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Chapter 22

"Racial Profiling" in the War on Terror
 Cultural Citizenship and South Asian Muslim
 Youth in the United States

Sunaina Maira

Introduction

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the "War on Terror" waged by the United States at home and abroad, questions of citizenship and racialization have taken on new, urgent meanings for South Asian immigrant youth. Many South Asian Americans, Arab Americans, and Muslim Americans, or individuals who appeared "Muslim," have been targeted for surveillance, detention, and deportation by the state. In the public sphere as well, South Asian, Muslim, and Arab Americans have been the objects of intensified scrutiny and suspicion and, in some cases, have experienced physical assaults and racial profiling as part of the renewed anti-Muslim backlash and demonization of Arabs in the United States.¹ There has been a shift in U.S. race politics after 9/11 where the fault lines are no longer just between those racialized as white Americans/people of color or black/white Americans, but between those categorized as Muslim/non-Muslim, American/"foreign," or citizen/non-citizen. This chapter examines the experiences in the United States of South Asian Muslim youth who emigrated from Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, in the context of this shifting racial formation and intensified exclusion of Arab and Muslim Americans from national belonging.

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The War on Terror

Within six weeks of September 11, 2001, Congress hastily passed the USA-PATRIOT Act, which conveniently stands for United and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act. The new laws to prosecute the "War on Terror" by eroding civil liberties were pushed through under considerable pressure from Attorney General John Ashcroft, who threatened critics of the act "that those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberties . . . only aid terrorists."² Not so conveniently for Muslim, Arab, and South Asian Americans, the PATRIOT Act gave the government sweeping new powers of investigation

... but I also know of your courage. You must have known to feel so comfortable, however compromised, your suicide was under such brutal conditions.

Including some postsurgery photos that I saw in the pictures at first. My sister is the girl I respected, who cut my hair, let me tag her, my impatience, envied me (too much) to be with me, spoke Korean more fluently than I, the pride of our father, the closest to our grandfather of our grandmother, the toughest, our younger brother's favorite sister, our brother, the one to have my teachers' attention. You said later, "I always feel obligated." I knew you had it so hard. Your suicide was

... through stories told by our family. You put blank cartridges into where the bullet went underneath the covers. Our mother found you with a gun. Eventually she found you at everything was going to be fine. You asked me to go to a psychiatric place. Our mother tried to give me orange juice, but she had walked down the stairs when she heard an explosion. You were de-

It would be nice to extract an ultimate comfort from analysis, but I am still consciousness. (That is what it feels like, the feeling of culture.) I cannot hope to achieve a future, I still remember, and I will live to tell it. I think it is possible to militate against violence and unity. I am not even calling for anarchy. We already live in a (nation-)state of war. It compels me to recount your death. Maybe by writing a historical or political consciousness, I will even find a patchwork place for my dreams.

Writings by Asian American Women, edited by Patricia T. Takagi (New York: Beacon Press, 1997), reprint by permission of the publisher.

and surveillance targeting their communities.³ It did this by creating an ambiguously defined category of "domestic terrorism"; by granting the government enhanced surveillance powers; and by taking away due process rights from noncitizens who could be placed in mandatory (and in actuality, indefinite and secret) detention and deported because of participation in broadly defined "terrorist activity" (often for minor immigration violations and also in secret).⁴ The act's provisions violated basic constitutional rights of due process and free speech and, in effect, sacrificed the liberties of specific minority groups in exchange for a presumed sense of "safety" of the larger majority. Before 9/11, about 80 percent of the American public thought it was wrong for law enforcement to use "racial profiling," popularly used to refer to the disproportionate targeting of African American drivers by police for the offense of "driving while black"; after the shock of the 9/11 attacks, 60 percent favored racial profiling, "at least as long as it was directed at Arabs and Muslims."⁵

It is important to note that discrimination against and suspicion of Arab Americans and Muslim Americans existed in the United States well before 9/11.⁶ However, South Asian Americans, particularly Sikh and Muslim males, suddenly found themselves scrutinized as potential "enemy" threats. Surveillance of Arab American communities has always been linked to U.S. foreign policies in the Middle East, and is closely tied to U.S. support of the Israeli occupation of Palestine and military interventions in the region. Arab Americans, and others, who have protested these policies have been monitored at various moments since the 1967 Israeli-Arab war, from the FBI's surveillance of the General Union of Palestinian Students in the 1980s to the attempted deportation of the pro-Palestinian activists known as the "L.A. 8" to the nationwide monitoring and interviews of Arab American individuals and organizations before and during the first Gulf War.⁷ Racial profiling must be understood not just as a scrutiny of certain groups because of presumed differences of "racial" or ethnic identity, or just in terms of cultural and social exclusion, but as an everyday practice that is linked to state policies. Racial profiling after 9/11, in particular, highlights the ways in which particular immigrant communities are positioned in relation to the nation-state, domestically and globally.

The shift in racialization of South Asian Americans after 9/11 is significant because South Asians in this country have had a different relationship than Arab Americans to the policies of the national security state. They have generally not been viewed as potentially working against the state's interests, at least not since the early twentieth century when Indian nationalists in the United States who were engaged in transnational activism against British colonialism were subjected to state surveillance.⁸ But South Asian immigrants, regardless of their political orientation or class status, have always been positioned within the United States in ways reflecting the state's economic and political interests. The primary influx of immigrants from South Asia came to the United States after the Immigration Act of 1965 as part of an effort by the United States to shore up its scientific and military technology expertise during the Cold War. These graduate students, scientists, and professionals generally did not engage in challenges to their adopted home state's policies. Despite economically strategic lobbying for minority status in the 1970s to avail themselves of civil rights benefits, the first

wave of South Asians has for the most part tried hard to live up to the mythic "model minority" image.⁹

The second wave of South Asian immigrants, however, that began coming to the United States in the 1980s through family reunification provisions of the 1965 Act was less affluent than their predecessors, more likely to come from small towns or even villages, and have had a very different exposure to U.S. race politics and the welfare state than those who reside in middle- and upper-middle-class, predominantly white suburbs. These more recent immigrants generally live in urban areas, often in multiethnic communities, and work in service-sector jobs or in small businesses. The civil rights crisis after 9/11 not only affected South Asian, Arab, and Muslim African Americans differently due to their varied histories of arrival and residence in the United States, and the different relationships of the United States with their home nation-states, but it also affected various South Asian American communities unevenly, based on their class status and previous understandings of U.S. racism.

The crisis of civil rights of South Asian Americans after 9/11 is the most virulent example of large-scale scapegoating of South Asians in the United States since the anti-Indian riots on the West Coast in the early twentieth century. As part of the domestic "War on Terror," at least twelve hundred Muslim immigrant men were rounded up and detained within seven weeks in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, none of them with any criminal charges, and some in high-security prisons. Nearly 40 percent of the detainees were thought to be Pakistani nationals, though virtually none of the detainees was identified publicly, and the locations where they were held remained secret.¹⁰ Many Muslim families who experienced the "disappearances" of their husbands, brothers, and sons ended up leaving the country after indefinite separations and loss of the means of family support.¹¹ There were mass deportations of Pakistani nationals on chartered planes, some leaving in the middle of the night from New York state, that went unreported in the mainstream media.¹²

In June 2002, the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (also known as "Special Registration") was established, requiring all male nationals over sixteen years from twenty-four Muslim-majority countries, including Pakistan and Bangladesh, as well as North Korea, to submit to photographing and fingerprinting at federal immigration facilities.¹³ After news broke of mass arrests of Iranians complying with Special Registration in southern California in December 2002, many undocumented immigrants and those with pending immigration applications tried to flee to Canada. By March 12, 2003, the Canadian immigration service reported 2,111 refugee claims by Pakistanis since January 1.¹⁴ More than fifteen thousand undocumented Pakistanis had reportedly left the country for Canada, Europe, and Pakistan by June 2003, according to the Pakistani Embassy in Washington.¹⁵

The profiling of Muslim and Arab immigrants affects the composition of communities and the nature of relationships within them, particularly in areas with large concentrations of these populations that have seen an exodus of immigrants, such as Brooklyn's "Little Pakistan" on Coney Island Avenue.¹⁶ Perhaps more alarming, "an unknowable number of immigrants have burrowed deeper underground," creating an even more precarious world of individuals who cannot fully admit they exist, who

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cannot safely live their lives openly for fear of deportation and so live in the shadows, if not under siege.¹⁷ The "War on Terrorism" has been waged primarily against immigrants, heightening the distinction between citizens and noncitizens and making citizenship a crucible for the post-9/11 crackdown. In fact, the "War on Terror" is an extension of the "war on immigrants," waged since the late 1980s and continuing with the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 passed in California in 1994 and the heightened policing of U.S. borders.¹⁸ The Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, both passed under the Clinton administration, laid the groundwork for the PATRIOT Act by stripping civil rights from noncitizens in the name of national security. The war on civil liberties did not begin after 9/11 but was accelerated after the Twin Towers tragedy.¹⁹

The heightened fear and anxiety of those targeted as suspects in the domestic "War on Terror" in the first year after 9/11 seem to have largely diminished in the public sphere, and within South Asian American communities seems to be borne ever more by Muslim and Sikh Americans to the exclusion of those who feel they are not "targets" of the "War on Terror." My own work on issues of immigrant rights with South Asian Americans in Massachusetts revealed that there was, understandably, a heightened sense of fear and vulnerability in Muslim immigrant communities, particularly among working-class immigrants who cannot as easily afford legal counsel to help them if they are harassed or detained. This fear about surveillance, detention, and deportation persists in Muslim American communities around the nation, for Muslims and Arabs continue to be associated with "terrorist" threats to the nation as the "War on Terror" continues to be used by the Bush administration to rally the nation.

South Asian Muslim Immigrant Youth in Wellford

The "war at home" in the aftermath of 9/11 raises questions about what the racial profiling and anti-Muslim backlash mean for South Asian and Muslim immigrant youth coming of age in the United States at a moment when their belonging in the nation is suspect. How do U.S. immigration and "homeland security" policies targeting Muslim immigrants affect the understandings of race, nationalism, and citizenship of South Asian Muslim immigrant youth? This chapter is based on an ethnographic study that I began in fall 2001, focused on working-class Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi immigrant students in a public high school in a town in Massachusetts that I call Wellford. As part of my research, I also interviewed immigrant parents, school staff, community and religious leaders, city officials, and community activists. I argue here that young Muslim immigrants' understandings of citizenship shed light on the ways in which belonging in the United States is defined in relation to transnationalism and globalization, to multiculturalism and polyculturalism, and, increasingly overtly, to the links between domestic and foreign policy that underlie U.S. imperial power.

Wellford is an interesting site for this research, for while media attention and community discussions of racial profiling were primarily focused on South Asians in the New York/New Jersey area, there were hundreds of incidents around the country in places where South Asians have not been as visible in the public sphere or as orga-

nized, including incidents in New England. It is also interesting to focus on communities such as Wellford that are known to be politically liberal, to understand what kinds of responses such a setting allows and does not allow, particularly for youth. The Wellford public high school has an extremely diverse student body reflecting the city's changing population, with students from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. Students from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan constituted the largest Muslim population in the school, followed by youth from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Morocco. At the time I did my research, there were about sixty students of South Asian origin, including a few Nepali and Tibetan youth, who were almost evenly split between immigrant students and second-generation youth.

The South Asian immigrant student population in Wellford is predominantly working- to lower-middle class, recently arrived (within five to seven years), and with minimal to moderate fluency in English. These youth generally seemed to socialize predominantly with other South Asian immigrant youth and with other immigrant students in the bilingual education program. The majority of the Indian immigrant youth were from Muslim families, most from small towns or villages in Gujarat in western India. Several of the South Asian students were actually related to one another as their families had sponsored relatives as part of an ongoing chain migration. Whole families had migrated from the same village in Gujarat recreating their extended family networks in the same apartment building in Wellford. The parents of these youth generally worked in low-income jobs in the service sector, and they themselves worked after school, up to thirty hours a week, in fast food restaurants, gas stations, retail stores, and as security guards.

The families of these South Asian (Sunni) Muslim youth are not very involved in local Muslim organizations or mosques that draw a diverse Arab, North African, Asian, and African American population. They tend to socialize mainly with people from their own ethnic community; but they do not seem to affiliate with the Indian American or Pakistani American community organizations in the area either, which tend to involve mainly middle- to upper-middle-class, suburban families.²⁰ Thus the responses of these immigrant youth are rooted in the specificities of their urban, working-class experience, an experience that is often completely unknown to their more privileged South Asian American counterparts in the area.

Cultural Citizenship

I found that in nearly all my conversations with South Asian immigrant youth, as well as their parents, the discussion would inevitably turn to citizenship, for this was an issue that had profoundly shaped their lives and driven their experiences of migration. There is very little research on youth and citizenship, and much work on young people's understandings of politics is based on a rather narrow definition of the "political" as tied to electoral politics, which is not useful when studying youth who are generally not involved in formal politics. More recent work challenges these assumptions and pays attention to young people's own understandings of politics in different realms of their everyday lives.²¹

Young people may not be interested in voting, but they express their relationship to the state in different ways and develop particular understandings of their role as "citizens." Citizenship has traditionally been thought of in political, economic, and civic terms, but increasingly analyses focus on the notion of cultural citizenship, or cultural belonging in the nation, which is a useful concept when considering the relationship of youth to the nation-state. This notion is very relevant to immigrant communities, as multiethnic societies are forced to confront questions of difference that undergird social inequity. It has become increasingly clear that the rights and obligations of civic citizenship are mediated by race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, as well as religion, as has been apparent in the post-9/11 backlash.²² Cultural citizenship, according to Lok Siu, is the "behaviors, discourses, and practices that give meaning to citizenship as lived experience" in the context of "webs of power relations" and the daily "practices of inclusion and exclusion."²³ Cultural citizenship is an important notion to examine after 9/11 because legal citizenship is clearly no longer enough to guarantee protection under the law with the state's "War on Terror," as is clear from the profiling, surveillance, and detention of Muslim Americans who are U.S. citizens.

The concept of cultural citizenship has been developed by Latino studies scholars such as Renato Rosaldo and William Flores and Rina Benmayor, who are interested in social movements for immigrant and civil rights. They employ the concept of cultural citizenship in such a way as to analyze "how cultural phenomena—from practices that organize the daily life of individuals, families, and the community, to linguistic and artistic expression—cross the political realm and contribute to the process of affirming and building an emerging Latino identity and political and social consciousness."²⁴ The concept has also been developed by cultural theorists such as Aihwa Ong who are concerned with citizenship as a process by which the state regulates and disciplines citizens. Ong defines cultural citizenship as "a dual process of self-making and being-made within webs of power linked to the nation-state and civil society."²⁵ Some scholars, such as Toby Miller, are somewhat skeptical about the possibility of using citizenship as the collective basis for political transformation, for it is increasingly individualized and privatized in neoliberal capitalist states, such as the United States, where being a citizen is more akin to being a consumer of services or social goods offered by the state. My work, in a sense, bridges these two approaches: I am interested in the critical possibilities of cultural citizenship for galvanizing struggles for civil and immigrant rights as suggested by the work of Latino studies scholars. At the same time, I view citizenship as a limited basis for social transformation, given that it is tied to the state and is often based on a model of consumer citizenship.²⁶

In my research, I found that there are three major ways in which South Asian immigrant youth understand and practice cultural citizenship: *flexible citizenship*, *multicultural or polycultural citizenship*, and *dissenting citizenship*. These terms are drawn from the ways in which the young immigrants in my study expressed and practiced cultural citizenship. It is also important to note that legal citizenship still remains very important, especially given that the "War on Terror" has used citizenship as a major weapon in its crackdown on undocumented immigrants and noncitizens and that less affluent immigrants were generally the ones most severely affected. Cultural citizen-

ship always has to be considered in relation to questions of formal documentation and economic citizenship, as my research shows.²⁷

The forms of citizenship that emerged from this study—flexible, multicultural and polycultural, and dissenting—are responses that these immigrant youth expressed simultaneously. They are not exclusive of one another nor do they exist in some kind of hierarchy of political or social development. I view these modes of citizenship not as static categories in a typology but as processes that are dynamic and cross different spheres: social, economic, and political. These citizenship practices are performed by adults as well, but it is clear that young people have to negotiate particular concerns due to their positioning in the family and social structure, and their participation in education. While immigrant youth have to deal with the migration choices of their parents and the demands of being both students and workers, it is clear that their lives are deeply shaped by the state and economic policies that drive their parents to cross national borders. Young people, too, grapple with the meaning of the state's role in their lives and with the implications of war, violence, and racism for an ethics of belonging.

Flexible Citizenship

"Flexible citizenship" describes the experience of migrants who use transnational links to provide political or material resources not available to them within a single nation-state, as has been argued for affluent Chinese migrants by Aihwa Ong.²⁸ It is different from traditional notions of dual citizenship, which imply an actual legal status as citizen of two nation-states, for it leaves open questions of national loyalty or strategic uses of citizenship status. The Muslim immigrant youth in my study display modes of flexible citizenship, for they understand citizenship in relation to the United States as well as one or more nations in South Asia. For them, national affiliations (such as "Indian" or "Bangladeshi") as well as linguistic-regional identities such as Gujarati or Pathan were very important, and they viewed all these identifications as compatible with national belonging in the United States. They came to the United States sponsored by relatives who are permanent residents or citizens, in some cases fathers who migrated alone many years earlier, so they grew up in transnational families spanning two continents. Transnational marriages and social ties are common in their families. However, their experiences of flexible citizenship were often more difficult than those of the elite Asian immigrant families studied by Ong and others. At least two boys had been separated from their fathers for about fifteen years; Faisal said his father had left Pakistan for the United States right after he was born, and in effect missed his son's childhood while he was working in the United States to support him and his family till they could be reunited. By the time Faisal came to the United States, however, his older brother was too old to enroll in high school and had to struggle to get a GED and find a job with limited English skills, so this flexible citizenship had its costs for these working- and lower-middle-class migrant families.

Most of these young immigrants desired and had applied for U.S. citizenship,

because of what they perceived as its civic and also economic benefits: a few stated that they wanted to be able to vote, and several said that they wanted to be able to travel freely between the United States and South Asia, to be mobile in work and family life. About half of these South Asian Muslim immigrant youth have green cards already; the remaining are a mix of citizens and undocumented immigrants. After 9/11, of course, citizenship has become less a matter of choice for immigrants, particularly Muslims and South Asian/Arab Americans, than a hoped-for shield against the abuses of civil rights. In fact, a few youth I spoke to were surprised that I myself had not obtained citizenship yet in the fall of 2001, and were in some cases concerned that I seemed to have taken so long to obtain this vital document!

Citizenship for these immigrant youth is part of a carefully planned, long-term, family-based strategy of migration undertaken in response to economic pressures on those living in, or at the edge of, the middle class in South Asia. Some of these youth in Wellford imagine their lives spanning national borders and speak of returning to South Asia, at least temporarily, once they have become U.S. citizens and perhaps when their parents have retired there. For example, Ismail, who worked as a computer assistant after school, wanted to set up a transnational hi-tech business so that he could live part-time in Gujarat and part-time in Boston while supporting his parents. He saw this as a strategy for Non-Resident Indians (or NRIs, a term used by the Indian government) to fulfill their obligations to the home nation-state, using the benefits of U.S. citizenship. It seems to me that these young immigrants' notions of flexible citizenship are based on at least two linked processes of "self-making and being-made" as citizens in relation to multiple nation-states.²⁹ First, their identification with India or Pakistan is based largely on transnational popular culture, on Bollywood films, South Asian television serials, and Hindi music that they access through video, DVDs, satellite TV, and the Internet. In the interest of space, I cannot delve into an analysis of transnational popular culture here, but it is clearly an important arena for the expression of transnational cultural citizenship by immigrant youth.

Second, flexible citizenship is intertwined with labor and education, areas that are interrelated for working-class, immigrant youth. These youth have come to the United States with their families, in some sense, as migrant workers. They work in low-wage, part-time jobs in retail and fast-food restaurants and struggle in school to get credentials for class mobility. These service-sector jobs are generally occupied by young people of diverse ethnic backgrounds in the United States.³⁰ However, unlike nonimmigrants who provide this flexible labor, immigrant youth can perform economic citizenship, which is based on individual productivity in the capitalist state, and they may aspire to the American Dream, but they cannot win cultural citizenship because they are nonwhite, because they are immigrant, and, currently, because they are identified as Muslim, so they are excluded from full national belonging. Their participation in U.S. public culture, in fact, occurs largely through work; their relations outside the school and community are mainly with other immigrant or young workers and with employers. For example, Walid, a Pakistani immigrant boy, lamented that he could never go out into the city with his friends because they all worked on different schedules and it was almost impossible for them to have a night off together, given that he worked night shifts at his weekend job as a security guard.

Compared to more affluent South Asian immigrants, these working-class youth are more ambiguously positioned in relation to what Ong calls the U.S. neoliberal ideology that emphasizes "freedom, progress, and individualism."³¹ They see the limits of this model of the self-reliant consumer-citizen—and of the American Dream—in their own lives, and that of their families. Soman, who worked in his family's Bengali restaurant after school and who often waited on more affluent South Asian immigrant students from the prestigious university down the street, said, "Here, you live in a golden cage, but it's still a cage. . . . [M]y life is so limited. I go to school, come to work, study, go to sleep." Soman's comment about being imprisoned by the "golden cage" of the American Dream is profound because in a single image it points to the glittering appeal of American capitalism and the confining imprisonment of belief in this illusion. It also suggests that young immigrants and their families may acknowledge the self-delusion, but continue to participate in it because at least, for immigrant youth, there is little alternative now that they are in the United States.

The idea of productive citizenship is tied to the need for a low-wage, undocumented/noncitizen labor pool by employers who wish to depress wages and keep labor compliant. Citizenship requirements discipline workers and keep immigrants vulnerable to exploitation and fear of dissent, as is very evident after 9/11 with the ongoing arrests and deportations of immigrant workers for visa violations.³² There continues to be fear among noncitizens who have transnational ties, political or familial, that are increasingly suspect when the "threat" to national security is attributed to specific foreign nations.

Yet, in the face of such regulations of citizenship and national boundaries, it became apparent to me that these young Muslim immigrants thought about citizenship in ways that were themselves flexible, shifting, and contextual. In some cases, it seems that religious identity actually prompts youth to think of themselves as belonging to the United States or at least identifying with its concerns, if not identifying as "American." Ismail said to me in the fall of 2001, "Islam teaches [us that] what country you live in, you should support them. . . . See, if I live in America, I have to support America, I cannot go to India." This of course is the same boy who said that he ultimately wanted to return to India and support its development. But these statements are not as contradictory as they first appear; Ismail is able to frame his relationship to Islam in a way that will help him think through questions of loyalty at a moment in the United States when Muslims are being framed as noncitizens *because* of a particular construction of Islam. Ismail instead uses Islam to counter this exclusion of Muslims from the nation-state, both officially and unofficially, and to develop a *flexible* definition of citizenship. Flexible citizenship is clearly an economic/family strategy for these youth but also part of a cultural strategy that allows them to manage diverse national affiliations.

Multicultural/Polycultural Citizenship

Not surprisingly, some of these immigrant youth talked about ideas of cultural difference and relationships with others in terms of multicultural citizenship, since multi-

culturalism is such a pervasive discourse of cultural belonging in the United States, particularly in the arena of education. Multicultural citizenship is based on the idea of minority cultural rights, or the rights of minority groups within multiethnic nations to express their cultural identity. The high school, implicitly and explicitly, promoted this notion of multicultural citizenship through visual symbols and support for ethnic-based student activities. Outside the high school's main office was a display case with changing exhibits that often focused on the theme of cultural diversity, among other issues, acknowledging the different ethnic groups in the school through artistic and cultural products, often tied to ethnic heritage month celebrations.

For South Asian immigrant students, multicultural citizenship was expressed through everyday understandings of pluralism embedded in the social fabric of their relationships. Most of them emphasized that they had friendships crossing ethnic and racial boundaries, as Walid did in commenting on his black, Egyptian, Moroccan, and Gujarati Indian friends. In their daily lives, these youth did, in fact, hang out with Latino, Caribbean, African American, and Asian students, and especially with Muslim African youth from Somalia, Ethiopia, or Egypt, potentially forming a pan-Islamic identity. Yet it was also apparent that students in the school, as in most American high schools and even colleges, tended to cluster by ethnic group in the cafeteria and on the playground. Ismail commented that his friendships with non-South Asian students were sometimes questioned by "*desi*" (South Asian) youth, but he defended this by arguing for a more expansive conception of community:

I hang out with different kids but even I heard it from a lot of *desis* who say, "Why you go with them?" They don't like it, but I say if you want to live in a different world, you have to exist with them. . . . Sometimes you have to go outside [your group] and say, yeah, alright, we are friends too, we are not going to discriminate [against] you, because . . . we don't look like you. . . . [Y]our relationship is gonna be bigger, right. But if you're gonna live in the *desi* community, you're only going to know *desi* people, not the other people.

Ismail traced the value he places on multiculturalist coexistence to a notion of India as a multiethnic nation. He said, "India is a really good place to live in . . . because they've got a lot of religions, different languages, different people." But this was before the massacre of Muslim Indians during the Gujarat riots in spring 2002 shook the belief in the reality and depth of Indian secularism for many Indians, especially Muslims, even though the Indian Muslim youth I spoke to continued to cling to their belief in Indian pluralism after the riots.

Coexisting with this idea of multicultural inclusion were moments of tension among different groups of youth in the school, as there are in any school or community. After September 11, some of the South Asian immigrant youth, particularly the Muslim boys, felt targeted by other high school youth. Accusations of "you're a terrorist" or "you're a bin Laden" entered into fights among boys who flung these new racial epithets at one another as part of a national discourse about Muslims and Arabs as the "enemy threat" that was intensified after 9/11. The South Asian Muslim boys, and girls, felt this acutely: did this mean *they* were the enemy, and how could they live as such?

One of the anti-Muslim incidents in Wellford after 9/11 occurred in the school, when an African American girl accused two Pakistani boys, Amir and Walid, of "killing people" and reportedly called them "Muslim niggers." The girl was eventually suspended but Amir was, in fact, a friend of the girl's brother and said he tried to intervene to soften her punishment. Both boys emphatically refused to portray the incident as a Black/South Asian or Black/Muslim conflict; they insisted that this was the case of a lone individual who Walid half-jokingly said must have been "drunk" or "high." Amir, in fact, said that he thought African Americans were less likely to have an uncritically nationalist response to the events of 9/11 than white Americans, even though he was hesitant to extend this generalization to their responses to the military campaign in Afghanistan.

For Walid and Amir, 9/11 prompted a heightened self-consciousness about racialization that seemed, if anything, to reinforce the black-white racial polarization. Walid felt that African Americans were not as shattered by the attacks on the United States because, in his view, black Americans feel alienated from the nation-state due to the legacy of slavery. While this racialized difference after 9/11 is more complex than Walid suggests, what is important is that he *believes* that African Americans share his experience of marginalization within the nation. But Walid does not completely dismiss the renewed nationalism of Americans after 9/11, saying, "The first thing is they're born here in the USA, so that's their country. . . . We are immigrants. . . . If something happens in back home, like, and someone else did something, we're gonna be angry too, right?" Yet it is also apparent that 9/11 seems to have drawn him into an understanding of citizenship that is based on racialized fissures in claims to national identity and affiliation with other youth of color.

For Walid and others, the response of African Americans seems more significant than that of Latinos or even Arab Americans because on the one hand they are the largest group of students of color in the school, and on the other hand, they stand for a particular manifestation of contested U.S. citizenship to these youth, even if not all are actually U.S.-born. The responses of these Pakistani boys suggests to me a potentially *polycultural citizenship*, based not on the reification of cultural difference that multiculturalism implies, but on a complex set of political affiliations and social boundary crossings. Robin Kelley's notion of polyculturalism suggests that "we were multi-ethnic and polycultural from the get-go." A polycultural approach to difference suggests that cultures are inevitably already hybridized, and that there are no discrete, "pure" cultures.³³ Polycultural citizenship is embedded in the messiness and nuances of relationships of different groups with one other and with the state, and is based on a political, not just cultural resonance, based on particular historical and material conjunctures.

Polycultural citizenship is not an idealization, however, of the complexities of race politics. I do not want to suggest that polyculturalism exists in the absence of antiblack racism in this community, or that racialized antagonisms and suspicion in the school are not imbibed at all by immigrant youth; in getting to know these youth over a period of time, I have found that these tensions do indeed exist. Rather, there is room in my notion of polycultural citizenship to acknowledge the resentment and competition bred by daily struggles for turf or resources. These young immigrants

simultaneously invoke a multiculturalist discourse of pluralist coexistence and a multiculturalist notion of boundary crossing and affiliation, embedded in political experience but also in popular-culture practices shared with youth of color. These young people are not involved in formal political organizations or in traditionally defined activism, but their deepened understanding of racism is based on a political, not just cultural, resonance with other youth of color in the school based on their shared experiences after 9/11.

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Muslim immigrant youth sense a connection with other youth of color and with African Muslim youth in the city, even as they struggle with the challenges that Muslim identity has posed to liberal multiculturalism. Multiculturalist responses to the assault on the civil liberties of Muslim and Arab Americans have tended to consider racial profiling within a racialized framework of minority victimhood. "Muslim Americans," or the trio of "Arab, Muslim, and South Asian Americans," are constructed as just another culturally (and religiously) distinct ethnic category whose problems can be contained within a discourse of domestic racism. The assumption is that "racial profiling" can be addressed simply by "cross-cultural understanding" or interreligious "dialogue" that leads to inclusion within the multicultural nation. However, the "War on Terror" has highlighted the limitations of multicultural citizenship as a response to state policies targeting Muslim and Arab Americans after 9/11, for these were based not just on racial or religious but on political profiling. "Muslim" identity has been ethnicized since 9/11, but it is not an ethnic or racial category at all, even within the ambiguous construction of race in the United States, although Muslims have certainly experienced an intensified racialization as a demonized "other." But it is important to keep in mind that "racial profiling" and Islamophobia after 9/11 are at root tied to imperial policies that drive the global "War on Terror," particularly U.S. interests in dominating the Middle East. However, liberal multiculturalism suppresses a critique of the state and evades discussions of political injustice through a discourse of cultural difference.

After 9/11, it also became apparent that minority groups who had traditionally borne the brunt of racial profiling were not completely resistant to the anti-Arab and anti-Muslim suspicion and paranoia of the "War on Terrorism." There are many reasons for the failure of interracial alliances among these groups, historically and politically, that could be clarified in a longer discussion. Such a discussion would have to include the resistance of some South Asians to affiliate with marginalized groups of color in their desire to achieve model minority status and the hyper-nationalism that emerged in the United States after 9/11 and that absorbed even marginalized groups. The U.S. empire uses difference and consumption, in its domestic subordination of marginalized groups, to divide struggles against racism at home from movements for justice and against imperialism abroad.

Dissenting Citizenship

Muslim Americans and Arab Americans are defined, particularly after 9/11 but also at other moments, such as the Iran hostage crisis and the Gulf War, as political scapegoats and therefore cultural aliens.³⁴ Their presumed cultural difference is highlighted

as part of a political and cultural doctrine that defines American interests and national identity in opposition to a "foreign enemy" and an "enemy within." Syed Khan, an Indian immigrant who was on the Board of Religious Directors of the Islamic Center of Sharon, was the founder of Muslim Community Support Services, an organization that held forums on issues of civil rights and cultural citizenship for Muslim Americans after 9/11. Khan commented in the fall of 2002 on the White House's early public embrace and then neglect of Muslim American leaders after 9/11: "Initially leaders including Bush had spoken up [against racial profiling], but afterwards, when it wasn't as critical, outreach to Muslim Americans has stopped completely. Now, it's bashing time." Other South Asian Muslims I spoke to were quick to point to the outpouring of support offered by neighbors and friends after 9/11. The two perspectives are, of course, both true. Individual acts of solidarity have coexisted with acts of discrimination, private and state-sponsored, on a mass scale.³⁵ The two processes often work together in racial profiling that works through contradictions of official rhetoric, which emphasized multicultural inclusion, and state policy, which continued to target Muslim and Arab Americans through surveillance, detention, deportation, and programs such as Special Registration.

Khan worried, as others in the community did, that Muslim Americans were not speaking up enough against the prospect of social and political, if not physical, internment, given the specter of the mass internment of Japanese Americans as "enemy" threats during World War II that loomed in historical memory when the mass detentions of Muslim and Arab Americans took place after 9/11. However, my research demonstrated that some Muslim immigrant youth were willing to voice political views, even publicly, that most South Asian middle-class community leaders were afraid of expressing. The Muslim immigrant youth I spoke to had an analysis of 9/11 and the U.S. war in Afghanistan that drew on a notion of international human rights and resisted the nationalization of the Twin Towers tragedy. Amir said to me in December 2001,

You have to look at it in two ways. It's not right that ordinary people over there [in Afghanistan], like you and me, just doing their work, get killed. They don't have anything to do with . . . the attacks in New York, but they're getting killed. And also the people in New York who got killed, that's not right either.

Aliyah, a Gujarati American girl who could very easily pass for Latina, chose to write the words "INDIA + MUSLIM" on her bag after 9/11. For her, this was a gesture of defiance responding to the casting of Muslims as potentially disloyal citizens; she said, "Just because one Muslim did it in New York, you can't involve everybody in there, you know what I'm sayin'" Issues of innocence, culpability, justice, and collective punishment were uppermost in the minds of the South Asian Muslim students when discussing this topic, even for new immigrants such as Zeenat. She thought that the bombing of Afghanistan in response to the attacks of 9/11 was "wrong" because the United States was attacking people who were not involved in the terrorist attacks and, echoing Ayesha's remark, said, "After September 11, they [Americans] hate the Muslims. . . . I think they want the government to hate the Muslims, like, all Muslims are same."

After the anti-Muslim incident in the high school, the International Student Center organized a student assembly featuring two Arab American speakers who criticized the "War on Terrorism" and the attack on civil liberties. Amir, Walid, and a Gujarati Muslim girl, Samiyah, delivered eloquent speeches condemning racism to an auditorium filled with their peers. Amir said that when he was threatened by some young men in Boston, "I could have done the same thing, but I don't think it's the right thing to do." Amir is a muscular young man and his call for nonviolent response was a powerful one at that assembly, one that could also be taken to be a larger political statement about the U.S. response to the attacks. Samiyah stood up in her *salwar kameez* and said, "We have to respect each other if we want to change society. You have to stand up for your rights." Muslim immigrant youth were being publicly drawn into race politics and civil rights debates in the local community, although it is not clear yet what the impact of this politicization will be over time. But a year later on the anniversary of September 11, when the International Student Center organized another student assembly, Samiyah's younger sister and another Gujarati Muslim girl, Mumtaz, voluntarily made similar speeches that were reported in the local press. Mumtaz spoke of her sadness at the events of 9/11 and also said "that it's not right to go after Pakistan and Afghanistan and all Muslims who had nothing to do with it."

Even though these working-class youth do not have the support of, or time to participate in, community or political organizations, they have become spokespersons in the public sphere willing to voice a dissenting view. Other Muslim American youth have been forced to play the role of educators as well, giving speeches at their schools and in community forums about Islam, though a coordinator of a Muslim youth group at the Central Square mosque says that it is a role not without pressure or fatigue for young Muslim Americans. Understandably some of them are also hesitant to speak publicly about political issues given that even legal citizens are worried about expressing political critique or dissent in the era of the PATRIOT Act. Repression works on two levels to silence dissent, as Corey Robin points out: on a state level, and also on the level of civil society, where individuals internalize repression and censor themselves.³⁶ Robin argues that "fear does the work—or enhances the work—of repression," noting that the "effects of 'Fear, American Style' are most evident today in immigrant, Middle Eastern, and South Asian communities, as well as in the workplace where 'suppression of dissent' is evident since 9/11."³⁷

In the face of such repression, I have found these Muslim immigrant youth to be engaged in a practice of dissenting citizenship based on a critique of state policies, both privately and publicly. Their expression of dissenting citizenship means they stand apart from the dominant perspective in the nation at some moments, even as they stand together with others outside the borders of the nation who are affected by U.S. foreign policy. Jamila, a Bangladeshi girl, said of the war in Afghanistan, "I felt bad for those poor people there. Because America didn't have no proof that they actually did it, but they were killing all those innocent people who had nothing to do with it." Amir and other youth emphasized the importance of political justice and respect for international human rights, denouncing both the terrorist attacks and militarized state aggression as a means of retribution. Dissenting citizenship captures some of the ambivalence toward the United States that these youth experience, for America is

simultaneously a place invested with their parents' desire for economic advancement and security and their own hopes to belong in a new home, and also the site of alienation, discrimination, and anxiety about belonging. } imp. Q4

The perspective of Muslim immigrant youth is very much rooted in their identities as Muslims, for they are targeted as Muslims by the state, and it also sheds light on the links between U.S. policies at home and abroad. These young immigrants are subjects of both the "Wars on Terror" and the war on immigration. The dissenting views of Muslim immigrant youth implicitly critique U.S. imperial power through their linking of warfare within the state to international war. It is this link between the domestic and imperial that makes their perspective an important mode of dissent because the imperial project of the new Cold War works by obscuring the links between domestic and foreign policies. The United States has had a long history, since its wars in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines in 1898, of "imperialism without colonies" or of "informal empire" and of neocolonial occupation, as in Iraq.³⁸ The conceptualization of U.S. empire is a project that has drawn renewed attention now that the term "empire" has come out of the closet, in the academy and mass media. Despite the different forms that U.S. empire has taken in exercising direct or indirect control, such as through proxy wars or client states (such as Israel, Jordan, and now Afghanistan), the dominance of U.S. military, economic, and political power, the three major aspects of imperial power, is still paramount.³⁹ The war at home and the war abroad, the two fronts of empire, actually work in tandem with each other at the expense of ordinary people everywhere.

Conclusion

It is important to remember that there are important continuities before and after 9/11 that are often not acknowledged enough in discussing the "War on Terror." My use of "post-9/11" is not meant to signify a radical historical or political rupture in U.S. politics but rather a moment of renewed contestation over ongoing issues of citizenship and transnationalism, religion and nationalism, civil rights and immigrant rights. This state of emergency, the crisis of civil rights and warfare, is in fact not exceptional in the United States,⁴⁰ for the post-9/11 moment builds on measures and forms of power already in place. This is a state of everyday life in empire. The research here is an attempt to craft an ethnography of the new empire in order to understand the everyday struggles of those, such as immigrants and youth, whose lives have been transformed by this ongoing crisis and who have found subtle and complex ways to express their dissent.

NOTES

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1. There were seven hundred reported hate crimes against South Asian Americans, Arab Americans, and Muslim Americans, including four homicides (two involving South Asian American victims), in the three weeks following 9-11-01 (Jeff Coen, "Hate Crimes Reports Reach Record Level," *Chicago Tribune*, October 9, 2001). At least two hundred hate crimes were reported against Sikh Americans alone (Jane Lampman, "Under Attack, Sikhs Defend Their Religious Liberties," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 31, 2001). The Council on American-Islamic Relations reported that it had documented 960 incidents of racial profiling in the five weeks after 9/11/01, with hate crimes declining and incidents of airport profiling and workplace discrimination on the increase (Associated Press, San Jose, CA, "Hate Crime Reports Down, Civil Rights Complaints Up," October 25, 2001).
2. Nancy Chang, *Silencing Political Dissent: How Post-September 11 Anti-Terrorism Measures Threaten Our Civil Liberties* (New York: Seven Stories/Open Media, 2002), 94.
3. *Ibid.*, 29-32.
4. *Ibid.*
5. David Cole and James Dempsey, *Terrorism and the Constitution: Sacrificing Civil Liberties in the Name of National Security* (New York: New Press, 2002), 168.
6. CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations), *The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States: Patterns of Discrimination* (Washington, DC: Council on American-Islamic Relations Research Center, 1998); Jack G. Shaheen, "Hollywood's Reel Arabs and Muslims," pp. 179-202 in *Muslims and Islamization in North America: Problems and Prospects*, ed. Ambreen Haque (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 1999).
7. Cole and Dempsey, 35-48; Louise Cainkar, "No Longer Invisible: Arab and Muslim Exclusion after September 11," *Middle East Report* 224 (Fall 2002). Accessed through website: http://www.merip.org/mer/mer224/224_cainkar.html; Jordan Green, "Silencing Dissent," *ColorLines* 6.2 (2003): 17-20.
8. Joan Jensen, *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988).
9. Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).
10. Stephen J. Schulhofer, *The Enemy Within: Intelligence Gathering, Law Enforcement, and Civil Liberties in the Wake of September 11* (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2002), 11.
11. Chang, 69-87.
12. Oliver Ryan, "Empty Shops, Empty Promises for Coney Island Pakistanis," *ColorLines* 6.2 (2003): 14-16; see p. 16.
13. The re-registration component of the program was officially ended by the Department of Homeland Security in December 2003, after protests by immigrant/civil rights and grassroots community organizations, while other aspects of the program remained in place, and the detentions and deportations put in place by the program continue.
14. Ryan, "Empty Shops," 16.
15. Rachel L. Swarns, "More Than 13,000 May Face Deportation," *New York Times*, June 7 2003, Internet posting.
16. Ryan, "Empty Shops."
17. Swarns, "More Than 13,000."

18. Bill O. Hing, "No Place for Angels: In Reaction to Kevin Johnson," *University of Illinois Law Review* 2000 (2): 559-601; Bill O. Hing, "The Dark Side of Operation Gatekeeper," *UC Davis Journal of International Law & Policy* 7.2 (2001): 123-67.
19. Kathleen Moore, "A Closer Look at Anti-Terrorism Law: *American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee v. Reno* and the Construction of Aliens' Rights," in *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, ed. Michael Suleiman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 84-99; see p. 95. From 1996 to 2000, the government sought to use secret evidence to detain and deport two dozen immigrants, almost all of them Muslims, but ultimately the government evidence was thrown out and the accused were released (Cole and Dempsey, *Terrorism*, 127).
20. The 2000 Census reported 2,720 Indian immigrants (2.7 percent of the population), 125 Pakistanis, and 120 Bangladeshis in Wellford, a city that is 68.1 percent White American, 11.9 percent African American, 11.9 percent Asian American, and 7.4 percent Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). This, of course, does not include undocumented immigrants. The "native" population is 74.1 percent and foreign-born is 25.9 percent; 17.7 percent are not citizens and 31.2 percent speak a language other than English.
21. Kum-Kum Bhavnani, *Talking Politics: A Psychological Framing for Views from Youth in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); David Buckingham, *The Making of Citizens: Young People, News, and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2000).
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23. Lok Siu, "Diasporic Cultural Citizenship: Chineseness and Belonging in Central America and Panama," *Social Text* 69 (2001): 7-28; see p. 9.
24. William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor, eds., *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 6; Renato Rosaldo, "Cultural Citizenship, Inequality, and Multiculturalism," in Flores and Benmayor, eds., *Latino Cultural Citizenship*, 27-38.
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28. Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, eds., *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1994).
29. Ong, "Cultural Citizenship," 737; Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*.
30. Katherine S. Newman, *No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City* (New York: Knopf and the Russell Sage Foundation, 1999); Stuart Tannock, *Youth at Work: The Unionized Fast-Food and Grocery Workplace* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).

31. Ong, "Cultural Citizenship," 739.
32. Manu Vimalassery, "Passports and Pink Slips," *SAMAR (South Asian Magazine for Action and Reflection)* 15 (2002): 7–8, 20; see Ong, "Cultural Citizenship," for a fuller discussion.
33. Robin D. Kelley, *Yo Mama's Disfunktional! Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997).
34. Cole and Dempsey, *Terrorism*; Fereydoon Safizadeh, "Children of the Revolution: Transnational Identity among Young Iranians in Northern California," in *A World Between: Poems, Short Stories, and Essays by Iranian-Americans*, ed. Persis Karim and Mohammad M. Khorrami (New York: George Braziller, 1999), 255–76.
35. Bill O. Hing, "Vigilante Racism: The De-Americanization of Immigrant America," *Michigan Journal of Race and Law* 7.2 (2002): 441–56; Vijay Prashad, "The Green Menace: McCarthyism after 9/11," *The Subcontinent: A Journal of South Asian American Political Identity* 1.1 (2003): 65–75; Corey Robin, "Fear, American Style: Civil Liberty after 9/11," in *Implicating Empire: Globalization and Resistance in the 21st-Century World Order*, ed. Stanley Aronowitz and Heather Gautney (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 47–64.
36. Robin, "Fear," 47–64.
37. *Ibid.*, 48, 53.
38. Amy Kaplan, "Where Is Guantánamo?" In *Legal Borderlands: Law and the Construction of American Borders*, ed. Mary Dudziak and Leti Volpp, special issue of *American Quarterly* 57.3 (2005): 831–58; Harry Magdoff, *Imperialism without Colonies* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2003); Ediberto Román, "Membership Denied: An Outsider's Story of Subordination and Subjugation under U.S. Colonialism," in *Moral Imperialism: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Berta Esperanza Hernández-Truyol (New York: New York University Press, 2002).
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Chapter 23

Without a Trace

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Prime-Time Television

Christina B. Chin, Noriko Milman, Meera E. Deo,
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Introduction

Television creates a kind of hyper-reality, a shared fantasy world that merges with and sometimes overshadows the more mundane world of real life for millions of Americans. (Lichter et al. 1994, 13)

While prime-time television is often considered mere "fantasy," it is one of the most pervasive agents of socialization and, consequently, demands critical examination. This is particularly pertinent given that the world of prime time often fails to present an accurate portrait of reality. Past studies of television reveal discrepancies by group statuses, such as race and gender (Children Now 2004; Entman and Rojecki 2001; Gray 1995; Hoffman and Noriega 2004). White males tend to dominate the world of prime-time television while all other groups remain severely underrepresented compared to their population percentages (Children Now 2004; Hoffman and Noriega 2004; Hunt 2002, 2003) and/or restricted to particular networks associated with "ethnic" programming, as in the case of African Americans (Hunt 2002, 2003).

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are consistently underrepresented numerically and especially missing from lead roles (Asian American Justice Center et al. 2006; Children Now 2004; Hoffman and Noriega 2004; National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium et al. 2005). The estimated number of AAPIs living in the United States in 2004 approximated fifteen million, or about 5 percent of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau 2006). AAPI fictional characters in the world of prime-time television are consistently underrepresented at less than half of their actual U.S. population (Asian American Justice Center et al. 2006; Children Now 2004; National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium et al. 2005; Screen Actors Guild 2004). AAPI actors are typically relegated to supporting and marginal roles, portraying only 1.3 percent of all lead roles in film and television in 2003 (Screen Actors Guild 2004). In contrast, white actors dominated in 2003, with 74.8 percent of the total lead roles (Screen Actors Guild 2004). When examining prime-time television, the