INTRODUCTION

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On Intersections and Divergences

During a recent conference of the Association for Asian American Studies, we attended a dinner banquet at a restaurant in the Chinatown section of Philadelphia. When our server came, he gave chopsticks to all but one person, who is half Japanese, a quarter Danish, and a quarter Czech, and has reddish hair and freckles. To her, he gave a fork. When she pointed this out, we laughed and decided that, in solidarity, we would all ask for forks. When we did, the server was puzzled. He looked at our friend and said, "She's American, isn't she?" We understood what he meant, but somehow the implication that the rest of us were not "American," an all-too-common experience for many, had a peculiar sting, even if it was expressed by someone of Chinese ancestry.[1]

Our friend is Yonsei, a fourth-generation Japanese American. This "American" studied Japanese in college; attended summer school in Tokyo; and traveled in rural Japan. Ironically, a person sitting next to her was also a Yonsei but had never been to Japan; spoke only English but was learning Spanish; and had spent a couple of years hitchhiking around Europe. Our group varied in ethnic origin. We lived in different parts of the country. Some were immigrants. Some were monolingual, while others were multilingual. The list of common and varying attributes is long. And over dinner, this one small and seemingly inconsequential gesture mushroomed into discussions and debates about who Asian Americans are, how we define ourselves, what others think about us, and, perhaps more provocative, what others still do not know about us. On the surface, it seems amusing that people can make assumptions about tableware preferences based on one's physical features. But more seriously, this is yet another instance of the persistence of racial stereotypes in which assumptions about who counts as "Asian," what "Asians" use to eat, and what "Asian American" means are brought into question. The year before this conference was held, questions about the status and quality of Filipino American presence within the association's institutional arrangements and political practices had been heatedly debated. And in several communities

within and outside academe, parallel questions are constantly being raised: Who are the Iu Mien? What does "1.5" generation mean? Should we count as Asian American those who spend more time outside the United States than in it? What about those who are multiracial, the *hapas?* Can we form a group on the Internet and call it an Asian American community? Which strategies are most effective for collectively challenging the model-minority myth that affects most, if not all, Asian American groups?

The impetus for this "community" collection originally came from questions derived during our graduate-student days, when we were both doing ethnographic research projects on Asian American groups in Southern California.[2] Our aim is to advance the practice of applying multidisciplinary approaches to similar objects of study in order to open a broader, more complex, and richer set of conversations among scholars from different fields, such as history, literature, cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, urban studies, and legal studies.[3] The contributors to this collection grapple with ideas and practices of community formation from empirical, literary, and theoretical perspectives, exploring, revealing, and expanding the themes of both shared histories and diverse experiences of Asian American communities.

This anthology presents a collection of original essays on the dynamics of contemporary Asian American communities; taken as a whole, the volume engages the intersections and divergences of community formations and considers whether these formative elements persist or are transformed. Most of the available sources on this subject emphasize the historical development of these communities (e.g., Chan 1991; Daniels 1988; Okihiro 1994; Takaki 1989). With the influx of post-1965 immigrants and refugees and the generational growth and spread of pre-1965 communities, Asian Americans are transforming the demographics of the American population, and Asian American communities are altering the nature of the American landscape (Barkan 1992; Chan 1991; Hing 1993; Kitano and Daniels 1995; Ong et al. 1994; Zia 2000). In addition, the historical legacies and unique present-day environments created by globalization and transnational movements have complicated individual and collective Asian American identities in ways that connect the local with the regional and the global.[4] These conditions call for new ways to analyze how we think about Asian Americans, how we think about Americans, and how we think about "community" formations.[5]

Asian Americans, because of the increasing heterogeneity of their subpopulation groups, raise questions not only about the assumed stability of such a categorical identification but also about the persistent articulation of U.S. race relations solely through a black–white framework. Viewed through the local and global contexts of their influx and presence in the United States more than through their sheer numbers, Asian Americans also prompt a critical rethinking of social norms regarding nationhood, visibility, and power. Who can be considered American? Who can belong? And on whose and what terms? Likewise, the need to understand race as a central social and political force in Asian Americans' lives and as a category of experience that interlocks with gender, class, and sexuality suggests new questions about how Asian Americans perceive themselves, interact with others, and locate themselves in various contexts. We address these issues by considering the centrality of ideas and practices of "community" as they are formed and transformed within Asian America.

In the parts that follow, we will provide such explanatory contexts and identify each of our authors' contributions to the discussions of specific themes in this collection. We focus on three themes:

Communities in Transition: Spaces and Practices discusses the concepts and processes of forging aggregations that relate to physical settlements, situational spaces, and social sites.

Communities in Transformation: Identities and Generations examines elements of change within Asian American community identities, specifically in light of their generational composition and the way these compositions intersect with ethnic and racial factors, class configurations, and gender distribution.

Communities of Alternatives: Representations and Politics highlights nontraditional modes of evoking "community" with respect to cultural representation and activist political organizing.

By no means do we argue that these three themes exhaust all the formations of community that can be identified as Asian American. Rather, we employ these thematic perspectives to make explicit the contours and complexities of contemporary Asian American community configurations. The essays in this collection demonstrate how, over the past twenty years or more, Asian American social spaces and practices have been in transition; internal group compositions and identities have been undergoing transformations; and group initiatives have been positing alternative constructions of cultural representations and political interests. Hence, we can consider these works as proposals that offer multiple avenues for understanding "community." Although we assigned each of the chapters to only one theme, we wish to make it clear that the thematic groupings do not disallow overlaps and cross-connections. The themes we have laid out are more fluid and intersecting than they appear to be. For these reasons, our discussion of the parts will include not only the primary essays grouped under the themes but also other essays in the volume that may be relevant.

We begin our scrutiny of these changing configurations by locating such population transformations within local and global historical contexts of capitalism, immigration legislation, and race relations as they affect Asian American group identification. These histories—some of them shared, some of them inherited—continue to impinge significantly on fundamental sociopolitical issues: in the ways we think about American society and its communities as fraught with consensus and contestation; in the continuation, emergence, or reformulation of communities that are not bound solely by geography, ethnicity, or racial identification; and in the recognition of the heterogeneous composition and multiple identifications of Asian American communities that include, among others, youths, mixed-race people, sexually marginalized groups, and transnationals. Our collective perspective therefore envisions communities as both territorial sites or geographically delineated formations *and* socially constructed entities; as such, these communities are based on relations of similarities and differences and on relations that extend to multiple networks *across* locations and interests. Taken together, the essays in this collection address how Asian Americans are reconceiving and reshaping their own communities, and examines the representations, expressions,

practices, and cultures of Asian Americans located within and beyond homes, families, and formal organizations.

Capitalism, Immigration, and Race

Transnational capitalism, historically and currently, exerts direct influence on the Asian American experience as one of labor. Before 1965, Asian Americans, particularly in the West Coast states and in Hawai'i, were used as a cheap labor source in the service of American expansionism and internationalization (Cheng and Bonacich 1984). Asians were recruited as contract laborers to build and maintain the national infrastructure, to develop and sustain massive agricultural production, and to assist in domestic work. As a result of the 1965 Immigration Act, Asians have been able to come to the United States mainly through the act's family-reunification and employment-specific provisions. Immigrants from diverse backgrounds have entered low-end service-sector jobs by working as cooks, janitors, or maids, or have taken low end manufacturing jobs as factory assemblers or seamstresses in the garment industry. Others have entered high-end sectors as well-educated, skilled professionals (Barkan 1992; Kitano and Daniels 1995).

Many from these immigrant populations still provide the low-income labor that is crucial to local industrial production and manufacturing (Lowe 1996; Ong et al. 1994). After 1975, refugees and immigrants from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos came to the United States to escape the chaos created by the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Although they did not initially enter as a laboring class, they, too, have been used to fulfill U.S. industrial and service-sector employment needs (Gold 1992; Kibria 1993). Thus, Asian immigrants and refugees and those who are American-born of Asian descent are fulfilling the demands of the dual labor market that requires both workers who are highly educated and skilled and workers who are unskilled or semi-skilled with minimal formal education (Espiritu 1997; Lowe 1996). The global restructuring of capitalism, whose expansion and contraction require and depend on different forms of exploitation, benefits from more liberalized policies of immigration to perpetuate the recruiting of Asian labor.

Today, about half of all immigrants to the United States come from Asia. As a result, the Asian American population has increased dramatically, becoming significantly more foreign-born as well as more ethnically, economically, politically, and socially diverse. For example, past legislation ensured that Asian immigrants were mainly single men in their prime working years with limited formal schooling (Chan 1991). Now, the immigration of multi-generational families, women and children, highly skilled and unskilled individuals, and refugees is changing the internal composition of this population. Moreover, many of these individuals are twice or thrice immigrants. Some migrated internally within their homelands, and others resided briefly, or for generations, in neighboring Asian countries or in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, or Canada prior to their arrival in America (Kitano and Daniels 1995). These paths of migration to the United States, facilitated largely by immigra-

tion legislation, U.S. participation in the global restructuring of capitalism, political and economic crises in Asia, and the ideological persistence of the so-called American dream fueled by the U.S. presence abroad, have influenced the ways in which Asian Americans are reconceiving and reshaping their communities.

Finally, and most important, the history of U.S. race relations has fundamentally shaped the course of Asian American experience over the years. U.S. imperialism in Asia in the form of militarization, colonialization, and "democratizing" projects shapes the lives of Asians even before they arrive in America. Upon their arrival, Asians have been subjected to both de jure and de facto discriminatory treatment. As a racialized group, they have been singled out in immigration-exclusion acts, barred from citizenship and property ownership, interned in concentration camps during a period of war, exploited on the job, and greatly disfranchised in civil society. Many suffered violence and dehumanization borne out of racial and gender prejudice that was expressed openly as the "Yellow Peril" and other forms of Orientalism. Yet many of them have found ways to circumvent barriers or escape hostility by forming self-sufficient, semi-autonomous enclaves; by appealing to the local or national justice system; or by forging political alliances among themselves and with other groups (Aguilar-San Juan 1994; Chan 1991). Asian American groups that participated in the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-imperialist movements of the late 1960s provide evidence of this history of struggle and proactive engagement against racial injustice (Espiritu 1997; Wei 1993).

One cannot conclude, however, that antidiscrimination legislation passed during and in the aftermath of the Civil Rights and Asian American movements has erased all forms of racism. We contend, rather, that both pre-1965 and post-1965 Asian Americans currently experience racism in more complex ways. Sometimes this racism is expressed overtly in the form of hate crimes, but often it is covert and subtle, taking the form of "glass ceilings" and other hidden barriers to positions of power or of persistent stereotyping as exemplified by the chopsticks incident mentioned earlier and even "model minority" characterizations. Even as new Asian groups inherit a long legacy of Orientalized stereotyping, new forms of racism arise in the name of fairness for all individuals. Those who argue against affirmative action programs often articulate an opposition to "group preferential treatment." They portray white groups also as victims of discrimination because they assume all groups are similarly situated, disregarding uneven forms of access and power. Oppositionists regard antiracist programs as unnecessary even in the face of persistent underrepresentation of particular Asian American groups in the educational system (Hirabayashi 1998; Wang 1993).

Communities in Transition: Spaces and Practices

The term "community" has several definitions. The most conventional and prevalent one refers to a collection of people situated in a geographical space and grouped together out of shared histories, experiences, and values (Marshall 1994). Traditionally, the

word is used to denote territorial units, as in ethnic communities or villages, ethnic neighborhoods, ethnic pockets, or ethnic enclaves (Breton 1964). In contrast, a community does not necessarily have to be a spatially defined territory; rather, it may be based on an array of interpersonal networks defined (although not exclusively) out of a sense of belonging, a body of shared values, a system of social organization or interdependency (Webber et al. 1964: 108–9; Wellman 1979). An example might be a community of doctors, a religious community, a working-class community, or a community of women.

Disputes have arisen in the social sciences about adequate and appropriate definitions and understandings of community, but certain models and constructs have persisted. They include the conceptualizing of community as constitutive of a "set of social relationships based on something which the participants have in common—usually, a common sense of identity" (Marshall 1994). More broadly speaking, communities can be conceived of as social groups in which an aggregate of individuals interact with one another. Models for types or kinds of community, as elaborated by Ferdinand Tonnies (1963 [1922]), include *Gemeinshaft* and *Gesellschaft* (intimate communal and large-scale associative social relations) and, in the scholarship of Emile Durkheim (1915), mechanical versus organic solidarities. In many community studies, these models enable specific descriptive and analytical perspectives that explain ideal-typical societies as well as external factors that cause change in the nature and extent of community life.

In this book, we do not intend to dispute these definitions and models per se. Rather, we have gathered essays together to propose a less territory-centered orientation of community sites, a more unstable or fluid rendition of the nature and scope of communities, and an understanding of communities that goes beyond the dualisms dictated by traditional scholarship. Although the principal theories do not address Asian American communities explicitly, we can think about them as foundational constructs whose meanings persist or change according to context, and from which we can draw larger questions about community, given particular material conditions and literary productions associated with Asian Americans. As with other groups of color, Asian Americans' experiences of group formation cannot simply be generalized as instances of ideal-typical societal arrangements. Their experiences may be far more complex and nuanced than, and qualitatively different from, the experiences of more dominant groups to fit neatly into any of the specific binary categories. In this instance, we agree with Gary Okihiro's contention that "a simpleminded assertion of race or ethnicity [as a central phenomenon of Asian American communities] is no longer adequate, nor will an 'instinctual' basis for ethnic solidarity and identity suffice" (1988: 181).

We also do not intend to reconceptualize mainstream notions of community in order to substitute arbitrary definitions or even to do away with any definition of community. Instead, we aim to propose definitions of communities of Asian Americans that are grounded in specific conditions that are both external and internal to these communities. Challenging mainstream definitions of "community" opens new avenues of thinking beyond the strictures of distinct territories and closed boundaries; at the same time, there is risk in moving too far from such definitions (so that they

seem totally disconnected and unrecognizable) or appearing random or arbitrary (as in, "anything goes"). We do recognize these dangers, and we offer this collection of essays as a testament to the ways in which we test, grapple with, and navigate through such challenges. Indeed, we claim that in examining new and alternative perspectives regarding Asian American communities, we also recognize that there are connections and continuities across definitions and formations. These are, as we discussed earlier, the shared historical and contemporary experiences of capitalist, immigrant, and racialized processes among Asian Americans.

In regard to particular Asian American communities as communities in transition, we propose to illustrate connections as well as disconnections between the traditional enclave-defined incarnations of community and the changes associated with broader conceptions of communities as "sites." Territorially defined communities are usually understood to have been formed by structural forces. Restrictive U.S. immigration policies limited the number of Asians, particularly women and children, and initially deterred the formation of permanent settlements. Naturalization laws prohibited Asians from obtaining citizenship; as "aliens ineligible for citizenship," they were prevented from purchasing property, which was later reinforced by restrictive covenants on housing. These and other discriminatory policies led to the segregation of Asian Americans in ethnic enclaves in urban areas and in clusters in rural settings. Hysteria against Asian Americans, led by the white working class, who targeted them as economic competitors, resulted in anti-Asian riots that included the murdering of Asian Americans and the firebombing and destruction of their physical communities. Threats of violence kept Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, and Asian Indians from establishing more stable and permanent roots. The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II shattered the spatial communities they had occupied in urban and rural areas. But while these factors curbed the development of their early residential and business communities, they did not prevent them altogether.[6]

Asian American ethnic concentrations were once perceived as unsavory slums marked by vice, disease, degradation, co-ethnic exploitation, and disorganization. As a result, these areas by the late 1960s were prime targets for replacement through gentrification projects. Community studies focused on how ethnic and racial communities have, will, or should assimilate economically, politically, and socially into the American mainstream, leading to the dissipation of ethnic communities (Bonacich and Modell 1980). Although some locations became extinct because of residential dispersion or evictions; others survived because their residents struggled to preserve them. More important, the influx of Asian newcomers after 1965 rejuvenated dwindling ethnic enclaves and helped to create new ethnic communities; it also brought an infusion of domestic and international financial investment that led to a revitalization of urban spaces and a re-energizing of local economies (Fong 1998; Horton 1995; Saito 1998). Although some Asian American communities are still condemned for their insalubrious components, others are celebrated for their positive contributions to American society.

Chain migration and occupational opportunities are still the primary reasons that Asian Americans choose to settle in particular areas and help to explain the dispersal of Asians across the nation, even though many of them are still concentrated in

urban and suburban locations. In the chain-migration process, Asian immigrants tend to settle in areas with established ethnic communities where they can rely on the resources and support of relatives and friends. Some groups do not use social networks as extensively as others when selecting a settlement site, because occupational considerations are primary elements in their limited choices. As a result of their association with the military, for example, Filipinos tend to choose locations near military bases, where many remain even after retirement (Bonus 2000; Espiritu 1995). Asian professionals who immigrated using the occupational provisions of the 1965 legislation found work at hospitals, universities, and research companies, many of which were located in the Midwest or South or on the East Coast. This explains the growth of this group in these regions in the post-1965 period.

Given such patterns of spatial concentration, Asian American communities have been historically studied as ethnic enclaves that display common elements: mostly homogeneous, self-sufficient, and isolated from the rest of society. Regarding them as such produced works that have depicted enclaves as places where collective immigrant narratives of success (or failure) are played out.[7] In recent years, however, scholars have questioned the presumed accuracy of mainstream definitions of community as having fixed borders. They have instead introduced alternative perspectives of communities that are more porous, interdependent, and transspatial.[8] The work of Tarry Hum in Chapter 1 is emblematic of this scholarship. Using a case study of the neighborhood of Sunset Park in Brooklyn, Hum demonstrates how traditional perspectives on immigrant communities fail to account for contemporary communities that are directly linked to global assembly lines, racially diverse, and transnationally configured. This work is crucial not only because it gives us a better understanding of global interconnections within which Asian American communities play critical roles (whether as centers of capital or as providers of labor), but also because it provides us with expansive tools that can situate contemporary Asian American realities beyond the isolationist and internally self-sufficient models of community formations.

Since Asian Americans were denied U.S. citizenship, they had an incentive to remain in close contact with their homelands. With most of their family still in Asia, many were involved in homeland politics, with some assisting abroad in the nationalist and anticolonialist movements in their home countries. Since World War II and afterward, when U.S. citizenship became available to them, Asians were able to choose the kinds of connections they wanted to maintain with their homelands. With the ease of air travel today, those who can afford to can shuttle between countries and maintain residences and businesses in both or multiple continents. Connections to "homelands" and ethnic cultures vary depending on when one immigrated and, particularly, where one was socialized into adulthood. The tension and uncertainty that might accompany these connections are the central theme of Eileen Chia-Ching Fung's essay (Chapter 2). Fung analyzes the works of the filmmakers Ang Lee and Nien-Jen Wu, showing how the histories of Taiwan, China, and the United States find their way into the complex conditions faced by Taiwanese Chinese Americans; these conditions, in turn, inform filmic narratives of fragmentation, colonialism, and "homelessness" that may well characterize transnational and diasporic elements of this par-

ticular Asian American community. Again, these factors bring to light the porous boundaries of many Asian American communities and the situational parameters from which we can understand their composition.

Connections within and among communities may not be solely ethnically or racially determined. In Russell Jeung's essay (Chapter 3), we can clearly infer that "homeland" connections among a community of Southeast Asian American youth are neither absolutely unidirectional nor predictably sharp and singular. For his participants, primarily Khmer and Iu Mien youth, collective identities are dynamically forged among relationships revolving around concepts of tradition and Americanness. For these youths, living in the inner city of Oakland, California, constructions of community and ethnicity are intertwined with their experiences of poverty, racism, gang violence, and struggles for panethnic partnerships.

When we come to understand that territorially defined communities can often exceed their physical boundaries and have overlapping elements located within and outside neighborhoods, we can extend the theme of *Communities in Transition* to include communities that are organized around sexualized spaces and virtual arrangements. Eric C. Wat (Chapter 4) focuses on interactions between a community composed of individuals who identify as Asian American and gay and the larger and more dominant community of mostly white gay men. It is difficult to determine how the post-1965 immigration flows have transformed the character of the queer Asian American communities. Because historical sources and studies are lacking, the transitions are too intricate to demarcate. Scholars of history are only beginning to speculate on the freedom available to gay Asian American men, most of whom lived in racially segregated, predominantly male communities unrestricted by the traditions of their homelands and the scrutiny of their families. On some level, it would seem that contemporary immigration to America allows gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals the opportunity to escape the traditional expectations of their families in their homelands. The gay rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s improved the situation for gays and lesbians, even though white racism limited the inclusion of people of color in their political agendas.

The increased immigration from Asia has allowed substantial numbers of Asians to choose potential partners and seek validation for their life experiences. This has led to the creation of queer spaces, such as Asian gay bars, and the allocation of resources to organize formal support groups. For many Asian American gays and lesbians today, however, ethnic-bound communities are not sanctuaries but stifling sites of exclusion where homophobia persists and where they are remarginalized (Eng and Hom 1998). Based on historical and fieldwork research conducted primarily in two Asian gay bars in Los Angeles, Wat's chapter elucidates these tensions in the lives of gay Asian American men who have been involved in forging panethnic coalitions among the L.A. gay communities and in developing personal sexual relationships among specific Asian American gay men in the area. His study is illustrative of the uneven and often conflictual processes of community formation.

One relatively recent phenomenon is the rise of cyberspace-mediated communication in the late twentieth century. In this anthology, we scrutinize its current use and

potential for expressing and explaining communities in transition by way of an essay written by Emily Noelle Ignacio (Chapter 5). Ignacio's chapter looks at how a particular Internet-based newsgroup or discussion list became a global electronic site for conversations about identities for its Filipino participants; hence, the interrogative *"Pilipino ka ba?"* ("Are You Pilipino?"). This "community" was configured as a virtual connection to its participants' homeland and, even though its community boundaries were only electronically fixed (they were available only to those who have access to the technology), the Internet exchanges posed more expansive ways to construct "Filipinoness" (especially in relation to "Americanness"), as exemplified by the 'Netters' debates on language use.

Communities in Transformation: Identities and Generations

This part highlights the major transformations affecting the composition of Asian American groups and analyzes how these factors shape relations within these socially constructed communities. With the 1965 Immigration Act, ethnic groups already present in the United States such as the Chinese, Asian Indians, Koreans, and Filipinos expanded and new groups formed with the influx of populations from Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and other parts of Asia. The numbers of biracial and multiracial Asian Americans have also increased in recent decades and are changing the contours of these communities. The educational and occupational mobility of established Asian Americans, along with the arrival of newcomers, has led to a socioeconomically diverse population. The increasing numbers of women and children have made possible the establishment of multigenerational Asian American families. These transformations have greatly reconfigured group boundaries and interactions.

The expansion of some ethnic groups and the emergence of new ones have accentuated internal differences in Asian America. The ethnic Chinese American population is a clear representation of a community reshaping itself. As the largest ethnic group, it incorporates people of Chinese ancestry from the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific, Europe, Africa, and throughout Asia (Pan 1998), creating new subgroups in the United States. Taiwanese Americans, an emerging group, are attempting to define their distinctive social and political history, using various means by which their members contend with their positions within the triangle of America, Taiwan, and mainland China, as Eileen Chia-Ching Fung points out in Chapter 2. Their substantial numbers have enabled them to organize their own language schools, professional organizations, and cultural events. Filipinos are another example of a group with varying regional and linguistic differences, especially as a result of the post-1965 immigrant waves. These affiliations create internal divisions among immigrant communities that go largely unnoticed by outsiders. Their legacy of Spanish colonization has led to their being considered a mixed-race population as well as one shaped by Spanish language and culture and by Catholicism. This aspect of Filipino history has led many to question their positioning within Asian America rather than with Latinos.

Before 1975, the few Southeast Asians living in the United States were mainly international students, military trainees, or war brides. Arriving here after the Vietnam War, refugees and immigrants from Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea (formerly Cambodia) were lumped together as "Southeast Asians" or "Indochinese," even though stark ethnic, historical, religious, cultural, and linguistic differences separated these groups. Their diversity and status as involuntary immigrants gives them perhaps stronger commonalities with refugees from Central America, Africa, and Europe, but they have been principally included in the Asian American category. The fit has not always been comfortable for them.

Like "Southeast Asian," the "South Asian" label conveniently incorporates diverse ethnic groups and faces the same challenges of inclusion in the Asian American classification. Asian Indians have a long history in the United States; the population of other "South Asians," from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, however, has increased substantially since 1965. Although historically linked to Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, and Koreans, Asian Indians were officially included in the Asian American category only in the 1980 census (Chan 1991; Takaki 1989). Once a predominantly laboring class from the Punjab region of India and mainly of Sikh faith, contemporary immigrants are from diverse class backgrounds, come from varying regions in India (some are twice immigrants from Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean), and represent a wide spectrum of religious faiths and political affiliations (Mathew and Prashad 1999–2000). Such differences obviously affect their ability to come together as a cohesive community (Prashad 2000; see also Margaret Abraham's essay [Chapter 12] in this volume).

Although there has been little open debate about grouping Asians and Pacific Islanders together, the alliance between these groups has never been easy. Although it is a misnomer imposed by outsiders, the term "Asian Pacific American" is widely used in educational programs and courses and by political, social, and economic organizers. As Debbie Hippolite Wright and Paul Spickard argue in Chapter 6, however, Pacific Islanders' experiences are culturally distinct from Asians', and their historical markers differ from those of the Asian immigrant experience. Hawaiians, for example, are U.S. citizens by birth and are socialized with English; having lived in what is now known as the American territory since A.D. 500, they cannot be considered immigrants. In fact, because of the annexation of their lands and their continuing struggle for sovereignty, they may have more in common with Native Americans than with other Asian groups.

As Wright and Spickard show, the label "Pacific Islander" includes diverse groups (Chamorros, Fijians, Hawaiians, Maoris, Northern Mariana Islanders, Palauans, Samoans, Tahitians, Tongans, etc.) who have varying ethnic experiences depending on their place of birth, where they were socialized, and how their family life was structured. Their association with other Asian Americans raises contentious problems for a number of scholars, including the editors of this volume, who continue to grapple particularly with the negative impact this forced, artificial, and seemingly irrational grouping with Asian Americans has had on specific groups of Pacific Islanders. This also raises complicated questions about, for example, the commonalties that exist in

the colonization and militarization of populations in the Pacific, and about the colonial histories of the Philippines, Vietnam, and India, and the continuing military presence in Korea, Japan, and other Asian countries. On the mainland, how does the process of racialization affect Asians and Pacific Islanders and their ability to contend collectively with hate crimes, poverty, social services, juvenile delinquency, and police mistreatment? While some argue that this grouping has largely done a disservice to both groups, others contend that these communities have been geographically situated together. And as neighbors in America, they have had close, daily interactions that have led to a sharing of life experiences beyond governmental classifications. Nevertheless, the alliance is becoming more precarious, especially because the 2000 U.S. Census disaggregated the two groups, affecting whether these communities will go their separate ways or choose to strengthen their connections, however they opt to define them.

Although not openly discussed, the ethnic and racial boundaries of the Asian American community have always been porous because of the presence of multiracial populations. Because earlier immigration laws restricted the number of female co-ethnics, Asian American men had sexual relations with—and in some instances, married—Alaskan Native, Hawaiian, Native American, Black, and Latino women. Although anti-miscegenation laws and social pressure prevented relationships between Asians and whites, some mixed-race couples formed. As a result of these unions, interracial Asian children changed the composition of the population. Their numbers have increased with more contact between racial groups and the lessening (to a certain extent) of social stigma attached to these relationships in the contemporary period. The children of war brides and their American husbands, many of them of non-Asian ancestry, have also contributed to the multiracial composition of the community. Furthermore, Filipino immigrants, many of them of mixed-race ancestry, have been a large part of continuing immigration flows to the United States.

Intra-racial relationships and marriages are reported to be more commonplace, so children who are biethnic (Japanese and Filipino, Chinese and Japanese, etc.) are also prevalent in many Asian American communities (Shinagawa and Pang 1996). The Japanese American community, which has the highest rate of out-marriage, is contending with this mixed-race population, and their experience can be instructive for all Asian American groups that are also likely to become more ethnically and racially diverse. In Chapter 7, Rebecca Chiyoko King examines two pastimes, beauty pageants and basketball leagues, to analyze how the Japanese American community uses the transracial ethnic strategy to justify the inclusion of multiethnic and multiracial people of Japanese ancestry in these activities and, in so doing, constructs a community that moves beyond the assimilationist or panethnic models. The 2000 Census's inclusion of a "mixed racial heritage" category will clearly reconfigure Asian American communities in unpredictable ways.

Class disparities among Asian Americans have become more pronounced in the past couple of decades. Once a population made up primarily of common laborers living in low-income neighborhoods, Asian Americans now also work in the most privileged professions and claim some of the most exclusive addresses in the coun-

try. More of the new immigrants are well-educated professionals from metropolitan areas in Asia, and their material and cultural capital ease their adjustment in this country. Pensri Ho's essay (Chapter 8) addresses the growth of affluent Asian Americans who are interested in economic integration and in advancing within mainstream professions, while simultaneously identifying with their ethnicity and forging a deterritorialized Asian American community. Their attempts to form a professional organization raise questions about how we might redefine activism in the post-Civil Rights era and how this contrasts with efforts by Asian American factory and service workers to organize unions.

While Cambodians, Hmong, and Laotians have the highest rate of those living in poverty, Chinese, Filipinos and Asian Indians can be found in the higher income brackets as well as in the lowest ones. Some members of these communities insist that Asian Americans are the "model minority." The myth of successful immigrants and citizens who contribute to the economic growth in America is the one they want to project of their communities, even when they are confronted with realities that contradict this image, as Abraham notes in Chapter 12. Others argue that many Asian Americans still live in dire poverty and that there is a need to continue the struggle for adequate social services for this population (see Andrew Leong's essay [Chapter 15]). Class divisions, along with other differences, affect Asian Americans' opinions on issues such as affirmative action, unionization, welfare reform, partisan politics, and race relations.

The new immigration has balanced the generational composition of the population. Whereas families and children once were rare, they are now commonplace. In this section, we define generational differences, first, to mean age, and second, to mean period of immigration. We group these together because they are often related, with groups of immigrants of similar age arriving at the same time. The 1990 Census found that Asian Americans had a median age of 30 years, younger than the national median of 33 years (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1993). The Asian American population has undergone several generational transitions. During the 1970s, primarily first-generation immigrants gave way to a mainly U.S.-born group; that trend was reversed in the 1980s, as Asian Americans went back to being a primarily foreign-born, first-generation population. With continuing immigration, Asian newcomers are joining co-ethnic old-timers who are several generations removed from the initial immigration experience.

The post-1965 immigration waves have included multi-generational families whose experiences of adaptation vary widely. Although social scientists have used "first," "second," "third," and so on to designate generations, we find these terms inexact. More recently, the term "1.5" has been commonly used to describe the experiences of those who were born abroad and immigrated with their families, including those who came as toddlers, teenagers, or young adults. In Chapter 9, Mary Yu Danico captures the distinctions among the 1.5 generation—who are bicultural and bilingual—contrasting them to the first and second generation and raising new possibilities for how we discuss multi-generational communities. The 1.5-generation children, for example, have recast what it means to be "Korean" in Hawai'i, mediating their position and identity in American society in relation to other Koreans and in relation to

the larger sociopolitical context. The ideological outlook of Korean Americans, like that of most Asian American groups, is affected by generational factors, along with language ability, socialization, class position, and familiarity with the structure of American society, as Edward J. W. Park discusses in Chapter 13. The younger generation also may have access to different tools to construct their identity—notably, access to Internet technology to connect to co-ethnics (see Chapter 5).

It is almost a cliché to discuss how Asian American children experience a clash between traditional ethnic practices at home and the Americanized values and norms promoted in the schools and through the popular media. Such cultural and identity clashes occur primarily during the first-generation stages. Asian Americans have tried to maintain their cultural and linguistic practices in a variety of ways. Reacting to the racialization process that lumps Asian Americans together, for instance, Southeast Asian youths who were born or largely socialized in the United States and reside in low-income, multiracial neighborhoods are forging their own sense of a specific youth culture. As children of refugee parents, they are affected by their parents' experiences and ideologies, but they are also distanced from them, making the relationship among generations difficult, as Russell Jeung notes in Chapter 3. As with all ethnic groups, connections to "homelands" and ethnic cultures vary depending on when one immigrated and particularly where one was socialized into adulthood.

Although Asian Americans are praised for their entrepreneurial acumen, this often overlooks the fact that many immigrants are able to achieve the "American dream" only because their small family businesses are sustained by the invisible labor of their children. Lisa Sun-Hee Park's case study of immigrant entrepreneurial families (Chapter 10) focuses on the lives of Chinese and Korean children who grew up in such businesses, showing how their experiences have led to a reorganization of their family life, as well as to a reconstruction of their sense of identity and community. These children often take on adult responsibilities and tasks at an early age, helping their families eke out a living and functioning as translators for their immigrant parents. Although many of them manage to adapt, others do not fare as well, choosing to rebel against their families and the establishment, as a result earning the classification of "juvenile delinquents." Many immigrants turn to entrepreneurship because they lack educational and occupational skills. However, others find that educational degrees from their homelands are not recognized here. This, combined with their lack of fluency in English and prevailing racial discrimination, can force them into self-employment. As a result, Asian Americans are over-represented in the total U.S. population as small-business owners, and many of them barely make a profit or go bankrupt. The costs that this exacts on youths and families in the community are just beginning to be considered.

The shifts in the ethnic, racial, gender, class, and generational composition of the Asian American population since 1965 have created new internal tensions and fissures in Asian American communities. As a result, they are realigning and rearranging themselves, a dialectic process that is determined largely by interactions among individuals and groups.

Communities of Alternatives: Representations and Politics

We hope to open discussions of more expanded and fluid notions of Asian American communities by exposing the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality in such formations. Ethnicity and racial identification cannot be the only means for defining the boundaries and composition of community. Asian Americans, in addition to their ethnic or racial identification, can be strategically identified and positioned as women, gays, lesbians, immigrants, seniors, mixed-race, transnationals, biculturals, or poor. These added perspectives enable scholars to recognize the processes of community identification whether they are internally or externally defined.

In the 1970s, for example, when Asian American studies were being defined, a great deal of emphasis was placed on thinking about "Asia" within "America." As the proportion of foreign-born immigrants increases, questions about the meanings of "America" and their relationship to "Asia" can no longer be assessed and contained within strict national boundaries and distinct, racialized identities. To be sure, cultural constructions of Asian Americans have always been complicated and shaped by connections to "homelands," race relations, and imperialism. And it is in the sites of cultural production that we observe a dialectic process that involves exchanges among groups on local, national, and global levels. Such exchanges have had enormous consequences not only for how communities have been formed and reformulated, but also for how they have been represented.[9]

To a large degree, new communication technology and the globalization of culture in the mass media have transformed our understanding of space and place. Capitalist expansion has led to interconnections among individuals separated by national boundaries. Mobile telephones, fax machines, and computers have facilitated instantaneous communication among individuals and groups; Internet communications via e-mail chat rooms now allow co-ethnics residing in various parts of the world to maintain constant contact, and these dialogue exchanges help shape a variety of self-perceptions and encourage a reconfiguration of spatial communities (see Chapter 5). Many young people are more adept than their elders at manipulating the new technology to create and sustain complex social relationships, changing the process by which culture and identity are transmitted from one generation to the next. The emerging processes affect Asian American cultural representations, expressions, and practices in multiple spaces, including language schools, religious performances, beauty pageants, video stores, *karaoke* clubs, community parades, and ethnic presses. Given these conditions, how do we think about Asian American communities in their generalities and particularities? How do we understand the ways in which cultures are created, changed, sustained, and reformulated?

In Chapter 11, Karen Har-Yen Chow interrogates what may be one of the most pressing concerns of communities bound by historical tracings of presumed common identities and current manifestations of diversity by discussing Asian American panethnicity and its representation in fiction. Through Yen Le Espiritu's (1992) scholarship on that subject, we learn that panethnicity is created by external and internal

dynamics. Chow adds another twist to that argument by peering through the work of Maxine Hong Kingston and reading it as a social text whose elements emblematize and embody a particular notion of Asian American panethnicity. To a large degree, Chow challenges us to explore the boundaries and interstices of history and fiction as places where we encounter ideas about how ideology and consciousness work and about how the permeable borders between them can be made less obscure in order to examine alternative community formations.

The remaining four essays delve into organizational and institutional forms of political activism. Earlier, we said that the changing internal composition of many Asian American communities along the lines of gender, sexuality, and class suggests a reconsideration of traditional emphases on the centrality of race and ethnicity in alliance formation and maintenance. Likewise, the larger dynamics of social, political, and economic relationships in American society have become more complex due to globalized capitalism, changing population demographics, and the emergence of neoconservative racism. These circumstances pose challenges and alternatives to the ways politics have been played out among specific Asian American groups and their relationships with other local and national communities. In Chapter 12, Margaret Abraham places the changing dynamics of South Asian community identities in the United States within the larger historical and contemporary debates over the concepts of model minority (as applied particularly to Asian immigrants) and the persistence of cultures of patriarchy in many ethnic groups. A key context to her analysis is the dramatic rise in the immigration of women and families in the post-1965 years. Women are immigrating with their partners, their families, and, in some instances, on their own as college students and as professionals. Filipinas and South Asian women, for example, have qualified to immigrate because of their professional skills, fulfilling some of the occupational provisions of the 1965 Immigration Act. They have also sponsored family members along the way. With the presence of more women in the communities, otherwise hidden or unmentioned problems of sexism and patriarchy begin to surface. Abraham's chapter targets domestic violence as a primary concern for women in her study and examines the formation of South Asian women's organizations as a proactive effort in this instance.[10]

We recognize in Abraham's essay that the problem of violence against women is not simply interpersonal; it reveals multiple dynamics of race relations and internal group politics. In fighting against domestic violence, South Asian women in the United States are not only contesting the mainstream treatment of this social problem, for example, they are also challenging sexism among their male co-ethnics. Put another way and from a larger perspective, these women (and the men who fight alongside them) are challenging the patriarchal systems within both Asian and mainstream American society. But choosing gender politics over a politics of ethnic nationalism brings risks, such as ostracism, marginalization, and exposure to other forms of social punishment. Traditionalists lament that many anti-patriarchy movements have led to a breakdown of "comfortable" gender relations and, ultimately, of community life. For others, however, these struggles have created new opportunities to curtail gender oppression. As they come of age, some young Asian American women are attempting to find their own voices in a society that still holds gendered expectations

for girls and that stereotypes Asian women as secondary to men (see also Chapter 3). As some of them have become independent women, they have exercised more choices and greater freedom to pursue partners and careers than women had a generation ago. However, many—particularly those with immigrant parents—still face strict obligations to family and community, as Lisa Sun-Hee Park also discusses in Chapter 10. Furthermore, these groups and organizations have to weigh the consequences of publicizing social problems such as domestic violence and juvenile delinquency in an era in which anti-Asian and anti-immigrant sentiments continue to be pervasive.

Contrary to common misperceptions, most Asian Americans have been neither politically passive nor mere victims of their situations. They have worked within the constraints placed on them to contest unfair working conditions, as well as against anti-miscegenation laws, segregation in the schools, biased naturalization laws, and immigration restrictions (Chan 1991; Lowe 1996; Okihiro 1994). In the contemporary period, they have worked within and across Asian American communities against racism, exploitation, imperialism, and marginalization (Aguilar-San Juan 1994; Espiritu 1992). Newcomers bring human and material capital, providing new resources for community building and political mobilization. But they also bring divergent socioeconomic and political agendas. Edward J. W. Park's essay (Chapter 13) addresses how Korean Americans in particular challenge traditionally configured black—white liberal politics in urban settings that do not take the interests, strategies, and political visions of other groups into account. Using comparative models, Park lucidly describes the terrains of urban political struggles involving Korean Americans and their relationships with one another and other racialized groups, particularly African Americans, to map the multiple contexts of intergroup power relations.

The diversity of the Asian American population has increasingly become evident through active attempts to maneuver for social change. The political stance in the United States has moved toward the right, as demonstrated by the passage of propositions, initiatives, acts, and bills that rescind support for social services, affirmative-action programs, and immigrants' rights. However, poverty, educational and occupational discrimination, and anti-immigrant sentiments persist. How Asian Americans approach the quest for racial equality is determined by local race relations and the available political discourses and actors in a specific location. In Chapter 14, Jiannbin Lee Shiao directs our attention to the ideological, institutional, and social contexts of particular Asian American communities so that we can better understand parallels and discontinuities of civic participation among such communities. In his chapter, he frames two case studies of city-based philanthropic foundations, one in the San Francisco Bay area and the other in Cleveland, along two differing tropes of race discourse—race defined in terms of inequality and race defined in terms of diversity—to derive the lessons from past, current, and future initiatives in political inclusion of Asian American communities. Ultimately, Shiao's chapter may well be read as an invitation to examine the prospects of moving beyond the strict boundaries of ethnic-specific community interests and ethnic organizations, as he argues that Asian Americans need to direct themselves toward the larger, more complex interactions among social movements and philanthropic actors, institutions, and policies.

As individuals and in various collectivities, Asian Americans have made significant gains in electoral politics, as shown in their efforts to win seats in public office. This is not to say that numbers and presence are enough or that they guarantee that meaningful political participation has been fully achieved. Like other ethnic groups, Asian Americans are beset with conflicts between conservatives and progressives, while others choose to remain apolitical or complacent. Diversity makes strategizing, politicizing, and organizing around common sets of interests and agendas particularly difficult. In Chapter 15, Andrew Leong examines the parameters of these difficulties and the prospects by which differences can be managed or transcended within specific conditions. His snapshots of group cleavages as well as alliances demonstrate the advantages of having Asian Americans recognize, tolerate, and work with differences within their communities in moments that particular issues, such as welfare reform and immigration, provide opportunities for unity and solidarity. As the composition of the population and the sociopolitical contexts are being altered, Asian Americans increasingly need to re-examine how we define activism and resistance, especially in relation to promoting transgressive politics. As this collection's final essay, Leong's chapter offers what we consider a key set of arguments for addressing intersections and divergences in contemporary Asian American communities.

Over the years, racist policies led to the forcible social and physical segregation of Asian Americans from mainstream society. The geographically bound sites they occupied—the Chinatowns, Japantowns, and Manilatowns—were safe havens where they were temporarily protected from the discrimination of outsiders and from taunts about how they looked, what they wore, what they ate, and what language they spoke. These were places of refuge that enabled them to maintain their dignity and form voluntary social networks among co-ethnics that helped them find housing, employment, and other assistance—essential services because of the transitory life they lived as migrant or transnational laborers. Thus, their spatial ghettoization and occupational status reinforced the cohesiveness of their social communities. For many contemporary Asian Americans, geographic communities and social networks continue to provide a symbolic and material place for escape, solace, belonging, acceptance, and protection.

However, such communities can also be fraught with conflict and tension. And they can be places of entrapment and danger. The term "community" has often been associated with the comforts of home, but the familiarity and security of a haven can be an illusion. As transnational immigrants, as queers, as monolingual speakers, as women, or as multiracials, we may feel abandoned, displaced, or disconnected from our so-called communities. All of us at some moments in our lives are "othered" by our "own" communities and, in some cases, even exploited by them.

Some may argue that the concept or praxis of contemporary community is elusive. We do not. We concur with Chandra Mohanty, who writes about "home not as a comfortable, stable, inherited and familiar space, but instead as an imaginative, politically charged space where the familiarity and sense of affection and commitment lay in shared collective analysis of social injustice, as well as a vision of radical transformation" (1993: 353). For us, Asian American communities manifest themselves in

everyday spaces, geographic and social, where Asians reside, work, and carry out their social and political activities. They are evident in the relationships and interactions Asian Americans have with one another and with people of all ethnic and racial backgrounds. And their constant reformulations suggest different spaces and visions that attempt to braid local experiences with connections that extend into the regional, the global, and the transnational.[11] This does not mean that community formations, geographic or social, are based only on congenial relations. They are marked by contestation, negotiation, and compromise. The Asian American population is fluid and flexible. Thus, we want this collection to reflect the non-static, non-essentialized nature of contemporary Asian American communities.

We felt a need to redefine and reconstruct our understanding of various possibilities under which such competing or consensual formations of communities occur, paying particular attention to the larger structural and historical forces transfiguring these formations. Immigration policies determined by both economics and politics; the changing racial dynamics of the U.S. population that mark the numerical decrease in the white population; the emphasis foreign-policy makers place on Latin American and Pacific Rim markets and investments; the de-industrialization of America in the global economy, along with the expansion of the service sector; the reactionary stance the American polity holds toward issues of social and civil rights; and technological advances that supposedly give people instantaneous connections to the world—these factors only begin to speak to the confluence of national and international forces, that affect Asian America. Focusing on the intricacies of Asian America and its contours reflects these broader trends and developments.

We know that this collection does not exhaust the possibilities for the continuation, emergence, and re-formulation of contemporary Asian American communities. We hope, however, that it serves as an introduction to the complexities of the issues, and we expect that it will generate further discussions and debates about such communities as we move into the new century.

Notes

1. The "perpetual foreigner" status continues to stigmatize Americans of Asian ancestry. The events of the Wen Ho Lee case speak to the detrimental impact of this racialized stereotyping. Lee is a naturalized U.S. citizen of Taiwanese ancestry who worked as a nuclear scientist for the University of California Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico for twenty years and was accused of espionage on behalf of mainland China. His defense lawyers, along with active members of the scientific and Asian American communities, claim that he was being unfairly targeted because of his race.

2. See Bonus 2000; and our essays in Manalansan 2000.

3. We also emphasize this aim to distinguish our anthology from other collections and works that employ specific disciplinary approaches, not so much to create distance from them as to offer a complementary view.

4. For an incisive collection of essays on the phenomenon of globalization with respect to Asian Americans, see Hu-DeHart 1999.

5. See Omi 1988 for an engaging discussion of the need for Asian American studies scholars to debate these critical issues.

6. Scholarship on specific Asian American communities since the 1965 Immigration Act includes, among others, Abelmann and Lie 1995; Almirol 1985; Bacon 1996; Bonus 2000; Chan 1994; Chen 1992; Eng and Hom 1998; Fisher 1980; Fong 1994; Fugita and O'Brien 1991; Gold 1992; Horton 1995; Kibria 1993; Kim 1981; Koltyk 1998; Kwong 1996; Lee 1998; Light 1972; Lin 1998; Loo 1998; MacDonald 1997; Montero 1979; Okamura 1998; Park 1997; Rangaswamy 2000; Saito 1998; Smith-Hefner 1999; Takahashi 1997; and Zhou 1992. For scholarship on specific historical communities, see Friday 1994; Ichioka 1988; Jensen 1989; Leonard 1992; Loewen 1988 (1971); Lukes and Okihiro 1985; Lydon 1985; Matsumoto 1993; Miyamoto 1984 (1939); Modell 1977; Nee and Nee 1972; Tamura 1993; and Yung 1995.

7. Chinatowns are the most commonly studied Asian American communities in this regard. Refer to Kwong 1996; Lyman 1986; and Zhou 1992 for examples.

8. Abelmann and Lie 1995; Chen 1992; Hu-DeHart 1999; and Lin 1998 are recent examples of scholarship that places sets of Asian American communities within the context of global economic exchanges.

9. Regarding the relationships across Asian American literature, representation, identity, and nationhood, refer to Hamamoto 1994; Kondo 1997; R. C. Lee 1999; R. G. Lee 1999; Li 1998; Ling 1998; and Marchetti 1993.

10. For a recent discussion of critical issues confronting Asian American women, see Sciachitano and Võ 2000.

11. For an important discussion of the politics of the local and the transnational, see Basch et al. 1994 and Dirlik 1999.

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