

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF IMMIGRANTS IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Ever since the first European settlers started coming to this land, immigration has been a very important issue. Even though the US is clearly a country of immigrants, anti-immigrant sentiments have a regular part of US history. There are indications that the first European settlers enforced the ideology that this was not the land of native peoples but the land of their own.¹ It was considered that whoever arrived several months or years before others had the right to view those “others” who arrived later as immigrants, and a group that should enjoy less rights.

Although non-white immigrants have faced much more difficult challenges, we could say that whether we think about Western Europeans, Eastern Europeans, Latino, Asian or African immigrants, every group at the time of arrival faced a certain amount of xenophobia and artificially constructed “nativism.”² Besides, many immigrants have thought about themselves as sojourners (temporary workers, temporary inhabitants), and this has been complicating the reality and serving as means for keeping sojourners even lower on the ladder of non-residents and non-citizens. The myth of Asian immigrants as sojourners vs. European immigrants as settlers was used to intensify exploitation and preserve a racial hierarchy. This is documented vividly by Ronald Takaki.³

The myths about immigrants are embodied in social psychology, basis of the political, economic and legal system, dominant public discourse and even in social sciences. On one hand, anti-immigrant orientation in the county of immigrants seems paradoxical and even illogical. On the other hand, anti-immigrant legislature,⁴ open or hidden xenophobia, open discussions about immigration as a problem and crisis⁵ and immigrants as “social problems” are almost permanently present.

There are many reasons for mystifying the reality regarding immigrants and immigration policy of this country. Mystification helps preserve the status quo of treating more recent immigrants as “real immigrants” vs. those who immigrated before them (and usually changed their legal status). Adopting the dominant ideology, most immigrants wish to transition out of their “immigrant phase” as soon as possible and climb the ladder so that “others” as newcomers can take their place.

Respondents randomly selected for the Summit on Immigrant Needs survey tended to reflect this view. First, there was a significant difference between immigrants and the US-born population who thought that immigrants did not make significant contributions in Santa Clara County. Every tenth American-born respondent expressed this opinion, in comparison to only 1.7% of immigrants. Also, deeper analysis of those immigrants who said that immigrants did not make important contributions revealed that the Chinese group was the closest to the US-born sub sample. Going even further,

it becomes clear that the great majority of those immigrants who thought negatively about immigrant contributions were naturalized US citizens (see note 17). The ideal of assimilation has been adopted by many immigrants who wanted to give up their previous lives and cultures in order to be called American as soon as possible. Immigration policies and ideologies around them are helping to preserve the status quo to have enough relatively cheap and vulnerable labor.

Numerous discussions about the need for immigrants in this country, why and how they come and whether they contribute as much as they gain, document how both official and unofficial immigration policies are mystified. Some of the potential survey respondents did not want to participate when they heard or read the word immigrant. Many “ordinary Americans” are hardly aware that their government carefully creates these policies, and tend to think of immigrants as people who just arrive on their own,⁶ becoming dangerous competitors for jobs, benefits and resources. Adopting these myths, many believe that there are more “undocumented” than legally present immigrants. If immigrants just started coming to the US in great numbers in recent years, false dilemmas about how rational it is to have such a great number of immigrants would have been almost understandable. Even dominant theoretical models in social sciences on immigration and particular immigrant groups are not immune to many myths about immigrants. Not only “ordinary people” think negatively about immigrants and their role, but also politicians, journalists and scientists. Sometimes they emphasize “negative contributions” of immigrants and connect their arguments to the use of US resources by immigrants. However, throughout history the development of this country depended on immigrants. Very often, proponents of the anti-immigrant orientation (be they politicians, social scientists, or “ordinary people”) at the same time argue that immigrants “drain the US economy more than they contribute”, and that US policies and the US itself are the most superior. At the same time, they cannot deny the fact that there have been a great number of immigrants admitted to this country every year. How do these statements all go together? Why would such a powerful country admit millions of immigrants every year throughout its history if immigrants have been mostly draining its resources? If millions and millions of immigrants have been predominantly draining its resources, wouldn't that negatively affect the economy and the US position in the world system? The answer is simple: contributions of immigrants are enormous,⁷ and much of this country's development is tied to these contributions.

In order to study the contributions of immigrants in Santa Clara County or any other part of the US, it is necessary to review theoretical perspectives and adopt a theoretical approach. For these purposes we summarize and review some of the major theories on immigration.

Theories of Immigration and the Role of Immigrants

Few theoretical models look at immigrants as agents who bring new ideas and values, actively transforming their social settings and the larger society. In general, complex models that capture relationships between immigrants and their new environment, the

causes of immigration and world processes are rarely developed. Rather, theories on immigration and immigrants' roles predominantly see these processes and relationships as more or less linear and simplistic. It is more likely to find theories defining adaptation or assimilation as the main measures of immigrants' success, than theories on immigrants as creative members of their new society and agents of change of their environments and themselves. Immigrants are seen as mostly passive or just reacting to their old and new social realities. Very often theories on immigration in the US reflect the dominant discourse and many controversies.⁸ Immigration is usually seen as a consequence of hardships that immigrants face in their homelands. Critical and comprehensive analysis of the world system and the US role in creating and maintaining it, is hardly present in the social sciences.⁹ From the point of view of the dominant theories, one would rarely guess that US companies, agencies and individuals have any active role in bringing immigrants to the country.¹⁰ Nor is it suspected that substantial resources are directed to convince people around the world that the US is an ideal country that everyone would like to live in. Theories and theorists who address sharp inequalities around the world usually fail to go deeply into reasons for creating and maintaining these inequalities.

Pure economic theories of immigration are very influential. The “Push-Pull” approach is seeing immigrants as individuals that are responding to negative “push” factors in their homelands (or point of origin) and positive “pull” factors at their point of destination. This model reduces immigrants to purely self-interested and rational “economic” beings. The approach is an individualistic and one-dimensional view of human action and social processes. This model is very similar to the “cost-benefit” approach to immigration that corresponds to popular views that immigration occurs because of individual motivations and cost-benefit calculations.

Macro-structural approaches take into account structural and historical factors that influence immigration. These theoretical models especially focus on labor migration. Among these models there are those that take into account the global system. These approaches do not see immigrants exclusively as passive or victims of structural forces. Also, immigrants are not seen as robots computing the cost of benefits and their moves. However, it is not rare that these theoretical models analyze negative sides of global processes as abstract global inequalities. The real sources of inequalities and the characteristics of global capitalism are rarely analyzed.

Dynamic approaches are rarely mentioned when theoretical models on immigration are analyzed. These approaches are critically taking into account the whole world system, including the US dominant role. For these theorists immigrants are human beings able to create their own lives both in their homelands and new societies. Immigrants do not only adapt to their new social environments, but also change them. Structural and macro factors definitely influence immigrants' decisions, but they are not only reacting to them. Immigrants are active participants in policies and all other social processes. Some feminist theorists have incorporated gender into their analysis,

arguing for a deeper understanding of the causes of immigration as well as the multiplicity of factors that influence immigration patterns of both men and women.

Immigration as a Problem or Crisis. Many theorists argue on different grounds that immigration should be stopped because it is a serious problem or produces crisis. Leon Bouvier, for example, argues against immigration on an environmental basis, trying to prove that immigrants produce congestion and pollution.¹¹ Others argue that immigrants place economic burden on American-born citizens.¹² An immigrant himself, George Borjas advances a thesis that modern-day immigrants are more of a burden than earlier immigrants because they are less skillful and more dependent on welfare.

When immigrants come to this country, there are different theoretical views of their roles. Some theorists argue that theories of **assimilation** belong to the past. However, modified theories of assimilation are still dominant.¹³ The Teutonic thesis assumed that in the last instance, immigrants should be assimilated into the American (Anglo-Saxon or Germanic) institutions and society as a whole. These scholars have argued that some immigrant groups (Asian, African, Latino, even Eastern European) couldn't be seen as assimilable.

Instead of this "classical assimilation" approach there are many softened versions. Theses about "melting pot" give some credit to immigrants' active role. These theses insist that adaptation and interaction are directed toward creation of a mixed race, without a specific nationality or characteristics. Segmented assimilation approaches have advantages in comparison to "classical assimilation" theories. These approaches emphasize that all segments of society do not absorb immigrants (or even one immigrant) equally.¹⁴ Immigrants themselves are not interested in participating in all social institutions and processes equally, but this is not acknowledged by versions of the assimilation approach.

On the other hand, a variety of more dynamic approaches emphasize the complexities present in the relationship of new individuals and new society, old and new cultures, changes and conflicts. Assimilation and acculturation cannot be seen as linear processes, but rather as long processes of both changing and preserving cultural identities. From this point of view, immigrants cannot be seen as passive subjects waiting to gain entrance to a host society. Tensions and negotiations, discrimination and resistance, ethnic and racial hierarchies, strategies used to challenge these hierarchies are all elements of these dynamic approaches. Writing about families of Vietnamese-Americans, for example, Nazli Kibria¹⁵ sees families as entities characterized by conflicts, tensions and negotiations about family and social roles. In her writing, cultural blending and multiple changes of cultural heritage—both Vietnamese and American—are presented in a complex and dynamic way.

Social scientists do not see immigrants as "crude, plastic material" to be adapted, adjusted, and completely integrated into already existing structures and hierarchies are still a minority. Nevertheless, immigrants come to the US as complete personalities,

bringing both material and spiritual wealth. In the interplay with other members of society, they develop themselves and serve as a basis for development. Immigrants are not the only people who have needs and need help. Other members of society need help from immigrants as well, especially in better understanding that the US is not the only culture in the world. Cultural blending should be seen as a source of wealth.

2. IMMIGRANT CONTRIBUTIONS IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY: SCOPE OF THE STUDY, LIMITATIONS AND THE NEED FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Major trends in social theories and the dominant public discourse, make it necessary to prove that immigrants contribute.¹⁶ Talking about immigrant needs without emphasizing their major contributions would be counter-productive, unbalanced and false.

It is not by coincidence that there are hardly any comprehensive studies on immigrant contributions clearly formulated as contributions. By using the term contributions we emphasize positive results of immigrant activities, and social processes they either initiate or are engaged in. We think about economic, cultural, educational, political and other types of activities. Data on immigrant economic activities, and on cultural, political and other engagement exists. However, this data is fragmented into small groups of immigrants, ethnic and racial groups, gender divisions, or specific spheres of social life. Thus, we find information here and there—dispersed and almost unnoticed or hidden. In general, official statistics are not oriented to, for example, follow trends related to labor force participation by immigration status, and/or by counties. In many cases it has been very difficult to obtain information focusing both on immigrants and Santa Clara County.

This study of immigrant contributions is only a beginning effort to develop a framework and collect data that is available and relatively easy to obtain at this point. It is an effort to turn our attention to the importance of the multiple aspects of immigrant lives. There is no doubt that there is no social arena in Santa Clara County that is not marked by the many contributions of all immigrant groups that live in the county. After all, immigrants and their children make up around 60% of the county population.

However, financial, personnel and time limits do not permit this study to focus on every immigrant group and every sphere of social life. Immigrants come to Santa Clara County from more than 180 countries around the world. For these reasons, this study does not focus on as many immigrant groups and as many spheres as necessary. Literally, every immigrant group and every small area of social life--music, small businesses, farm production, hi-tech companies, natural sciences, etc. could be a challenging topic for a doctoral dissertation.

Therefore, the attempt in this study is more a sketch and a direction for eventual further research than an in depth-study. Still, researchers interested in continuing and highlighting a particular angle will find significant theoretical and substantive foundations here. Some authors would argue that our scope is too broad and a task

impossible to carry out. They might even argue that it is methodologically impossible and incorrect to combine all Latino or all Asian groups because of their different experiences, histories in the US, and even conflicts between groups. Similar objections were directed to Ronald Takaki when he was studying immigrant experiences of most Asian groups. However, Takaki emphasized the importance of cross-national comparisons that could help us to identify both particular group experiences and to highlight the experiences common to all of them.¹⁷ By studying a particular group, there are more possibilities to conduct in-depth research, but finding commonalities becomes much more complicated. In the case of immigrant contributions there is an important argument for putting many groups together. Only then can a great number of people, including researchers, gain a real perspective on the great extent of the quantity and quality of contributions. Furthermore, when authors with anti-immigrant orientation write or give speeches on “problems with immigration and immigrants” they have no problem with placing all immigrants together.

Immigrant contributions do not occur outside of a historical perspective. Thus, this study accounts some of most obvious immigrant contributions that either belong to the past or are registered by some researchers in the past. However, time constraints and the scope of the study limit the focus here to predominantly contemporary contributions. Most contributions that are documented are results of immigrant activities in the last decade. In order for a reader to be able to connect contemporary contributions with already accumulated results of immigrant activities and experiences, we refer to a number of studies focusing both on Santa Clara County and other parts of California. Also, a diskette is available of notable immigrants who lived in the past and whose names mark many of today’s streets of San Jose.

3. IMMIGRANT ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Almost every discussion about immigrants, immigration and immigrants’ roles is tied or focused on some economic aspects. When analyzing economic contributions of immigrants numerous analysts often overlook many elements of contributions. Impact of immigrants on overall productivity, working conditions under which immigrants work, building and developing economic and political bridges between the US and other countries, are not researched as often as scientists and engineers, hi technology companies, creation of jobs and wealth.¹⁸ Also, in recent years, many more studies and discussions have been conducted on educated and skilled immigrants and their role, than on low-paid immigrant workers working in hi-tech manufacturing, agriculture and service sectors. Contributions of immigrant professionals who were skilled and educated in their homelands, but for some reason are under-employed, underpaid and experiencing downward mobility in the US are also not challenging topics for many researchers. Immigrant respondents to our random sample survey documented that immigrants were more likely than the US born to have more than one wage-earner in the family, to have lower hourly wage levels, to work for immigrant employers, to work swing, graveyard or weekend shifts and have other negative working conditions. Contrary to popular views of the US as a land of opportunity, our research—surveys and numerous focus groups document that many immigrants experience downward

mobility, and only slightly more than half of them experience upward mobility. The Summit on Immigrant Needs random sample survey showed that only 56.4% of all immigrant respondents from 5 countries—India, China, The Philippines, Mexico and Vietnam experienced any upward occupational mobility, compared to their occupational status in their homelands. For three out of five groups the percentage of occupationally upward mobile was lower than the average.¹⁹

Before presenting more detailed analysis of immigrant economic contributions in Santa Clara County, let us review some basic general facts on immigrants and economy. These facts will put additional light on both general and specific conditions that influence immigrant lives and their economic activities wherever they live and work in the US.

When entering the US immigrants must prove that they wouldn't be a burden. In addition, when applying for a green card H1B visa holders must prove that they are not "replacing an American-born workers." Immigrants in general are more likely to be employed and start small businesses than American-born population.²⁰ Although popular views emphasize that immigrants, including "undocumented" almost automatically receive public services, most immigrants do not qualify for them. The only benefits that all immigrants can receive are emergency medical care and K-12 education. Refugees are exception, but refugees make up a small number of immigrants and only 1.5% of the world refugee population is located in the US.²¹ Even before starting to think about immigrant economic activities using the language of "cost-benefit" analysts it is clear that immigrants pay more in taxes than they get in public benefits. According to the Census Bureau data and the Immigration Forum interpretation, immigrants add about \$ 10 billion each year to the US economy. In 1997, immigrant households paid an estimated \$133 billion in direct taxes to federal, state and local governments and this means that an average immigrant paid an estimated \$80,000 more in taxes than received in local, state and federal benefits in a lifetime.²² Federal taxes paid by families with naturalized citizens average \$6,580 per year compared with \$5,070 for US-born-only families.²³

Data from 1998 show that in Silicon Valley about one third of all scientists and engineers were born in a foreign country. Just the 10 largest high tech firms founded or co-founded by immigrants employed 50,000 and accounted for more than \$20 billion in revenues.²⁴

Since Silicon Valley is the core of Santa Clara County, in the next section we will focus more on hi-tech industry, immigrant professionals and production workers. Sections that will follow discuss contributions of other low paid immigrants—janitors, farm and domestic workers, garment and other types of production workers.

Educated and Skilled Immigrants in the High-Tech Industry

About one in four of high-tech firms in the Valley were founded by immigrants.²⁵ In 1996 these firms were employing 67,000 workers and generated annual revenues of \$27.9 billion.²⁶ Since immigrants significantly make Silicon Valley's image of the

“technological center of the world” and produce a lot of material wealth, there are many articles calling immigrants vital to the Valley. From newspapers and popular magazines, to financial magazines to scholarly journals, there are many calls for “opening the doors” to skilled immigrants and making them feel welcome.

There is data that only Indian immigrants run more than 700 start-up firms in Silicon Valley.²⁷ Immigrants founded or co-founded many famous companies in Silicon Valley. Jerry Yang created Yahoo!, Sabeer Bhatia, an Asian Indian, founded free email provider Hotmail Corp., Hungarian-born Andrew Grove is the CEO of Intel, Suhas Patil, from India, established Cirrus Logic, Solectron Corp. was co-founded by a Taiwanese immigrant Winston Chen, Sigma Designs co-founded by a Vietnamese immigrant Think Tran, Hong Kong immigrant Jimmy Chan, and Taiwanese immigrant Jansen Chen. Hong Chen, a Chinese American started a global network of Internet services Gric Communications, Jimmy Lee started Integrated Silicon Solutions, Prabhu Goel established Gateway Design Automation, Linus Torvalds, an immigrant from Finland, invented Linux operating system, Victron was established by Korean immigrants, Sitara Networks was created by a Pakistani immigrant and Kopin Corp. was created by an immigrant from Hong Kong, John C.C. Fan. One Sun Microsystems co-founder was Andreas Bechtolsheim, a German-American, and the other one was Vinod Khosla, an immigrant of Indian decent. Kanwal Rehki created The IndUS Entrepreneurs, a networking club for Indian businessmen. Borland International, a software company worth hundreds of millions of dollars was founded by an undocumented immigrant, Philippe Kahn.²⁸ The list goes on and on. For more information about immigrant founded and run businesses and organizations see our additional materials.

Many immigrants are executives or leading figures in hi-tech and other companies. In 1998, Chinese and Indian immigrants were executives of 24% of the Valley’s hi-tech companies. Between 1980-1998, among all entrepreneurs heading businesses, 17.5% were Chinese and 6.8% Indian immigrants. Between 1995 and 1998, number of immigrants of Chinese and Indian decent who run companies in Silicon Valley rose to 29%.²⁹ Immigrants from other countries also head many companies. Dominic Orr was born in Macao and he is an executive of Alteon Web Systems, and Sherman Tuan, from Taiwan, leads AboveNet Communications Net. John Pham, a Vietnamese American, is and executive in Acropolis Systems, a Milpitas firm that designs computer systems to minimize downtime. Evangelina Calderon, president of Micon Telecommunications in Fremont is a Mexican American. Lavonne Luquis is the owner of the web site LatinoLink, and is form Puerto Rico. For example, at Cypress Semiconductor Corp. 4 out of 10 senior vice presidents are foreign-born. Jose Arreola, a Mexican immigrant with a doctorate in transistor physics is Cypress’s top scientist.

However, a study has shown that although Asians make up to 30% of workers in Silicon Valley high-tech startups, of 100 firms that received venture capital funding, only 7% were headed by Asians or Asian-Americans.³⁰

Among high-tech workers in Silicon Valley, 31% of US-born hold graduate degrees.³¹ 40% of Chinese-born and 55% of Indian-born high-tech workers hold graduate degrees.³² This is not specific for Silicon Valley. Nationally, the number of doctorates awarded to Chinese students tripled and doubled to Indian students between 1990-1996.³³ Although some researchers document (Saxenian) that salaries of foreign born and native-born engineers and scientists are about the same, there is a serious doubt that all elements were taken into account when comparisons are made. Other research documents that Indian-born scientists and engineers face glass ceiling.³⁴ Also, many immigrants stress that they form their own businesses in order to ensure that they would be fairly rewarded for their skills and abilities.

	Total Workforce		High-Technology Workforce		Scientists and Engineers in High-Technology Workforce	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Foreign born	446,963	24	81,841	29	18,498	32
Asian born	205,603	11	50,608	18	12,237	21
Other foreign born	241,360	13	31,233	11	6,261	11
Native	1,359,270	75	192,494	70	38,997	68
Total (may not =100%)	1,806,233	100	274,335	100	57,495	100

SOURCE: U.S. Census 1990 PUMS

According to the study on Silicon Valley's new immigrant entrepreneurs, Chinese and Indian immigrants only, created more than 58,000 jobs in 1998. Our survey also documents that immigrants create jobs and are likely to hire other immigrants.³⁵

It would be wrong to think that only Chinese, Taiwanese and (Asian) Indian Americans come to Silicon Valley as high-tech specialists, scientists and engineers. Even though engineers and scientists of Chinese and Indian decent comprise the majority, many other immigrant groups have a significant number of their experts working in high-tech industry. Overall, immigrants account for *at least 1/3 of the scientific and engineering workforce in the Valley*. However, immigrants coming from other countries aren't mentioned as often as their counterparts of Chinese and Indian decent. In a sense they might become "the hidden contributors", as Aaron Klein was describing Black scientists and inventors in the US.³⁶ For example, in 1997 there were 1,645 engineers, 478 computer scientists and 289 managers of Vietnamese decent in Santa Clara County.³⁷ Immigrant engineers and scientists from Korea, Japan, Iran, Russia, France, the Philippines, Israel, Singapore, former Yugoslavia, Hong Kong and other countries

have come not in small numbers to work in Silicon Valley. Actually, if we follow percentages of foreign born engineers and scientists employed in Silicon Valley's high-tech industry we get the following picture: Taiwan: 16.4%, India: 11.9%, China: 9.9%, Vietnam: 8.9%, Hong Kong: 6.1%, Philippines: 5.1%, Iran: 5.0%, Japan: 3.0%, Korea: 2.8%, Germany: 2.2%, Great Britain: 2.0%, Canada, Pakistan, Poland, France: around 1% each, Mexico: 0.8%, all other countries together: 19.1%.³⁸ For example, Hewlett Packard Laboratories (HP Labs), located in Palo Alto, employs engineers and scientists from many parts of the world and also includes locations in Bristol, Tokyo and Haifa (Israel).³⁹ At Cypress Semiconductor Corp., San Jose, about 40% of research and development jobs are held by immigrants. (Examples of high-tech and other immigrant companies are available on a diskette). In addition, many scientists and engineers are female. Both native and foreign-born females make up about 17.5% of the total of engineers and scientists in Silicon Valley.⁴⁰ Some examples of female entrepreneurs and their companies are available among data provided in our additional materials.

Chinese and Indian immigrants created many professional organizations and mobilized many members around various professional and other related issues. Anna Lee Saxenian (1999) described some of them:

- Silicon Valley Indian Professionals, SIPA, founded in 1991, more than 1,000 members. Forum for expatriate Indians to contribute to cooperation between US and India. www.sipa.org
- The Indus Entrepreneur, founded in 1992, around 600 members. Mentorship and resources. www.tie.org
- Chinese Institute of Engineers, founded in 1979. Over 1,000 members. Communication among Chinese engineers and scientists. www.cie-sf.org
- Chinese Information and networking Association, founded in 1992, more than 700 members. Chinese professionals who advocate technologies and business opportunities in information technology. www.cina.org
- Chinese Internet Technology Association, founded in 1996. Over 600 members. Forum for Chinese Internet professionals and entrepreneurs. www.cita.net
- North America Chinese Semiconductor Association, founded in 1996. More than 600 members. Professional advancement in semiconductor sector, interaction between the US and China. www.nacsa.com
- Asian American Manufacturers Association, founded in 1980. Around 700. Promotes growth and success of US high-tech firms throughout the Pacific Rim. www.aamasv.com
- Chinese Software Professionals Association, founded in 1988. More than 1,400 members. www.cspa.com
- Chinese American Computer Corporation, founded in 1988. Around 270 corporations. Majority from Taiwan. www.killerapp.com
- Silicon Valley Chinese Engineers Association, founded in 1989. Around 400 members, to establish ties to China. www.scea.org
- Chinese American Semiconductor Professionals Association, founded in 1991. 40 corporations, 1,600 individuals. www.caspa.com

- The North American Taiwanese Engineers Association, founded in 1991. About 400 members. www.natea.org
- The Monte Jade Science and Technology Association (Chinese), founded in 1989. 150 corporations + 1,600 individuals. Communication and collaboration among semiconductor professionals. www.montejade.org

Professional and Other Support Networks are Created by Immigrants

In order to enhance their own business opportunities, support start-ups, learn new business strategies, have a sense of community and belonging, as well as to build international businesses, immigrants create national and ethnic networks. Immigrants say that they want to increase dynamism of regional economy, to learn new business strategies, to have feelings of community and sense of belonging and to enhance their own business opportunities (Global Competitiveness project, 99, www.aif.org). Among all these goals is the goal of building international businesses. In the next section we will briefly present immigrant investments, their activities that draw foreign/international investments in the US companies, and building ties to homelands of immigrants and other parts of the world. In all of these processes the role of immigrants is essential.

Asian-Americans create their own networks. The above associations and networks are just a small part of many examples. They even have parallel funding systems,⁴¹ created by Asian-Americans themselves and supportive organizations. They do not depend on institutionalized ways of funding from the dominant financial organizations. Chip designers Oak Technology and trident Microsystems were built on Taiwanese and Taiwanese-Americans' funds. Especially the second-generation Vietnamese immigrants have started to construct "angel" networks—that fund the capital for other Vietnamese to launch start-ups.⁴²

Immigrant Investments and Ties to Other Parts of the World Market

Immigrants play a key role in strengthening ties to their homelands and other parts of the world. As Anna Lee Saxenian argued in 1994, Silicon Valley entrepreneurs developed a regional network based industrial system.⁴³ That system is not only flexible and open from inside for all new ideas, creativity and the flow of capital, but also open to connections with markets outside the Valley and the country.

Foreign-born engineers and scientists that were former workers at subsidiaries of Silicon Valley companies located in India, Mexico and other countries play a specific role in establishing connections and links. An international division of labor within high-tech industry assumed that research and development was carried out in core areas (Silicon Valley mostly) and assembly and testing were performed in the peripheries. Offshore plants have been located in Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Puerto Rico, Southeast Asia and to a lesser extent in Latin America and Europe. Many immigrants have been circulating between Silicon Valley and other locations of high-tech companies and their plants located offshore.⁴⁴ Some H1 B visa holders are temporary

workers, but they still help make connections with their homelands and high-tech markets.

In 1995, Asia accounted for 61% or \$16.3 billion of Silicon Valley's exports and \$24 billion of the San Francisco Bay region's exports. The San Jose Metropolitan Statistical Area (SCC) ranked #1 in the country in exports to Asia, exceeding Los Angeles, Seattle and New York.⁴⁵ Immigrants and immigrant companies play the most important role creating connections. Asian-Americans and their companies strengthen Valley's ties to the Pacific Rim.⁴⁶ Development of immigrant import-export businesses is closely related to increasing economic linkages between the US and Asian countries.⁴⁷

Some venture capitalists set up their ventures in both the US and, for example, Asia because they have ties with both countries. Herbert Chang has shops in Taipei and San Jose. Some Chinese immigrant professionals are nicknamed "astronauts" because of their constant travel between Asia and Silicon Valley.

In 1998 venture capitalists from Taiwan brought at least \$400 million into Silicon Valley.⁴⁸ InveStar from Taipei has made more than 70 investments in Silicon Valley based high-tech companies.⁴⁹ Companies founded by Asian Americans have drawn most of the \$72 million that Alpine Ventures has invested in the Valley.⁵⁰ Substantial Japanese capital is coming into the US technology firms. \$70 million Defra Venture Fund for Japanese firms is looking to catch up with their US competitors by investing in US ventures. Toshiba set up Advanced Information Technology Center in San Jose in 1995. Toshiba already invested \$30 million in US start-ups. Fujitsu has invested \$10-15 million in a few dozen US firms. NEC is investing in networking companies via two Silicon Valley offices in order to become a part of The Internet standards set up by the Silicon Valley. Japan Associated Finance Co. invested about \$130 million in the US venture capital. Softbank invested in Yahoo! GeoCities and dozens of others Internet-related ventures.⁵¹ Jafco, Japan's largest venture capital firm has funded 100 US start-ups including Silknet, Net Perceptions and PocketScience, investing more than \$180 million by mid 1999.⁵²

Denny Roja, a Filipino immigrant, is a corporate investor. Kanwal Rekhi, from India, is the founder of the IndUS Entrepreneurs, invested a lot in several start-ups.⁵³ Sina.com, a Sunnyvale Internet company, was funded by 2 American-born of Chinese decent and a Chinese immigrant through a single angel investor. Now the company has offices in Beijing, Taipei, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Many links between Silicon Valley and Asian markets are made through the Bay Area chapters of alumni clubs of Asian universities. One of the examples is a connection with Taiwan's elite technical university National Chiao Tung University.

These are just some examples of connections between the Silicon Valley and other parts of the world market. The US emphasizes the importance of globalization and its

role in these processes. Immigrants' role in balancing between the US and other potential new markets is definitely important. Connections made by family ties, friendships and other private relationships are sources of other networking activities and opportunities. These connections are beyond the scope of this study.

Growth of Immigrant Small and Large Businesses

Immigrants are very likely to start their own businesses—small or large. Our survey documented that 18.2% of our immigrant respondents or their family members had their own small businesses.⁵⁴ In the recent years numbers of businesses started and maintained by immigrants continue to grow. In 1999 38.4% of small businesses in California were owned by Asian Americans with \$37.7 billion in annual receipts.⁵⁵ Number of all Hispanic owned businesses in the country between 1987 and 1992 increased for 83%. Number of businesses owned by Hispanic women grew 114% in the same period. Among the fortune 1000 firms in 1999 there were 366 Hispanic executives at a level of vice-president or higher in 144 companies.

According to the census Bureau, Mexican-American owned businesses had grown from 4,487 in 1987 to 6,491 in 1992. At the same time, the number of Vietnamese-Americans owned businesses in the County was 2,026 in 1987, and 4,716 in 1992. In 1997, it was estimated that there were around 5,000 Vietnamese-owned businesses in the County. In the Vietnamese directory there are more and more pages every year and the spectrum of businesses is great. Many Vietnamese associations are listed as well—from churches and temples to professional associations and social services.⁵⁶ For example, only The Tropicana, plaza with 46 existing businesses at Story and King Road, contain 13 businesses owned by Vietnamese-Americans.

In 1990 the San Jose Indian Chamber of Commerce lists more than 1,000 small Indian-owned businesses in Northern California, and that was only a partial list.⁵⁷ Data on other smaller groups of immigrants and their small businesses is not as accessible as data on these large groups. However, there is no doubt that smaller groups also engage in starting their own businesses. Our survey data provides such indicators. More research should be directed to examine the growth of businesses owned by smaller groups of immigrants.

Immigrant Professionals Not Working in the High-Tech Industry

Many immigrant professionals who are not engineers and scientists also live in Silicon Valley, but find their situation much more complex than the situation of engineers and scientists who work in high-tech industry. Two of the focus groups conducted for the Summit on Immigrant Needs provide data on the great potential these professionals bring and their difficulties to find ways to use their skills and potentials.⁵⁸ In every immigrant group we can find professionals with similar stories. Our focus groups revealed that immigrant professionals come from many countries, from India and Uganda, to Argentina and other countries of Latin America, to Vietnam, Serbia and

Iran. And these are just a small part of immigrant professionals that struggle, study and work, usually in unrelated and lower paid fields, in Silicon Valley.

These were dentists, horticulturists, nutritionists, graphic designers, medical doctors, social workers etc. They all struggle to find ways to continue their careers and often have to work in unrelated areas while they study for exams needed in their area, hoping that one day they will gain entrance into these fields. Many of these professionals find themselves repeating the schooling from their home countries, with some additions and at this time in English. In many cases additional schooling or training demands more than five years of sacrifice. Some professionals already passed through all the gates and finally are able to work in their fields. In his book about Vietnamese Americans, Hien Duc Do included excerpts from interviews with a former Vietnamese diplomat, attorney and teacher. They encountered many difficulties and often had to change their professions.⁵⁹ and contribute to some other occupational field.

Production Workers in the High-Tech Industry

Production workers, occupying low paid and low skilled positions in Silicon Valley are less often the topics of research. Nevertheless, the work of these workers is essential for the high-tech industry as a whole. Therefore, their hard work and their contributions to the “booming economy” cannot be devalued.

According to researchers estimates, so called Third world immigrant women account for 68-90% of the entire operative labor force in Silicon Valley.⁶⁰ Others estimate that all immigrants make nearly half of Silicon Valley’s high-tech manufacturing labor force.⁶¹

Low-wage immigrant workers are shouldering Bay Area’s tech boom, according to ERA (Equal Rights Advocates). Also, women comprise 65% of electronic assembly workers in Santa Clara County.⁶² In Santa Clara County’s Silicon Valley, the electronics industry employed nearly 207,000 workers in 1990. Asian immigrants now dominate semi-skilled operative positions on the assembly line, making up 47% of these workers, as well as making up 41.2% of the all unskilled workers.⁶³ Many of these workers have not been protected from dangerous lead exposure and other hazards.⁶⁴ This shows immigrant willingness to work under difficult and dangerous working conditions which clarifies their role of fulfilling positions that would otherwise be either offered to non-immigrant residents or transferred overseas. All of these women have been needed for semiconductors and microprocessors production, as well as for disk drives, hardware for the Internet, testing and calibration of products. There are estimates that about one fifth of this type of manufacturing has gone to small, little known companies that sub-contract with giants like Cisco or Hewlett Packard. This situation forces production workers to work under even harder and more dangerous conditions because many of them are temporary workers, required to work at home, for low wages.

The situation opened doors for labor violations. Recently, ERA filed a lawsuit against three companies that abused workers’ rights. The high-tech industry is still not

unionized, in spite of many attempts. These facts, especially affects immigrants because they work in great numbers in the industry and usually do not have enough knowledge about labor rights. However, through the long process and attempts to organize immigrants improved their knowledge and understanding of working conditions and their own situation. Many immigrants engage in political activism and become labor activists.

Processes visible in high-tech industry are reflected in other industries. As Karen Hossfeld wrote, automotive, communications, appliance manufacturing and other industries are all dependent on microelectronics for their means of production. At the same time, job insecurity, losing and eliminating jobs replaced by microelectronics-based technological innovations and automation are processes that go across all of the industries and not only in this local economy.⁶⁵ However, other industries and workers' contributions demand our attention as well.

Professional Organizations, Associations, Centers and Networks Created and/or Supported by Immigrants

There are a substantial number of professional organizations, associations, community centers, networks and social services organizations initiated and supported by immigrants. The richness of the diversity of organizations is illustrated by the following selective list:

- Filipino American Chamber of Commerce
- The Filipino American Council of Santa Clara County
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (over 1200 companies and individual members)
- Hispanic Business Journal
- Center for Employment Training
- National Foundation for Women Business owners
- Ethiopian Community Services
- San Jose Japanese American Chamber of Commerce
- Japantown Business Association
- Japanese American Citizens League: San Jose Chapter
- Japanese American Resource Center
- West Valley Japanese American Citizens League
- South Bay Japanese Community Network
- Chinese American Cultural Center
- Chinese Community Center of the Peninsula
- Chinese Student Association (SJSU)
- Association for Viet Arts (AVA)
- Bosnian American Association
- East European Service Agency
- The Ellahie Law Firm
- The Portnov Computer School
- Jewish Family Service of Santa Clara County
- Jewish Vocational and Career Counseling Services

National Hispanic University
Portuguese Organization for Social Services
Portuguese Heritage Society
South Bay Scottish Society
San Jose Indian Chamber of Commerce
Network of Indian Professionals
Northside Community Center
Korean American Professionals Association
Korean American Community Services
Korean-American Senior Citizens League of Santa Clara County
Taiwanese American Chamber of Commerce
Association de Profesionistas Mexicanos en Silicon Valley.
Indian Business and Professional Women
Indo-American Chamber of Commerce
Indian Arts Production
Indo-American Community Service Center
Indian Muslim Relief Committee
Iranian Culture Foundation of the US
Ireland Industrial development Agency
Italian American Heritage Foundation
Chicanos and Latinos in Engineering and Science at Santa Clara University
Asian Pacific Law Students Association, Santa Clara University School of Law
Asian Immigrant Women Advocates
Asian Law Alliance
Asian Business League of the Silicon Valley
Asian Americans for Community Involvement
Asian American Recovery Services
Southeast Asian Community Service Center
Indo-Chinese Resettlement and Cultural Center
The Bay Area's Vietnamese American Professionals Alliance
Vietnamese American Cultural and Social Council
Mekong Community Center
Vietnamese Community Center
Vietnamese Voluntary Foundation
Vietnamese Student Association (SJSU)

Other Industries and the Impact of Immigrants

In 1985, in Santa Clara County, women accounted for around 60% of the workforce. According to AIWA-- Asian Immigrant Women Advocates, in recent years, many industries in the San Francisco Bay Area now depend on the work of Asian immigrant women. Of course, immigrant women and men from other parts of the world have their share in performing hard industrial labor for low wages and often with little or without any benefits. Working Partnerships USA report, for the hearing of the California Senate Committee on Industrial Relations and a *Status Report on Social and Economic Well-being in the State of California*, document economic insecurity and labor law violations in electronic, janitorial, home health-care, restaurant/hotel and other

industries.⁶⁶ We will discuss situations in the garment industry, domestic services, including janitorial, and briefly present some developments in farm work/fruit industry, construction and some other industries. Research has been conducted focusing on workers in some of these industries in both present days and in the past. Previous hard work of thousands of immigrants has been recorded and results have been visible.

Garment Workers

There is a long history of Chinese women working in the garment industry. Around 1900s seamstress was the most common occupation of Chinese immigrant women, according to Judy Yung⁶⁷. After World War I Chinese women began replacing the Chinese male workforce in the sewing factories.

The San Francisco Bay Area is a home to the third largest garment industry center in the country. There are over 600 contractor shops. The Bay Area garment industry employs over 25,000 workers, of whom 90% are women. About 85% of garment workers are Asian, 10% Latino and the rest are mostly African-American. These workers produce millions of garment items for millions of consumers. The overwhelming majority of workers in this industry are immigrant women. They work often in shifts, day and night. Typically, they spend 60-80 hours per week in front of their machines.

In 1992, AIWA, based in Oakland and San Jose, launched the Garment Workers Justice Campaign to demand corporate responsibility from garment manufacturers, winning institutional changes for workers throughout the Bay Area. AIWA discovered that relatively little research attention has been paid to health issues of garment workers. AIWA staff and activists announced the conclusion to meetings with the executives of three prominent garment manufacturers in the Bay Area-Allan Byer, President of Byer California; Bob Tandler, President of Fritzi California; and Jay Margolis, CEO of Esprit de Corp. In addition to these companies maintaining their already existing monitoring programs, all three have agreed to implement toll-free, confidential hotlines to protect garment workers' rights in the workplace. One garment worker, Su Tang, said, "These hotlines will allow us to report problems without fear of being fired or identified as a troublemaker." Now, over 2,500 garment workers who sew for Byer California, Fritzi California and Esprit de Corp. in the Bay Area can voice their concerns to these manufacturers. Sweatshop watch is monitoring conditions of piece work and assembly-line work leading to dead-end jobs. Many of these immigrant women garment workers work long hours have no job security and have their health already damaged. This is the situation for thousands of Bay Area women, young and old, from China, Hong Kong, Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam and many other countries.

According to interviews conducted with immigrant women garment workers by AIWA personnel, many of these women invest their whole lives, working hard and hoping for better future in the United States. Tam Le who fled from Vietnam after sending her two daughters ahead alone, explains, "I wanted my kids to have a better life, so I gave up

everything.” A single mother, Mrs. Le sews from early morning to late at night Monday through Saturday. Wiping tears from her eyes she says, “I’m working so much I don’t have many friends. It’s hard for me to take care of the girls by myself. But I do everything for them.”⁶⁸

Janitors and Domestic Workers

Janitors are probably the most vulnerable and devalued workers. Yet, almost everyone has to agree that their work is very much needed. Almost exclusively immigrant workers occupy these positions, similar to garbage collecting. Even though American-born population often complain that immigrants come to the US in order to take jobs from them, a very minimal number of non-immigrant population would see themselves occupying janitorial positions. In Silicon Valley and the East Bay immigrant janitors have to work incredibly much to survive in these expensive areas. The average janitors’ household worked 104 hours per week, and still only 9% of households with children could meet a basic family budget. These 9% of the households had to work an average of 145 hours per week!⁶⁹ Because of these extremely hard conditions under which janitors work and live a massive Justice for Janitors campaign has been launched in many cities. In the families of janitors, all adult family members have to work hoping meet the most basic human needs. In Laura’s (a female janitor living in San Jose) words: “Sometimes I get discouraged and I just give up and say, ‘well, at least I have a roof over my head’. But then I look at my children and I want them to have something better.”⁷⁰

To be able to pay expensive rents, families of janitors live with friends, relatives or strangers. In more than 1/3 of families surveyed children had to sleep in living rooms and in 1/5 of the cases janitors lived in a single room, garage or mobile home.⁷¹

Pirrette Hondagneu-Sotelo conducted a study on Mexican experiences of immigration in the Bay Area. Following the list of her study participants and their occupations, it becomes clear that almost all of them occupied similar positions. Most often they worked in low-end service-sector jobs as domestic service workers, including in-home care for elderly and children, janitors and gardeners, laundry workers and dishwashers, construction workers, cooks and in a small number of cases as factory assembly workers. Stories of these immigrants do not only document gendered immigration patterns, but also relentless work of people who often experienced downward class mobility with few opportunities for occupational advancement. There was a multiplication of domestic work and child-care for immigrant women in almost all cases. These immigrants also had to multiply their working hours in order to survive. Some women janitors and domestic workers were often working at eighteen houses per week.⁷² After work, many immigrant women also do their “homework”, doing piece work at home, as another research documented.⁷³

Restaurant, Bar and Hotel Workers

These occupations are also most often occupied by immigrants. It is estimated that the majority of these workers are Latino immigrants.⁷⁴ For example, San Francisco’s

tourist industry employs 12,900 hotel and 16,900 restaurant and bar workers. According to the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union, an estimated 30% of these workers are Asian immigrants. Sang Hee Lee, a Korean hotel worker, who joined AIWA described herself as being lonely, frustrated, and always full of anxiety, like other immigrant women, isolated by long hours of tedious work, by language, and culture. It is hard to argue that these hard and unpleasant jobs would be otherwise filled by native-born population. Also, it would be hard to imagine the whole tourist industry functioning without immigrants.

Cannery and Agricultural Workers

In 1906, Thomas Foon Chew, a Chinese American, took over his fathers business, the Bayside Cannery. At the time it was taken over by Foon Chew the cannery was one of the largest in the world. When he started, his workers were predominately Chinese. Later on, he began to hire Portuguese, Italian and Irish workers. There is evidence that he personally cared for his workers and their well-being. After he died in 1931, others took initiative to include Thomas Foon Chew as a contributor to the historical development of Santa Clara County.

Patricia Zavella, documented a great impact of women cannery workers in Santa Clara County at the end of 1970s. Even though Zavella used term Chicana, it was clear that some of these women were immigrants. Women cannery workers were seasonal labor force, concentrated at the bottom of wage categories and positions. Both women and men of Mexican decent built their lives in the “cannery world.” In many ways, the industry depended on them, only 30% of cannery workers were white men.⁷⁵ However, mechanization and automation replaced many jobs or made them seasonal.

Urban growth erased many farms and orchards. In both Sunnyvale and Cupertino what once was full of orchards and flourishing fruit industry is transforming in emphasized high-tech centers. In San Jose, the Almaden Winery and vineyards also were replaced by newly built homes. All these developments definitely affected farm workers and their potential jobs that are shrinking rapidly. However, past and present contributions of immigrant farm workers should be remembered. Farm worker’s working conditions are still in many cases similar to the time when Cesar Chavez started the farm workers’ struggle. Farm jobs are rated among the three most dangerous occupations in the US.⁷⁶

4. EDUCATION AND IMMIGRANT CONTRIBUTIONS

Adult immigrants coming to the US often are already educated in their homelands. Although many would argue that the education attained abroad is inferior to the same level of education in the US, there are enormous benefits of getting already educated labor force. Authors of the Fiscal Portrait of the Newest Americans present that about 17.5 million of immigrants came to the US educated elsewhere. The total value of having such a situation or discounted value windfall to the US taxpayer is roughly \$1.43 trillion.⁷⁷ On the national level, average new arrived immigrants tend to be

slightly better educated than the US born population. Comparing graduate degrees of foreign-born and native population, whatever level we observe, national, state or county, immigrants hold more graduate degrees.

Especially in the 1990s a great number of highly educated immigrants came to Silicon Valley. A great majority of researchers focusing on the County or Silicon Valley agree that this is enormous human capital. Educated immigrants are bringing their rich educational and work experiences, in many cases already developed skills, and above all—creativity and curiosity. Among High-tech workers in Silicon Valley, 31% of US-born hold graduate degrees. 40% Chinese-born and 55% of Indian-born high-tech workers hold graduate degrees.⁷⁸ The phenomenon is not unique for Silicon Valley. Nationally, numbers of graduate degrees awarded to immigrants (especially Asian immigrants) are increasing each year. Immigrants in Silicon Valley are twice as likely to have obtained doctoral degrees than are the US born population.⁷⁹ At the same time, between 1990 and 1996, the number of high-tech degrees awarded to foreign-born students increased while the number of degrees obtained by the US born population decreased.⁸⁰

Also, some European countries, e.g. Denmark, Germany or Switzerland, send their top scientists to the US and most often Silicon Valley, while paying full tuition and living expenses for their education and scientific work in the US⁸¹. These scientists contribute while they work in Silicon Valley and some of them decide to stay as immigrants.

Immigrants establish private bilingual and monolingual schools, as well as professional schools and centers. They and their children also attend these schools, pay tuition build and develop them. For example, many immigrant groups organize bilingual instruction for their children to preserve multiculturalism and language fluency. There is the International School of the Mid Peninsula in Palo Alto with programs offered in Chinese, French and English. French American School is located in Sunnyvale, German-American in Menlo Park. There are also German School of Silicon Valley, Vietnamese-American School in San Jose, Chinese American (Great Success School) in Cupertino. Many immigrant groups organized schools within churches and community centers. For example, Greek Americans have organized bilingual Greek school in St. Nicholas Greek Church, and Serbian-Americans organized bilingual Serbian school in St. Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church. Latino Women developed The Learning and Loving Educational Center in Morgan Hill. Phu Lam Nguyen has a language network, professional educational center serving Vietnamese-Americans. Michael Portnov established The Portnov Computer School for computer testing and first started with Russian immigrants and now serves many immigrant groups. There is also Korean School of Technology in Los Altos. Carlos Watson, a Jamaican immigrant opened Achieva College Preparation Centers, and there are six of these centers in Silicon Valley. Immigrants definitely play an important role at the National Hispanic University. List of schools and education centers is certainly much longer. Almost all of these schools are also open to US born population.

The City of Cupertino is one of the examples how student population changes, followed by changes in city residents. About 45% of students in the Cupertino Union School District are Asian Americans. In 1985, there were only 20% of Asian American students in Cupertino schools.⁸² Shift in student population is visible countywide as well. Race and ethnic composition of students suggest that over 60% of student population in the county are Asian, Hispanic or Black.⁸³ Similarly, in San Jose/Evergreen college district, student mix reflects the diversity in the county, with 46% of Asian, 26% Hispanic, 16% White, 6% African-American (and 6% other) students. Even though, there are many college and university instructors who belong to these groups and to the category of immigrants, there are indicators that “teachers mix” doesn’t follow enough the diversity of students. This is the case especially in K-12 education. However, we can find in almost every educational institution instructors that are either immigrants or children of immigrants. Some departments and colleges and universities have been incorporating more immigrants than others. The impact of immigrant instructors on many generations of students, their educational and occupational choices should not be downplayed. Also, with increasing globalization it is critical for the US born students to be educated in a multicultural environment. The diversity provided by immigrant children and families promotes this goal.

Many immigrant students initiate, support and participate in a great number of student organizations. For example, only at San Jose State University numerous student organizations exist and immigrants or children of immigrants play a significant role in them. There are: Vietnamese Student Association, Korean Student Association, Japan Club, Hong Kong Student Organization, Filipino Nursing Student Organization, Hispanic Business Association, India Student Association, The Chinese Cultural Club and so on. Almost every other college or university has the same or similar diversity of student organizations.

Nationally, 20% of school children are children of immigrants.⁸⁴ The Summit on Immigrant Needs random survey shows that 51.8% of the immigrant respondents had children under 18 going to schools in the county. There were 5.6% of our immigrant respondents that did not feel welcome and respected at schools their children were attending. Contrary to popular myths, our survey revealed that the service immigrants use most at schools are parent-teacher meetings. Only 30.5% of immigrant children of our respondents were using school lunch programs, 18.3% homework centers, 15% on-site child care and 30% of them were using after-school activities. On the other hand, more than 30% of our immigrant respondents were engaged in school or parent organizations.⁸⁵

It has been discussed often that many immigrant children tend to be very motivated and good students. Each year, one third to one half of the student winners of elite science contests come from immigrant families, sometimes even impoverished. Many of elite universities nationwide have significant numbers of immigrants. Science and engineering departments of those and other universities often account for half or more immigrant students.⁸⁶ Common views of some immigrant groups as better learners (like the myth of model minority/ Asians/Vietnamese) and others as less advanced and

less interested in schooling (like perceptions of Latino students) should be seriously reexamined. Research should be conducted free of popular myths, but interested in complexity of social conditions. Only then multiplicity of contributions of immigrants and their children in the sphere of education could be fully documented.

5. CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF IMMIGRANTS

Perhaps one of the greatest contributions that immigrants make in life in Santa Clara County is the cultural diversity and cultural identity represented within each immigrant group. Although the largest groups of immigrants in this county come from Mexican and Vietnamese background, immigrants from other groups also contribute greatly to the cultural richness of this county. Santa Clara County neighborhoods are richly diverse; it is common to find several cultures represented in one street or city block. Nowhere is this more apparent, than in the schools. In the San Jose Unified School District, for example, 46 different languages are spoken.

Communities throughout Santa Clara County embody a rich sense of tradition and culture. Community centers, landmarks, gardens, and neighborhoods show the diversity and history of immigrants that have arrived here. Some examples of some of these communities are San Jose's Japantown. Built after San Jose's second Chinatown mysteriously burned down, Japantown now consists of restaurants, specialty stores and gift shops that reflect the history of the Japanese merchants who lived behind their places of businesses in the early 1900s. In addition, professional services, doctors, non-profit organizations and churches flourish in this historic part of town. A few blocks away from Japantown, community members attend dance lessons, theatre performances and visit thematic promenades and gardens at the recently built Mexican Heritage Plaza. Located in the heart of East San Jose, this plaza attests to the pride and community that thrives in this neighborhood. In similar ways, the Biblioteca Latinoamericana proudly offers the largest collection of Spanish language material in Northern California.⁸⁷

Immigrants celebrate various educational, cultural and social activities sharing their heritage throughout community centers in Santa Clara County. In addition to community centers, gardens are a place for contemplation and enrichment.⁸⁸ The Overfelt Chinese Gardens, for example, covers 33 acres and has as its focal point an impressive 30-foot marble and bronze statue of the Chinese philosopher Confucius. There are also beautiful ornamental gates, and memorials. The Japanese friendship garden, in Kelley Park in San Jose, is a living symbol of the sister city relationship between Okayama, Japan and San Jose. This garden includes immense ponds, waterfalls and streams that can be used for reflection. Also in this garden, there is a Japanese tea-house that can be rented out for events, meetings and retreats. This county also offers a Vietnamese Cultural Heritage garden and the Hakone Japanese garden in Saratoga.

Immigrants have contributed vivid and lively venues for arts, music, literature, food, history and tradition, making our county a desirable place to live. These contributions are great sources of enlightenment for people of varied ethnic backgrounds. Literary contributions, for example, are vital contributions to life in Santa Clara County.⁸⁹ Jose Antonio Villarreal, is known widely by scholars of American culture as the "founder of Chicano literature." Although Jose Villarreal is a native Californian, his father was a Mexican national and fought with Pancho Villa during the 1917 Mexican Revolution. In his writings, Villarreal describes the culture of 20th century life in Mexico and in the Santa Clara Valley and paints a vivid picture of life in the old country and of life as an immigrant to the U.S. In his writing, he vividly portrays the juxtaposition of cultures and their potential conflicts.

Throughout the year, communities maintain their cultural traditions alive by celebrating cultural events such as festivals and holidays like Cinco de Mayo (Mexican Independence), Vietnamese Spring Festival, Obon (Japanese) Festival, Afriibbean Music and Cultural Festival, Oktoberfest (a German celebration), San Jose International Mariachi (traditional Mexican folklore) Festival, the Greek Festival, the Iranian New Year Festival and the "Dia de Portugal" Festival and Parade.⁹⁰ In addition, there is the Chinese Dragon Festival, Scottish Games in the Bay, and the Russian festival.⁹¹ The magic of these festivals and events is that they bring people of all communities and all cultural identities together to celebrate and share culture in food, music and festivity.

Santa Clara County has designated April as Unity in Diversity month, culminating in a celebration featuring Caribbean carnival tunes, Filipino folk dances, Mexican folkloric dancers, poetry and drumming performances.⁹² On May 3rd this year, over 60 community and County organizations and hundreds of individuals came together to celebrate diversity in the third annual "Unity in Diversity" day. This celebration included cultural performances by the Shri Krupa Dance Foundation, American Indian Alliance and the Iranian Federated Women's Organization. Awards were presented to individuals and groups for their efforts in promoting diversity. Another organization in Santa Clara County which enables the celebration of diversity and culture is Resources for Families and Communities,⁹³ a non-profit organization. This organization coordinated the second annual Multi-cultural Festival, where hundreds of people attended workshops about culture, diversity and building community.

The TET festival, a Vietnamese New Year celebration, also brings thousands of people together, and gains an even greater attendance each year in San Jose. In similar ways, the Chinese New Year festivals and Iranian Summer Festivals enable people to pass along culture and tradition to their children and provide an opportunity for all to share in their cultural identity. The Mid-Autumn festival, a Vietnamese celebration, has been organized for the last 7 years in San Jose. A one day event focused on children, features dancing, multi-cultural performances and fosters participation from other Asian American, European and Latino communities.⁹⁴ The food booths serve food from Vietnam, Mexico, Italy, China, and the Philippines. San Jose State University professor Hien Duc Do, in his book "The Vietnamese Americans"(1999), tells of the

culmination of this festival with a beautiful array of children following in a procession carrying lit lanterns and singing songs.⁹⁵ This festival is attended by diverse communities, and its attendance shows solidarity among immigrant residents in this county.

As examples of the variety of immigrant and ethnic organizations, Santa Clara County is also enriched by the presence of organizations such as The Italian American Heritage Foundation of San Jose, which is dedicated to strengthening and enhancing the local Italian culture. This organization organizes events for its members such as Opera nights, musical shows, film festivals, concerts and cultural exchanges in addition to the Italian American festival held in late September each year.⁹⁶

The last fifteen years have seen a great expansion in the audience, sponsorship and popularity of multi-cultural media venues, such as radio, television and newspapers. In various languages, these media sources help immigrants maintain a sense of cultural identity.⁹⁷ Radio stations both in A.M. and F.M. help people stay connected through music and talk. Latino and Vietnamese newspapers have increased their readership greatly in the last 10 years. Some examples of these organizations include newspapers such as the "Nuevo Mundo" and "Viet Mercury" divisions of The San Jose Mercury News, in addition to other independent newspapers such as "El Avisador", "El Observador", "El Mensajero", "La Ofterta Review" and, "La Voz Latina." Other newspapers representing different cultures are "India Currents", "Korea Community News", "Viet Bao", "Thoi Bao," to name a few.

Another form of great cultural contributions of immigrants is art.⁹⁸ Multi-cultural organizations have fostered the popularity and admiration of art from many cultural and ethnic groups. Some examples of these organizations include the Chicano Murals in the Santa Clara Valley, Chinese Fine Arts Gallery of Los Altos, Indian Arts Production, Iranian Culture Foundation of the United States, Russian Club of Mountain View, Machu Picchu Gallery, Mexican American Center for Latino Arts, Rosicrucian Museum. Other area groups foster the celebration of cultural art such as Silicon Valley Irish Guild, Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Balka ensemble (Russian Folk music group). Having the potential to transcend differences and bridge across cultural identity, art connects people in remarkable ways. The immigrant's artistry and talent can often be representative of their unique history, struggle and experiences and as such reaches all individuals at a human level.

Another area where cultural contributions are made by immigrants is in the area of music, theatre and the performing arts. In the City of San Jose, for example, the Montgomery Theatre's October 2000 calendar shows the diversity of cultural groups that exist in this area. Featured in this calendar are the Flamenco Society of San Jose, Casa de la Cultura Mexica, Kaisahan of San Jose Dance Company, Shri Krupa Dance Foundation, Arte Flamenco de San Jose, Contemporary Asian Theatre Scene, and Aztlan Academy of San Jose. Other organizations include El Teatro Familia Aztlan, Los Lupenos de San Jose, and numerous other performing arts groups. The San Jose Multi-Cultural Arts Guild enables groups to come together and perform.

In addition to festivals and cultural events, other groups have made great contributions to cultural awareness in Santa Clara County by chronicling their history and culture.⁹⁹ In May of 1999, The Chinese Historical and Cultural Project displayed a traveling exhibit, "Pioneering the Valley: The Chinese American Legacy in Santa Clara County." This exhibit features 14 large color panels portraying the local Chinese American history and life. Another group that has done this is the Nikkei Matsuri Committee. As an educational association that strives to preserve Japanese American traditions and educate others about their culture, they organize the Nikkei Matsuri Festival in Japantown. Japanese organizations from all over Santa Clara valley sponsor booths and events that focus on all aspects of Japanese American culture. One individual that has made remarkable contributions in capturing the history and struggle of his people is Dave Tatsuno. Now a San Jose Japantown store owner, Dave Tatsuno was interned in Utah's Topaz Internment Camp from 1943-1945. With the help of a camp official, he was able to have a movie camera sent to him with which he filmed life in Topaz. In 1997 this video was named "Topaz" and was placed on the national film registry, becoming the 2nd home movie added to the list. This film was chosen over 1,000 other films because of its historical significance, including its ability to capture the Japanese Americans determination to recreate their lives in the camp.¹⁰⁰ Immigrants in this county come from more than 100 countries in the world, each culture represented contributing a sense of multi-cultural community.

In general, Santa Clara County remains relatively free of the racial tensions experienced in other parts of California. Santa Clara County has flourished in its cultural diversity, not only because of the variety in the expressions of culture, such as festivals, ceremonies, and celebrations, but also because of the traditions and rich history of people that immigrate. This is a rich community, not in the sense of material wealth, but greatly in the sense of culture and diversity due to the immigrants that have made Santa Clara County their home.

6. POLITICAL LIFE OF IMMIGRANTS

Immigrants have played an integral role in shaping U.S. political life as we know it today. The very myth of the "American Dream" is largely based on this immigrant experience. Early immigrants brought some of the core beliefs that are held dear today, such as representative government, individualism and protection of the minority. When we think about political contributions to Santa Clara County, we must keep in mind the history of the many immigrants who founded the cities as we know them today, and have shaped political life since the 1700's. Spanish immigrants, and later Russian, U.S. and Chinese immigrants (among others) have been making political contributions for centuries.

Today, the majority of immigrants to the United States are from Latin America and Asia. While the cultures of immigrants have varied over time, the idea of representative government remains. Ideals of many cultures must be incorporated into

politics in order for government to reflect who we are. As we move to a majority-minority population (already achieved in Santa Clara County) we need politics to reflect that shift. Immigrants are bringing a depth of experience and knowledge to U.S. politics as well as a global perspective. Just as all groups should be represented in the political process, we find that all of us are.

Political Process: Citizenship, Voting and Elections

While immigrants influence the politics of the U.S., politics also influence immigrants. In 1996, sweeping changes in welfare reform impacted immigrants most severely, affecting approximately 785,000 immigrants, who stood to lose benefits, such as Medicare, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and food stamps.¹⁰¹ In the wake of such anti-immigrant legislation, record numbers of immigrants applied for citizenship. Most recent statistics show that more than one out of three immigrants in the United States is a citizen, while many more wait for naturalization processing through the INS which can take more than three years to complete.¹⁰²

Naturalization is not automatic. Not only must a legal resident meet residency requirements, he or she must also show “good moral character” and pass an English and history exam. Finally, new citizens must swear an oath of allegiance to the United States. In the last four years, the County of Santa Clara’s Office of Human Relations Citizenship Collaborative has overseen over 14,000 eligible residents apply for citizenship.¹⁰³ Over 1,000,000 residents applied for citizenship in the Fiscal Year 1996.¹⁰⁴

Immigrants have recently registered to vote like never before as well. For the 1996 election, a record breaking 75,000 Asian Americans registered nationwide.¹⁰⁵ Once naturalized and registered, it’s only a matter of getting to the polling place on election day. In the Random Sample Survey conducted by the Santa Clara County Office of Human Relations, seventy-five percent of registered voters in the most numerous immigrant groups in the county (Mexico, China, Philippines, Vietnam and India) reported that they vote all the time. Those who are receiving benefits in the county reported voting all the time at a slightly higher rate than the native-born.¹⁰⁶

Of the most visible political acts is to run for elected office and immigrants are doing so around the country and in the Santa Clara Valley. Patricia Martinez Roach, born in Mexico, has spent fifteen years in public elected service through the Alum Rock School District Board, a member of the Metropolitan Adult Education Board and currently serves on the East San Jose Union High School Board of Trustees. In the March, 2000 election, she ran for San Jose City Council, District 8 representing the Evergreen area.¹⁰⁷

Kansen Chu was born in Taiwan and also ran for San Jose City Council. After serving as a commissioner and committee chair for the County Mental Health Board as well as numerous other boards and commissions, he ran for Council seat serving District 4.¹⁰⁸

Michael Chang has served on the Cupertino City Council since 1995, was elected vice-mayor in 1997, and served as mayor from 1997 to 1998. Mr. Chang was elected to the Cupertino School Board in 1991 and served until he won his city council seat. In addition to these elected offices, Michael Chang has also served on various boards and commissions including the Santa Clara County Joint Powers Authority Board and on the Board of Director of Asian Americans for Community Involvement.¹⁰⁹

Immigrants are involved in campaigns in many other forms. Seven percent of respondent immigrants in the Santa Clara County Random Sample Survey showed their commitment to the political process by working on a political campaign.¹¹⁰ The same percentage reported working on social issue campaigns. For example, Jessie Singh, an Indian immigrant living in Los Gatos, hosted a Presidential candidate fundraiser at his home in anticipation of the 2000 election.¹¹¹

Working Towards Solutions

Finding solutions to our shared problems is often thought of as a role for the politicians and the voters, but many of us are working toward solutions every day that we go to work. More than just contributing to the economy, immigrants in the nonprofit sector, social services, teaching, local government employees, higher education and military service are working for us all. Forty percent of foreign language teachers in our school are immigrants.¹¹² Immigrants are also working in ethnic based community centers, which are critical to give voice to each of the dozens of communities represented in the county. Examples of these include Ethiopian Community Services and Bosnian-American Association of Santa Clara-San Jose.

One of the thousands immigrants working to improve Santa Clara County is Jaclyn Phuong Fabre, recently appointed Executive Director of Cupertino Community Services after a history of working in the non profit sector. As the Cupertino Courier reported, Ms. Fabre uses her experiences as a Vietnamese refugee in her work serving valley residents.¹¹³

Political Activism and Informal Politics

Perhaps most important, are the tens of thousands of us who spend our free time, working without wide recognition, making improvements to our communities through political organizations, informal groups and volunteer channels. One-quarter of immigrants in the County's Random Sample Survey reported being involved in a community organization. More than one out of three are involved in their school or parent organizations.¹¹⁴

There exists a wide range of volunteerism among immigrants. Latino immigrants have a long history of making social change through political movements. The most well know in the county is the work of Cesar Chavez, who organized farmworkers through the United Farm Workers (UFW), the Union he founded. Through his leadership,

thousand of immigrant Mexicans fought for, and won, better working conditions in the fields. Many more immigrants have following in this tradition, notably the Justice for Janitors strike, and the August 2000 Amnesty March.¹¹⁵

Others offer their work in their places of worship, others serve on boards of non profit organizations. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, who was born in India and who later lived in Sunnyvale, was a founder and president of MAITRI, a help line for South Asian women.¹¹⁶

Political contributions of immigrants often take place in the context of an organization, such as the Lien Hoi Nguoi Viet Quoc Gia Bac California or the Association of Vietnamese Organizations of Northern California, a coalitions of many Vietnamese organizations. This group not only sponsors the annual Tet Festival in San Jose, but also educates the community about Vietnam and Vietnamese culture. In addition, the organization organizes community wide opposition to communism in Vietnam.¹¹⁷

Numerous student groups flex political muscle such as the Caribbean Students Association (CSA) at Stanford which has about 90 members, mostly first and second-generation Caribbean immigrants. Through social, cultural and political activities, students create a visible Caribbean presence on campus.¹¹⁸

Included in this group of informal political actors are the immigrants parents who instill the values of community service in their children. These first generation citizens grow up to contribute in many ways, sometimes in the formal ways discussed above, like Norm Mineta. Mineta, a San Jose native and son of Japanese immigrants. Mineta was interned in the Japanese Internment Camps during World War II. He went on to serve in the U.S. Army in Korea. Mineta was elected to the San Jose City Council and to Mayor of San Jose. For 21 years, Norm Mineta represented Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties in the House of Representatives where he brought attention to Asian American issues through the creation of the Congressional Asian Pacific Caucus and Research Group. Mineta was appointed to Secretary of Commerce in June, 2000. As such, he is the first Asian American to serve in a Presidential Cabinet and the highest government position ever for an Asian American.¹¹⁹ That his parents were immigrants is not a small fact.

Immigrants, as a group, infuse this country with their bravery and idealism. We are all constantly renewed by immigrant spirit. The hope and courage that defines political life in the United States comes directly from our immigrant roots, our immigrant neighbors and our immigrant selves.

7. CONCLUSION

The material presented above is only a small portion of immigrant contributions. Yet this small portion represents a great variety of areas and types of contributions. We can see that immigrant lives are built in almost every social sphere. The impact of immigrants is visible in the economy, culture, politics, education and many other areas. We couldn't devote an equal amount of attention to all social spheres and all immigrant groups. However, we start down a path for future attempts to look at immigrant contributions in a more comprehensive way. Human lives are complex and immigrants, like other populations, build and rebuild their lives into their new social environment. The richness of their activities and positive effects of these activities are yet to be studied in depth. This could not be carried out without connecting immigrant contributions from the past to these of the present. The processes of accumulation of positive results of immigrant activities from one generation to the next should also become topics of research. Immigrant activities do not happen in a social vacuum, unconnected from what has already been accumulated.

Our time and resources were too limited for such a huge task. Therefore we couldn't include areas such as sports, media, the medical and legal fields, natural and social sciences, and so on. Data we collected could be systematized further by immigrant group or by country of origin. Researches could go further and research, for example, the impact of immigrants on the performing arts.

Different immigrant groups, especially groups with large number of immigrants, may have a substantial interest in documenting all contributions that members of that group gave to the larger community. Historical museums, historical societies and special projects could focus on documenting impacts of immigrant groups and notable individuals. Having such a high percentage and diversity of immigrants Santa Clara County itself could start documenting these contributions in a more systematic manner. We hope this study can be seen as a useful beginning for those interested in pursuing this challenging research further.

NOTES:

1. It is hard to find references to first Europeans to come to this land as *immigrants* in contrast to Native Americans. Most often it has been written and talked about "European settlers" and immigrants became those who came thereafter. In order to understand the roots of ideology that was needed to preserve the dominant values of Anglo-Saxon "settlers", see: Jim Carnes. 1996. *US and THEM. A History of Intolerance in America*. New York: Oxford University Press. Specifically important chapters on: the Chinese laborers, Jews, Mexican Americans and Japanese Americans (pp. 48-58, 76-84, 92-112).
2. Vedder, Richard, Lowell Gallaway and Stephen Moore. 2000. "The Immigration Problem, Then and Now". *Bender's Immigration Bulletin*, Vol.5, No.8/April 15,

- 2000, pp. 343-344. Also see: David Bennett 1988. *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. Ellis Cose, 1992. *A Nation of Strangers: Prejudice, Politics, and the Populating of America*. New York: Morrow. Roger Daniels, 1988. *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States Since 1950*. Seattle: University of Washington Press. John Higham, 1988. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, 2d ed. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. Maldwyn Allen Jones, 1992. *American Immigration*, 2d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. James Crawford, 2000. *Cycles of Nativism*. Washington DC: National Immigration Forum
3. Takaki, Ronald. 1998. *A History of Asian-Americans: Strangers From a Different Shore*. Boston & New York: Little, Brown and Company.
 4. See the Immigration Forum overview of anti-immigrant legislature: www.immigrantforum.org
 5. Vedder, Gallaway and Moore, op.cit. pp. 343-343,
 6. The Immigrant Forum poll revealed that nearly 2/3 of Americans taught more immigrants were coming to the US illegally than legally. Immigrant Forum: www.immigrantforum.org/USATodayPol.html
 Also, our survey (Summit on Immigrant Needs Project, 2000) documented that 36.8% of US born residents of Santa Clara County thought that immigrants were coming to the US because of benefits in comparison to 7.3% of immigrant respondents who shared their opinion. About immigration myths also see: Sociologist tackles immigration myths with data collection. At www.azteca.net/aztec/immigrant/socilog.html, De La Torre, Adela. 2000. False Figure Fuels Furor. Explanation of methodological mistakes of counting fixed costs that would be necessary anyway when anti-immigrant authors argue against “undocumented” children using public schools. At www.latinoweb.com/research.html
 7. See facts on immigrants at American Immigration Law Foundation www.aifl.org, National Center for Policy Analysis www.ncpa.org, Immigration Forum www.immigrationforum.org, Weissinger, Erika. 2000. Fast Facts about Immigrants and Refugees, Strengthening Immigrant Families and American Communities Conference., Moore, Stephen. 1998. *A Fiscal Portrait of the Newest Americans*. The National Immigration Forum and the Cato Institute. And Portes, Alejandro and Ruben G. Rumbaut. 1996. *Immigrant America: A portrait*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press. Chapter 3. Simon, Julian. 1999. *Economic Consequences of Immigration*. University of Michigan Press. 81% of economists and other social scientists surveyed believe that immigration has had a very favorable effect on the nations economic growth.
 8. How discussions on immigration and role of immigrants could be very heated and controversial see: Barbour Scott, ed. 1995. *At Issue: Immigration Policy*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press. Even a recent study by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) attempted to downplay the economic impact of immigrants and presented different data that contradicted all presented by the Immigration Forum, Cato Institute, the US Small Business Administration and others. All of these

- institutions used similar sources of data for their research. See www.aifl.org and the full report of CIS study at www.cis.org
9. For example, although Portes and Ruben emphasize multiple reasons for immigration and immigrants' active role in the process of self-selection for immigrating, mention sharp inequalities around the world they do not even attempt to encourage any discussion about the origin of these inequalities. Pp.1-27
 10. For instance, Mexican immigration was initiated by US growers and railroad companies in the 1910s , see: Portes, Alejandro and Ruben G. Rumbaut, Op.cit. p. 9, or H1 B visa holders are often encouraged/invited in the first place by US firms.
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 14. See: Bankston, Carl L. III and Min Zhou. 1997. "The Social Adjustment of Vietnamese American Adolescents: Evidence for a Segmented-Assimilation Approach". Social Science Quarterly, 78 (2):508-523
 15. Kibria, Nazli. 1993. Family Tightrope: The Changing Lives of Vietnamese Americans. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
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28. see Unz, Ron 1994. Value Added. National Review, 11/7/94, vol.46, No 21, p. 56
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33. Skilled Immigrants and Silicon Valley, www.aifl.org
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