

Three Visual Portfolios

In this chapter we present three portfolios of photographs on topics related to other chapters in our anthology. The first consists of seven photographs depicting various images of family life in modern America, some of them alluding to issues discussed in the essays of Chapter 12 on the changing American family. The second consists of seven photographs depicting various images of wealth, poverty, and the social markers that distinguish between them, some of them alluding to issues discussed in the essays of Chapter 13 on social class and inequality. The third consists of seven photographs depicting various images of immigrant experience in the United States, some of them alluding to issues represented in the selections of Chapter 15 on stories of ethnic difference.

These portfolios combine studio-pose pictures with newsworthy action shots, pictures taken by amateurs and by professionals, photos capturing the pulse of the present, and photos capturing scenes from the past. The first portfolio, *Images of Families*, opens with two idealized portraits, the first of a three-generational family, the second of young parents with identical twins. Juxtaposed against them is the enigmatic "Vengeful Sister, Chicago," taken in 1956 by the prominent social landscape photographer David Heath (1931–), and a newspaper photo from 2004 showing a lesbian couple and their adopted children being heckled by antigay demonstrators. The ideal and the real confront each other in these two pairs of images, as the composure of the initial pair gives way to the turmoil of its successor.

Two socially-conscious images follow. Beneath the surface tranquility of their compositions lies an unspoken agitation. The first of them, taken in 1912 by the renowned photographer Lewis Wickes Hine (1874–1940), depicts a mother and her adolescent children sitting at a dining room table. On closer inspection, it appears that the family is working at menial tasks for inevitably small wages. This picture belongs to the photographer's classic collection "Let Children Be Children: Lewis Wickes Hine's Crusade Against Child Labor."

The second, undated, though likely from the early twentieth-century and anonymously attributed, repeats this topic. It comes to us from the American photographic archives of the Library of Congress with an attached caption: "This mother and her two children...were living in a tiny one room and were finishing garments.... Said they make from \$1 to \$2 a week and the boy makes some selling newspapers...." Despite its anonymity, it packs a powerful punch.

The first portfolio concludes with "Portrait of a Boy Overlooking Ocean" by the Cuban-American photographer Antonio Fernandez (1941–). Taken in Miami in 1968, it is part of a series entitled "Vision and Expression" that captures ordinary events from startling perspectives, investing them with a sense of mystery that defies the apparent subject matter. The minimal amount of visual information seems to cut the boy off from his family and erase any links he might have to a broader social environment.

The second portfolio presents *Images of Inequality*, and it too juxtaposes two pairs of contrasting images against a trio of related photographs. It opens with the portrait of an elegant table set for an elegant gourmet dessert in an upscale environment, and it then shifts to the picture of volunteer servers and their guests at a soup kitchen and the homeless in Sacramento, California. Next, it offers the image of a homeless man pulling a cart containing his belongings against a backdrop of San Diego's downtown prosperity. The disparity in this image leads to the following one in which a homeless person amid a sea of other homeless people views a television monitor of George W. Bush during a presidential debate in 2000. This image of a picture-within-a-picture conveys a striking difference between political rhetoric and social reality.

Images of Inequality concludes with a trio of photographs that weigh contemporary representations of civil rights action against their counterparts more than four decades ago. First, a lifelike modern sculpture of Rosa Parks sits in the replica of a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus where Ms. Parks defied segregation policies in the 1950s. Located at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, the sculpture attracts the attention of a middle-aged couple visiting the museum upon its opening in 1998. Next, a famous photograph of Martin Luther King, Jr. at his "I Have a Dream" speech captures the galvanizing energy of the historic March on Washington, DC, in 1963. Finally, a newspaper photograph of a rally to reverse a 2001 ban on affirmative action depicts students supporting affirmative action against those who oppose it. People who were alive during the earlier period would find it hard to believe that the gains of their political conscience could come under such attack less than forty years later.

The third portfolio serves up *Images of Ethnic Difference* with an accent on conflicting experiences of immigrant groups arriving in the United States over the past century. The initial image, identified as "Arriving at Ellis Island, 1907," affirms the aspirations and the promise that coincided with an immigrant's arrival in America at the time. Balancing it is a fairly cynical snapshot of a recent sign warning motorists of illegal border crossings in the Southwest. Aspirations and promise are radically dashed in the next two photos, which depict the potentially tragic consequences of illegal immigration. The first shows a U.S. Border Patrol Officer searching illegal aliens on the Texas border, and the second illustrates a newspaper account of the deaths and injuries to several Chinese illegal aliens who attempted to reach shore from a grounded vessel off New York harbor in 1993.

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The final three photographs represent diverse aspects of coping with life in America after immigration. In the first one, survivors of the Haitian earthquake in January 2010, await medical treatment that would require the amputation of a leg for both the mother and her daughter in the foreground. In another, three Arab-Americans assemble at their office for an antidiscrimination group that they have just formed. In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, many Americans of Muslim descent have experienced prejudice, discrimination, and curtailment of their civil liberties, a condition that this picture directly addresses. In the third, demonstrators march in a rally against draconian immigration reforms slated for legislation in Spring 2006. Proclaiming their valuable contributions to America, hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens and their supporters took to the streets to petition for citizenship for immigrants and to protest measures against citizenship proposed by a Republican Congress.

The images in these portfolios fold into one another even as they refer back to earlier chapters in this anthology. The struggle for immigrants' rights in the last three pictures of Portfolio 3, for example, joins the conversation about civil rights in the last three pictures of Portfolio 2, and both sets of pictures echo the conversations about social class and inequality and the stories of ethnic difference conducted in Chapters 13 and 15 above. The pictures that depict various families in Portfolio 1 display markers of social class and inequality as well as ethnic difference, and they sustain as many possible links to the previously mentioned anthology chapters as they do to Chapter 12 on the changing American family. Pictures may constitute an international language, and they serve an important purpose as they stimulate each of us to formulate our own arguments about the topics they represent, to articulate them in the language of written discourse, and to enter the conversation about issues of our time as it is conducted in academic disciplines across the college curriculum.

PREVIEWING

Survey the pictures offered in each of the three following portfolios. Jot down relationships that might link them to one another, both within a single portfolio and across different portfolios. Do you think that these pictures offer plausible representations of the world as you know it? Or do they instead project biased, limited, or idealized representations? Freewrite your response to this question. Do you know or can you imagine other photos that would better represent these topics? Search an online photographic archive such as corbis.com, accuweather.ap.org, or photosearch.com for different possibilities and download your most important findings for future reference and comparison.



PORTFOLIO 1

IMAGES OF FAMILIES

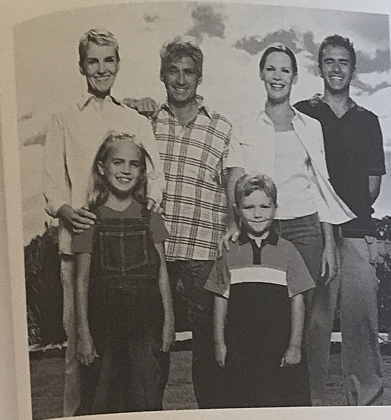


Photo 16-1 Aging, generation gap, summer. Courtesy of George Doyle/Stockbyte/Getty Images.



Photo 16-2 Parents sitting on a sofa with twin babies. Courtesy of FOTORESEARCH.com.

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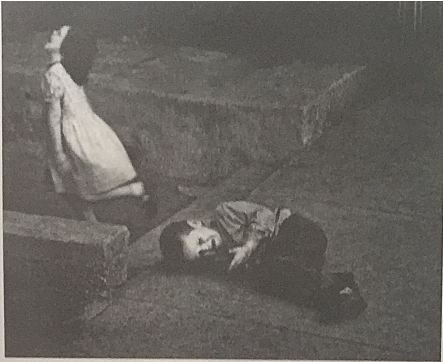


Photo 16-3 David Heath, "Vengeful Sister, Chicago" (1956). © Dave Heath, Courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery, NYC and Stephen Bulger Gallery.



Photo 16-4 Stacey and Jessie Harris, of New Jersey, walk with their children, Zion, 4, and Torin, 15 months, through Rawson Square in downtown Nassau past a demonstration held to oppose the gay cruise on which the Harris family traveled Friday, July 16, 2004, to the Bahamas. Photo by Tim Ayles, courtesy of Associated Press/World Wide Photos.

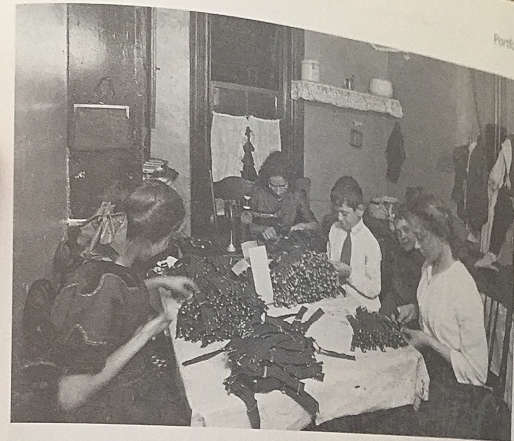


Photo 16-5 Lewis Wickes Hine, "Child Labor," from "Let Children Be Children: Lewis Wickes Hine's Crusade Against Child Labor" (1912). Courtesy of Lewis Wickes Hine/Library of Congress.



Photo 16-6 High up on the top floor of a rickety tenement, 214 Elizabeth Street, New York City. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

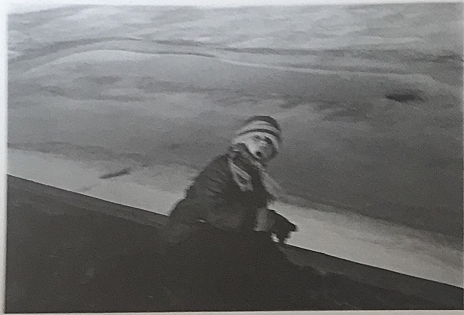


Photo 16-7 Antonio Ferrandiz, "Portrait of a Boy Overlooking Ocean" (1988). Courtesy of the George Eastman House, Rochester, NY.

PORTFOLIO 2

IMAGES OF INEQUALITY

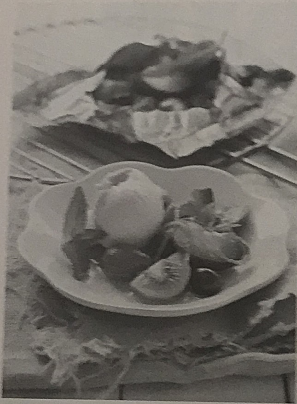


Photo 16-8 Fresh fruits baked en papillote with vanilla ice cream. Photo by Philippe Desnerck, courtesy of Fresh Food Images/PhotoLibrary.

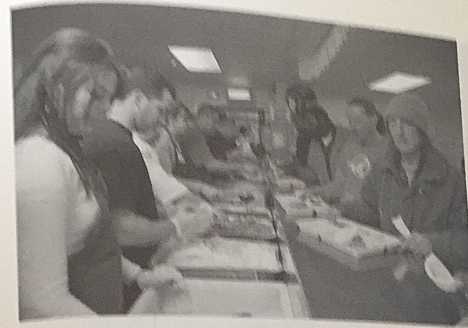


Photo 16-9 People enjoy a free meal at Loaves and Fishes, a non-profit that helps local homeless people in Sacramento, California. Photo by Melissa Barnes, courtesy of Aurora Photos/Alamy.



Photo 16-10 Homeless man dragging a cart in San Diego. Courtesy of James Steidl/Shutterstock.

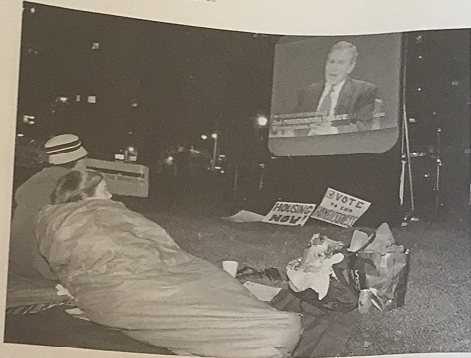


Photo 16-11 A homeless registered voter joins a former homeless person and an estimated 200 other homeless persons to watch George W. Bush on one of the television monitors set up for the second presidential debate in New York's Union Square Park, Wednesday, October 11, 2004. Photo by Tina Fineberg, courtesy of Associated Press/World Wide Photos.

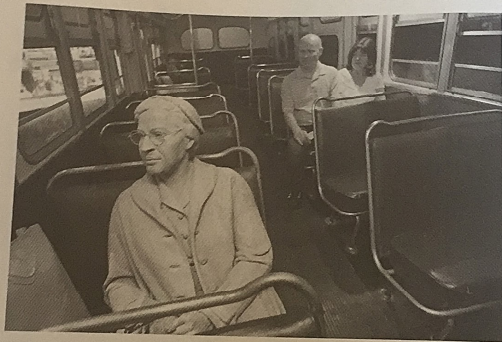


Photo 16-12 Visitors at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis listen as a recording of the bus driver "threatens" the figure of Rosa Parks seated in the front of the bus. The bus, a real Montgomery, Alabama, city bus of the 1950s is one of the displays at the museum. Courtesy of Martin Thomas Photography/Alamy.

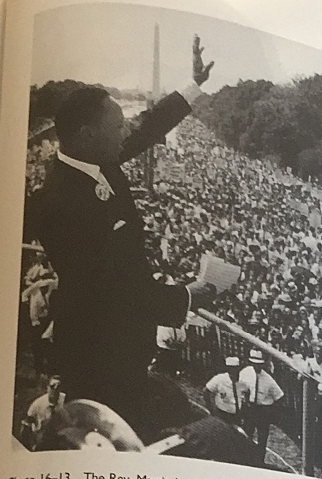


Photo 16-13 The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. acknowledges the crowd at the Lincoln Memorial for his "I Have a Dream" speech during the March on Washington, DC, on August 28, 1963. Courtesy of UPI Photo Service/Newscom.

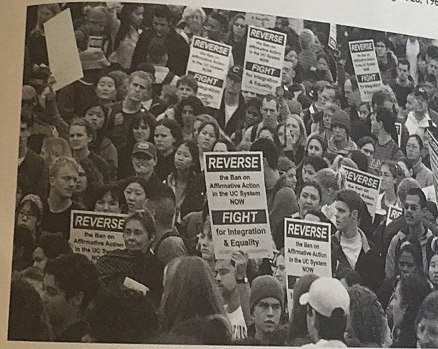


Photo 16-14 Students for affirmative action during the Day of Action to Reverse the Ban on Affirmative Action rally held on the University of California-Berkeley campus Thursday, March 8, 2001. Photo by Lorry Shavelson, courtesy of Newscom.

PORTFOLIO 3

IMAGES OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY



Photo 16-15 Arriving at Ellis Island, 1907. Courtesy of Library of Congress

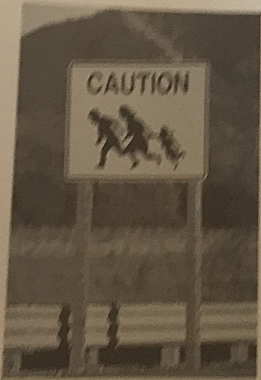


Photo 16-16 Sign Warning Drivers of Illegal Border Crossings. Courtesy of Chris Smith/Corbis

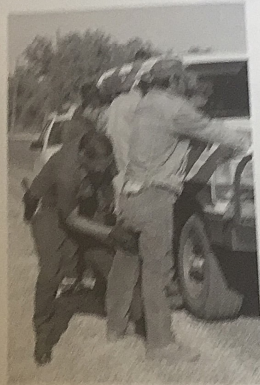


Photo 16-17 A U.S. Border Patrol Officer Searching Illegal Aliens in El Paso, Texas. Photo by John Boyer, courtesy of Stock Connection/Contrasto/Getty

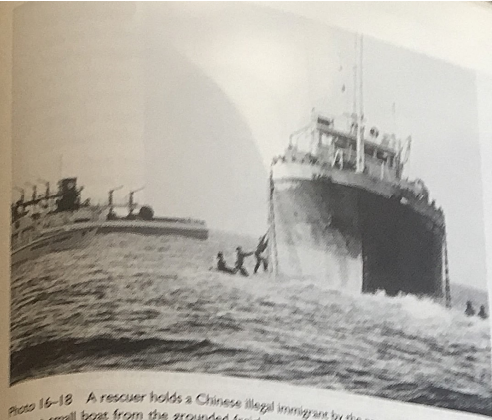


Photo 16-18 A rescuer holds a Chinese illegal immigrant by the pants as he tries to transfer to a small boat from the grounded freighter Golden Venture off New York City, June 6, 1993. The vessel was carrying at least 200 Chinese illegal immigrants trying to enter the United States. Six were reported dead and at least sixteen were injured while trying to reach the shore. Photo by Michael Alexander, courtesy of Associated Press/World Wide Photos

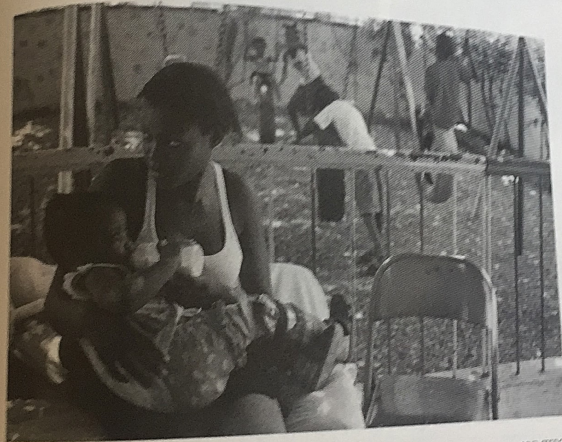


Photo 16-19 Immigrant Mother from Haiti with daughter. Photo by Eduardo Munoz, courtesy of REUTERS/Landov Media



Photo 16-20 Three members of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee pose at their new office in Clifton, N.J., Sunday, January 8, 2006. With bias incidents against Arab-Americans and Muslims running high in New Jersey, this antidiscrimination group is strengthening its presence here, hoping to become a larger part of the fight to defend civil rights and project a positive image of the state's Muslim community. Photo by Mike Derer, courtesy of Associated Press/World Wide Photos.

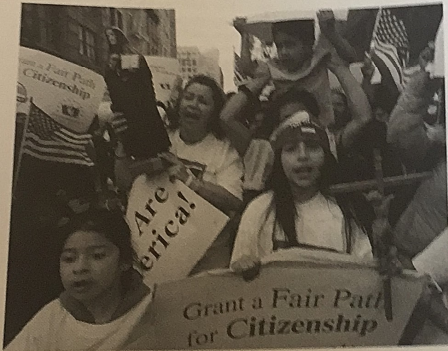


Photo 16-21 Immigrants and other supporters march down Broadway to call attention to the valuable position of immigrants in American society, Monday, April 10, 2006, in New York City. Hundreds of thousands of people demanding U.S. citizenship for illegal immigrants took to the streets in dozens of cities across the nation in peaceful protests against impending Republican legislation to limit immigrants' rights. Photo by D on Emmert, courtesy of AFP/Getty Images/Newscom.

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