

The Korean Diaspora and Rethinking Asian-American Theory

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Introduction

The field of Korean American Studies exists within the context of the origins and development of Asian American Studies and the general discipline of Ethnic Studies. At its inception, Asian American Studies focused on adding Asian American voices and concerns about identity to the discourse of American history. This focus was necessary because Asian American experiences had been ignored or neglected before the 1960s, and the contributions of Asians to American history were omitted from “official” historiography. In addition, Asian Americans have been depicted in the popular media as foreigners or aliens ineligible for U.S. citizenship. Interest in Asian American identity emerged from the premise that Asian Americanness is neither Asian nor American, but Asian American. For these reasons, Asian American Studies has tried to uncover a usable past and construct an American identity at the domestic level, consciously choosing to stay within the boundaries of the United States in order to emphasize Americanness.

During the 1960s, Asian American activists began to stress the need for a pan-Asian consciousness and inter-Asian coalition to attain the basic goals of racial equality, social justice, and political empowerment in a pluralistic North American culture. Asian American pan-ethnicity also serves as a unifying force within the United States by emphasizing the similarities among Asian American groups and transcending the ethnic differences that these groups brought with them from Asia. The pan-Asian movement operated on the concept that all Asian ethnic groups share Asian Americanness, a communal consciousness and unique cultural identity that is neither Asian nor American, but Asian American.

This solidarity, however, proved to be a double-edged sword; it reinforced the stereotype that all Asian Americans are the same. More importantly, Asian American pan-ethnicity threatens to homogenize what is a highly heterogeneous Asian American population. Recent demographic shifts and globalization challenge the traditional concept of Asian American pan-ethnicity. Asian American Studies therefore must consider not only Asians in America, but also those living in various countries around the globe. The growing economic power of Asian countries has also influenced the direction of Asian American Studies. Many Asian American families are multiple migratory families— for example, some Koreans came to North America by way of Vietnam, Japan, Argentina, or Germany.

Historically, international events have always influenced the way Asian Americans think and act. Korean independence movements dominated the early experiences of the Korean American community, and homeland politics continue to be important to Korean immigrant groups. The diasporic Korean communities in Japan, China, Russia and the United States provide a specific context for rethinking the theoretical underpinnings of Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies. With the recent changes in demographics, globalization, and transnational relations the Asian American community in the twenty-first century is profoundly different from its 1960s predecessor in its mix of class, gender, and ethnic concerns, and therefore, the theories that presently dominate Asian American and Ethnic Studies are challenged by.

The purpose of this paper is to trace the historic origins of the Asian American Studies and critically examine challenges it faces in the context of globalization and internationalization. What are limitations of the traditional paradigm in Asian American Studies? To what extent theories of Asian American Studies relevant in the twenty-first century? How can Korean American Studies maintain its original mission, but negotiate new paradigm shift in the global context? These are some issues this paper intend to explore.

The Origins of Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies

The year 1968 marked the decline of other racially based social and

political protest movements in the United States, but gave birth to the Asian American movement (Omatsu 1994). The Asian American movement followed on the heels of the Civil Rights movement and coincided with the Black Power movement. Like the Black Power movement, Asian American activism was propelled by a sense of cultural nationalism, racial pride, and the goal of raising ethnic consciousness.

A call for the inauguration of Ethnic Studies programs and opposition to the war in Vietnam were two key issues of the nascent Asian American movement in the late 1960s. The Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) staged strikes at San Francisco State College and the University of California at Berkeley between 1968 and 1969. Asian American students joined other students of color in demanding Ethnic Studies programs (Umemoto 1989; Omatsu 1994; Wei 1997) and more inclusive curricula to reflect non-Caucasian experiences. The TWLF and other groups from that period demonstrated that the Asian American community had a very real potential to effect change. Students on college campuses on both coasts were successful in persuading their institutions to open Asian American Studies programs. But on a larger scale, the TWLF experience inspired Asian Americans to take up a grassroots political strategy. Their initial success helped them to build mass democratic organizations (Omatsu 1994).

It was, however, the protests of the late 1960s against the Vietnam War that attracted widespread interest across ethnic, racial, and economic lines. The Vietnam War brought together Asian American activists across the country to demand racial equality, social justice, and political empowerment (Umemoto 1989; Omatsu 1994; Wei 1997). Asian American antiwar activists were dissatisfied with the Caucasian-dominated antiwar movement that ignored the issue of race. In addition, Asian American feminist activists were angered by the antiwar movement's refusal to acknowledge that American soldiers were raping Asian women. The antiwar movement unified Asian Americans both psychologically and politically on the grounds that the war was racist as well as unjust. For many Asian Americans, the antiwar movement was their first engagement in political protest. As antiwar activists, they overcame ethnic differences and geographic limitations in a common struggle to stop the war (Wei 1997). The Vietnam War awakened Asian Americans to stand and unite as

a collective unit bound by their shared otherness.

Since Asian Americans were treated as foreigners regardless of how American they were, American-born Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and a smaller number of Filipino Americans and Korean Americans continued to be viewed as aliens— just as their first-generation parents or grandparents had been. This sense of foreignness or otherness denied Asians the assimilation that had been possible for other immigrant groups (i.e. European). Although the notion of whiteness had steadily expanded to include immigrants from most parts of Europe, Asian Americans by virtue of their appearance were regarded as “different” from “Americans.” Whereas most European immigrants could easily be incorporated into American identity by simply losing their accents and ethnic heritage, Asian Americans had to assume the burden of proof of loyalty to the United States. In the process, they have negotiated the diverse cultures of their homelands with their Asian American experiences and their marginalized roles outside mainstream America.

While Asian Americans have had to overcome numerous racial stereotypes, they have also had to unearth and reconstruct the buried pasts and identities of their ethnic and Asian American heritages. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which ended the migration of Chinese labor to the United States, was followed by the 1907 Gentleman’s Agreement cutting off Japanese and Korean immigration to America. The 1913 Alien Land Law effectively forbade Asian immigrants from owning and leasing land in California. Asian immigrants were denied naturalization rights because they were defined as aliens ineligible for United States citizenship. Although Asian immigrants were a critical source of cheap labor in building railroads, cultivating lands, and developing manufacturing industries in California and the West Coast, their contributions were ignored as a part of American history until Asian American Studies challenged the marginalization of their experiences and began to construct a new American identity (Takaki 1989).

The fields of Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies differ from other traditional academic disciplines as they seek a balance between theory and practice. According to Paulo Freire, theory without practice is just words, and practice without theory is just thoughtless action. Many scholars in Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies are engaged in

action research to promote social change and justice. The original mission of Asian American Studies was accountability and relevancy to the community (Oamtsu 1994; Umemoto 1989). In order for Asian American Studies to remain accountable and relevant, however, the discipline must strive to incorporate not only the long history of Japanese and Chinese immigration, but also the history of Asians who entered the United States more recently. Asian American Studies must also consider the diversity of cultures represented by Asian Americans, as well as the multicultural experiences and perspectives of multiple migratory families (Hune 1995). Furthermore, the field must also give voice to people who do not represent dominant views, whether they have been excluded on account of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or age.

Challenges to the Traditional Paradigm

Although the Asian American movement was effective during its early years in uniting American-born Asian Americans on the basis of pan-Asian solidarity and otherness, the movement has faced new challenges in recent years. Lucie Cheng and Philip Q. Yang maintain that the new wave of Asian immigration that followed the Immigration Act of 1965 is distinct because of its larger size, higher percentage of women, greater ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, and more extensive and intensive global linkages (Cheng and Yang 2000). Yet the field of Asian American Studies made a conscious decision to stay within the boundaries of the United States because of Asian Americans desire to reclaim their past and to construct an Asian American identity. With increased internationalization and immigrant population growth scholars in the field are being asked to expand their horizon beyond America's borders. Furthermore, Asian Americans have been tempered by a dual marginalization; Asian Americans have been regarded as too Asian for mainstream American society and at the same time as too American by homeland standards. This twofold exclusion is further complicated by the different experiences of diverse ethnic groups and their immigration histories. Thus, the field of Asian American Studies must now recognize the complexities within the Asian American community and analyze the ways in which diasporic relations affect the lives of contemporary Asian immigrants in the United States.

Historically, Asian American Studies has attempted to form its own distinctive identity as separate from Asian Studies (Hune 1995). Sau-Ling Wong (1995) explains that the two academic disciplines were at times openly antagonistic, having sharply divergent histories and institutional locations. Given their different beginnings, missions, and framework of analysis, one can readily understand why Asian American Studies sought to differentiate itself from Asian Studies. With the end of the Cold War era, the influx of new immigrants, and an internationalist orientation, the lines between Asian Studies and Asian American Studies began to blur.

New immigrants also have unique concerns because they may have continued economic, political, and cultural ties to their homeland and the rest of the world. First-generation immigrants can also build cultural bridges between Asian and American societies through language, schools, and customs. The growth of the Asian economies in the 1980s and potential for trade have also strengthened economic ties between Asia and the United States. Many Asian American businessmen are engaged in transnational businesses that import products from Taiwan, Hong Kong or South Korea. Other recent immigrants, especially businessmen taking advantage of American immigration policies to entice investors, have transferred their assets in order to establish sizeable businesses in the United States.

Many recent immigrants from Korea, Vietnam, and the Philippines have ongoing concerns about homeland politics. Through the 1980s, Korean Americans and Filipino Americans were vocal in calling for the democratization of their respective homelands (Chang 1988; Bello 1986-87; Liem and Kim 1992). Korean Americans have been actively promoting normalization of diplomatic relations and peaceful reunification between North and South Korea. These close political and financial ties between Asian American communities and their homelands, however, are not a new phenomenon. The early Chinese immigrant community provided critical financial support for the Chinese republican revolution in 1911. The Indian community in the United States established the Ghadr Party in order to support the independence movement in their homeland. Korean immigrants also sacrificed themselves to support the Korean independence movements in Korea and Manchuria in the early part of the twentieth century.

While there has been a transition toward a renewed concern for first-generation issues, it is also imperative to apply other transnational approaches to Korean American immigrant history. Until recently, Korean immigrants have primarily identified themselves as Korean, therefore ignoring and neglecting issues facing second-generation Korean Americans, adoptees, and military brides. The reality, however, is that these groups are an important part of the Korean American experience and contribute to the transnational dimension of Korean American immigrant history. The recent interest in globalization and transnationalism has illuminated the unique features in the experiences of these other groups.

Transnational ties are closely related to the self-perception of Asian Americans as well as others' perceptions of them. As such, they help to define Asian American identities. Korean American self-identity has changed over time, depending on mainstream American views of Korea. Hesung Chun Koh has noted that during the Korean War, Americans saw Korea as a poor, war-ravaged country. During the 1970s, Korean Americans tried to disassociate themselves from "Koreagate" and the Unification Church, because these were regarded as embarrassments. In the aftermath of the 1988 Seoul Olympics and South Korean economic success, however, Korea enjoyed a period of positive publicity in the United States (Koh 2001). But only four years later, the 1992 Los Angeles riots again cast Korean Americans in a negative light, this time as money-grubbing, gun-toting vigilantes who were hostile toward their African American neighbors (Chang and Diaz-Veizades 1999). Across these different time periods, Korean Americans have been affected by the mainstream culture's opinion of Korea, whether favorable or unfavorable.

Related to this phenomenon is the myth of the model minority. Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans were first praised as model minorities by the *Time* and *World News and Report* in 1966. According to Keith Osajima, this newly minted image of success was based on the supposition of a direct link between traditional Asian values and the high educational and professional achievements of Asian Americans (Osajima 2000). Although the stereotype is supposed to be laudatory, its underlying message is detrimental. It implies that certain individuals or members of other minority groups lack the ethos of success, and the myth also gives voice to anti-Asian sentiment. Critics of the model minority myth also

maintain that the racial stereotype is both inaccurate and inapplicable, given the increasing diversity of the Asian American population (Takaki 1987; Ong and Hee 1994; Cheng and Yang 2000). Asian Americans should seek affirmative identities that incorporate both their commonalities and their differences.

Just as the Asian American movement must incorporate and reflect the diversity of its members, it must avoid other hegemonic pitfalls. Asian American Studies is confronted with the necessity of fighting all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, and numerous other issues. In order for Asian American Studies to continue to be relevant, it must also look to other fields to find common ground.

From the Asian American Experience to Diasporic and Global Studies

Throughout its forty-plus years of existence, Asian American Studies has been anything but stagnant. Sau-ling Wong uses the term denationalization to describe three trends in the current period of transition in Asian American Studies: the easing of nationalist cultural concerns; the growing permeability between Asian and Asian American; and a shift from a domestic to a diasporic perspective (Wong 1995). Denationalization emphasizes the erasure of the boundaries between Asian American Studies and Asian Studies. At the same time, Wong stresses the need to build coalitions among racial and ethnic minorities within the United States. The current tendency to build metaphorical bridges across oceans and neighborhoods stands in marked contrast to the hegemonic origins of area studies.

Today, at the turn of a new millennium, the Korean diasporas in China, Japan, the former Soviet Union and the United States illustrate the inadequacy of the traditional domestic perspective of Asian Studies, which tends to focus on Asian Americans as an ethnic/racial minority within the national boundaries of the United States. I concur with Wong (1995) that the diasporic perspective is a more useful concept for a comprehensive understanding and analysis of the bilateral and multinational nature of Asian immigrant experiences.

Asian Studies in America began with the European colonial perspective in its Orientalist phase from the late eighteenth century up through the 1920s. The general trend of early Asian Studies favored stagnation theories in order to answer questions regarding the East's "failure" to follow a Western path of historical (i.e., economic) development. The development of Asian Studies during the period from the 1920s through the 1960s, together with the pioneering work of scholars at major American universities enabled the discipline to become professionalized even though it remained essentially Orientalist. The political pressures of the Cold War brought government support for Asian Studies in an effort to develop the foreign policy interests of the United States, and enabled the emergence of Asia specialists (Mazumdar 1991). It was not until after 1968, however, that many of the previous Orientalist premises and assumptions were finally challenged. The Vietnam War created a schism between government and academia and brought about a new era of radical politics and Marxist theories (Mazumdar 1991). While Asian Studies is still largely dominated by Chinese and Japanese area studies, there are now more pan-Asian and global perspectives represented.

As previously mentioned, Asian American Studies has been affected by recent emphases on denationalization and globalization. The field has expanded from its initial concentration on Japanese American and Chinese American immigrant history to include the diverse experiences of other first-generation immigrants and multinational perspectives, while continuing to address the complex issues of Asian Americans born in the United States. In this context, Korean American Studies experienced dynamic growth and expansion in terms of both quantity and quality over the past 30 years. But there are many other challenges confronting Korean American and Asian American Studies, and the need for a diasporic perspective is more urgent than ever.

The Korean Diaspora

Korean American Studies must also adopt a diasporic perspective. The Korean American experience cannot be studied in a vacuum without considering the experiences of Koreans in Japan, China, Russia, South America, and other places. And diasporic studies cannot exist without ties

to the homeland and Korean Studies. This globalizing perspective will undoubtedly help to unite Korean diasporic communities around the world with one another and with the homeland. In addition, it may also stimulate a secondary expansion of Asian American Studies by enabling comparisons between the Korean diaspora and other Asian diasporas.

With some 5.7 million Koreans in over 160 countries living outside the homeland, the Korean diaspora is the fourth largest in the world (ranking after the Chinese, Jewish, and Italian diasporas). In terms of population percentage, however, Korean diasporas rank first in the world, as nearly 7% of all Koreans live abroad. Because of the sizable contingent of diasporic Koreans, they are a natural concern of Koreans, specifically South Koreans.

The Overseas Korean Foundation (*Chaeoe tongpo chaedan*) is a South Korean governmental organization established to deal with the issues of overseas Koreans. Their self-stated goal is to help fellow Koreans lead stable lives in their country of residence, so that they may become successful participants in its social and cultural mainstream. The Foundation seeks to reinforce the Korean cultural heritage by promoting the study of the Korean language and culture in the diasporic communities. The organization reflects South Korea's intention to reach out to Koreans abroad and reclaim them as valuable national assets (Byong-Hyon Kwon, 2001). Although the reality may fall short of the OKF's aspirations, its goals reflect a renewed mutual concern between South Korea and diasporic communities.

Korean migration to China (*or Chosonjok*) began in the 1860s when migrant farmers sought new farmland in Manchuria and Siberia. During the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945), many Koreans, including the leaders of the independence movement, relocated to Manchuria. About 40% of the 1.7 million Koreans living in China and Manchuria at the end of World War II returned to Korea. In 1949, the Koreans in China were granted Chinese citizenship and given official ethnic minority status. The Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture was established in 1953 and came to be regarded as a model minority community. The Chosonjok managed to preserve their Korean language, culture, and ethnic identity, in part because of their relative isolation.

During the Cold War, the Korean Chinese imagined North Korea as

their symbolic homeland. But with the establishment of new diplomatic ties between South Korea and China, South Korea became the new homeland for the Korean Chinese, a homeland filled with promise and opportunities. Although some Chosonjok were able to benefit from economic ties with South Korea, many others had their dreams dashed. The Korean Chinese community now faces crises of population decline, identity confusion, and cultural assimilation. The combined effects of the exodus from Korean Chinese villages to the industrial cities of China and South Korea, the out-marriage of Korean Chinese women, and declining birth rates at home, have brought about a sharp decline in the Chosonjok population. Their sense of Korean identity is also expected to decline, although it may continue on in the newly developing urban communities. But the biggest problem for the Chosonjok may lie in their future. According to Tai-Hwan Kwon, the Korean Chinese community is in danger of dissolution and ultimate extinction (Kwon 2001).

The history of the Koreans in Russia (*Koryo saram*) dates back about a century and a half. In 1937, the Soviet Koreans were deported to Kazakhstan and other parts of Central Asia. There they became active in the politics, society, and culture of the former Soviet Union. Ross King maintains that whether as a survival strategy or because of a transition in leadership, the *Koryo saram* have become more prominent in Kazakhstani politics since perestroika as well (King 2001). Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the *Koryo saram* have also become successful in agribusiness, particularly because of their distinctive form of long-distance, semilegal lease farming. These Koreans are said to be the only group in the former Soviet Union, and the only members of a Korean diaspora anywhere, to engage in this unique form of agribusiness (King 2001).

Many Koreans in Japan can trace their roots to the involuntary relocation of Koreans during the colonial period (1910-1945). Although most of the 2.4 million Koreans who were living in Japan at the end of World War II returned to Korea after 1945, some 600,000 remained behind. The Korean War divided the Japanese Koreans into two camps. While some Koreans in Japan became naturalized Japanese citizens, most have only permanent resident status because of the policy of deassimilation and the stigma attached to accepting Japanese citizenship. According to Sonia Ryang, this is the reason why the term Koreans in Japan is used

rather than Korean Japanese, since the latter phrase would imply Japanese citizenship.

The first wave of Korean American immigration to the United States began in 1903, with the arrival of 103 Korean laborers in Hawaii, and lasted until 1924. Various political, economic, and cultural factors in Korea pushed Koreans to America, while labor shortages in Hawaii and the mainland were factors pulling Koreans to America. These early Korean immigrants were usually young, urban, single, male workers-- and about 40% of them were Christian converts (Patterson 1995). Picture brides began arriving in 1910 to marry the young men, and many couples moved to the mainland in search of better economic opportunities. The second wave of Korean American immigration (1945-1953) was related to the American occupation of South Korea (1945-1948), the Korean War (1950-1953), and Cold War politics. The complex military and social links between Koreans and the United States pushed many Koreans, including war brides, war orphans, and adoptees, to emigrate to the United States. The third wave of Korean American immigration occurred after the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. Most of the third-wave immigrants were people from middle-class urban backgrounds and came with their nuclear families intact. The 1980s also saw an increase in Korean entrepreneurial activities, especially in mom-and-pop stores and semi-professional businesses in areas dominated by a Korean ethnic economy (Light and Bonacich 1988; Yoon 1997; Min 1996; Chang and Diaz-Veizades 1999).

Discussion

Korean American Studies existed within the context of origins and missions of Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies. Demographic changes and globalization has forced Korean American Studies to consider new factors previously neglected or omitted. In particular, Korean American Studies face pressure to incorporate not only recent immigrant's experiences in the U.S. but more importantly historical and socio-political conditions of Korea and relations with Korean immigrants in the U. S.

“Wherever they may be, Koreans abroad have played a major role in the preservation of Korean culture. Whereas the ability to speak Korean

may fade after several generations in a new country, it may survive in other diasporic communities such as among the Chosonjok. The preservation of Korean culture has also had some unforeseen results. Although Koreans may eventually adapt to the host country's customs, Korean culture can flourish in diasporic communities even after specific practices fall out of use in Korea. On the other hand, such negative aspects of Korean culture as an emphasis on hierarchical structures and male dominance, or domestic and workplace violence, may also be preserved in diasporic communities" (Koh 2001). Although unselective preservation is unfortunate, it seems inevitable that both positive and negative aspects of a culture would remain vital in diasporic communities.

While there are differences in the experiences of diasporic Koreans, they also exhibit some important common features. For example, overseas Korean communities share a bond of loyalty to their homeland, be it North or South Korea; furthermore, this loyalty often lasts beyond the first generation. Overseas Koreans also have maintained political, economic, and cultural ties with Korea. They have sought to preserve Korean language, culture, and identity. Overseas Korean communities share another similarity in their image within their respective host cultures as a model minority. Because of these similarities in their real or imagined ties with the homeland, Korean diasporas must be examined and analyzed in relation to one another. With the increased frequency of multiple migrations of Koreans, the need for diasporic reinterpretation becomes even more urgent.

The continuity of Korean identity is also an important aspect of Korean diasporas. While Korean identity is formed by a complex interrelationship among the homeland, diasporic community, and host country, the preservation of a unique Koreanness binds all overseas Korean communities. People of Korean descent have retained their sense of Korean identity and heritage despite the many political shifts of the twentieth century. For Koreans in China or Russia, recent contacts with South Korea may have given them a new sense of optimism or disappointment regarding their homeland. Others may long for a single Korea, divided no longer.

Conclusion

Asian Americans have always been influenced by such international concerns such as political, economic, and cultural ties with their homeland. And yet, traditional Asian American Studies paradigm failed to incorporate immigrant experiences in its desire to stay within the borders of the United States. With globalization and demographic shift during the past thirty years, Asian American Studies are faced with numerous challenges including pressure to expand its boundaries and incorporate experiences of diasporic communities. At the same time, Asian American Studies have been working toward a non-hegemonic, pan-Asian sense of unity that celebrates both diversity and shared characteristics. While these may seem to be contradictory directions, they have been possible because of a paradigmatic shift toward globalism. Just as Asian American Studies is moving to a diasporic rather than domestic perspective, members of the Asian American community must also continue to look beyond national boundaries.

For Korean American Studies, this paradigm shift requires a move toward diasporic communities and closer ties with Korean Studies. Korean American Studies must incorporate experiences of Korean immigrants before they arrive in the U.S. Furthermore, comparative understanding of overseas Korean communities will not only enhance visibility but also broaden theoretical frameworks of Korean American Studies. For Korean Americans, this entails close dialogue with other diasporic Korean communities through organizations and joint efforts to bring overseas Koreans closer together. The easing of political, economic, and cultural barriers in the past decade has resulted from globalizing trends as well as the increased accessibility of news and information. With the Internet's ability to reach into any corner of the world, we can truly globalize any locale and localize the globe in our efforts to unite in our diversity.

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Abstract

At its inception, Asian American Studies focused on adding Asian American voices and concerns about identity to the discourse of American history. This focus was necessary because Asian American experiences had been ignored or neglected before the 1960's, and the contributions of Asians to American history were omitted from "official" historiography. Interest in Asian American identity emerged from the premise that Asian Americanness is neither Asian nor American, but Asian American. For these reasons, Asian American Studies has tried to uncover a usable past and construct an American identity at the domestic level, consciously choosing to stay within the boundaries of the United States in order to emphasize Americanness.

However international events have always influenced the way Asian Americans

think and act. Korean independence movements dominated the early experiences of the Korean American community, and homeland politics continue to be important to Korean immigrant groups. The diasporic Korean communities in Japan, China, Russia and the United States provide a specific context for rethinking the theoretical underpinnings of Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies. With the recent changes in demographics, globalization, and transnational relations the Asian American community in the twenty-first century is profoundly different from its 1960s predecessor in its mix of class, gender, and ethnic concerns, and therefore, the theories that presently dominate Asian American and Ethnic Studies are challenged by.

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