting these biases is not, however, simple.

To begin with, the entire premise behind granting asylum is based on a foundation of difference. By asking for a haven from persecution, the petitioner is immediately perceived as valuing the United States as being a "more enlightened" place (whether they believe it or not) than their country of origin, which automatically reinforces older notions of America as a strong and powerful colonial empire. As Charles Piot explains,

The asylum claim assumes a difference—a cultural difference—between country of origin and host country. Thus the asylum petitioner seeks refuge from barbaric

customs/irrational sentiments/racist prejudice/talitarian politics/religious fanaticism. As such the granting of asylum invokes and reinscribes notions of radical cultural alterity that were emblematic of colonial modernity as well as of cold war geopolitics... those that were 'modern' (whether capitalist or socialist) and those more 'traditional'⁴⁵

Other social scientists concur and find that the very act of accepting refugees "usually implies condemnation of the relevant government for persecuting its citizens, or at least failing to afford them protection."⁴⁶ The U.S. government is not blind to the signal that asylum sends. During the Cold War in the 1950s, for example, America's refugee program gave high priority to individuals escaping from communist nations and it was not just for humanitarian reasons. As political scientists Salehyan and Rosenblum explain, "the United States readily accepted [these] refugees...as a way to discredit these regimes, drain them of human resources, and promote opposition activities."⁴⁷

At the very heart of asylum claims is the reinscription of differences between the host and country of origin, but a great deal of those differences were constructed centuries ago with the myth of American Exceptionalism, that predates legal asylum. This myth is based on the view of America as distinct, unique, free from the corruption and decay of the old world, and free from the confines and persecutions of hierarchical societies and governments, which has been circulating since Europeans started settling the land. Philosophers and travelers from the 1700s and 1800s often proclaimed the new world to be an asylum from tyranny and nepotism of the old world and ripe for a social revolution.⁴⁸

Claims for American Exceptionalism also include that the "United States has a unique place in history, differing fundamentally and qualitatively from all other countries" and that it has a "'God-given destiny' to guide the

rest of the world.”⁴⁹ The claim of being a “civilized” country in comparison to the rest of the world has been a part of the foundational narrative from the start and has been embedded in every policy concerning American expansionism, efforts to spread democracy, international policing activities, and the war against terrorism.

Embedded in this “God-given destiny” are also notions of racialized moral superiority. This sentiment can be read in John Winthrop’s belief that God wanted the English colonists to control the lands inhabited by Indians: “For the natives, they are near all dead of the smallpox, so the Lord hath cleared our title to what we possess.”⁵⁰ This sense of superiority can also be found in the discussions surrounding the U.S. colonization of the Philippines; government officials, including presidents, justified controlling the islands stating that it was their duty to “civilize” and “uplift” Filipinos.⁵¹ A more recent reference can be found in George W. Bush’s explanation of 9/11 to the press, “I see things this way: The people who did this act on America and who may be planning further acts are evil people. They don’t represent an ideology; they don’t represent a legitimate political group of people. They’re flat evil. That’s all they can think about, is evil. And as a nation of good folks, we’re going to hunt them down and we’re going to find them, and we will bring them to justice.”⁵² Though Bush did not ascribe a race or color to this “evil” group, by September 12th, most of American media had already identified the terrorists to be connected with radical Islamic groups and/or from the Middle East. It is easy to surmise from Bush’s comments, then, that we, “good folks” are opposites to, and better than, the darker-skinned, non-Christian “evil” people.

Within this broader context of American Exceptionalism and its impact on the society and politics, the ethnocentric and racialized gendered aspects of the asylum process can be seen as manifestations of that foundational narrative. The original asylum definition as well as all newer guidelines and recent case law were never meant

to disrupt that claim; in fact, they were created imbued with a sense of American superiority complete with its ideals about race and gender.

Even with the advancements in gender-related asylum practices, such as *In re R-A-*, racialized political and cultural concerns still feature prominently in the refugee process. It appears that judges and officers have concerns that go beyond the applicant's circumstances. A study in 2004 by Rosenblum and Salehyan, for example, finds strong evidence that "non-ideational interests" temper human rights concerns in asylum cases. They found that "US asylum enforcement has consistently taken account of the level of democracy in applicants' countries of origin," as part of their decision to approve, or not, the petitioner's request. Similarly, the 2009 study by Andy Rottman, et al, presents persuasive evidence that asylum officers have been affected by the events of 9/11 and have been "more apt to deny claims after 2001" for fear of future attacks on US soil.⁵³

Gender-related asylum cases have also been affected by concerns that go beyond confirming whether an applicant is eligible or not. During this climate of anti-immigrant sentiment, fears about national security, job protection, and increasing social welfare costs, have prompted officers and judges to wonder if they are opening the "floodgates" with each woman they admit. This argument, as described by Helen Grant, is the belief that "to recognize women as a social group and domestic violence as persecution" would "open the floodgates to these types of claims." As the argument goes, petitioners would fraudulently claim their husbands beat them in order to gain entry, which would overwhelm immigration officers and end up closing the borders to people who need protection.⁵⁴ While this argument may sound overly dramatic, it cannot be dismissed. Three different asylum attorneys contacted for this study all agreed that judges are thinking about the "floodgates" when adjudicating gender-based persecution cases and that it is a

factor they must account for in their arguments on behalf of the respondents. As a result, each attorney carefully frames the applicant's situation to emphasize the gravity of her situation, which includes lengthy discussions of culturally-based discriminatory gender practices that occur in their country of origin.

There are many drawbacks and caveats to the present (and slowly changing) gender-based asylum process. Some critics believe the recent successful cases do not educate officers, judges and the public about the broader factors that encourage and support violence against women—such as patriarchy--and sadly reinforce neo-Orientalist notions about non-western cultures. Other critics believe this very approach is dangerous not for its colonialist ideas, but for setting a negative precedence for future petitions. In contrast to cases of FGM, women who are fleeing forced detention, torture, or the denial to gain an education may not qualify for asylum because their cases may not seem “exotic” enough or lack the “cultural hook.” Furthermore, asylum case law will never be exempt from the all-consuming interests about national security, job protection, and conservative social concerns. They will continue to be affected by racialized gender practices and beliefs about American Exceptionalism that pervade this country. And last, but not least, the prejudices and biases that affect asylum officers and judges will not necessarily disappear.

The solutions to most of these concerns are not forthcoming. All scholars and attorneys who write about gender-based asylum all hope for a process that is less ethnocentric, provides greater gender equality and is more sensitive to the needs of the petitioner instead of other concerns. Yet, there appears little incentive on part of those who control immigration to change so radically. Change might only happen with each new legal success, but very slowly and with great limitations.

In view of these factors, when I hear of individuals like Vallabhaneni, Zhu, Alvarado, and Kasinga, my concerns—

the ones I raised in the beginning of this article--seem rather selfish and whiney. These are women who have struggled hard to find safety and to rebuild their lives by whatever means were available to them. Who am I to be critical of their cases or their methods? Haven't they been persecuted enough by both their abusers and the asylum system? Isn't it enough that the asylum process can and will save the lives of some women?

Further, the asylum process does not seem like the "front line" to changing deep-seated beliefs in moral and racial superiority. At this very moment, the "front line" is in New York where public outcry is trying to prevent an Islamic Community Center from opening near "Ground Zero," and in Gainesville, Florida, where the Dove World Outreach Center proposes to burn Qurans in a public bonfire.⁵⁵ And yet, these two places are integrally tied to the process of asylum by fear and nationalism guided by racism. The very basis on which America opens its doors to abused women of different faiths, political beliefs, and nationalities, also undergirds the racial, cultural, and religious hostility that pervades the country. As a result, the asylum process is a good place to start.

By highlighting the consequences of adjudicating petitions under a gender regime and through the cultural lens of Orientalism and American Exceptionalism, I am drawing a new line. Cultural stereotypes cannot be the basis for asylum decisions. The dependency on stereotypes narrows case law and policies for asylum based on gender-related persecution; petitioners, like Alvarado, who lack the "culture hook" are at great risk of being deported. Furthermore, stereotypes obscure the true nature of violence against women. Gendered power arrangements, not traditional family customs, enabled Gao to sell his daughter into marriage; culture may socially and legally sanction the practice, but it is not the source.⁵⁶ Last, but not least, ending the use of cultural stereotypes might help create a process that is based on gender justice, not on narratives of difference and supposed "infe-

riority,” and perhaps then my students will have a more sophisticated critique about immigration and asylum that restores agency to the petitioner and moves away from America the savior.

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**How does race operate among Asian
Americans in the labor market?:
Occupational segregation and different
rewards by occupation among native-
born Chinese American and Japanese
American male workers**

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The effect of race in the U.S. labor market has long been controversial. One posits that racial effects have been diminished since the civil rights movement of the 1960s (Alba & Nee, 2003; Sakamoto, Wu, & Tzeng, 2000; Wilson, 1980). Even if some disparities in labor-market outcomes among race groups are found, advocates of this “declining significance of race” thesis do not attribute these disparities to racial discrimination. They, instead, understand the racial gaps as a result of *class* composition of racial minority groups, classes represented by larger proportions of the working-class population (Wilson, 1980, 1997) as well as unskilled-immigrant workers (Borjas, 1994).

This position tends to ignore populations such as

Asian Americans. Asian Americans are characterized neither as the working-class-dominant group nor as the unskilled group. They have higher instances of obtaining professional occupations (Barringer, Takeuchi, & Xenos, 1990). The earnings of some Asian ethnic groups exceed the earnings of non-Hispanic Whites¹ (Shinagawa & Kim, 2008; Shinagawa & Lee, forthcoming). Because of these labor-market outcomes, Asian Americans are often cited as a supporting case for labor-market assimilation theories (Alba & Nee, 2003; Sakamoto, Wu, & Tzeng, 2000), or as an exceptional case to the persistence of racial disadvantages (Massey, 2007, p.113).² These perspectives are often supported by aggregate information across occupational fields on Asian Americans, which include their high median incomes and their high percentage of holding professional occupations. However, studies focusing on such aggregate information often overlook racial disparities observed in segmentation of field *within* professional occupations as well as reward differentials by the field of occupations between Asians and Whites. Within professional occupations, indeed, the levels of earnings returns vary according to the field of professional occupations; some professional occupations are characterized as high-paying fields while other professional occupations are not. According to Sakamoto and Xie (2006), Asian Americans have been segregated from non-Asian Americans occupationally and have not converged from 1960 to 2000. Particularly, highly educated Asian Americans are found disproportionately in high-paying computer, engineering, and medical occupations. Given that, we can infer that the high median and mean wages of Asian Americans are largely the reflection of the high earnings of professional workers in such lucrative science and technology fields. If there is occupational segregation between Asian Americans and Whites within professional occupations, how should we interpret that in the light of racial effects? Can we still say that Asian Americans are assimilating into the U.S. labor

market? This study aims to examine racial effects for Asian Americans and understand how, if at all, the racial effects of “being an Asian” shape Asian Americans’ labor-market achievements. For this purpose, I will examine the occupational distributions of Chinese Americans and Japanese American³ and non-Hispanic Whites in a comparative perspective and the racial effects on earnings returns at specific occupational levels. The findings of this analysis will help us understand what kinds of fields give better returns to Asian Americans, and thereby, how race affects Asian Americans in the U.S. labor market.

BACKGROUND AND THEORY

Earnings and occupations of Asian Americans

Some labor-market outcomes of Asian Americans indicate that there are no significant disparities between Asian Americans and non-Hispanic Whites in labor-market achievement. The earnings of Asian Americans are not significantly less than those of Whites as of 2000. One study found that the average earnings are \$46,000 for non-Hispanic Whites and \$43,000 for native-born Asian Americans. Likewise, hourly wages are similar: \$23 for non-Hispanic Whites and \$22 for native-born Asian Americans (Sakamoto & Xie, 2006:62). The measurement of the occupational prestige scores of Asian Americans demonstrates that native-born Asian American men achieve occupational attainments comparable to those of non-Hispanic White (Iceland, 1999). Particularly, Asian Americans have gained greater access to high-tier technical and professional occupations (Sakamoto & Xie, 2006).

There is a debate on how we should understand Asians’ seemingly successful outcomes in occupations and earnings in the light of the effect of race in the labor market. One group of scholars attributes such outcomes to the overeducation of Asian Americans. That is, Asian Americans are more likely to be overeducated for the same occupation for the same level of wages as non-

Hispanic Whites (Hirschman & Wong, 1984; Min, 1995; Takaki, 1998), which veils racial disadvantages for Asian Americans. For example, in their study using the 1960 and 1970 census data and data from the 1976 Survey of Income and Education, Hirschman and Wong (1984) estimated that in 1975, average earnings of Asian Americans would decline by about \$1,000 when their educational levels were adjusted to parity with the rest of the U.S. population (1984, p.599). For other scholars, however, it is problematic to consider this over-education hypothesis evidence of *racial* disadvantage for Asian Americans (e.g., Zeng & Xie, 2004). If lower returns on education exist among Asian Americans, this may be due not to racial discrimination but to *immigration* effects such as the devaluation of foreign schooling (Zeng & Xie, 2004) or the imperfect transferability of immigrant's human skills (Chiswick & Miller, 2009). Comparing the earnings of three groups of Asian American male workers (foreign-born and foreign-educated, foreign-born but U.S.-educated, and U.S.-born), Zeng and Xie (2004) found that only foreign-educated immigrants were systematically underpaid, by approximately 16 percent, as compared to non-Hispanic White and the other (U.S.-born or U.S.-educated) Asian American groups. In their conclusion, Zeng and Xie (2004) remarked, "Asian Americans' earnings disadvantage is rooted in human capital differences between U.S.-educated workers and foreign-educated workers rather than in race-based discrimination (p.116)."

To eliminate these immigration effects, some studies distinguished U.S.-born Asian Americans from foreign-born Asian Americans and compared each group with Whites to explore inter-group differentials in socioeconomic attainments, often measured by earnings and occupational prestige scores. A study by Iceland (1999) revealed that neither native-born Asian American males nor females are disadvantaged in earnings, including earnings returns to their occupational status, when compared to non-Hispanic Whites. Only foreign-born Asian men

are disadvantaged relative to native-born non-Hispanic White men, although within the foreign-born Asian American group there is considerable variation by nation of origin. Another native-born-only study by Sakamoto et al. (2000), found that, for African Americans, American Indians, Japanese Americans, and Chinese Americans, the net disadvantage between 1950 and 1990 had declined by more than 50 percent, similarly concluding: native-born Asian Americans clearly faced a net racial disadvantage in the period before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but the net racial disadvantage (in wages, earnings, or occupational attainments) disappeared after the Civil Rights Act was enacted. By demonstrating that there is no racial disadvantage between native-born Asian Americans and non-Hispanic Whites in the post-Civil Rights period, these studies advocate that the disadvantages of Asian Americans shown in the over-education hypothesis are due not to their racial status but to their immigration status.

Occupational fields of Asian Americans

Do these findings, which are based on aggregate information such as median incomes or occupational prestige scores, really reflect the “declining significance of race” for native-born Asian Americans? Considering the possibility that racial effects for Asian Americans do appear neither as wage disadvantages by race nor less the procurement of prestigious occupations than Whites, we can think of a different way in which race operates among Asian Americans in the U.S. labor market. Race may affect Asian Americans in choosing similarly prestigious but different occupational fields than those the majority of Whites take. The most noticeable labor-market characteristic among Asian American workers is the high rate of professional occupations in computer, science, engineering, and medical fields. In 2000, Asian Americans appear to be overrepresented in higher-status professional occupations such as physical scientists

(15.3%), mathematicians (11.1%), nurses (6.2%), engineers (9.9%), and accountants (6.1%) (Sakamoto & Xie, 2006:67). Generally these are relatively high-paying occupations. Given the concentration of Asian Americans in high-paying occupational fields, we can infer that their higher earnings might be the consequence of their occupational distributions. Other occupations may not provide Asian Americans with earnings comparable to those earned in occupations in sciences and technology fields. If this is the case, we can see the occupational concentration of Asian Americans in certain fields. This may be a result of the system of the U.S. labor market that defines some fields as “Asianized occupations” and others as “White occupations” and then rewards Asian Americans’ human capital unequally according to occupation. In this case, we may find racial effects for Asian Americans not in earnings or occupational prestige scores but in their occupational segregation and different rewards by the field of occupations.

Unequal treatment by occupational fields

Occupational choice is in general understood as a matter of individual decision-making. However, the persistence of occupational segregation by race turns our attention to the structural factors that shape the racial divisions of labor. According to Ong, Bonacich, and Cheng (1994), occupational segregation by race has been driven by the U.S. capitalist economy and neoconservative policies. This is especially true for post-1965 Asian immigrants. Tremendous increases in Asian immigration began when the United States initiated its economic restructuring plans in the mid-1960s. One goal of this economic restructuring was the pursuit of innovation. To do so, it needed a larger, highly-trained labor force. However, domestic populations within the United States could not satisfy the emerging demands for high-skilled labor in areas such as healthcare, engineering, and science. Labor shortages in these fields were exacerbated by a combination of several

factors: reductions in education spending, which created a lack of adequate funds for advanced professional training; the high-paying financial and legal sectors, which offered better individual returns per unit of educational investment; and some oppressive working conditions in healthcare, engineering, and scientific fields. The U.S. government attempted to remediate these labor shortages by importing Asian immigrants with the desired high-skills qualifications. Creating an official policy to support this goal, the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965 gave preference to individuals with the desired training and to those with capital to invest. Given the demand for highly-skilled Asian immigrants, we can expect that the United States would provide better rewards for Asian workers in these labor-short areas than in other low-demand areas, professions which were sufficiently populated by White workers. Because of these differentiated reward systems, occupations may still reflect this covertly sanctioned segregation between Asian Americans and majority Whites. In short, highly-skilled Asian Americans are more likely to be concentrated in Asian-dominated occupational fields. This is because they can maximize the returns on their human capital and resources in areas characterized by a high demand for Asian workers and reduced competition with majority Whites. The unequal rewards by fields that Asian immigrant parents have experienced may shape their children's perspectives on opportunity structures facing them.

Not only structural factors, but interpersonal factors contribute to the occupational concentration of Asian Americans in certain fields. Firstly, discrimination in hiring and in the workplace is a leading factor shaping occupational choices of Asian American individuals. In their ethnographic research, Chou and Feagin (2008) report that with regard to hiring, Asian Americans have more difficulty finding work at White-owned companies as compared to when they seek employment at Asian American-owned companies. Moreover, Asian American

individuals often have to accept below-market salaries in order to join these White companies (Chou & Feagin, 2008, p. 84). In the workplace, employed Asian Americans often face a glass ceiling (Woo, 2000; The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1988; Chou & Feagin, 2008, pp.91-96). The glass-ceiling hypothesis states that a preference for White managers, who are believed to be more competent administratively and more compatible with White workers, negatively impacts the professional attainment of Asian Americans in White-owned companies (Woo, 2000). Simultaneously, stereotypes of Asian Americans, characterizing them as “not aggressive, inarticulate in English language, and too technical to become managers,” hamper promotion of Asian American individuals (Ong & Hee 1993:146-147). Relationships with co-workers also influence occupational choices for Asian Americans. White co-workers are often a problem for Asian American employees. Chou and Feagin’s interviews reveal that Asian Americans “pay a heavy energy price in dealing with discrimination at the hands of White employees and employers” because of “a great array of racialized barriers and mistreatment at their places of work.”(Chou & Feagin 2008: 89, 99).

All of these experiences contribute to preferences of Asian Americans to work at same racial/ethnic group-dominated workplaces. Most Asian Americans may expect that, in an Asian-dominated work setting, they will not be marginalized nor degraded based on race. Moreover, Asian Americans can expect to enjoy strong solidarity among Asian American workers at their workplaces, an unrealistic expectation in White-dominated work environments. Both better returns in high-need areas of U.S. economy and less discrimination in workplaces dominated by same racial/ethnic coworkers play influencing roles in occupational choice for Asian American. Even though Asian Americans on average earn higher incomes, and a higher percentage of them have professional occupations, we should not simply understand this as evidence of the declining

significance of race. Instead, we should pay attention to how race operates for Asian Americans. For Asian Americans, race affects their choice of occupation in the way that being an Asian is associated with advantage in some fields and disadvantage in other fields.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study compares the occupational distributions and earnings by occupation between Asian (Chinese/Japanese) Americans and non-Hispanic Whites in order to examine whether there are distinctive patterns by race in choosing occupations and whether there are differential rewards by race. For analytical purposes, I created two distinctive fields of occupations: “Asian-Overrepresented (AO) fields” and “White-Overrepresented (WO) fields.” The AO fields refer to within-group work settings that present relatively higher rates of same racial/ethnic co-workers as compared to non-Hispanic Whites. The AO fields are presumably characterized as having a high demand for or high supply of Asian workers, or both. The WO fields, by contrast, refer to labor markets in which Whites are over-represented as compared to Asian Americans. These fields are perceived as areas where Asian workers are either less demanded or less supplied, or both.

The analysis consists of three steps. The first step is to investigate distinctive patterns by race, if any, in occupational distributions. This work provides the list of AO occupations and WO occupations. Additionally, occupational segregation is measured between Asians and Whites with the conventional measurement, the index of dissimilarity (D):

$$D = \sum_{i=1}^J \left| \left(\frac{A_i}{A} \right) - \left(\frac{W_i}{W} \right) \right| \times \frac{1}{2} \times 100,$$

where J refers to the total number of occupations, A_i and W_i refer to the number of Asians and Whites in the

ith occupation, and A and W refers to the total number of Asians and Whites among wage and salary earners in the labor force⁴. The index (D) indicates the degree of occupational segregation between Asian Americans and non-Hispanic Whites. The occupational dissimilarity index provides an intuitive measure of how much a fraction of either Asian Americans or Whites would have to change occupations for the two groups to achieve an identical distribution across occupations. The values range from zero to one. The value of zero indicates perfect occupational integration and the value of one indicates complete occupational segregation between the racial groups. The second step examines whether race - that is, being an "Asian American" - has a significant influence on choosing AO fields and WO fields. There may be many factors that differentiate the job choices of Asian Americans from those of Whites. It might be possible that the higher rate of post-secondary degrees among Asian Americans leads them to higher-paying professional occupations. It is also possible that Asian Americans may have more opportunities in these professional occupations due to their residential concentration in metropolitan areas. Likewise, occupational opportunity may depend on which region of the United States they live in. They may also be influenced by other factors such as age, marital status, or wealth status. To examine the existence of the racial effects of being Asian in individuals' occupational choice, I conducted logistic regression analyses with occupation as a dependent variable. Control variables are: race, age, marital status, metropolitan status, region, education, and homeownership (as an indicator for wealth). This logistic regression analysis examines factors predicting AO fields and factors predicting WO fields, focusing on whether significant differentials by race remain after controlling other major factors. The last step compares the wage level and the degree of racial effect on wages earned in AO fields with those earned in WO fields by ordinary least squares regression analysis on factors

predicting wage. For this analysis, I used the same control variables as those used for the logistic regression analysis. This analysis demonstrates how differently Asian Americans are rewarded in AO fields as compared with WO fields.

The data for the individual workers are derived from the 2005-2007 American Community Survey (ACS) three-year sample of the U.S. Census Bureau, representing three percent of the entire U.S. population.⁵ To eliminate non-racial effects such as gender, immigrant status, and human capital differentials such as educational attainment, the selected samples are limited to native-born male wage and salary earners aged 25 to 64 who had four-year-college degrees at minimum, had a non-zero income, were not enrolled in school, and classified themselves as “Chinese alone” or “Japanese alone” for the year prior to the census. I select Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans because both groups are characterized by large native-born populations and a diverse range of ages and generations. In contrast, native-born populations for other Asian ethnic groups are not large enough for consideration in this study. Additionally, other Asian ethnic groups are disproportionately young and are over-represented by second-generation individuals as compared to non-Hispanic Whites who are comprised of a multitude of generations. Most importantly, both groups provide an opportunity to examine whether returns on human-capital investment are maximized in the context of within-group work settings (*i.e.*, AO fields) or in labor markets where Asian Americans are more likely to work or compete with Whites (*i.e.*, WO fields). Chinese Americans are characterized as more prevalent in AO fields, as compared to Japanese Americans. Japanese American workers, among Asian American ethnic groups, are most integrated with Whites; that is, they are more likely to choose occupations in WO fields than other Asian ethnic groups ⁶ (Shinagawa & Kim, 2008; Shinagawa & Lee, forthcoming).

FINDINGS

Table 1 presents descriptive characteristics of samples selected for this research. The only selected samples are U.S.-born male wage and salary earners aged between 24 and 64 who have completed their college or post-college education.

Among the three sampled populations, Japanese Americans are oldest and Chinese Americans are youngest, as measured by median age. In regard to marital status, non-Hispanic White men are most likely to live with a spouse in a household. The rate of living together with a spouse is lowest for Chinese American men. Most Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans live in metropolitan areas (98.8% and 91.7% respectively), and to a lesser extent, so do non-Hispanic Whites. Likewise, the majority of Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans live in the West (61.0% and 86.6% respectively). Among college-educated individuals, 39.1 percent of Chinese Americans have post-college degrees. Japanese Americans are least likely to have graduate-school educations. The homeownership rate, as an approximate indicator for wealth, is the highest for non-Hispanic Whites (86.4%), and the lowest for Chinese Americans (79.0%). However, Chinese Americans earn the highest level of wage and salary incomes, while non-Hispanic Whites earn the lowest.

Occupational Segregation among the college-educated male workers

Table 2 shows that both Chinese American men and Japanese American men have occupational choice distribution patterns similar to each other. Both Asian American ethnic groups are overrepresented in professional occupations, especially in computer and mathematical, healthcare, and engineering fields. Non-Hispanic White men, on the other hand, maintain overrepresentation among management, education-related professions, and sales occupations.

Both Asian ethnic groups experience overrepresentation in the same areas but to a different extent. Chinese Americans are segregated from Whites twice as much as Japanese Americans. The index of occupational dissimilarity between Chinese American men and non-Hispanic White men is 20.7, meaning that 20.7 percent of either Chinese Americans or Whites would have to change their occupations in order for the two groups to reach identical occupational distributions. The index for Japanese American men is 9.7, indicating that 9.7 percent of either Japanese Americans or Whites would have to change their jobs for the same purpose. In computer and mathematical occupations, for example, Chinese American men are overrepresented by 7.32 percent as compared to non-Hispanic White men, while Japanese American men are only 1.13 percent overrepresented when compared to White men. By contrast, in management occupations, Chinese American men are underrepresented when compared to White men by 6.18 percent, while Japanese Americans are only 1.56 percent underrepresented.

The effect of race on occupational choice

From the table of occupational distributions, I selected the three most Asian-overrepresented fields - computer, healthcare, and engineering, and the top three White-overrepresented occupations - management, sales, and education.⁷ Now, to examine the question: Is there a possibility that race for Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans affects occupational choices?

The effect of race for both native-born Chinese American men and Japanese American men is significant and positive in choosing AO occupations. In computer and mathematical occupations, the positive B value (.677) for the race variable for Chinese Americans indicates that being a Chinese American is positively associated with obtaining the computer or mathematical occupations. The

odds ratio indicates that the odds of having computer and mathematical occupations are almost two times higher for Chinese Americans than non-Hispanic Whites, all other factors being equal. Japanese Americans exhibit the same pattern but to a lesser extent. For Japanese Americans, the odds of having such occupations attributed to their ethnicity is about 1.2 times higher than for non-Hispanic Whites but this result is not statistically significant. In the other AO fields, healthcare and engineering, the results are similar to those for computer occupations. Chinese Americans are two times more likely to have a professional occupation in healthcare and 1.6 times more in engineering compared with their non-Hispanic White counterparts. These two fields also exhibit the positive effect of “being Japanese” as a race variable. Japanese Americans are about 1.5 times more likely to do work as a professional worker in healthcare and 1.2 times more in engineering than non-Hispanic Whites, all the other variables being equal. All the values of the racial effects in the three AO occupations are significant except for the racial effect of being Japanese in computer and mathematics. In short, the results of AO fields demonstrate that Asian heritage plays a positive and significant role in the selection of AO occupations.

In WO fields, race is also correlated significantly, but the effect of race is the opposite in AO fields. That is, ‘being an Asian’ is negatively associated with WO occupations. In management occupations, for instance, Chinese Americans are 0.8 times as often (or, 1.2 times less likely⁸) to be represented than non-Hispanic Whites. The other two WO occupations, sales and education, also supply evidence of negative associations with Chinese heritage. In education-related occupations, especially, Chinese Americans are 0.5 times as often (or 2.2 times less likely) to be employed than non-Hispanic Whites. Japanese Americans exhibit a similar negative pattern in all three WO fields but the significant association with Japanese ethnicity is found only in sales occupations.

Japanese Americans are 0.7 times as often (or 1.4 times less likely) to be found in sales occupations. In management or education occupations, there is no significant difference by race in the odds of choosing such occupations between Japanese Americans and non-Hispanic Whites. These results confirm that, regarding occupational distribution, Chinese Americans are more segregated from, while Japanese Americans are relatively more integrated with, non-Hispanic White workers.

Racial effects in earnings by occupational fields

The third part of the study compares wage and salary incomes of each occupation by race. Median incomes in Table 4 show that, in all three AO fields, both Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans earn more than non-Hispanic Whites. Japanese Americans exhibit the highest median income in each AO field, followed by Chinese Americans. However, in WO fields, no distinct pattern by race is found. Only sales occupations appear to give higher earnings to non-Hispanic Whites than to the other two minority groups.

Lastly, this study questions whether race is significant in determining wages and how much race increases or decreases wage in each of the AO fields and WO fields. For these questions, I conducted ordinary least squares regression analyses. The dependent variable is the log of annual wage and salary income; the control variables are race, age, age square, marital status, metropolitan status, education, homeownership, and region. Table 5 displays the coefficients of the racial effects on their wages for both Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans after controlling the other factors. Looking at the column of Chinese Americans, we can find significant racial effects in the two AO fields - computer and healthcare. Noteworthy is that, in these fields, Chinese heritage is positively associated with wage. That is, in these areas, the racial effect of being Chinese appears to be a type of racial *advantage* or racial premium over

non-Hispanic Whites. The highest racial premium is found in healthcare-related occupations. In this field, Chinese heritage alone increases log wage by 0.15. Computer and mathematical occupations also exhibit racial advantages of 0.07 on earnings for Chinese Americans. In architecture and engineering occupations, the association of Chinese heritage and those occupations is positive but not significant. Unlike the case of Chinese Americans, for Japanese Americans, a significant racial premium is not found in all three AO fields, although the result displays that Japanese Americans enjoy a slight racial advantage in computer and mathematical occupations while they face a racial disadvantage in health as well as architecture and engineering occupations.

In WO fields, by contrast, Chinese heritage bears no advantage in wage. In all of the WO fields (management, sales, and education-related occupations), the racial effects of being Chinese American appear as a disadvantage but only the association in sales is statistically significant. Such racial disadvantages are also found for Japanese Americans in the two WO fields - management and sales occupations. Japanese heritage alone in the field of management affects a slight, but statistically significant, decline in wage. A slight racial disadvantage is also found in sales occupations but is not statistically significant. Education-related occupations are the only field that represents the advantage of Japanese heritage in earnings, but it is statistically not significant.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the statistical analysis suggest that there are different patterns in the occupational choices of college-educated male workers in U.S.-born Chinese/Japanese Americans and non-Hispanic Whites. First, members of the two Asian groups more often select computer, healthcare, and engineering occupations (grouped as AO fields), but fewer individuals select occupations in management, sales, and education fields (grouped as WO

fields) as compared to non-Hispanic Whites. Furthermore, these segregations are nearly twice as pronounced for Chinese Americans than Japanese Americans. Second, the logistic regression analysis indicates that race matters for Chinese Americans in choosing occupations. All the other major factors remaining equal, but race (*i.e.*, having Chinese heritage), when compared with non-Hispanic Whites, is significantly and positively associated with pursuing AO occupations and is negatively associated with choosing WO occupations. The same patterns are found among Japanese Americans, but the associations of their heritage with each occupation are weaker than those found for Chinese Americans. Some of the racial effects do not represent statistically significant differences from those of non-Hispanic Whites. This result reflects that Chinese Americans are significantly segregated from Whites in the labor market while Japanese Americans are relatively more assimilated with Whites. Third, the analysis of racial effects on wages by occupation displays racial advantages on wage for Chinese Americans in two AO fields: computers and health. In the WO fields, by contrast, it appears that Chinese Americans earn a lesser wage than non-Hispanic Whites, other factors being equal, but such racial disadvantage is significant only in Sales occupations. For Japanese Americans, there is no such pattern. They do not enjoy a significant racial advantage in any of the AO fields. In the WO fields, the management field gives Japanese Americans a significant racial disadvantage, while no advantage/disadvantage is found in the other two WO fields. In short, Chinese heritage is significantly associated with the wage differentials between AO fields and WO fields, while Japanese heritage is not. Summing up the findings of this study, race for Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans plays a role in their choosing occupational fields. The hypothesis of “differential rewards to Asians in different fields” is supported by the case of Chinese Americans but not by the case of Japanese Americans.

What do these results imply for the racial effects for Asian Americans in the labor market? One may argue that the significance of race for other Asian ethnic groups will disappear in the labor market, following Japanese Americans who do not experience significant differential rewards compared to Whites. Another may claim that race will continue to affect Asian Americans, as it does for Chinese Americans. This difference makes it problematic to treat Asian Americans as a whole. Besides, the difference in the racial effects between Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans implies that race interplays with the characteristics of each Asian ethnic community in different ways. For example, the perspectives of native-born Chinese Americans on the labor market may continue to be influenced by their ethnic heritage by way of incoming Chinese immigrants as well as the strong tie with their ethnic community, while their Japanese American counterparts may be less likely to be shaped by their ethnic community given their weak tie with their ethnic heritage. Thus, future research should examine how the effects of each ethnic community, combined with their racial status, affect Asian Americans in occupational choices and earnings.

There are several limitations in this research. Firstly, this research investigated only two ethnic groups, Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans. Given the diversity by ethnicity within Asian Americans, the findings of this research are limited to these two groups. Secondly, this research employed non-Hispanic Whites only for the reference group. We should examine whether the patterns of occupational choices and differential earnings for Asian Americans would persist or change when including other racial minority groups.

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Endnotes

- 1 Although “white” is mostly used in literature, I prefer using “White” (with capital W) in order to address my perspective that White Americans should be treated the same as any of the other racial groups like Black, Latino, and Asian Americans.
- 2 Massey (2007) argues that categorical inequality continues to persist in the United States. According to Massey, however, the racial disadvantages exist among African Americans and Latinos but no disadvantage is found among Asian Americans. He states, “The future of America would seem to be one in which various European and Asian ancestries are increasingly jumbled together in a way that makes categorical distinctions between them fade”(Massey 2007:113).
- 3 In this study, only Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans, both of whom are U.S.-born, are employed for the sample for Asian Americans (for the reason of selecting these two groups only, please refer to the section of ‘research design’ below). Although I use the term “Asian Americans” very often throughout the paper, this term used in my own analysis refers only to these two ethnic groups. Although we may find from this research some implications for Asian Americans in general, strictly speaking, the interpretation of this research should be limited to these two ethnic groups.
- 4 For the equation of the occupational segregation between Asians and Whites, I referred to the index of dissimilarity for occupational segregation by sex which is introduced as a conventional measurement by Charles and Grusky (2004, p.39). See Charles and Grusky (2004, ch.2) for alternative measurements of the index of dissimilarity.
- 5 The 2005-07 ACS dataset was provided from Minnesota Population Center (www.ipums.org). Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. *Integrated Public Use*

Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database].
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

- 6 According to a report by Shinagawa and Kim (2008), using 2006 ACS data, the top three occupations for Chinese American men aged between 18 and 64 are cooks, computer software developers, and managers and administrators in that order. The top three occupations for Japanese American correspondents are managers and administrators, supervisors and proprietors of sales jobs, and computer systems analysts and computer scientists (Shinagawa & Lee, forthcoming). My statistical analysis using 2008 ACS data shows that although Japanese Americans also exhibit a slight over-representation in AO fields like other Asian ethnic groups, they exhibit the smallest degree of overrepresentation of all Asian ethnic groups.
- 7 In the comparative analysis of Chinese Americans and Whites, AO fields consist of the occupations in which Chinese American men are overrepresented in comparison to non-Hispanic White men by more than 3 percent; WO fields consist of the occupations in which Chinese American men are underrepresented to non-Hispanic White men by more than 3 percent. The same AO fields and WO fields are used for comparison of Japanese Americans and Whites because Japanese Americans also exhibit overrepresentation in the same top three AO fields and underrepresentation in top three WO fields, although in these fields Japanese Americans are over/underrepresented by less than 3 percent.
- 8 To facilitate interpretation, odds ratios less than 1 are often inverted to new values which are equal to “1 divided by the odds ratio.” For example, in the management occupations for Chinese Americans, 1 divided by .718 equals 1.39. This suggests that Chinese heritage reduces the odds of management occupations by a factor of 1.39
- 9 Mean wage and salary incomes by race display more complicated pattern by specific occupation within AO fields.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Selected Samples

Variable	Chinese American (N = 2,157)	Japanese American (N = 1,730)	Non-Hispanic White (N = 400,215)
Median age	38.0	47.5	46.0
Married, spouse present	56.0%	65.9%	74.5%
Metropolitan residence	98.8%	91.7%	86.6%
Post-bachelor's degree	39.1%	30.4%	35.8%
Homeowner	79.0%	84.8%	86.4%
Northeast	22.9%	3.6%	21.4%
Midwest	5.7%	3.8%	23.3%
South	10.4%	6.0%	34.2%
West	61.0%	86.6%	21.0%
Median wage and salary income	74,652	72,488	70,324

Samples: U.S.-born male wage and salary earners aged 25-64 who have college degrees and beyond but did not attend school during the year of survey.

Table 2. Occupational distributions and overrepresentation by racial/ethnic group

Occupation	Percentage of Whites out of total White population	Percentage of Chinese Americans out of total Chinese American population	Percentage of Japanese Americans out of total Japanese American population	Difference in Percentage between Chinese Americans and Whites	Difference in Percentage between Japanese Americans and Whites
Management Occupations	21.6%	15.4%	20.0%	-6.2%	-1.6%
Business Operations Specialists	3.2%	3.3%	4.3%	0.1%	1.1%
Financial Specialists	5.5%	7.2%	6.2%	1.7%	0.7%
Professional - Computer and Mathematical Occupations	6.4%	13.8%	7.6%	7.4%	1.2%
Professional - Architecture and Engineering Occupations	7.0%	10.8%	8.8%	3.8%	1.8%
Professional - Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	2.5%	3.3%	2.4%	0.8%	-0.1%
Professional - Community and Social Services Occupations	3.0%	1.2%	2.5%	-1.8%	-0.5%
Professional - Legal Occupations	2.9%	2.9%	1.9%	0.0%	-1.0%
Professional - Education, Training, and Library Occupations	10.1%	6.2%	8.1%	-3.9%	-2.0%
Professional - Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	2.9%	3.0%	2.7%	0.1%	-0.2%
Professional - Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	4.4%	8.6%	5.8%	4.2%	1.4%
Service - Healthcare Support Occupations	0.2%	0.6%	0.2%	0.4%	0.0%

Table 2. Occupational distributions and overrepresentation by racial/ethnic group

continued

Service - Protective Service Occupations	2.7%	2.0%	3.6%	-0.7%	0.9%
Service - Food Preparation and Serving	0.9%	0.6%	1.2%	-0.3%	0.3%
Service - Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	0.6%	0.3%	0.9%	-0.3%	0.3%
Service - Personal Care and Service Occupations	0.7%	0.5%	1.3%	-0.2%	0.6%
Sales Occupations	12.3%	9.1%	9.1%	-3.2%	-3.2%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	5.1%	7.4%	6.2%	2.3%	1.1%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	-0.1%	0.1%
Construction Trades	1.5%	0.4%	0.7%	-1.1%	-0.8%
Extraction Workers	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers	1.4%	0.9%	1.6%	-0.5%	0.2%
Production Occupations	2.0%	1.1%	2.1%	-0.9%	0.1%
Transportation and Material Moving	2.4%	0.9%	2.3%	-1.5%	-0.1%
Military Specific	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%	-0.2%	-0.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Dissimilarity Index (D)				20.7	9.7

Table 3. Logistic Regression Predicting Likelihood of Choosing Occupations

AO fields	Chinese American		Japanese American	
	<i>B</i> (S.E.)	Exp(<i>B</i>)	<i>B</i> (S.E.)	Exp(<i>B</i>)
Computer and Mathematical				
Asian (=1, White=0)	.677 (.063)**	1.969	.166 (.088)	1.180
Age	.046 (.005)**	1.047	.047 (.006)**	1.048
Age, squared	-.001 (.000)**	.999	-.001 (.000)**	.999
Married, spouse present (=1, else=0)	-.073 (.015)**	.930	-.069 (.016)**	.933
Metropolitan (=1, non-metro=0)	.641 (.020)**	1.899	.642 (.020)**	1.901
Post-bachelor's degree (=1, bachelor's=0)	-.444 (.015)**	.641	-.442 (.015)**	.642
Homeowner (=1, non-homeowner=0)	.139 (.020)**	1.115	.140 (.020)**	1.151
Region (reference category: Northeast)				
Midwest (=1, else=0)	-.080 (.020)**	.923	-.077 (.020)**	.926
South (=1, else=0)	.055 (.018)**	1.057	.060 (.018)**	1.061
West (=1, else=0)	.109 (.019)**	1.115	.116 (.020)**	1.124
Constant	-3.609 (.115)**	.027	-3.631 (.116)**	.026
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical				
Asian (=1, White=0)	.757 (.077)**	2.133	.383 (.109)**	1.466
Age	-.019 (.007)**	.981	-.019 (.007)**	.982
Age, squared	.000 (.000)	1.000	.000 (.000)	1.000
Married, spouse present (=1, else=0)	-.030 (.019)	.971	-.031 (.019)	.969

Table 3. Logistic Regression Predicting Likelihood of Choosing Occupations continued

Metropolitan (=1, non-metro=0)	-.177 (.019)**	.838	-.177 (.019)**	.838
Post-bachelor's degree (=1, bachelor's=0)	1.379 (.016)**	3.973	1.373 (.017)**	3.947
Homeowner (=1, non-homeowner=0)	.228 (.026)**	1.256	.236 (.026)**	1.266
Region (reference category: Northeast)				
Midwest (=1, else=0)	.102 (.023)**	1.107	.099 (.023)**	1.105
South (=1, else=0)	.128 (.021)**	1.137	.128 (.021)**	1.136
West (=1, else=0)	.014 (.024)	1.014	.016 (.024)	1.016
Constant	-3.130 (.142)**	.044	-3.147 (.143)**	.043
Architecture and Engineering				
Asian (=1, White=0)	.446 (.068)**	1.561	.164 (.083)*	1.179
Age	.008 (.005)	1.009	.008 (.005)	1.008
Age, squared	.000 (.000)**	1.000	.000 (.000)**	1.000
Married, spouse present (=1, else=0)	.113 (.015)**	1.119	.112 (.015)**	1.119
Metropolitan (=1, non-metro=0)	.101 (.016)**	1.106	.101 (.016)**	1.107
Post-bachelor's degree (=1, bachelor's=0)	-.307 (.014)**	.736	-.309 (.014)**	.734
Homeowner (=1, non-homeowner=0)	.349 (.021)**	1.418	.348 (.021)**	1.417
Region (reference category: Northeast)				
Midwest (=1, else=0)	.213 (.019)**	1.238	.212 (.019)**	1.237
South (=1, else=0)	.162 (.018)**	1.176	.160 (.018)**	1.173
West (=1, else=0)	.359 (.019)**	1.432	.357 (.019)**	1.429
Constant	-3.058 (.110)**	.047	-3.042 (.110)**	.048

WO fields	Chinese American		Japanese American	
	<i>B</i> (S.E.)	Exp(<i>B</i>)	<i>B</i> (S.E.)	
Management				
Asian (=1, White=0)	-.221 (.058)**	.802		-.096 (.060)
Age	.145 (.003)**	1.156		.145 (.003)**
Age, squared	-.001 (.000)**	.999		-.001 (.000)**
Married, spouse present (=1, else=0)	.345 (.010)**	1.412		.346 (.010)**
Metropolitan (=1, non-metro=0)	.242 (.010)**	1.274		.243 (.010)**
Post-bachelor's degree (=1, bachelor's=0)	.028 (.008)**	1.029		.028 (.008)**
Homeowner (=1, non-homeowner=0)	.245 (.013)**	1.277		.243 (.013)**
Region (reference category: Northeast)				
Midwest (=1, else=0)	-.036 (.012)**	.964		-.037 (.012)**
South (=1, else=0)	.047 (.010)**	1.048		.047 (.010)**
West (=1, else=0)	-.006 (.012)	.994		-.007 (.012)
Constant	-5.362 (.076)**	.005		-5.362 (.076)**
Sales				
Asian (=1, White=0)	-.412 (.080)**	.662		-.357 (.087)**
Age	-.008 (.004)*	.992		-.008 (.004)*
Age, squared	.000 (.000)	1.000		.000 (.000)
Married, spouse present (=1, else=0)	.068 (.012)**	1.071		.068 (.012)**
Metropolitan (=1, non-metro=0)	.345 (.013)**	1.412		.345 (.013)**

Table 3. Logistic Regression Predicting Likelihood of Choosing Occupations

continued

Post-bachelor's degree (=1, bachelor's=0)	-1.118 (.013)**	.327	-1.117 (.013)**
Homeowner (=1, non-homeowner=0)	.137 (.016)**	1.147	.138 (.016)**
Region (reference category: Northeast)			
Midwest (=1, else=0)	-.053 (.014)**	.948	-.054 (.014)**
South (=1, else=0)	-.050 (.013)**	.951	-.051 (.013)**
West (=1, else=0)	-.200 (.015)**	.818	-.202 (.015)**
Constant	-1.794 (.086)**	.166	-1.791 (.086)**
Education, Training, and Library			
Asian (=1, White=0)	-.774 (.105)**	.461	-.126 (.092)
Age	-.110 (.005)**	.896	-.110 (.005)**
Age, squared	.001 (.000)**	1.001	.001 (.000)**
Married, spouse present (=1, else=0)	-.111 (.014)**	.895	-.112 (.014)**
Metropolitan (=1, non-metro=0)	-.629 (.013)**	.533	-.629 (.013)**
Post-bachelor's degree (=1, bachelor's=0)	1.327 (.011)**	3.770	1.325 (.011)**
Homeowner (=1, non-homeowner=0)	.017 (.017)	1.018	.018 (.017)
Region (reference category: Northeast)			
Midwest (=1, else=0)	-.021 (.016)	.980	-.021 (.016)
South (=1, else=0)	-.161 (.015)**	.851	-.161 (.015)**

Table 3. Logistic Regression Predicting Likelihood of Choosing Occupations

continued

West (=1, else=0)	-0.017 (.017)	.983	-0.017 (.017)
Constant	-0.195 (.100)	.823	-0.190 (.100)

a. *p≤.05; **p≤.01

b. Samples: U.S.-born male wage and salary earners aged 25-64 who have bachelor's degrees and beyond but were not enrolled in school during the survey year.

c. For the column of Chinese American, the samples are White or Chinese only

d. For the column of Japanese American, the samples are White or Japanese only

e. Omitted category: White

Table 4. Comparisons of Wage and Salary Income by Occupation

	Median wage and salary income			Mean wage and salary income		
	Non-Hispanic White	Chinese American	Japanese American	Non-Hispanic White	Chinese American	Japanese American
AO fields						
Professional - Computer and Mathematical Occupations	75,893	76,905	81,144	81,550	79,168	90,115
Professional - Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	82,779	87,953	101,191	122,476	134,524	121,444
Professional - Architecture and Engineering Occupations	78,640	81,144	83,988	84,299	85,517	85,341
WO fields						
Management Occupations	91,963	96,131	86,553	116,828	101,647	106,941
Sales Occupations	70,324	50,595	60,714	94,392	71,346	87,007
Professional - Education, Training, and Library Occupations	48,633	41,488	51,824	52,239	45,897	55,651

Table 5. OLS Regression Predicting Wage in Each Occupation

AO fields	Chinese American		Japanese American	
	<i>B</i>	S.E.	<i>B</i>	S.E.
Computer and Mathematical				
Asian (=1, White=0)	.067*	.033	.014	.048
Age	.098**	.003	.098**	.003
Age, squared	-.001**	.000	-.001**	.000
Married, spouse present (=1, else=0)	.131**	.008	.131**	.008
Metropolitan (=1, non-metro=0)	.212**	.011	.213**	.011
Post-bachelor's degree (=1, bachelor's=0)	.132**	.008	.129**	.008
Homeowner (=1, non-homeowner=0)	.139**	.011	.139**	.011
Region (reference category: Northeast)				
Midwest (=1, else=0)	-.136**	.011	-.136**	.011
South (=1, else=0)	-.065**	.010	-.066**	.010
West (=1, else=0)	-.039**	.011	-.040**	.011
Constant	8.704**	.063	8.700**	.063
R square	.117		.116	
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical				
Asian (=1, White=0)	.151**	.056	-.057	.081
Age	.171**	.005	.169**	.005
Age, squared	-.002**	.000	-.002**	-.000

Table 5. OLS Regression Predicting Wage in Each Occupation

continued

Married, spouse present (=1, else=0)	.188**	.015	.188**	.015
Metropolitan (=1, non-metro=0)	.156**	.014	.157**	.014
Post-bachelor's degree (=1, bachelor's=0)	.603**	.012	.604**	.012
Homeowner (=1, non-homeowner=0)	.214**	.020	.210**	.020
Region (reference category: Northeast)				
Midwest (=1, else=0)	-.029	.018	-.032	.018
South (=1, else=0)	-.047**	.016	-.050**	.016
West (=1, else=0)	-.057**	.018	-.060**	.018
Constant	6.662**	.111	6.702**	.111
R square	.223		.222	

Architecture and Engineering

Asian (=1, White=0)	.033	.032	-.046	.040
Age	.085**	.002	.085**	.002
Age, squared	-.001**	.000	-.001**	.000
Married, spouse present (=1, else=0)	.131**	.008	.133**	.008
Metropolitan (=1, non-metro=0)	.155**	.008	.155**	.008
Post-bachelor's degree (=1, bachelor's=0)	.124**	.007	.125**	.007
Homeowner (=1, non-homeowner=0)	.112**	.010	.113**	.010

Region (reference category: Northeast)

Midwest (=1, else=0)	-.042**	.009	-.042**	.009
South (=1, else=0)	.009	.009	.008	.009
West (=1, else=0)	.124**	.009	.039**	.009
Constant	8.923**	.052	8.922**	.052

R square .138 .138

WO fields	Chinese American		Japanese American	
	<i>B</i>	S.E.		<i>B</i>
Management				
Asian (=1, White=0)	-.007	.037		-.075*
Age	.134**	.002		.134**
Age, squared	-.001**	.000		-.001**
Married, spouse present (=1, else=0)	.192**	.007		.192**
Metropolitan (=1, non-metro=0)	.308**	.007		.308**
Post-bachelor's degree (=1, bachelor's=0)	.131**	.005		.131**
Homeowner (=1, non-homeowner=0)	.199**	.009		.198**
Region (reference category: Northeast)				
Midwest (=1, else=0)	-.128**	.007		-.128**
South (=1, else=0)	-.078**	.007		-.078**
West (=1, else=0)	-.044**	.007		-.045**
Constant	7.789**	.050		7.784**

Table 5. OLS Regression Predicting Wage in Each Occupation
continued

R square	.116		.116
Sales			
Asian (=1, White=0)	-.170*	.067	-.042
Age	.147**	.003	.147**
Age, squared	-.002**	.000	-.002**
Married, spouse present (=1, else=0)	.358**	.010	.357**
Metropolitan (=1, non-metro=0)	.353**	.011	.353**
Post-bachelor's degree (=1, bachelor's=0)	.145**	.011	.145**
Homeowner (=1, non-homeowner=0)	.265**	.013	.267**
Region (reference category: Northeast)			
Midwest (=1, else=0)	-.171**	.012	-.170**
South (=1, else=0)	-.121**	.011	-.120**
West (=1, else=0)	-.094**	.012	-.092**
Constant	7.453**		7.456
R square	.132		.132

Education, Training, and Library			
Asian (=1, White=0)	-.044	.080	.114
Age	.127**	.003	.127
Age, squared	-.001**	.000	-.001
Married, spouse present (=1, else=0)	.120**	.010	.120
Metropolitan (=1, non-metro=0)	.142**	.009	.141
Post-bachelor's degree (=1, bachelor's=0)	.296**	.009	.295
Homeowner (=1, non-homeowner=0)	.128**	.013	.129
Region (reference category: Northeast)			
Midwest (=1, else=0)	-.108**	.012	-.108
South (=1, else=0)	-.085**	.011	-.086
West (=1, else=0)	-.041	.012	-.041
Constant	7.576**	.074	7.587
R square	.098		.097

a. * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$

b. Samples: U.S.-born male wage and salary earners aged 25-64 who have bachelor's degrees and beyond but were not enrolled in school during the survey year.

c. For the column of Chinese American, the samples are White or Chinese only

d. For the column of Japanese American, the samples are White or Japanese only

e. Omitted category: White

**Jacob Riis and Double Consciousness:
The Documentary/Ethnic “I” in
*How the Other Half Lives***

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“Contradictory” is the watchword in scholarship on Danish-American photojournalist Jacob Riis. “Wildly contradictory, morally schizophrenic”: so Keith Gandal describes Riis’ work (18). “A deeply contradictory figure [...] a conservative activist and a skillful entertainer who presented controversial ideas in a compelling but ultimately comforting manner”: such is the assessment of Riis offered by Bonnie Yochelson and Daniel Czitrom (xv). “The typical Victorian moralist,” but also the Progressive—so Tom Buk-Swienty proclaims him (239, XIII).

These assertions point up perhaps the central issue in the relatively small amount of scholarly work on Riis since his rediscovery by Alexander Alland in 1947. How does one resolve the contradictions, in his photos and texts, between protest of the plight of the ethnic urban poor and acceptance of pejorative nativist assumptions about them? Until the 1980s, scholars usually did so by emphasizing the apparent haziness of Riis’ thought.

According to Roy Lubove in *The Progressives and the Slums*, Riis' social theorizing was "unsystematic[...] almost impressionistic"(49); Charles Madison, editor of the 1970 Dover edition of *How the Other Half Lives*, calls Riis' sociological thought "relatively unsophisticated and[...] limited"(vii). To these scholars, Riis seems oblivious to the conflicting portrayals of the poor in his works.

Recent commentators have sometimes been harsher, seeing the tensions as reflections of Riis' systematic efforts to project himself as spokesperson for the emerging American middle class. Scholars such as Maren Stange, Sally Stein, and Gandal regard Riis' work as canny exercises in definition by opposition: by portraying the ethnic tenement dwellers from the smugly condescending standpoint of the American middle class, the writer affirms their status, authority, and Christian charity, and-most importantly--his own affiliation with them. For Maren Stange, Riis is the "consummate publicist" for the American *bourgeoisie*, eager to ally himself with them (5). Sally Stein is more blunt, portraying Riis as "one of a long succession of professional informers manufacturing vast amounts and kinds of information [about the urban poor] to assuage and intensify [middle class] fantasies" (10). Gandal's conception of Riis presents a variation on this theme. He describes Riis' social vision as the mixture of two opposed but complementary ethical approaches: one, the traditional Protestant commitment to moral principle maintained through discipline (personal as well as institutional); the other, a modern, technology-and-media-based promotion of "spectacle," the American public's emerging preoccupation with looking at others and being looked at themselves. In other words, tenement dwellers' eagerness to be seen, reflected in their frequent desire to be photographed, might well be employed to promote their own moral development. While this conception of Riis treats his contradictions in more sophisticated and perhaps more plausible ways

than do those of Stange or Stein, Gandal still perceives Riis in essentially the same fashion as these other scholars--as a writer eager to promote the middle class and his membership of it. If earlier commentary portrays Riis as a *naif*, unaware of his own contradictions, these contemporary scholars depict him as a *bourgeois* assimilationist.

While both approaches offer important information, both represent Riis in terms that are rather simple and narrow intellectually, psychologically, and, above all, rhetorically; terms that do not account adequately for the individual and his work. Perhaps the major flaw in both is the overly simple reading of the "I" who speaks for Riis throughout his works. Proponents of both conceptions assume that Riis, in all his first-person commentary on the tenement poor, is oblivious to the ambiguities in his own self-portrayal. From this perspective, Riis' narrative "I" lacks any capacity for self-detachment: his "I" speaks merely as Jacob Riis, in an ingenuous fashion free of conscious artifice, dissimulation, ambiguity, and, certainly, of irony. Whatever tensions or oppositions scholars find are explained as products of his sloppy thinking or of his pandering to the middle class. So, when this "I" speaks of himself and his polite audience as "we" in contrast to the "they" of "the other half," both sides assume that Riis allies himself consistently and whole-heartedly with his audience.

Yet this premise may itself be ingenuous, for several reasons. For one thing, the documentary context from which Riis' "I" addresses us--a context which, as William Stott has noted, *Other Half* was instrumental in establishing (30)--operates through the conscious interplay of tensions and contradictions. Stott points out that "documentary," as idea and as genre, melds two opposing meanings:

The first, the dictionary meaning, we use when we speak of 'documentary proof' and 'legal documents,' of 'documentary history' and 'historical documents.'

This ‘documentary’ has been defined as ‘presenting facts objectively and without editorializing and inserting fictional matter [...]’ (5-6)

This first type of “document” Stott terms “official.” In opposition to it, though often combined with it, is the “human” document. This latter sort “is not objective,” notes Stott, “but thoroughly personal,” for the human document “carries and communicates feeling, the raw material of drama” (6-7). The most powerful documentaries combine the two meanings, rousing “human” feeling *via* “official” detachment.

Assuming that Riis understood, to at least some extent, these ambiguities implicit in the documentary genre he helped originate, he must also have realized that they could be most effectively employed in the narrative voice, the “I” whom Riis creates to carry us through the tenements of New York City and to offer commentary.¹ If this “I” is not simply the sloppily thinking Progressive or the middle class assimilationist scholars have perceived, then exactly who is he? Whom does he represent, and how does he regard his subject and his audience? The answers to these questions require an examination of the relations between documentary and autobiography in *Other Half*, for the “I” who addresses us does so from both contexts, though the documentary context is the more apparent. But by embedding his autobiographical “I” within the documentary context, Riis may actually be freer to manipulate his self-portrayal than authorial *personae* in conventional autobiographies.

All involved will agree the speaker is some species of the author himself. In taking us on guided tours of various tenement districts and offering firsthand accounts of his own tenement experiences, this narrative “I” repeatedly indicates that the pronoun refers to Jacob Riis, police reporter. If the author’s conscious intention is, through his narrative voice, to meld “documentary proof” with “human” feeling, the feelings he wishes to rouse inevitably have their origins in himself-in his own

experiences and his thoughts and feelings about them. In other words, to understand most fully the “documentary” tensions and contradictions of the “I” who addresses us in *Other Half*, we must approach this speaker as an autobiographical “I,” as a particular rendering of Riis himself, and consider his manipulations of self-portrayal from that angle.

By the time Riis published *Other Half*, in 1890, he had acquired firsthand a profound understanding of ethnic relations in late 19th century America. When the young Dane had arrived, in 1870, newcomers were entering the country in numbers unprecedented—ten million between 1860 and 1890 (Jones 179). Response to these “aliens” was becoming more and more hostile; as Roy Lubove has noted, nativism in later 19th century America was “pervasive” (61). A nativist frenzy erupted after Chicago’s Haymarket riots; Slavic strikebreakers in the Pennsylvania coalfields were shot by state militia; in New Orleans, eleven Italians accused of killing a police superintendent were lynched; New York and Pennsylvania excluded all immigrants from employment in state and local public works; Idaho prohibited private corporations from hiring any “alien” who would not declare his intention to become an American citizen (Higham 87-97, Jones 177-229).

Twenty years’ immersion in this ethnic maelstrom would make Riis a savvy and sensitive commentator on the immigrant’s plight. Like many newcomers, he spent his first years in America eking out a hand-to-mouth existence, taking whatever work he could find—carpentering, hoeing cucumbers, peddling books and flatirons. When there was no work, he starved, and found sleeping quarters wherever he could—in doorways, the police station lodging house, even a churchyard. As Riis’ autobiography, *The Making of an American*, amply reveals, the young Dane repeatedly faced the prejudice and ill treatment so many immigrants encountered: the spoiled meat given to Riis and the other passengers in steerage on the voyage over; the policeman who uses

his boot and nightstick to roust the sleeping Riis from a Chatham Square doorway throughout his first winter in America; another policeman who throws him out of a police station lodging house for reporting a theft; the mill foreman who twice reduces Riis' pay for planing doors too quickly—"he did not want his men to make over \$10 [*sic*] a week, he said; it was not good for them"--the "Yankee businessman" who refuses to invest in Riis' scheme for devices called "window reflectors," then produces them himself (*American* 40-102). Even after landing the reporting job with the New York *Tribune*, Riis, the immigrant, was still subjected to nativist bias. Reporters from the other New York papers immediately labeled him "the Dutchman" and joined forces to keep him from getting stories. As Riis recalls, "[t]hey hailed the coming of 'the Dutchman' with shouts of derision and decided [...] to finish me off while I was new" (*American* 200). From these experiences and many others described in Riis' autobiography, he learned how harsh the New World could be to its newcomers. In the process, the Dane also discovered the flimsiness of his own ethnic biases and of nativist stereotypes.

Like many Danes, Riis harbored a particular dislike for Germans, because Germany had taken Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark in the late 1840s. "I always walk with a chip on my shoulder," Riis would write in 1910, "for I cannot forget the Great Robbery [*sic*] of my childhood" (qtd. in Ware 264). But experience in America provided periodic correctives to his nationalist urges. On the trip over, when rotten meat was served to Riis and the other passengers in steerage, the young Dane found himself allied with "a big, explosive German" named Adler, a former officer of the Prussian reserves, in leading a protest. (*American* 40). After landing, the two became not only bunkmates in the Pennsylvania coalfields, but good friends. Riis recalled how, when the two were working together in the mines, a stretch of roof collapsed; Dane and German ran for the surface

“holding each other’s hands as though we were not men and miners, but frightened children in the dark” (*American* 46). Adler’s friendship softened Riis’ anti-German feeling; some months later, as a laborer in a Buffalo lumberyard, he found himself taking up for some fellow workers who were newly-arrived German immigrants exploited by their “tyrant foreman.” His protests got him fired (*American* 90). After Riis became a reporter and lecturer, the ideas of German education theorist Friedrich Froebel became essential to his own thought; he relied heavily Froebel’s *kindergarten* concept in promoting education of immigrant children (*American* 312-314). Froebel was, in Riis’ words, “the great kindergartner who gave us the best legacy of the nineteenth century to its successor” (qtd. In Lubove 78). Clearly, he learned to distance himself from his ancestral anger.

If Riis was prompted to question his own “Danish” biases, he came to question and to distrust ethnic assumptions prevalent in America as well. Experience had shown him, time and again, how mistaken Americans could be about Danish immigrants; he learned that Americans could be just as mistaken about other ethnic groups. Anti-Semitic feeling ran high in the country in the late 19th century, as many Jewish immigrants arrived, often from Eastern Europe; yet Riis established and maintained strong relations with Jewish individuals, and proclaimed as much. In his police reporting, Riis employed as his chief assistant a young Jewish journalist, Max Fischel. The two developed a strong and lasting personal relationship: to Riis, Max came to be “the image of his younger self” (Lane 70). Riis also knew and worked with Felix Adler, a particularly active member of New York City’s Tenement House Commission, who was both German and Jewish. In *The Making of an American*, Riis makes a point of praising the “Christian” compassion embodied by Adler, the “Jew or heretic, take it whichever way you please” (247). In emphasizing Adler’s “Christian” virtue, Riis calls attention to the hypocrisy and the anti-Semitism of some of the “Christians” in his audience: clearly,

the anti-Semitic “you” whom he sarcastically addresses operates from mistaken assumptions. He memorializes his bonds to both men at the end of *The Making of An American*: in acknowledging the friends and fellow advocates with whom he had worked for social reform— notable activists such as Jane Addams, Lyman Abbott, and Charles Parkhurst—Riis includes Adler and Max; the latter he calls the “trustworthy friend of the years in Mulberry Street who never said “can’t once-you always knew a way” (435). Perhaps the most telling reflection of Riis’ ideas regarding anti-Semitism emerges in his comment, in *American*, on the Dreyfuss affair. Recalling his failed attempts to return to Europe to fight the Germans in the Franco-Prussian War, he admits that, looking back, he actually takes satisfaction in the German victory. If the French could condone such flagrant anti-Semitism as Dreyfuss suffered, they did not deserve to keep Alsace-Lorraine. “The country which[...]is still capable of the Dreyfuss infamy, was not fit to hold what was its own. I am glad now that I did not go [...]” (65-66). In light of Riis’ Danish hostility to Germany, this statement against anti-Semitism could scarcely be stronger.

To American prejudice against Blacks and Native Americans, he had similar reactions. Through Theodore Roosevelt, Riis developed a working relationship with Booker T. Washington; the two joined forces periodically to publicize the predicament of Black Americans. In September, 1904, Riis took Washington on a tour of New York City’s East Side; the following February, Riis spent two days at Tuskegee Institute, and spoke there on the need for better living and working conditions among Black Americans (Lane 176). The plight of Native Americans was brought home to Riis through his friendship with General Ely Parker. A Tonawanda Seneca, Parker had been U. S. Grant’s personal secretary during the Civil War, and later the first Native American Commissioner of Indian Affairs. By the time Riis knew him, in the 1880s and 90s, Parker had been reduced to serving as a clerk in

the New York City Police Department. Riis found the old man compelling, not because of his military service, but because of his identity as a Native American:

It was not General Parker, however, but Donehogawa, Chief of the Six Nations [...] that appealed to me[....] There was about him an infinite pathos, penned up there in his old age among the tenements of Mulberry Street on the pay of a second-rate clerk, that never ceased to amaze me. (*American* 244)

Riis' comment suggests that he associates Parker's loss of stature with the plight of Native Americans generally. Though they constituted only a small portion of the inhabitants of the New York City tenements, Ely Parker's people remained on Riis' mind; his photos of the tenement poor include that of an Iroquois, Mountain Eagle, and his family (*Other Half* 17).

Knowing people of color--from immigrant tenement dwellers to civic leaders of Jewish, Black, and Native American origins--describing immigrants for the respectable classes, and, of course, being an immigrant himself, Riis acquired the understanding and detachment to move beyond the pejorative stereotypes prevalent among many Americans; he saw the immigrant as an individual capable of complete humanity. Riis' comments on the findings of the New York City Tenement House Commission of 1884 reflect his own sense of the fully human status of the immigrant:

[I]n 1884, came the Tenement House Commission which first brought home to us the fact that the people living in the tenements were "better than the houses." That was a big white milestone on a dreary road. From that time on we hear of "souls" in the slums. The property end of it had held the stage up till then, and in a kind of self defence, I suppose, we had had to forget that the people there had souls.

Because you couldn't very well count souls as chattel yielding so much income to the owner: it would not be polite toward the Lord [...]. (*American* 246)

Being an immigrant "soul" who had himself struggled to become "better than the houses," then watching and reporting on fellow immigrants caught up in the same struggle, Riis had learned the power that environment can exert on human character. "[W]e are creatures of environment," he proclaimed; "a man everywhere is largely what his neighbors and children think him to be" (*A Ten Years' War* 1). The term "everywhere" is of particular note; it generalizes, universalizes the "we." Whether "we" are Anglo, Chinese, Irish, Jewish, Black, or Native American, "we" are largely the products of our surroundings. In Riis' ideas of character formation, heredity, including ethnicity, becomes not only a relatively insignificant factor, but a dangerous notion, since it promotes ethnocentric assumptions that produce prejudice and exploitation. Heredity is, in Riis' words, "the arch-enemy of hope and effort" (*American* 413).

In light of his belief in the power of environment, one understands the strong, sustained emphasis Riis gives to children in his writing and his photos; children are, after all, most susceptible to their surroundings. "The bad environment becomes the heredity of the next generation," he asserts (*A Ten Years' War* 1). "[T]he rescue of the children is the key to the problem of city poverty [...] a character may be formed where to reform it would be a hopeless task" (*Other Half* 143). Throughout his public career, Riis advocated loudly for improvements in children's formative environments: improvements in tenement design and construction, more schools, more parks and playgrounds. In 1906, he helped found The Federated Boys' Clubs of America; in 1910, he served as one of the organizers of the Boy Scouts of America, and addressed the organizers' first meeting (Lane 187).

Unfortunately, when *How the Other Half Lives*

first appeared, the impact of environment on human development was not widely acknowledged. As Gandal notes:

Before the 1890s sociologists had not begun to divide racial influence from the forces of culture and environment; they had not questioned the popular Larmarckian and Spencerian ideas that acquired traits could be inherited. (154)

Thus, many Americans maintained their belief in heredity and the ethnocentric assumptions that followed from it. For them, the growing immigrant presence, particularly from Southern and Eastern European cultures, seemed to confirm these assumptions. The newcomers from Italy, Poland, and Russia appeared especially alien and distinctly inferior.

Persuading a largely hostile audience to take a sympathetic viewpoint toward the immigrant would be a daunting task--particularly for a writer who was an immigrant himself. It would require not only a sophisticated awareness of the audience---especially of its ethnic assumptions--but a refined understanding of the writer-audience dynamic and how it operates--more specifically, how it might be manipulated. Above all, the task would require the very careful handling of the speaker, the "I" addressing the audience.

Riis was introduced to the rhetorical basics of attracting and holding an audience before he entered journalism. Peddling furniture, Dickens novels and flatirons throughout New York and Pennsylvania in 1872-73 (*American* 101-125), the young immigrant learned that the salesman--like the reporter or the social activist--must appeal to an audience in terms of their own needs. Addressing consumer appetites would prepare him to speak to people's more profound need for self-validation, perhaps by (apparently) affirming the audience's belief in its superiority, by appealing to its

humanitarian urges, or both. Another business venture furthered his rhetorical education. After dabbling briefly in newspaper work in the mid-1870s, Riis purchased a stereopticon, or magic lantern, and embarked on an advertising scheme, traveling the length of Long Island, giving “open-air exhibitions.” These were comprised of “ads for Brooklyn merchants [...] cunningly interlarded with the very beautiful colored views of which I had a fine collection” (*American* 184).² The experience would be crucial in sharpening Riis’ understanding of the dynamic between presenter and audience. Organizing the ads and “colored views,” writing the accompanying commentary, and delivering it before a group, Riis faced a complex rhetorical situation: he now had to manage images, words, and self-presentation in a public venue. The stereopticon venture “was to play an important part in the real-life work that was waiting for me,” he remembered; “without the knowledge which the possession of it gave me, that work could not have been carried out as it was” (*American* 181).

Once he was hired by the New York *Tribune*, the young Dane applied and enlarged his rhetorical knowledge in a far trickier context: now the immigrant was a police reporter describing tenement immigrants for the polite classes. In defining a voice, a *persona* to present to middle- and upper-class American readers, Riis knew that his own ethnicity would be a prominent factor. When he sold furniture, books, and flatirons to American customers, or ran the stereopticon shows for American audiences, it had been tangential; now, his ethnicity became integral. After all, Riis himself had lived the immigrant experience of the people he described. If he wished to depict his fellow immigrants in sympathetic fashion for a largely nativist audience, he would have to be very, very careful in managing his own self-portrayal. The autobiographical “I” who spoke for Jacob Riis would have to be ambiguous, “contradictory”—a shape-shifter employing the complexities of his predicament to his

own rhetorical advantage.

As Riis was to learn, and as recent scholars have affirmed, the possibilities for manipulation in autobiographical writing are considerable. The autobiographical first-person narrator cannot be taken at face value, so to speak, but instead as purposeful “de-facement” as Paul de Man put it (69) or as “displacement” in the words of Sandra Adell (60). The writer of autobiography, with his or her own psychological, social, and political agendas, inevitably portrays the self with an eye to these concerns, as well as to the formal requirements of narrative and to narrator-audience relations. While it is simple and convenient to assume that the writer’s life produces and determines the autobiographical account, De Man posits the reverse possibility:

can we not suggest, with equal justice, that the autobiographical project may itself produce and determine the life and that whatever the writer *does* is in fact governed by the[...] demands of self-portraiture and thus determined in all its respects by the resources of his medium? [...D]oes the referent determine the figure, or is it the other way round: is the illusion of reference not a correlation of the structure of the figure, that is to say no longer clearly and simply a referent at all but something more akin to fiction? (69)

In light of this possibility, any “I” who allegedly speaks as the author becomes suspect.

The suspicion must intensify when the issue of race or ethnicity is introduced. For the ethnic American, like the black American, inevitably feels at odds with Anglo-American society, and is plagued by the disturbing awareness of his own otherness, the phenomenon W. E. B. Du Bois termed “double consciousness:” the peculiar sensation [...] of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape

of a world that looks on in amuse contempt and pity. (8) Defined by the *status quo* as inferior other, the self becomes, in Du Bois's words, "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one... body" (8-9). Emerging as it does from the collision of the Black or ethnic American's heightened sense of his own humanity with the middle and upper classes' diminished sense of it, double consciousness may be regarded as the product of what Mikhail Bakhtin calls "heteroglossia," the ever-present tension among ideas, values, and beliefs within a society, reflected in the dynamic of its language.

According to Bakhtin, the constant give-and-take over all kinds of social, political, and ethical issues ideologically charges or energizes language, as collision of one word with another, opposing word on the same topic generates dialogical relations between words and their referents as objects, and between words themselves. As Bakhtin puts it:

any concrete discourse (utterance) finds the object at which it was directed already as it were overlain with qualifications, open to dispute, charged with value, already enveloped in an obscuring mist--or, on the contrary, by the light of alien words that have already been spoken about it. It is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgements and accents. The word, directed toward its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgements and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group; and all this may crucially shape discourse, may leave a trace in all its semantic layers, may complicate its expression and influence its entire stylistic profile. ("Discourse" 276)

For the Black or the ethnic American, perhaps no realm of discourse is more "dialogically agitated and

tension-filled” than that pertaining to his or her racial or ethnic background; and as a referent within America’s “heteroglot” arena of racial and ethnic discourse, the Black or the ethnic American must inevitably confront double consciousness, the dialogical sense of self defined as “other.”

Yet, if the Black or the ethnic American is the victim of double consciousness, he is, as the writer, its beneficiary, for it provides a species of inspiration. As Werner Sollors notes, this conflict within ethnic consciousness prompts ethnic writers to engage their audiences in all sorts of literary and rhetorical games:

Double consciousness, far from stifling American ethnic authors, alerts them to the possibilities of playfulness in establishing their voice. Raising and thwarting initiation expectations, feeding the gullibility of readers and then pulling the rug from under their feet, or ironically undercutting the image of a presumably stable relationship between in-group and out-group are among the weapons in the rich arsenal of ethnic writers. (252)

When relations between writer and audience become as tenuous and shifty as this, the writer’s self-portrayal becomes particularly suspect. If, as suggested earlier, the autobiographical “I” must always be taken with several grains of salt, perhaps the ethnic writer’s autobiographical “I” must be taken with several pounds, because double consciousness will prompt the ethnic writer to don various guises, to speak in various voices. He will, in Sollors’ words, “put on the ethnic costume here, sound an American voice there. Writer, narrator, or character may begin to resemble a ‘chameleon,’ a crucial term in ethnic discourse” (251). In adopting multiple guises, speaking in multiple voices, the ethnic writer makes his text and his self-representation, as Bakhtin would term it, “polyvocal” and “dialogical.” The victim/

beneficiary of double consciousness takes “heteroglot” ethnic discourse and turns its dialogicality to his own ends—he creates for himself a *persona* or *personae* for articulating his shifting narrative and ideological stances.

These stratagems became second nature to Jacob Riis. In his twelve years of police reporting previous to publishing *Other Half*, the Danish immigrant learned the rhetorical tricks of the documentary/autobiographical/ethnic trade which Stott, Deman, Sollors, and Bakhtin describe. Such a speaker, lacing monologic, “authoritative” discourse with dialogic assertions of ethnic double consciousness, is indeed “contradictory.” Nevertheless, as we have seen, many scholars have taken the monologic, authoritative facets of the Riis *persona* to be dominant. They would agree with Gandal’s assertion that Riis, in his books and lectures, speaks simply “as a member of the professional middle class” (144 note 19). Yet this argument denies any influence to Riis’ Danish heritage or to his twenty years’ immigrant experience previous to the appearance of *Other Half*, six of which were spent in the same brutal poverty faced by many newly arrived. This is, nevertheless, the position that Professor Gandal, explicitly, and others, implicitly, have taken: “Riis’s immigrant status and initial poverty in America should not cloud the issue,” Gandal proclaims; “by the time he produced his books, he was no longer a part of the lower-class socioethnic community which he passed through [...]” (144 note 19). In terms of socioeconomic fact, the assertion is certainly true; if read in terms of the experiences’ psychological and ideological impact on Riis, it is highly tenuous.

No one can deny that *How the Other Half Lives* often mimics the prevailing middle- and upper-class tendencies to exoticize the tenements or to demonize them, to make them gamely alluring dens of iniquity or dangerous nests of moral and political anarchy, or both. In these assertions of the *status quo*, Riis’ *persona* becomes the voice for Bakhtin’s “authoritative discourse”; that is, the

assertion of “authority as such, or the authoritativeness of tradition, of generally acknowledged truths, of the official line and other similar authorities (“Discourse” 344). In the lines that follow, describing the social and political unrest smouldering in the tenements, the speaker’s alliance with the economic and legal authority of the middle- and upper-classes and his detachment from the tenements seems complete:

Crowding all the lower ward, wherever business leaves a foot of ground unclaimed, strung along both rivers, like ball and chain tied to the foot of every street, and filling Harlem with their restless pent-up multitudes, they [the tenements] hold in their clutch the wealth and business of New York, hold them at their mercy in the day of mob-rule and wrath. The bullet-proof shutters, the stacks of hand-grenades, and the Gatling guns of the Sub-Treasury are tacit admissions of the fact, and of the quality of mercy expected. (*Other Half* 177)

Here the speaker’s concern with maintaining the social, political, and economic power of his polite audience appears straightforward, unabashed ; he sounds as alarmed at the impending apocalypse, “the day of mob-rule and wrath,” as he wishes his middle- and upper-class readers to be.

Authoritative discourse such as this is ever present in *Other Half*. But, over the course of the text, the speaker’s relations to it become highly malleable. He may, as in the above passage, embrace it completely; or he may adopt a distanced, neutral stance. He may even oppose authority outright-or he may blend various stances. Such rhetorical tricks derive from the double consciousness Riis himself acquired in struggling with his own conflicted situation as an immigrant who became a journalist covering immigrants for the “natives.” Discovering what could and could not be said, at least explicitly, to an American audience

would draw Riis to engage in these species of rhetorical gamesmanship: if one could not protest overtly, one could embed protest within apparent accommodation. This discovery provided the foundation for Riis' rhetorical strategies, and it was the fundamental lesson he offered to a young cub reporter named Lincoln Steffens.³ Guiding the novice through the halls of a police station full of Jewish strikers whom the authorities had beaten and arrested, immigrants whose plight the city newspapers refused to address honestly, the veteran revealed how double consciousness can lead to rhetorical tricks:

'I'll tell you what to do while you are learning our ways up here; you hang around this office every morning, watch the broken heads brought in, and as the prisoners are discharged, ask them for their stories. *No paper will print them*, but you yourself might as well see and hear how strikes are broken by the police.' (Steffens 206-207; emphasis mine)

If newspapers will not step beyond the boundaries of authoritative discourse in their portrayals of the immigrant, then the journalist seeking to protest is obliged to operate somehow within it: to manipulate it, twist it, to employ it ironically.

In playing off of authoritative discourse in these various fashions, Riis' *persona* engages in the type of expression Bakhtin terms "hybrid construction." This is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages,' two semantic and axiological belief systems[...T]here is no formal--compositional and syntactic--boundary between these utterances, styles, languages, belief systems; the division of voices and languages takes place within the limits of a single syntactic whole, often within the limits of a single sentence ("Discourse" 304-305).

Such “hybridization” enables Riis, as ethnic writer, to employ the “authoritative” discourse his polite readers accept, but to manipulate it so that he may, to employ another of Bakhtin’s terms, “refract” his own particular meaning. In other words, Riis’ speaker adopts the assumptions, values, beliefs, and above all, the discourse of his middle- and upper-class audience, but he does so to, in Bakhtin’s words, “speak indirectly, in a refracted way” (“Discourse” 327). As Bakhtin explains the concept, “refraction” enables the prose writer to employ discourses that are in varying degrees “alien” to him, for the sake of expressing his own ideas:

[A] prose writer can distance himself from the language of his own work[...]. He can make use of language without wholly giving himself up to it, he may treat it as semi-alien or completely alien to himself, while compelling language to serve all his own intentions. The author does not speak in a given language (from which he distances himself to a greater or lesser degree), but he speaks, as it were, *through* language, a language that has somehow more or less materialized, become, objectivized, that he merely ventriloquates[...]. The prose writer makes use of words that are already populated with social interactions of others and compels them to serve his own new intentions, to serve a second master. Therefore the intentions of the prose writer are refracted, and refracted *at different angles* depending on the degree to which the refracted, heteroglot languages he deals with are socially-ideologically alien, already embodied and already objectivized. (“Discourse” 299-300)

Refraction, then, creates a quality of “double-voicedness” in prose, as the writer’s intentions, embedded in the particular discourse he employs, emerge and compete with those implicit in that discourse. In ethnic writing like Riis’, such effects as refraction and double-

voicedness are products of double-consciousness, of the writer's sense of himself as socially-defined Other, and are in large part responsible for the "chameleon"-like quality which Sollors finds in so much ethnic writing (25).

Throughout *How the Other Half Lives*, Riis' *persona* constantly changes his colors. In the passage that follows, the speaker, with the same air of "authoritative" condescension he adopts in the previous excerpt, describes a Chinatown "Joss House," a temple for the worship of Joss, a Chinese deity, which serves also as a communal gaming hall. With heavy irony, the speaker compliments the pragmatism of "these people" in so conveniently blending their desires for salvation and prosperity--but then he abruptly broadens his criticism:

The practical way in which these people combine worship with business is certainly admirable. I was told that the scrawl covering the wall of both sides of a shrine stood for the names of the pillars of the church or club--the Joss House is both--that they might have their reward in this world, no matter what happened to them in the next. There was another inscription overhead that needed no interpreter. In familiar English letters, copied bodily from the trade dollar, was the sentiment: "In God We Trust." The priest pointed to it with undisguised pride and attempted an explanation, from which I gathered that the inscription was intended as a diplomatic courtesy, a delicate international compliment to the "Melican Joss," the almighty dollar. (*Other Half* 82)

As the speaker shifts his irony from Chinese greed to American greed, the reader may sense that this speaker is indeed double-voiced, chameleon-like: rhetorically, the passage virtually turns back upon itself. By juxtaposing Chinese temples with worldly inscriptions to American currency with devotional ones, the *persona* comes to the brink of criticizing the American devotion to getting

ahead. But he “refracts” his irony--that is, softens and diverts it--by focusing on the Chinese priest: he, not the speaker, characterizes the dollar as ““the Melican Joss,”” though the perceptive reader senses that the speaker and the author agree. In this instance, one finds Riis’ *persona* willing, even eager, to tamper with the seemingly simple relations, reflected in the previous excerpt, between speaker and subject and between speaker and audience.

Even when he addresses his readers directly, Riis’ chameleon-like speaker, spurred by double consciousness, can abruptly change his color. While the “I” may parrot his middle-class audience’s assumptions about the immigrant, he will also chide them for ignorance and lack of experience; he may show his readers the dehumanizing effects of the immigrant’s surrender to the authoritative discourse many of them accept, then challenge them to engage in double consciousness themselves. Here, the speaker, conducting his audience on a “slumming” tour, draws them up the stairs of a dark and stifling tenement, thrusts them into a heartbreaking domestic scene, then turns on them with an uncomfortable question:

Here is a door. Listen! That short hacking cough, that tiny, helpless wail--what do they mean? They mean that the soiled bow of white you saw on the door downstairs will have another story to tell--Oh! A sadly familiar story--before the day is at an end. The child is dying with measles. With half a chance, it might have lived; but it had none. That dark bedroom killed it. ‘It was took all of a suddint,’ says the mother, smoothing the throbbing little body with trembling hands. There is no unkindness in the rough voice of the man in the jumper, who sits by the window grimly smoking a clay pipe, with the little life ebbing out of his sight, bitter as his words sound: ‘Hush, Mary! If we cannot keep the baby, need we complain--such as we?’ Such as we. What if the words ring in your ears as we grope our way up the stairs and down from

floor to floor, listening to the sounds behind the closed doors--some of quarreling, some of coarse songs, more of profanity. They are true. (*Other Half* 38)

The episode is calculated to elicit the emotion of the audience, then to strike at its conscience *via* its consciousness. The details of the event--measles, dark bedroom, the homely dignity of the parents' words; all cast in the present tense to heighten the reader's sense of "documentary" fact--skillfully address the Victorian reverence for childhood, motherhood, and sentiment. The *persona*, with his interjection of "Oh! a sadly familiar story," conveys his own brief surrender to feeling.

Yet he remains sufficiently removed from the scene, from his own emotion, and from his audience to employ the episode to refract his and the author's intentions. In echoing the words of the dying baby's father, the speaker shifts his rhetorical stance from sentimental involvement in the scene to detachment from it and from his readers. The *persona* notes that "there is no unkindness in [the father's] rough voice"; nevertheless, to the speaker, the father's words "such as we" sound "bitter." The discrepancy signals the assertion of rhetorical distance: if the father accepts his family's degradation as members of the "other half," the *persona* does not. The father speaks from a single consciousness: his "such as we" represents his tacit but complete surrender to the forces controlling tenement life: poverty, unhealthy living conditions, and, above all, the social and economic power of the polite classes. Overcome by these obstacles the father abandons his own, heightened sense of the humanity of his family and himself: his "such as we" means that, in his eyes, he, his wife, and their children are become the inferior creatures the polite classes assume them to be. It is a lament at this enforced inferiority, offered with no irony, with "no unkindness," and parents and child emerge as virtuous victims.

Nevertheless, the speaker senses "bitterness" in the

father's words--because they speak to the bitter conflict within his own double consciousness and in that of his creator. Thus, when he repeats the father's words, the speaker's "'such as we'" is laced with irony and protest; if the father has surrendered his own double consciousness, the speaker has not. In turning to his readers, wondering if the father's words "may ring in *your* ears" (emphasis mine) as they have rung in his, the speaker also turns on his readers, chiding and challenging them. If the father's words were to ring in the ears of the audience, it would be for the first time; the fact that it has not happened previously emphasizes the genteel classes' lack of awareness of and concern for the human plight of the ethnic urban poor. Yet, in posing the possibility that it might happen, the *persona* challenges his audience to engage in double consciousness themselves, to confront the contradictions between their own "authoritative" assumptions about the ethnic tenement poor and the simple dignity of the decent folk portrayed here.

Riis' speaker turns to and on his audience periodically, becoming more aggressive in his efforts to rouse double consciousness in them. In the passage that follows, the *persona* urges his readers to put aside their preconceptions and to experience firsthand not merely the grim conditions of the tenement, but the psychology of the tenement dwellers--in other words, to enter their minds and hearts.

Go into any of the respectable tenement neighborhoods [...] where live the great body of hard-working Irish and German immigrants and their descendants, who accept naturally the conditions of tenement life, because for them there is nothing else in New York; be with and among its people until you understand their ways, their aims, and the quality of their ambitions, and unless you can content yourself with the scriptural promise that the poor we shall always have with us, or with the menagerie view that if fed, they have no

cause for complaint, you shall come away agreeing with me that, humanly speaking, life there does not seem worth living. (*Other Half* 122-123)

In pointing up the opposition between “authoritative” conceptions which dismiss or demean the ethnic poor (“the scriptural promise,” “the menagerie view”) and those which affirm the tenement dwellers’ complex, individual humanity (their “ways,” their “aims,” and “the quality of their ambitions”), the speaker again thrusts the burden of double consciousness onto his audience. Acknowledging his own sympathies for the psychological view of the tenement dwellers,⁴ he comes to the brink of accusing his audience of subscribing to the scriptural or the menagerie view--but stops short by couching the idea in the subjunctive--“*unless you can content yourself[...]*” (emphasis mine). Riis, the immigrant journalist who knows what can and cannot be said to “native” readers, is content to leave *persona* and readers poised on their respective sides of the threshold.

Such brinksmanship may seem “wildly contradictory, morally schizophrenic,” but it is, above all else, rhetorically and ideologically subversive, and “chameleon-like”: rhetorical doubleness reflects--or, as Bakhtin puts it, “refracts”--ideological doubleness. Thus, in contriving this shifting and blending of voices in his speaker, Riis seeks less to confirm his assimilation into the middle class than to subvert middle- and upper-class assumptions regarding the immigrant urban poor, the same assumptions he had confronted daily since his own arrival, the same assumptions he was obliged to address in his work as police reporter.

Because of his experiences as immigrant and as immigrant journalist, Riis came to ethnic double consciousness and devised the dialogical strategies for articulating it. Immersed in what Bakhtin might well describe as the *heteroglossia* of ethnic relations in late 19th century America, the Danish carpenter-cum-

American photojournalist learned that the immigrant is not free to define himself; rather, he finds himself defined in the “authoritative discourse” of the “natives.” Riis understood that, in the America of his time, the breadth and depth of the immigrant’s humanity are, as DuBois puts it, “measur[ed...] by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (8); that the immigrant is, to apply Bakhtin’s expression, “always entangled in someone else’s discourse [...] an object of dispute that is conceptualized and evaluated vicariously, inescapable from the social apperception of it” (“Discourse” 330). Knowing what could and could not be said concerning the plight of the immigrant, Riis embedded the latter within the former: he devised a *persona*, a rhetorical chameleon through whom he dialogically shaded and tinted authoritative discourse to “refract” his true colors.

Endnotes

- 1 The possibility that Riis creates a *persona* has been raised previously. Peter B. Hales, discussing Riis’ emphasis, in *Other Half* and in *The Making of an American*, on his clumsiness as a photographer, asserts that this constitutes a pose: Riis’ bumbling photographer was merely a *persona*. Its existence was designed to draw the audience’s attention away from the manipulations of the creator and the distortions of the medium, to lull viewers into believing themselves witnesses to an unrehearsed and unstaged confrontation with the raw grit of a previously hidden world (193). In addition, I maintain that Riis manipulates every facet of his self-portrayal in order to subvert the ethnic assumptions of many middle- and upper-class readers.
- 2 Apparently, these “colored views” were nature scenes and historical sites. In *American*, Riis refers to a stereopticon slide of Heidelberg Castle as “one of my most beautiful colored views” (185).
- 3 I make this same point about the Steffens passage in a previous article on Riis: “Walking the Ethnic Tightwire: Ethnicity and Dialectic in Jacob Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives*.” *Journal*

of *American Culture* 20 (1997): 41-53. For a contrasting viewpoint on Steffens' comment and Riis, see Christopher Carter's "Writing With Light: Jacob Riis' Ambivalent Exposures." *College English* 71 (2008): 117-141.

- 4 Gandal offers an enlightening discussion of Riis' place in the development of tenement psychology (91-9).

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Women without a Voice: The Paradox of Silence in the Works of Sandra Cisneros, Shashi Deshpande and Azar Nafisi

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Women of every culture face a similar problem: loss of voice. Their lives are permeated with silence. Whether their silence results from a patriarchal society that prohibits women from asserting their identity or from a social expectation of gender roles that confine women to an expressive domain—submissive, nurturing, passive, and domestic—rather than an instrumental role where men are dominant, affective and aggressive—women share the common bond of a debilitating silence. Maria Racine, in her analysis of Janie in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, reaffirms the pervasiveness of this bond: "For women, silence has crossed every racial and cultural boundary" (283). Indeed, Elaine Mar, a Chinese-American writer, in her memoir, *Paper Daughter*,

elucidates the implications of silence for women, “Like Mother I was learning to disappear. Frequently, I sought refuge with her in the basement room, in the silence of empty spaces. But I was also learning to vanish in full sight of others, retreating into myself when physical flight wasn’t possible. My voice withered. Silent desire parched my throat” (48). Silence and loss of voice debilitate and stifle women, as they are forced to sublimate their identity in order to survive in their worlds.

While many writers discuss the issue of silence, we intend to focus on the motif of silence and its impact on three characters, individuals: Esperanza in *House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, Ajji in *My Beloved Charioteer* by Shashi Deshpande, and Azar Nafisi in *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi. These authors write about women who have been socialized in a traditional, patriarchal society where men generally make decisions, have hegemonic control, and are usually physically, psychologically, or emotionally aggressive. In such an environment, women lack the opportunity and confidence to assert themselves or have some measure of control over their environment or their lives in order to establish their autonomy, and are, therefore, victimized by what Paulo Freire terms the “culture of silence” (13). If they confront instead of acquiescing to the traditional paradigm, their actions, at a minimum, are curtailed, or as is the case with Nafisi, completely forbidden. Ironically, however, women’s loss of voice serves a two-fold function.

While socio-cultural restrictions compromise their ability to find a voice and thus confine and marginalize Esperanza, Ajji, and Nafisi, these restrictions also provide them with the impetus to assert and redefine themselves in a manner similar to the mythological Phoenix. Just as the Phoenix builds a pyre, burns itself to ashes, and then reemerges, renewed and reborn, so too do these women undergo the ritualistic death-rebirth cycle. Their silence evokes a sense of independence and eventually fosters,

usually as a result of a domestic crisis, an epiphany in which they find and assert their voice, breaking through the silence. We will examine the ways in which these female characters are controlled by men, the symbols through which that control is expressed, and the strength these women find to transcend cultural, familial and social repression, sometimes at a tremendous personal cost.

While not all women may experience such a traditional upbringing, the fact that these experiences transcend cultural boundaries makes an important contribution to comparative cultural and gender literary analysis. These characters, developed by their culturally diverse authors, are separated by culture, time, and history, yet they share universal conflicts in the quest to discover their identity. The theme of the quest, also referred to as a form of the death-rebirth archetype, according to Joseph Campbell in *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, consists of at least four major phases: heading the call to adventure, facing the unknown, encountering conflicts and receiving concrete or symbolic rewards, and eventually “returning to the community” (Chapter 1). Campbell emphasizes the flexibility of these stages: some may be absent while others may be more fully developed and explored. The central characters in the works of Cisneros, Deshpande, and Nafisi evolve through these universal stages of the death-rebirth archetype, and--individually, as an unexpected function of their cultural sublimation--acquire the strength to find their voices and their identities, in spite of, and ironically because of, the repression they experience.

Not surprisingly, the home or house is the central source of alienation, confinement, and sometimes imprisonment for all of these women. Thus, transcending the physical and emotional boundaries of “home” becomes a crucial factor in crossing the threshold into the unknown and facing various obstacles before they can discover the strength to assert their identities. Esperanza, the main

character in *The House on Mango Street*, dreams of having a “real” house, “with running water and pipes that worked . . . with real stairs, not hallway stairs, but stairs inside like the houses on T.V.” (4). When her family finally gets their first house, however, the reality of their poverty shatters her illusion. Instead of creating a sense of pride and stability within her, her house has “small tight steps in front and windows so small you’d think they were holding their breath” (4). This dilapidated house engenders within Esperanza a sense of shame and embarrassment, which is made apparent, when one of the nuns from her grade school stops to look at Esperanza’s house and says, “You live *there*’ ”? *There*. The way she said it made me feel like nothing” (5). When the nun criticizes Esperanza’s house, she is, in effect criticizing and demeaning Esperanza, whose house is an extension of her own identity. By pointing to this dilapidated house, she points to herself, revealing her own poverty and shame (Olivares 215-216).

Esperanza’s feeling of nothingness is reinforced by the images of “tight steps” and “small windows,” which symbolize not only her shame at her impoverished life, but also the physical confinement she experiences as a result of her gender. Thus, the house becomes a metaphor for the cultural and economic limits imposed on marginalized women. The image of the window defines the position of women in her culture: imprisoned, viewing life rather than participating in it.

Esperanza’s grandmother further epitomizes the impact the patriarchal society has on women. When her grandmother was young, she was described as a vibrant, “horse woman,” a strong and independent woman. However, her strength “which is supposed to be bad luck if you’re born a female [because] . . . the Mexicans don’t like their women strong” is eroded when she marries. (10). Slowly, but inevitably, stricture and confinement impact Esperanza’s grandmother to the point where she becomes a non-entity, someone who

“looks out the window her whole life the way that so many women sit their sadness on an elbow” (11). Her silent acquiescence foreshadows the reality many young Latino women experience. Erlinda Gonzales-Berry and Tey Diana Rebolledo clarify the position of women in Latino cultures: “The female . . . is carefully schooled to function in society, to lose her freedom and her sense of individuality in order to become a loving wife and mother. She thus integrates her destiny with that of a man. . . Thus, rather than achieving maturity, young women . . . are led down the path to second infancy” (109-10). With her options limited, Esperanza’s grandmother retreats within herself and withdraws from life.

Many of Esperanza’s female friends experience the same sense of confinement and loss of voice as her grandmother. Her friend Rafaela, for example, is still young, but she is “getting old from leaning out the window so much” (Cisneros 79). Her husband locks her in the house because she is too beautiful and he fears she will run away, so she “leans out the window and leans on her elbow” (79), becoming a prisoner in her own home. Rafaela dreams of having hair like Rapunzel’s, so a prince will climb her hair and rescue her from her “empty room” (79). Unable to voice her dreams, take control over her own life, and escape her environment, she settles and remains a passive victim of her illusion and dreams. She, like Marin, another young woman, is “waiting for a car to stop, a star to fall, someone to change her life” (27). Neither asserts control over their destiny, and thus reinforces the second infancy concept. Another friend, Sally gets married too young to escape an abusive father, but she merely changes one prison for another. Her husband, like her father, wants complete control over her, so even though she has her own “new house,” he doesn’t allow her to “look out the window” (102). Even though she seems happy because she can buy material objects, she can only buy them when “he gives her money,” another way by which he asserts his dominance (102). Because she fears her husband, she

never leaves her new home; she never talks to her friends unless her husband is at work. Instead, she looks at the new “things they own,” none of which make her happy (102). Her future, like her past, is bleak: no windows, no voice, and no friends.

Unlike her peers and her grandmother, or maybe in part because of her peers and her grandmother, Esperanza makes a conscious decision “not to inherit her grandmother’s” place by the window, even though she inherited her name (11), a fact she wishes to change. She wants to reinvent herself by baptizing herself with a new name that expresses her true self, “something like Zeze the X will do” (11). She wants a name that defines her true nature. She has witnessed the repressive, shallow existence of her grandmother and her peers and “refuses to sacrifice her gender to a patriarchic society and undertakes a personal quest to liberate herself from the gender constraints of her culture” (Olivares 213). She acts on her desires: she begins a quiet war, leaving the “table like a man without putting back the chair or picking up the plate” (Cisneros 89). She is no longer prey to her oppression and silence. In fact, according to Freire, she is emerging from her oppression and turning upon it, a step she achieves by “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (36). This act of defiance, although perhaps minor in terms of physical action, is a major step in her actualization, rebirth process, especially considering she has few, if any, role models to teach her such an assertive behavior. Her friends resolve conflicts by quietly acquiescing, while Esperanza resolves her conflict by asserting her voice. Therefore, her aggressive action crosses the threshold into the unknown. Her new-found strength is symbolized by comparing herself to trees whose “strength is secret . . . who grow despite the concrete [and] do not forget to reach” (74-75). Just as the trees survive despite their constrictive environment, so, too, will Esperanza survive and triumph over an environment that is hostile to the

acquisition of independence and strength.

By recognizing her internal strength, she overcomes obstacles that endanger her independence. At this point, Esperanza is consciously and internally reinventing herself, a process that is symbolized through her desire to have that “real house” she dreamed of having: “not a man’s house. Not a daddy’s. A house all my own . . . a house as quiet as snow, a space for myself to go, clean as paper before a poem” (108). Her epiphany is “quiet, thoughtful, and strong: I am too strong for [Mango Street] to keep me here forever”(110). Her strength and empowerment are evident in the final stage of the quest, the return or redemption, which occurs toward the conclusion of the novel with the realization that her friends and neighbors will not know she has “gone away to come back” (110). A crucial aspect of the transformation can now occur; once she becomes empowered, she can return to Mango, “For the ones who cannot [get] out” (110). Accepting and acknowledging individual responsibility to the community, according to Campbell, is indispensable to the “continuous circulation of spiritual energy into the world” (Hero 36). Yet, according to Campbell, the last stage is the most difficult phase because the heroes may not be able to sustain their new-found knowledge, or they may face derision from the community (36-37). Because Esperanza has acknowledged her responsibilities to the community as an integral part of developing her autonomous self, she will be able to sustain her voice and continue on her quest.

Metaphorical and physical confinement in the home is also an obstacle faced by Ajji, the grandmother in *My Beloved Charioteer*. She, like many of the female protagonists in Deshpande’s fiction, is “an emotionally cloistered woman who struggles to shed her inhibitions and her cloistered self” (Dinesh 196). However, in Ajji’s case, confinement is self imposed out of a sense of fear, duty, and ingrained cultural obligation to her dead husband. Such a sense of duty and obligation is

manifested and perpetuated generationally in patriarchal cultures. In India, “Both men and women are socialized into accepting the male’s superiority” (Atrey and Kirpal 7). Because she no longer has to subordinate herself, a manifestation of silence, to her husband’s wishes or cope with her husband’s physical, psychological, and emotional abuse, Ajji feels safe and is comforted by the silence that now permeates her world. She describes it as a “friendly silence filled with the ghosts of so many voices” in her life, who return to her and keep her company when she is alone (Deshpande 373). She enjoys her life: free from tension, pain and criticism. Even though the silence comforts her, it is an artificial silence, isolating her from the life-affirming community. According to A.K. Awasthi, if a character does not feel a need for self-assessment, he or she may come to feel a love for and acceptance of illusion (98). She subconsciously accepts the illusion of peace and contentment, and the self-imposed silence that accompanies such an illusion. Because she does not acknowledge his continued control over her, “Habits of obedience die harder than any other” (373), she is still a victim, the same passive victim she was with her husband. Before she can establish her autonomy and find her voice, she must be able to confront her past. Her continued victimization is symbolized through her husband’s room. Even though he has been dead for seven years, Ajji keeps his room immaculately clean; it is unchanged, just as his psychological control over her is unchanged.

Often typical of women living in compromising conditions, Ajji does not recognize her isolation or her victimization. She feels “bound by tradition and myth to keep her silence intact” (Dinesh 198) until her daughter, Aarti and her granddaughter, Priti move into her home. With Aarti comes a different type of silence, a repressive silence, and an “infinity of bitterness” (Deshpande 375) over what she perceives to be the unfairness of life because she has lost everyone she has ever loved, her father and husband. Wallowing in self-pity, “Isn’t it

gloomy here? The right atmosphere for a pair of desolate widows” (374). Ajji recognizes the oppression Aarti brings with her,” Aarti turns “everyone’s happiness into a wrong” (375). As a result of her self-absorption, she stifles any type of communication with her mother, and subconsciously blames her mother for her losses and for her emotional death.

Lacking the moral courage to confront her daughter in the much the same way she was afraid to confront her husband, “I have no courage to speak” (375), Ajji allows her daughter to suffocate her happiness by controlling her voice. Her self-deprecation is a typical characteristic of people who are oppressed and results from internalizing the negative opinions the oppressor has of them. If they constantly “hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing . . . in the end, they become convinced of their own unfitnes” (Freire 49). In fact, she even blames herself for Aarti’s emotional withdrawal from life: “If my daughter is so empty that she can hate people who are happy, the fault is, to some extent, mine” (375). Not until Ajji begins to realize the impact Aarti’s emotional callousness is having on her granddaughter, who is afraid to speak to her mother and wants to sleep in her grandmother’s room at night, does she become more concerned about her granddaughter’s feelings than what she perceives as her own inadequacy, “I have never known how to win anyone’s love” (375). Priti has awakened new life in Ajji and has brought her a happiness she has never known, “the day is full of meaning. I wait . . . eagerly for her to return from school. I don’t know who is happier, she or I”(375). On the other hand, when Priti leaves for school, a “silence settles on the house” enveloping Ajji and bringing with it a death-like pall and a safe retreat into her voiceless home (372), and she succumbs to a disassociation from herself and society. Thus, she remains passive and alienated.

Eventually, Ajji’s happiness and love for Priti prompt her to find the courage to confront not only Aarti but also

her dead husband. In fact, one could argue that Ajji's evolution occurs because of her relationship with Priti. Priti is the catalyst by which Ajji finds the strength to end the cycle of silence. She had, until Priti arrival, suffered from a "symbolic deficiency," lack of voice (Hero 37).

Ironically, her husband's room offers her the opportunity to find her voice, rebel against her oppressor, and break the pervasive silence that threatens to destroy her home and granddaughter. Aarti, her daughter, provides her with the stimulus to confront her ghosts and usurp her husband's power over her when Aarti, who is sitting in her father's room, accidentally knocks over her father's photograph. When the photograph falls "face down," . . . The glass . . . cracked. Long splinters of glass lie on the floor," making the photo look "somehow naked," his importance in controlling and directing her life symbolically begins to shatter. Ajji has crossed the first threshold and, and although somewhat hesitant, tells her daughter she does not want to ever see the photograph again, "I don't want it. Let it go" (376). The "it" in her references seems to symbolize his continued authority over her and his presence in the room. Even as she becomes assertive, she still wonders timorously if her husband can hear her. Again, her fear results from internalizing the image of the oppressor and adopting his guidelines. Therefore, she is still apprehensive about speaking and afraid of the freedom that may result from her assertion (Freire 31). But she refuses to acquiesce to her fears and argues that she has let her husband go. Once she is able to articulate the words, "I let him go," she achieves an epiphany, a sudden revelation that she kept a room immaculate for a man who didn't value her and stifled her voice (376). Like Esperanza, once she crosses the first threshold, she cannot turn back. She is able to articulate her new-found strength and break the artificial silence that has permeated her life. With each assertion, she affirms the reality of emotional abuse and neglect she endured, "I know he didn't like tears. And so,

when your baby brothers died, I wept alone and in secret. . . . And at night . . . I scarcely dared to breathe, I was so terrified of disturbing him” (376). By confronting her abuse and shattering the illusions under which Aarti has been living, Ajji gains the courage to dispel not only her demons but perhaps her daughter’s as well. Both women were voiceless-- existing, not living--without substantial control over their lives or their future. While Aarti has not experienced the denigration her mother has, she has lost her voice, her control over her future with the death of her husband. She, like her mother, has been a victim of the patriarchal society. Daughters are closer to their fathers because it is the mother’s responsibilities to “impose restrictions on her and prepare her for a harsher future as part of the process of socialization” (Atrey and Kirpal 78). Thus, because she is conditioned in this process, Aarti loves her father and resents her mother.

However much her daughter tries to avoid the truth about her father, “Don’t tell me. Don’t,” her father’s control is diminishing: “With each negative [Aarti] bangs the photograph she still holds in her hands and the glass splinters again and again” (376-77). Again the image of the shattering glass foreshadows the disintegration of his control over Ajji. Now that he is “totally exposed to both of [them],” Ajji shatters the artificial reality she has created. She feels a sense of self-empowerment she has never experienced before; she is learning to assert herself and chose self over selflessness, despite her daughter’s opposition who doesn’t want to hear the truth about her father.

A domestic crisis, breaking the photograph, spurs Ajji to find her voice. She gains the strength to defy and triumph over her artificial reality due, in part, to Priti “I have a feeling that she is with me now, giving me strength for the battle, urging me on to it” (376). At the end of the story, when Priti comes home from school and asks where Ajji is, Ajji’s reply, “Here . . . I’m here,” carries a great deal of symbolic importance. This simple assertion

not only indicates a simple physical location, but it also reveals an emotional, psychological assertion of self-actualization and self-affirmation: for the first time in her life she IS. She has faced her sense of guilt in confronting Aarti and telling her the truth about her own life and overcomes her loss of face and defies the customs of her culture. In doing so, she acquires a sense of self-respect and “new” voice. She, like Esperanza, crosses a threshold into the unknown. Her voice here indicates a personal triumph, but it has universal implications. By finding and asserting her voice, Ajji has provided a role model for Priti and Aarti to follow in their own journey to find and assert their voices. Ajji may not have saved the world, but she has emerged from the pyre, a spiritually stronger character who has triumphed over her oppressor and broken the silence. Ajji’s personal victory demonstrates once again—in the death and rebirth archetypal cycle—that from sublimation and imposed silence, individual voice and identity may emerge stronger and in defiance of cultural norms.

While the “room” for Ajji, the main character in Shahsi Deshpande’s short story, symbolizes isolation, confinement, and an artificial reality, the room in the non-fiction memoir, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi, symbolizes freedom, a place of “transgression” where Nafisi, a former university teacher, and seven of her students meet to be “transformed into [jewels] through the magic eye of fiction” (8). Nafisi’s living room becomes a “protective cocoon” where the women, who are forced to meet in secret to read fiction forbidden by the regime in Iran (26), can discuss the relationship between fiction and reality (6).

Before meeting in this room to discuss works of fiction, all the women experienced a loss of voice. They all believed themselves to be totally irrelevant in their society. Even Nafisi, who organized the secret meetings, experiences many situations in which she feels as if she is “descending into an abyss or void” (167). Her feelings

Book Reviews

Alyshia Galvez, *Guadalupe in New York: Devotion and Struggle for Citizenship Rights among Mexican Immigrants*. (New York: NYU Press, 2009). xiii, 256 pp., \$27 paper.

Alyshia Galvez's *Guadalupe in New York* is an important contribution to a growing body of sociological and anthropological work devoted to immigrants and their fight for basic human rights in the United States. Galvez, a cultural anthropologist, uses interviews and observations to study the process of *guadalupanismo* (worship of Mexico's patron saint, Our Lady of Guadalupe) among recent Mexican immigrants in New York City. Between 2000 and 2008, Galvez gathered information on Marian worship by following members of *comites guadalupanos*, or social groups organized by parish, and explains her methodology in a useful appendix. Galvez argues that through these *comites*, undocumented Mexican immigrants engage in "political, activist activities which enhance their sense of well-being in material, lived and symbolic ways while their juridical status remains unchanged" (4). More specifically, it is Galvez's sophisticated and subtle observations on the connections between religion, politics, and transnational space that make her book a solid founda-

tion for future ethnic studies.

Galvez's most powerful observation in her work is the interconnectivity of *guadalupanismo* and the fight for citizenship rights among undocumented Mexican immigrants in New York. For many of these immigrants, turning to the Virgin for help in the political struggle for a better life in America requires little thought. "Rather than a co-optation of the Virgin's image to a political cause," Galvez explains, "the assertion of Guadalupe's support of the struggle for the rights of immigrants is logical...[for] to question that she naturally supports the struggle of her devotees for rights and dignities would be to question her" (81). Rather than simply stating that Mexican immigrants use religion to advance their political goals, Galvez takes her argument one step farther by stating that *guadalupanismo* in America transcends politics, for when immigrants evoke the image of the Virgin for help, they are calling on her for protection and assistance in securing the most basic of human rights. Undocumented Mexican immigrants are undocumented in the eyes of lawmakers, not God. These immigrants deserve citizenship rights as children of God, forming a powerful argument for privileges based on religion rather than politics alone. Galvez's argument is essential for future sociological and anthropological works that seek to analyze and understand how immigrants of all backgrounds approach politics and activism through the lens of religion. As Galvez points out to her readers, it is practically impossible to separate religion from politics among members of the *comites*.

Galvez centers another fascinating argument in her book on the role of transnational space in the development of *guadalupanismo* in New York. The idea that immigrants are transnational in the sense that they often transport and retain parts of their home cultures when migrating to America is a standard argument in many works of immigration; however, Galvez argues for sociologists and anthropologists to delve deeper into the mi-

gratory experience of immigrants by examining the dynamic nature of migration itself. Among members of the comites in New York, many report that their devotion to the Virgin has grown stronger now that they are living in America. The very process of migrating from Mexico, to the United States, and then to New York City and relying on the Virgin for assistance and guidance through treacherous times along the journey revolutionizes Marian devotion (72). To say that Mexican immigrants simply carry religious traditions with them to America from Mexico excludes the important transformations in devotion and worship that occur in the transnational space between home and the new country. This element of Galvez's work is critical for understanding what changes in the political and religious conscience of undocumented immigrants occur while crossing borders. More importantly, Galvez's focus on the importance of transnational spaces in migration creates new avenues for research in a field that often struggles with the definition of transnational itself.

While Galvez does an excellent job of analyzing often over-looked aspects of migration and religion, her work could benefit from a more in-depth discussion of the role of gender in *guadalupanismo* among undocumented Mexican immigrants in New York. Galvez briefly mentions the fact that more women than men attend the weekly Wednesday night meetings for comites (124), but she does not give many details on why this is so or how this may be a process of migration. In a form of religion that is devoted to a female figure, it would have been interesting to see how gender roles in *guadalupanismo* may have changed or remained the same in the transnational space of migration. Overall, however, Galvez's work is a fascinating addition to studies of recent undocumented migrants and religion in America.

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Continuing Perspectives on the Black Diaspora.
Revised Edition. Eds. Aubrey W. Bonnett and
Calvin B. Holder. (Landam, MD: University Press of
America, 2009). vii-xxi, 263 pp., \$38.00 paper.

As a follow-up to their *Emerging Perspectives on the Black Diaspora* (published in 1990), authors/editors Aubrey Bonnett and Calvin Holder have given another serious treatment of the African diaspora. In this new volume, they take on new trends, ones that are often underappreciated or neglected within the scholarly community. *Continuing Perspectives* proffers an examination of some of the “new and nuanced challenges which forcibly test the themes of persistence and resilience” of the black diaspora communities (xvii). As the authors proclaim in their introduction, “the essays in this volume [. . .] try to look back, assess current positions, and project into the future and, as such, attempt to make an ongoing contribution to the scholarship and pedagogy in this multi disciplinary, academic field” (xvii). With this objective in mind, these authors have fallen short at times through this book.

The book is divided into five sections (excluding an introduction) which address various geographic regions around the world (i.e., Europe and Asia, the Caribbean, North America-Canada/U.S.A, respectively), discuss

unique aspects of the diaspora, and posit theoretical ideas about the diaspora seen through media and political sovereignty. All sections are subdivided into two research essays each, except for the part devoted to North America which receives three essays. The organization of this book provides a detailed evolution of thought regarding the diaspora and its impact across the globe. In particular, by concentrating on regions, the editors have included evaluations of the diaspora in geographic regions that are often overlooked in research.

Despite this design of the collection, one is reticent to proclaim this book an outright success. The biggest drawback to the book is its lack of empirical research. Most of the essays simply synthesize disparate sources for their own means, ignoring more salient and statistical evidence. While there can be value in synthesis, this collection struggles in this area because of the inconsistency in research. For example, several essays cite research varying across four decades, sometimes from the mid 1940's to late 1980's. This information garnered from this research is not presented as comprehensive or historical; instead, the information is proffered as if in a vacuum without context to the social, political, and/or economic forces at work that created the research. It appears that many writers in the volume simply make passing references to their sources without fully developing arguments and/or synthesis from them. This approach creates several problems for the reader, especially one who is familiar with the claims taken from sources and thus disapproves of the shallow treatment of the theory or evidence. Those new to the field, particularly students, that approach can be dangerous and misleading, sending a novice kayaker into a class-five rapid of debate that he/she is unable to grasp hold of. Subsequently, this reviewer would benefit more from pointed research that deals with specific incidents or circumstances that affect the diaspora rather than generalities and loosely summa-

rized trends or perspectives. Beyond this problem, the book's editors or those editors at the publisher missed a number of grammatical and/or typographic errors and mistakes. While one may be able to overlook these at times, I feel that they contribute to the difficulty in recommending this book.

On the other hand, one can begin to see the true value of this book through its academic endeavor to explain and formulate the emerging discipline of African diaspora studies. Even though some essays fall flat (and others succeed—notably James W. St. C. Walker essay tracing the circumstances of early black Canadians, Calvin B. Holder's essay concentrating largely on Garveyism, and Walter F. Edwards's essay comparing Tupac Shakur and Bob Marley), the collection as a whole functions as a measuring stick for the research done and the work yet to be accomplished both within and out of the academy. Indeed, while many of the essays never claim definitive knowledge and scope, they do contend to present questions and concerns about historical racism, cultural separation(s), and economical inequalities that plagued diasporic communities and that still haunt many today. Readers should be selective and cautious as to the validity of some claims made within this volume, yet readers can glean the need for more exploration and answers for such ideas.

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Joanna Dreby, *Divided by Borders: Mexican Migrants and Their Children* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). xxi, 311 pp., \$21.95 paper.

Most of the recent books on the children of immigrants, whether they focus on new arrivals (*Learning a New Land*, 2008) or on children born in the United States (*Inheriting the City*, 2008), have concentrated on these youngsters' adaptation to American society, their performance in school and the workplace, and their attempts to renegotiate ethnic identity in a new land. Joanna Dreby's *Divided by Borders* is different. She explores what happens to the children of Mexican immigrants to the U.S., and to the migrants themselves, when those children are left behind in Mexico.

The larger context for Dreby's analysis is both the intense pressure on low-wage and unemployed labor to migrate in a global economy, and the increasingly repressive U.S. immigration policies that make migration more difficult and dangerous, and that undermine the ability of migrant parents to remain connected to their children. Many of the migrant parents that Dreby studied, for example, chose to leave their children in Mexico with grandparents or other relatives rather than put them at risk while crossing the border illegally; and they were unable to visit those children in Mexico, sometimes for

years, because of concern that they might not be able to cross back into the U.S.

Dreby employs what she terms “domestic ethnography” (p. 4) to explore the lives and actions of mothers, father, children, and extended family members, particularly grandparents, as they struggle to implement “the immigrant bargain”: “the expectation that parents will make economic gains during their time abroad and that children will make their parents’ sacrifices worthwhile” (page 4). She conducted formal interviews with 142 parents, children, and caregivers in both central New Jersey and southern Mexico; examined several thousand surveys of Mexican school children, along with drawings from hundreds of elementary students; interviewed twenty-three teachers and administrators (both in Mexico and New Jersey); and analyzed data from in-depth interviews and observations of a dozen migrant families over a four year period. This multi-pronged methodology enabled her to evaluate family narratives from a variety of sources.

Unfortunately, for all concerned, the bargain between immigrant parents and their children in Mexico proves to be very difficult to fulfill. The parents find low wage work in restaurants, construction, factories, and landscaping; but even when they squeeze in two or more of these jobs each week their remittances to family members are often meager, barely able to cover the children’s basic needs. Their children suffer emotionally from the separation and frequently drop out of school during their teens, often with a strong desire to migrate north themselves.

Divided by Borders has separate chapters that illustrate how **gender dynamics** impact or are impacted by the migration experience. Dreby discovers that children, parents, and caregivers all agree on the proper roles of fathers and mothers: fathers are responsible for the economic wellbeing of their families and mothers provide emotional and moral support, or as she phrases it, “a mother’s love is expressed in words and a father’s love is

expressed in dollars, or pesos” (page 79). This places a special burden in migrant mothers, since migrant fathers can fulfill their obligations and feel good about themselves simply by sending remittances; but migrant mothers must find ways to offer their children, many of whom are very young, the love and emotional support they seek through phone calls, packages, and letters. The pain that these mothers feel being separated from their children is a central theme of the book. Mothers who remarry or find new partners in the US are also frequently judged harshly by family in Mexico, more so than are fathers.

At the same time, the children’s caregivers in Mexico by and large are grandmothers or aunts, those Dreby calls “middlewomen.” They love their grandchildren, nieces or nephews, but they feel obligated to raise these children, often on meager resources, while sustaining the children’s relationship with their parents. This takes a heavy toll on aging grandparents who must cope with the demands and disillusionment of adolescent grandchildren. And for other extended family caregivers, questions from migrant parents in the United States about how their money is being spent and whether their children are well cared for can severely strain family ties.

While the children suffer greatly from being separated from their parents, they also, Dreby notes, find ways to exercise some control over circumstances by demanding additional gifts from their missing parents, by pleading to rejoin their parents in the U.S. and ratcheting up the parents’ guilt over leaving them in the first place, and by acting out at school or in the community in ways that threaten the immigrant bargain. By the time they reach adolescence, children’s resentment over having been left behind fades into ambivalence over ever reuniting with their parents. Even in adolescence, however, sons are generally more able to draw upon their parents’ contacts and resources to migrate north and to find work. For daughters, teenage romance frequently presents new opportunities and new families to replace the one that they lost.

While the connections between increasingly harsh U.S. immigration policies and the choices that migrant parents make could be better integrated throughout the book, Dreby's final chapter makes this linkage painfully clear and establishes *Divided by Borders* as a first rate addition to the literature on immigration. One can't help but reflect on the families in this book, struggling honorably to make the best out of very difficult choices, when one hears comments from right wing politicians about "anchor babies" and proposals to revise the birthright provisions of the U.S. Constitution. They should really read this book.

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D I A S P O R A

A JOURNAL OF TRANSNATIONAL STUDIES

Diaspora is dedicated to the multidisciplinary study of the history, culture, social structure, politics and economics of both the traditional dispersions that in the past three decades have chosen to identify themselves as "diasporas." These encompass groups ranging from the African-American to the Ukrainian-Canadian, from the Caribbean British to the new East and South Asian diasporas. The discourses of nationalism, transnationalism, ethnicity, postcolonialism and globalization constitute the semantic domain covered by the journal.

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