



# **Reinventing Citizenship: Black Los Angeles, Korean Kawasaki, and Community Participation (Critical American Studies)**

*Kazuyo Tsuchiya*

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In the 1960s and 1970s, the United States and Japan went through massive welfare expansions that sparked debates about citizenship. At the heart of these disputes stood African Americans and Koreans. *Reinventing Citizenship* offers a comparative study of African American welfare activism in Los Angeles and Koreans' campaigns for welfare rights in Kawasaki. In working-class and poor neighborhoods in both locations, African Americans and Koreans sought not only to be recognized as citizens but also to become legitimate constituting members of communities.

Local activists in Los Angeles and Kawasaki ardently challenged the welfare institutions. By creating opposition movements and voicing alternative visions of citizenship, African American leaders, Tsuchiya argues, turned Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty into a battle for equality. Koreans countered the city's and the nation's exclusionary policies and asserted their welfare rights. Tsuchiya's work exemplifies transnational antiracist networking, showing how black religious leaders traveled to Japan to meet Christian Korean activists and to provide counsel for their own struggles.

*Reinventing Citizenship* reveals how race and citizenship transform as they cross countries and continents. By documenting the interconnected histories of African Americans and Koreans in Japan, Tsuchiya enables us to rethink present ideas of community and belonging.

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