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Cosmopolitan Suburbs: Race, Immigration, and the Politics of Development in the Silicon Valley

by

Willow S. Lung Amam

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Emeritus Randolph T. Hester, Chair Professor Margaret Crawford Professor Louise Mozingo

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Abstract

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Doctor of Philosophy in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning

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Professor Emeritus Randolph T. Hester, Chair

Within the last half century, the geography of race and immigration in the U.S. has shifted. While many white middle class residents are moving into revitalized central cities, the suburbs have become home to the majority of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the U.S. Fremont, California, which only 30 years ago was a prototypical white, middle class suburb, is now home to an Asian American majority, including many of Silicon Valley's highly educated and high-income engineers from China, Taiwan, and India.

In a case study of Fremont, my dissertation looks at the changing material forms and uses of the built environment, and politics of space in suburbia amidst its rapid demographic changes. Using GIS mapping, archival analysis, participant observations, and in-depth interviews with 74 residents, city officials, planners, designers, and developers, my analysis centers on three spaces common to many high tech suburbs—McMansions, high-performing schools, and Asian malls. I look at the meaning of community and home as expressed by Asian immigrants in debates over residential teardowns and McMansions and the cultural politics of design guidelines and development standards used to regulate them. In a case study of Mission San Jose High, I then look at the value of high performing school districts to Asian immigrant families and how their educational priorities are reshaping neighborhood geographies of race and battles over school boundaries. And finally, I explore Asian malls' form, geography, and uses, and the politics of their regulation in Fremont.

Together these investigations show that Asian immigrants have introduced new spatial imaginaries and practices, values, meanings, and sources of economic capital that are reshaping suburban form and use in the Silicon Valley. But I also show that suburbia's increasing diversity has upset its presumed social and spatial order, leading to a politics of backlash that is producing new spaces and modes of marginality, even among immigrants of means. Both city officials and established residents have consistently portrayed landscapes built by or for Asian immigrants as non-normative and subjected them to critique and new forms of regulation, while simultaneously reinforcing white middle class norms, meanings, and values through planning, design, and public policy. These spaces, however, have also served as sites of cultural contest and collective resistance that threaten to undermine the dominance of suburbia's assumed spatial norms. I

argue that Asian immigrants' assertions for more inclusive, open, and diverse suburban spaces represents an emergent suburban spatial politics of difference aimed at bringing about new forms and norms of belonging, as well as new platforms for social and spatial justice.

The dissertation contributes to the existing scholarship in suburban studies, urban planning, design, and cosmopolitan theory. It extends the suburban studies literature on the contributions of minorities and immigrants to making a diverse suburban landscape by looking at understudied place and groups—Asian Americans in high tech suburbs—and at the spatial landscape of suburbs as an important object of study. In a new American century defined by suburbanization and diversity, this case study also speaks to the ways that cities manage vast demographic changes, and the role of design, planning, development, and public policy in supporting social differences and justice, as well as reinforcing existing social hierarchies and inequalities. And finally, this study grounds discourses on emergent forms of cosmopolitanism citizenship within the everyday struggles of immigrants to make home in the Silicon Valley suburbs.

For Ashay and Temani

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Diversity as the New Suburban Norm

This place, on its surface seems to be a collage. In reality, in its depth it is ubiquitous. A piling up of heterogeneous places. Each one, like a deteriorating page of a book, refers to a different mode of territorial unity, of socioeconomic distribution, of political conflicts and of identifying symbolism.

Michel de Certeau (1984, 201)

[H]ow can 'we' (all of us), in all of our differences, be 'at home' in the multicultural and multiethnic cities of the 21st century.

Leonie Sandercock (2003, 1)

Two trends have defined the last half-century of U.S. metropolitan growth as much as, if not more, than any others—suburbanization and increasing racial and ethnic diversity. While in 1940 only 15% of Americans lived suburbia, today it is home to nearly two-thirds of all Americans. And while in 1970, non-Hispanic whites accounted for roughly five in six Americans, today about one in three are non-white. By the middle of the century, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that racial and ethnic minorities will be in the majority.

In the last few decades, these trends have begun to converge—resulting in dramatic shifts in the geography of race in the U.S. While many downtowns have seen a resurgence of white, middle class residents (Sohmer and Lang, 2003), the suburbs have become home to the majority of all ethnic minorities in the U.S. Since 1990, minorities have been responsible for the bulk of suburban population gains in most of the nation's largest metro areas (Frey, 2001). As compared to 1970, when around 95% of suburbanites were white, today minorities comprise approximately 35% of the suburban population, a percentage roughly equal to their share of U.S. population (Frey, 2011). In 2010, for the first time in U.S. history, all racial minority groups were predominantly suburban, including 62% of Asians, 59% of Latinos, and 51% of African Americans (Frey, 2011). Already in California, the home of one in eight Americans, the bulk of the population is minority and suburban.

Suburbia is also home to the majority of U.S. immigrants. In 2010, 61% of immigrants lived in the suburbs of the largest metropolitan areas (Wilson and Singer, 2011). As opposed to previous generations of immigrants who often settled in central cities and later moved out to the suburbs, today immigrants are more likely to settle directly into suburbs, which Singer et al. (2008) call the new "gateways" of American immigration. In 2000, 48% of immigrants who arrived during the 1990s were already residing outside central cities (Jones-Correa, 2006). At the beginning of the 21st century, the suburbs are the center of a new American diversity, or as Hanlon et al. (2006) proclaim, "The new metropolitan reality is of heterogeneous suburbs" (2140).

Fremont, California, a suburb within the Silicon Valley, is emblematic of these dramatic demographic and geographic shifts (fig. 1.1). Up until the 1980s, Fremont was a prototypical postwar suburb, comprised of a largely white, middle class population. But today, ethnic minorities are the majority, comprising 73% of the city's population. By some estimates, Fremont is now *the* most ethnically diverse mid-sized city in the U.S. (Hendrix, 2002). Its residents come from as many as 147 different countries and speak over 150 different languages (Youngdahl, 2009). Nearly half are foreign born. Silicon Valley's highly educated and high-income engineers and researchers from China, Taiwan, and India make up the majority of its immigrant population.

Ripples of this demographic shift are apparent throughout Fremont, from the midday rush of Chinese and Indian grandparents pushing strollers through plush hillside neighborhoods, to the Sikh float decorated with a model of the Golden Temple in India that regularly appears in the city's annual Forth of July parade. But nowhere are the signs of change more striking than in Fremont's built environment. In stark contrast to the pastoral landscape that had defined the early development in the region, today Islamic, Sikh, and Hindu temples lie tucked within neighborhoods integrating new home and landscape materials, designs, and symbols. Custom-built McMansions eclectically elaborated with ornate iron fencing, grand European fountains and columns, and life size Buddha and Krishna sculptures adorn some of Fremont's most exclusive gated communities. Historic downtowns and strip centers host clusters of new ethnic enterprises ranging from Latino billiards to Chinese and Korean Christian churches. Fremont's downtown Centerville neighborhood is now informally known as "Little Kabul" because of the large number of Afghan restaurants and shops that have clustered nearby. Amidst its vast warehouse spaces, Fremont contains one of the nation's largest regulation ping-pong facilities, which regularly hosts international tournaments and world-class players. The Gateway Plaza Mall, so named because it serves as a major entry point into the downtown, is anchored by Naz8 Cinema, the self-proclaimed first "multicultural entertainment megaplex in North America," which shows Bollywood films on eight screens (Naz8 Cinemas, 2009). New users and uses have changed the content and character of public space, infusing parks, plazas, and parking lots with a sense of vibrancy and vitality. Tai chi practitioners and fan dancers crowd Fremont's Central Park in the early morning hours, while its main shopping hubs host Sikh elderly social clubs and large groups of multiethnic teens. Developers sometimes use fengshui and Vishnu design principles when constructing new homes and laying out subdivisions in the area, and are familiar references for many real estate agents and city planners.

Fremont's multilayered social and spatial environment challenges many popular and scholarly narratives that often locate diversity within the confines of the central city, while simultaneously painting the suburbs as a homogenous and sterile environment, reserved for white elites and the middle class. These portraits of suburbia are powerful images that have and continue to shape urban planning and design policies and practices, as well as individuals' decisions about their residence. They not only reflect the metropolis, but they help to create it—representations of spaces produce real space (Lefebvre, 1991). Though a growing body of scholarship on social diversity in suburbia

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¹ There are many scholarly debates surrounding the definition of suburbs. For the purposes of this dissertation, I define suburbs by their built form, consisting largely of low-density, auto-oriented development, like single-family homes, strip malls, and office parks.

has critiqued and countered these stereotypes, it has not given much attention suburbia's spatially diverse landscapes, nor the narratives they reveal struggles about racial and ethnic minorities' struggles to a make place in contemporary suburbia.

In this dissertation, I ask how Asian immigrants in the Silicon Valley have reshaped the suburban landscape as a reflection of their values, meanings, and identities, and the social and spatial politics that have surrounded these changes? In a case study of Fremont, I approach these questions by examining changes in the city's built form, its racial and ethnic geographies, and politics of planning, design, and development over the last half century of rapid demographic changes.

I argue that Fremont's underscores three main ways that race, immigration, and diversity are changing the spatial form and politics of Silicon Valley suburbs. First, diverse populations produce diverse landscapes. While at face value this may seem apparent, but given the way that suburbia is portrayed both in the popular media and dominant urban scholarship and neglected in revisionist scholarship on suburban diversity, this is far from the presumed reality. I show how Asian immigrant residents and developers have introduced new spatial imaginaries and practices, values, meanings, and sources of financial capital have changed the spatial form and function of everyday spaces in Fremont, including its schools, homes, and shopping malls. Further, I underscore the particularly important role of high tech areas in attracting diverse immigrants from all around the world and in shaping new suburban racial, ethnic, and class geographies. I argue that high tech areas have produced *cosmopolitan suburbs* characterized by dynamic, hybrid, flexible, and fluid landscapes and ethnically diverse, globally connected, and geographically mobile residents.

Second, increasing diversity has upset the presumed social and spatial order of the suburbs, leading to a politics of suburban backlash and new spaces and modes of marginality. In Fremont, the efforts of Asian immigrants to reconfigure space to accommodate their new suburban lifestyles has been highly contested and regulated. Landscapes built by or for Asian immigrants have been consistently portraved by both city officials and established residents as non-normative and subjected to critique and new forms of regulation, or in the words of Michel Laguerre (1999), "minoritized." I show that in suburbia, social and spatial marginality and exclusion not only impact poor people of color, but also increasingly those of means. While highly educated, highincome Asian immigrants have gained access to formerly exclusive suburban spaces, established residents and city officials often view their uses and preferences for space as "abnormal" or "undesirable" and in need of regulation. In a period of an intense reshuffling in the race and ethnic composition of suburbia, I argue that dominant white norms, meanings, and values continue to be reinforced in suburban space and through planning, design, and public policy. Thus, I show the suburban landscape as a critical site through which new social inequalities, especially those based on race, ethnic, and cultural differences, are being created and reproduced in an era of increasing immigration and diversity.

And lastly, I argue that suburbia is an important site for a new politics of difference. Minorities' and immigrants' "non-normative" spaces, or what I call landscapes of difference, are places of cultural contest and collective resistance. In Fremont, Asian immigrants are increasingly finding a voice in which to articulate their difference from the supposed suburban norm and engaging in a spatial politics that

threatens to undermine or at least question their dominant logic. I argue that Asian immigrants' assertions for more inclusive, open, and diverse suburban spaces represents an emergent *suburban spatial politics of difference* aimed at bringing about new forms and norms of belonging and inclusion, and creating new platforms for struggles over social and spatial justice in suburbia.

This dissertation continues the work of other scholars to carve out an important role for minorities, immigrants, and other "suburban outsiders" in helping to shape suburbia's meanings, values, and ideals and bring their practices and politics into the main view of scholarship on the processes producing suburban form, and its social, cultural, and political life. It broadens what continues to be a very limited and limiting vision of the suburbs as a homogeneous and sterile space that is more often the focus of critique, rather than rigorous analysis, especially among planners, architects, and urban designers.

This study also shows the value in thinking about the suburbs, and particularly the built environment, as a means through which contemporary issues of inequality and social justice arise. It shows the ways that race and social inequality are given meaning and form through particular patterns and practices of spatial construction and reproduction. As people of color are quickly becoming, at least numerically speaking, suburban majorities, it shows how studies of the suburban landscape can expand our understanding of the ways that race, ethnicity, and cultural differences continue to shape social privilege and power, and the opportunities available to communities of color in globalizing metropolitan landscape. While many scholars have written about the ways that suburban space has excluded poor and working class racial and ethnic minorities and reinforced divides between cities and suburbs, few have analyzed racial and ethnic inequality within suburbs and among minorities of means.

This study not only shows the suburbs as a space in which social inequalities are perpetuated, but also the ways in which they can be addressed by professional planners, designers, and public policy makers. Rather than to focus on the central city as the sole, or even primary, place in which to build and foster spaces difference and diversity, this study investigates the important lessons that can be drawn from looking at the ways that diverse suburban inhabitants are sharing and negotiating space in their everyday lives. It refocuses the discourse around diversity from the city to the suburbs and towards the landscape as a way of thinking about the ways that planning and design norms, processes, and policies both reproduce existing social hierarchies and inequalities, and can support social justice, difference, and diversity.

As *spaces of new American diversity*, suburbs like Fremont are productive places to explore how cities manage vast demographic change. At a time when suburbanization, and social and spatial differences, hybridity, and complexity predominate—when the border between cities and suburbs, home and away, the local and the global are becoming ever more illusive, fluid, and flexible—the struggles of one community are shared by many. Suburbia is a place where the productive and destructive possibilities of America's social diversity are colliding. It is *the* central battleground for contests over racial and ethnic equity and justice in the 21st century American metropolis.

Diverse Suburbs

Within suburban scholarship, the notion that American suburbs are diverse is relatively recent. In the 1980s, suburban studies pioneers Kenneth Jackson (1985) and Robert Fishman (1987) defined suburbs largely by their homogenous racial and class character—the lack of minorities and the poor. According to Fishman (1987), suburbia is defined both by what it includes—middle-class residences, and by what it excludes—industry, commerce, and lower-class residents (6). In the last two decades, "new suburban historians" have challenged this narrative for, among other things, its neglect of suburban race and class diversity (Harris and Larkham, 1999; Lewis, 2004). In Andrew Wiese's (2004) important history of African American suburbanites, he noted of the lack of attention that first wave historians gave to other narratives beyond those of the white middle-class and elites. "Historians have done a better job at excluding African Americans from the suburbs than even white suburbanites," Wiese wrote (5). As he and other revisionist historians argue, the suburbs were always and remain socially diverse places.

While paying homage to the early historians for giving needed attention to the suburbs as an important site of scholarship, this new body of literature has given more serious attention to the contributions "other suburbanites" to the making of a diverse suburban social life, culture, and politics. This scholarship has included work on pre-World War II industrial suburbs (Lewis, 2004; Walker, 2001; Walker and Lewis, 2001) immigrant suburbs (Harris, 1996), African American suburbs (Nicolaides 2002; Wiese 2004), and edited collections like *The New Suburban History* and *The Suburb Reader* (Kruse and Sugrue, 2006; Nicolaides and Wiese, 2006).

Together new suburban historians have refocused the scholarship towards an examination of the diversity of suburban residents and their values, meanings, identities, and experiences. They have also inspired many writings on "other suburbanites," including contemporary case studies of suburban Salvadorians (Mahler, 1995), Indians (Kalita, 2003), and middle class African Americans (Haynes, 2001) as well as an increasing number of sociological and demographic studies that have simply tried to keep pace with suburbia's growing diversity. These include national and regional studies of suburban immigration (Alba et al., 1994, 1999, 1999a; Singer, 2004), poverty (Lucy and Phillips, 2000; Vicino, 2008; Hanlon, 2010), diversity (Logan, 2003; Hanlon et. al, 2006, 2010), and even a book series entitled *Redefining Urban and Suburban*, published by the Brookings Institute (Katz and Lang, 2003; Berube et al., 2004).

The literature on suburban diversity that most directly informs Fremont's recent rise as a center of Asian immigration are studies of what geographer Wei Li termed *ethnoburbs*. According to Li (1998), ethnoburbs are suburban ethnic clusters of residential and business districts where one or more group holds the majority. Most scholars and the popular media, however, use the term ethnoburbs to refer to suburbs with large numbers recently arrived immigrants, especially Asians. Li (1998, 2009) cites Monterrey Park outside of Los Angeles as a classic ethnoburb, produced by a new global economy and changes in U.S. immigration laws that have permitted entry to more wealthy and educated immigrants than in the past. Others used Monterrey Park as a space to investigate questions about the creation of new suburban ethnic politics, emergent multiracial and ethnic relations and identities, and suburban ethnic economies (Fong, 1994; Horton, 1995; Saito, 1997; Cheng, 2009).

For studies of high tech suburbs like Fremont, however, the scholarship on Monterrey Park and other ethnoburbs are limited. Li (2006) refers to the Silicon Valley suburbs as "techno/ethnoburbs" as opposed to the "LA-type ethnoburb" like Monterrey Park, indicative of a different set of processes that have shaped its formation. Other urban scholars writing about the Silicon Valley have analyzed the region's emergence as a technological and innovation hub, its impacts on global flows of finance and people, and processes of urbanization (Castells, 1994; Saxenian, 1999, 2006; Sassen, 2001; O'Mara, 2005). This study extends both studies of the Silicon Valley and suburban studies scholarship by examining the region as a hub of immigration and ethnic diversity, and a changing spatial landscape.

It also extends the suburban scholarship on the diversity of the built environment. Both new suburban historians as well as other contemporary studies of diversity in suburbs, including much of the ethnoburbs literature, has focused on suburbia as a diverse social space, without much attention to how diversity is reflected in the physical landscape. Andrew Wiese's (2004) and Richard Harris' (1996) depiction of self-building practices and working-class homes among minorities and immigrants in the pre-WWII era and contemporary work on Latinos' yards in Los Angeles (Crawford, 1999; Rojas, 2003) are notable exceptions. However, there are far too few portraits of diverse suburban landscapes to counter popular contemporary critiques of the suburbs as a bland, boring, and homogenous physical space that continue to serve as a dominant suburban critique, especially in planning and design scholarship (Duany and Plater-Zyberk, 1991; Kunsler, 1993; Hayden, 2004). Robert Lang and Jennifer Lefurgy (2007) argue that the deficit of studies on the suburban landscape results from the reluctance among scholars and the wider public to regard suburbs as "real places" (2). At a 2010 biennial meeting of the Urban History Association, urban historian John Archer suggested a need for a new wave of suburban scholarship focused on the built environment as a means through which to understand everyday cultural practices and meanings. In Archer's book Architecture and Suburbia, he provides an analysis of the changing ideologies about and the physical form of the suburban single-family home. Archer (2005) argues that suburban landscape is a "continually evolving matrix of multiple narratives" that needs to be better understood by scholars of the built environment (354). Geographers Ruth McManus and Philip Ethington (2007) call for a spatial approach that would seek to understand processes of suburban social change through attention to suburban form. This dissertation brings this needed attention to the diverse material landscape of suburbia and the ways in which it supports an equally vibrant suburban social and cultural life.

Race and the Construction of "Minoritized" Suburban Space

The dissertation shows that high tech suburbs are not only spaces of social and spatial diversity, but also productive of new modes and spaces of marginality and inequality. Suburban landscapes, like all spaces, are socially constructed, subject to and reproductive of larger systems of power, control, order, and authority. These insights follow from long-heralded spatial theorists like Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, and David Harvey, who have focused on how the production of space sustains class inequities. More recently, scholars have also analyzed the ways that race and racialized systems of inequality are reproduced in and through the built environment. As Michel

Lagurre (1999) argues, "In order to have ethnic minorities, one must also have minoritized space" (4). In the one of the first collections of scholarly works on the racialized American landscape, *Landscape and Race in the United States*, editor Richard Schein (2006) argues, "all American landscapes can be seen through the lens of race, all American landscapes are racialized" (4).

Suburbia has long been understood as racialized space, constructed and reproduced through exclusionary public policies and private actions. Over the past century, these policies and practices have shifted from explicitly race-based exclusive measures to more class-based forms. Popular early and mid-twentieth century practices and policies of racial steering, racial zoning, race-restrictive covenants, blockbusting, redlining, discriminatory Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Veteran's Administration (VA) mortgage lending practices, and individual and collective acts of violence and discrimination were all explicitly designed to keep people of color out of suburban neighborhoods. Today, however, race-based form of exclusion have shifted to more class-based forms, through practices like exclusive zoning, common interests developments (CIDs), and gated communities, which continue to disparately impact people of color, especially the poor (McKenzie, 1994; Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Self, 2003; Low, 2004).

In this dissertation, I argue that the regulation of Asian immigrant spaces in the Silicon Valley marginalize immigrants and minorities in a ways that are neither race- nor class-based. Rather, I underscore the ways that dominant social and cultural norms are embedded in suburban landscape form and policies tend to privilege and normalize the presence and practices of white middle and upper-middle class residents, and at the same time marginalize people of color and their "non-normative" spatial practices and values. A number of scholars have implicated the built environment in helping dominant groups mask and normalize white privilege and social hierarchies, and keep minorities so to speak, "in their place" (Cresswell, 1996; Duncan and Duncan, 2003; Lipitz, 2007; Harris, 2007a). Others note that the normalization of privileged landscapes aids in marginalizing minority landscapes, often rendering them, their histories, and collective memories invisible to the mainstream (Hayden, 1995; Foote, 1997; Hood and Erickson, 2001; Barton, 2001; Hoelscher, 2006). Such exclusion lends to minority landscapes being "mediated" and manipulated to a wider public by the media and others, who often present minorities and their spaces as non-normative or otherwise justify their exclusion (Arreleo, 2006). I extend these analyses by showing the ways that highly educated, high-income Asian immigrants, who are supposedly beneficiaries of the new global economy, are socially and spatially marginalized by dominant social and cultural norms of suburban landscape that are reinforced through suburban planning, design, and development policies and practices. I posit a central role for planners, designers, and public policy makers in creating and deconstructing what George Lipitz (2007) calls, "the fatal links that connect race, place, and power" (14).

Suburban Cosmopolis

Finally, this dissertation shows that the marginalization and minoritization of Asian immigrant landscapes in the Silicon Valley have produced a politics that seeks tolerance and respect for different ways of being suburban, both socially and spatially.

This politics is reflected in scholarly discourses on cosmopolitanism citizenship, belonging, and managing our co-existence in an increasing heterogeneous, fluid, and connected world. Cosmopolitan scholars commonly assert that in order for groups to live together peacefully and on equitable basis, the rights of individuals and groups to different values, meanings, identities, practices, and spaces must be respected. In *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006) argues that the ethic of cosmopolitanism recognizes social differences without questioning the basis of our common humanity. In *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, political philosopher Iris Marion Young (1990) argues against dominant distributive paradigms of justice that prize an equal allocation of resources, towards a theory of justice that recognizes and respects differences in needs, values, and ideals. Craig Calhoun (2002) views cosmopolitanism as a project towards a shared democracy that *demands* attention to differences.

Urban scholarship has drawn on cosmopolitan theory to respond to the increasing hybridity and diversity of postmodern global metropolis. In *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities in the 21st Century*, Leonie Sandercock (2003) examines the postmodern urban condition, which she describes as one in which "difference, otherness, fragmentation, splintering, multiplicity, heterogeneity, diversity, plurality prevail," and has given rise to a new spatial politics of difference (1). Other urban scholars have highlighted the central role that public space plays in this new politics—as a space where values of respect, tolerance, and recognition of the multiple, and the sometimes conflicting, ways that people occupy space and express their identities can be forged (Buryidi, 2000, 2003; Amin, 2002). Sophie Watson (2006) explains that this politics of public space represents a "new thinking about ethical forms of conduct which have the notion of difference/otherness as their core" (11).

"Right to the city" scholars have argued that urban residents are imbued with certain rights of citizenship that include representation, political power, and difference (Mitchell, 2003). Henri Lefebvre (1991), the oft cited author of the right to the city discourse, argues however, that the "the right to difference implies no entitlements that do not have to be bitterly fought for" (396). For these scholars, the politics of difference is inherently spatial—it takes place both over and in the urban landscape.

Scholarship on the politics of difference and right to the city has focused mainly on urban public spaces and the central city. But as Lefebvre stresses, the politics of rights and recognition are often fought on the ritualistic and mundane terrain of everyday life. As spaces of social politics, everyday spaces are sites of social and spatial contest and transformation. In her writing on "everyday urbanism," Margaret Crawford (1999, 2008) argues that everyday spaces, which often blur the distinction between public and private space, can build respect and tolerance for difference and sites of democratic participation that can transform race and class hierarchies and boundaries. "Insurgent" practices of minorities, immigrants, and other disaffected groups disrupt and change the meaning, identity, and form of the landscape, and serve to generate new forms of urban citizenship and belonging (Holsten, 1998).

In this study, I bring the cosmopolitan framework to focus on everyday suburban spaces as increasingly important sites of difference, multiplicity, and heterogeneity. These spaces are the grounds upon which both discursive and real struggles over rights, belonging, and citizenship are fought. Soja (2010) argues that there has been a spatial

turn across the social sciences and humanities towards a new critical awareness of the role of space in shaping social and the historical processes. It is my intent to bring this critical spatial awareness to the suburbs to assess the ways that power and privilege operate through the built environment, and planning, design, and development processes, professionals, and policies to sustain racial and ethnic inequalities, and may serve to produce new prospects and possibilities for living together in a globally connected and diverse world.

Mapping the Spaces of Everyday Suburban Life

Research is more of a journey than a destination. Frustrated by abstract scholarly debates on designing for diversity, I began this research by asking what "lived diversity" looks like and how studies within ethnically diverse communities could inform planning and design practice and theory. Armed with maps of the Bay Area's most ethnically diverse neighborhoods, I spent the fall of 2007 driving and walking through many communities that I probably would was not otherwise have visited—"no go" center city neighborhoods like the Tenderloin in San Francisco, and poor suburbs like Pittsburg and Richmond that seemed to exist like black holes in the urban imaginaries of many Bay Area residents, including myself. Occasionally, I found myself in urban areas known for their diversity like San Francisco's Mission District, but more often, I spent time in suburban areas that I had not imaged as diverse like Hercules, Vallejo, and Fremont.

My study turned to the suburbs out of a realization that it was the most understudied, yet most prevalent form of diversity not only in the Bay Area, but also nationally. I chose to focus my work in Fremont because it was unique, both in terms of its social and physical landscape. Its demographic composition of diverse high-income and low-income immigrants was reflected in a diverse spatial landscape that contrasted with many other suburbs I visited, where standardized, tract homes and manicured lawns often hid residents' social differences. I wanted to know what social identities and struggles might be revealed by these disruptions in Fremont's otherwise orderly suburban landscape.

To refine my questions about Fremont's spatial diversity, I spent the fall of 2008 "taking the city apart" (Soja, 1989). I drove and walked through many residential, commercial, and industrial areas hoping to learn from observations about the underlying social processes that produced Fremont's urban form—an approach rooted in the field of environmental design and cultural landscape studies. John Brinkerhoff Jackson (1984), a pioneer in the field of cultural landscape studies, wrote of the ability of landscape scholars to "learn by seeing" (xii). In my initial observations, I noted various symbols of social change in the landscape, from new figurative lawn ornaments to new housing styles and ethnic businesses. During this observation period, I also had many informal conversations with business owners and residents about issues regarding growth, planning, design, and development amidst massive immigration and demographic shifts in the region. In the spring of 2010, I taught a class at the University of California, Berkeley entitled "Sacred Landscapes," in which students and I worked on a project in Fremont identifying resident's most valued places. During the semester, we conducted focus groups with twelve community groups and collected over 200 resident surveys. While I have not used the data from the surveys and focus groups in this study. I

subsequently interviewed many of the community leaders that we worked with. Based on these interviews and observations, I selected three landscapes I felt would allow me to best tell the story of demographic and landscape change in Fremont and its struggles over space. In choosing to focus on high performing schools, McMansions, and Asian malls, I realized that I was privileging the stories of Chinese and Indian immigrants in Fremont. For most residents, however, I found that Asian immigration was *the* story of change and development in the region. It evidenced the rise of high tech, which has permeated the lives of all residents and development politics in the city.

I approached my studies of these three landscapes through archival research, observations, and interviews. My methods and sources varied significantly for each site, and thus, I discuss more detailed methods for each landscape in their respective chapters. Here I provide a more general overview of my research process. Archival data relied on a variety of sources, including public documents from the city of Fremont, newspapers and other media reports, and U.S. Census data from 1960 to 2010. To understand the shifting social geography of Fremont and in specific places, I mapped the census data using Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

At each site, I made observations utilizing methods grounded in environmental design. I observed both people and places for clues to cultural meanings, experiences, and processes shaping the built environment's form and use. I spent time at each site observing architectural styles, patterns of circulation, cultural symbolisms, and use patterns and, in the case of Asian malls and schools, as a participant observer. I was a copious photographer, note taker, and sometimes sketched onsite to understand the form and structure of the landscapes. These visual and analytical methods were used to both document the spaces and probe further questions about them. These observations enhanced the quality, detail, and interpretation of my data and helped me to better decipher everyday life patterns and interpret the meaning of events and activities (Dewalt et. al, 1998).

Lastly, I conducted 74 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with politicians. planners, developers, business owners, community leaders, and residents. With the permission of participants, most were audio recorded and later transcribed and coded using an inductive approach. All but one interview was conducted in English. These interviews occurred at coffee shops, in people's living rooms, their offices, and onsite at the locations of interest, and sometimes provided opportunities to observe sites in greater detail through guided tours. All interviews included questions about resident's histories in the region. Like many other cities, the history of minorities Fremont remains largely unwritten (Hayden, 1995; Sandercock, 1998). Thus, these oral histories proved to be valuable sources of historical knowledge about Fremont. Other questions centered on specific landscapes, residents' meanings, values, and uses, and struggles over these spaces. Johnson (2002) argues that in-depth interviews are most appropriate "where different individuals or groups involved in the same line of activity have complicated. multiple perspectives on some phenomenon" (105). This is most certainly the case in regards to the changing demographic and development in Fremont. Although interviewees graciously allowed their names to be used for this project, in most cases I have used pseudonyms to protect their identities. Only for public officials, a few key actors, and for those who made comments on the public record (in the McMansion chapter), have actual names been used. In addition to these in-depth interviews

approximately 65 on-site brief unstructured interviews were conducted with customers and stores owners for the Asian malls chapter.

Among the challenges that I faced in conducting this research were my own biases, assumptions, and identity as a researcher. In discussions about issues of race, ethnicity, and immigration, my personal cultural heritage mattered. As a person of African, Chinese, and Native American heritage, I was challenged to find ways to establish rapport with my different interviewees, who mainly included Chinese and Indian immigrants, and established white residents. As Dunbar et al. (2002) note, building rapport can often be difficult when the researcher and participants are of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. While I experienced cases in which my ethnicity distanced me from my subjects, in most cases, I found my ethnic "ambiguity" and diversity to be an asset. For many Chinese immigrant participants, my ability to speak Chinese and Chinese heritage helped to establish rapport. For others, since people were generally unable to make assumptions about my ethnicity, they often asked, and my complicated answers on the matter served to open up sometimes difficult discussions about race, ethnicity, and immigration.

This research has generated many contradictions and competing accounts, which in a complex, real world settings are often the norm—a reflection of the contradictory and opposing viewpoints that make up the richness and diversity of everyday life. But synthesizing the conflicting claims and narratives has not been an easy or a perfect process. I have relied on developing what Jick (1983) calls a "plausible framework" based on intuition and first-hand knowledge. These contradictions have forced me to remain reflexive and critical towards my methods and the larger purpose of this research. It has also been difficult to write about the stories of a largely high-income, highly educated Chinese and Indian immigrants in a way that gives voice to their struggles as minorities and immigrants, while at the same time remaining aware of their privilege visà-vis other groups. I hope that my readers and those that shared their lives with me in the process of conducting this research, will feel that I have given their stories justice.

Landscapes in the Life of a Cosmopolitan Suburb

Landscapes offer a way to tell stories about a place (Basso, 1996). They offer insights into place values, meanings, and identities, as well as social and political contests over recognition, privilege, and power. I have organized this dissertation around three landscapes that tell the stories about the changing and multiple identities and meanings of Fremont and its struggles over space that have taken place over the past several decades of vast demographic change in the region. These are not meant to provide a comprehensive account of these changes or struggles, but rather to provide vignettes into the life of this place in ways that illuminate issues about suburban demographic and spatial changes that are useful to thinking about places and spaces beyond Fremont. I have organized the dissertation into six chapters covering the history of ethnic diversity and immigration in the Fremont, its emerging landscapes of difference, and their politics.

Chapter two, *Building Cosmopolitan Suburbia*, asks why Fremont and other high tech suburbs have become hubs of racial and ethnic diversity, especially among recently arrived immigrants in the latter half of the 20th century. It begins by looking at the ways that early minorities and immigrants thwarted exclusive suburban measures during the

post-WWII period to make their home in Fremont, laying the groundwork for future suburban newcomers from the civil rights era until today. The bulk of this chapter looks at the rise in immigration that attended the boom of high tech in Silicon Valley and why so many new immigrants chose to settle in Fremont. Finally, the chapter explores the contemporary social and spatial dynamics of Fremont's ethnic diversity, showing some of the major challenges and paradoxes of diversity in the region.

Chapter three, A "High Quality" Education for Whom?, looks at the politics of race and education and the relationship between high performing schools and the creation of new geographies of race. In a case study of Mission San Jose High in Fremont, I look at its history of Asian immigration, the value of the school to Asian immigrant families, increasing tensions between and among students and parents over the school, and the ways that these tensions have affected the geographies of Asian immigrants, Asian Americans, and whites in the region. In an analysis of the controversial decision by Fremont Unified School District to redraw the Mission High attendance boundaries, I also look at the ways that school policy impacts Asian-white relations and geographies.

Chapter four, *That "Monster House" Is My Home*, I assess dominant critiques of McMansion development by planners and designers by looking at controversies over and regulations for large home development in existing neighborhoods in Fremont, which were largely occupied by Chinese immigrants and opposed by established white residents. This chapter reviews the rise of the McMansionization phenomenon in the Silicon Valley, the public policy debates that occurred over these homes, and the planning and design policies adopted to regulate them.

Chapter five, *Mainstreaming the Asian Mall*, asks about the ways that Asian malls show the changing form and politics over the place of immigrants in the Silicon Valley. I analyze their unique design features, their geographic and economic differentiation and dispersion throughout the region, and the function of these malls for Asian- and non-Asian suburban consumers. I also question the way that Asian malls fit into a broader vision of "desirable" retail and multiculturalism in the city by looking at the backlash against Asian malls and the ways city officials have both regulated and strategically managed these properties.

Finally, I conclude with the lessons learned from this exploration of social and spatial difference in Fremont for urban planning and design theory, practice, policy, and practice. While it is clear that suburbia is not what it used to be, scholars, residents, and policy makers are yet to develop shared vocabularies of meaning to describe what it is or is becoming. Xavier de Sousa Briggs (2005) refers to suburbs as an opportunity to frame urban issues in a new way—"to tap emergent interests, new coalitions among groups, and policy innovations" (320). It is my hope that within these pages, readers will find insights into new ways of thinking about the challenges of racial and ethnic inequality and social justice in the contemporary metropolis, and opportunities for increasing our collective capacity to live and work together in an increasingly diverse, interdependent, and suburban world.

Building a Cosmopolitan Suburb

In only the last few decades, Fremont has transformed from a largely white agricultural community to a hub for international immigrants from all over the world. While in 1970s the area was 87% white and largely native-born, in 2010, 73% of its residents were minorities and 43% were foreign-born. Why did Fremont attracted so much diversity and immigration in the later half of the 20th century? In an analysis of the growth in Fremont's minority and immigrant populations over the last half-century, this chapter investigates the reasons and means by which diverse groups settled in Fremont, their struggles against suburban racial and class exclusions, and for a sense of community, identity, and place.

In this chapter, I show that the comingled, competing, and contested narratives of many different groups have shaped Fremont's contemporary social and spatial diversity. While city founders imagined Fremont as an elite and exclusive Garden City, their vision omitted the minority and immigrant communities that had lived on and worked the land for generations and its working-class industry and neighborhoods. During the period of civil rights suburbanization, as minorities began to push their way into Fremont in an organized fashion, new mechanisms were used to reinforce the racial and class exclusions upon which the city had been established. Yet a small community of minorities made their homes in Fremont during the period and forged a path that others followed. Rapid immigration began in the region with the rise of the Silicon Valley—and Fremont quickly became a highly desirable location for high tech firms and immigrants, especially Asians, as well as some of the Silicon Valley's most marginalized communities.

Fremont's history reinforces many of the claims made by new suburban historians about the contributions of "other suburbanites" to the making of the suburbs. This account, however, differs from many other suburban histories in that it shows an interwoven history and experiences of many different minority and immigrant groups that have helped to create suburbia's dynamic and diverse landscape. While I highlight the roles that many groups have played in Fremont's history, I concentrate most particularly on the experiences of Asian immigrants in this region, showing the reasons and means by which they have chosen to make home in this suburb. In doing so, I show the particular factors that have drawn suburban immigration and settlement into Fremont, which likely influence the social geographies of many high tech and other suburbs. This accounts begins to push scholarship on Asian immigrants in suburbia beyond the ethnoburbs to consider other spaces in which and means by which they make meaningful suburban lives and landscapes.

This work also strengthens the case made by new suburban historians Robert Lewis and Richard Walker (2001) that, "industry does not locate in the city, it helps to create the city" (7). I highlight the particularly important role played by various waves of industry, including agriculture, manufacturing, and high tech, in drawing immigrants and minorities to the suburbs. My focus on the high tech helps to bring attention to these spaces in the literature on contemporary suburban diversity and show the processes and

means by which both high tech companies and their employees are helping to shape the future landscape of suburban diversity and immigration.

And finally, I draw attention to the myriad contests over diversity, inclusion, and equity that have and continue to shape Fremont and the larger region. I show that Fremont has always been a contested landscape where minorities and immigrants' have fought for and over inclusion, access, and a sense of place and belonging. In the contemporary moment, I highlight the ways that Asian immigration among high-income Asians raises a host of new concerns over racial and class equity that flip the script on how suburban scholars have traditionally thought about social justice.

From Garden City to Industrial Garden City Suburb (1956–1964)

Prior to its incorporation in 1956, Fremont was part of a rural area known as the Washington Township. The township was comprised of eight unincorporated towns in Alameda County—Alvarado, Centerville, Decoto, Irvington, Niles, Newark, and Warm Springs, which were part of the Santa Clara Valley, an agricultural belt popularly referred to as the "Valley of the Heart's Delight." In the 1950s, Santa Clara County was the largest producer of fresh and dried canned fruit in the nation (Malone, 1985). Apricots and cherries were the "kind and queen" of the Washington Township, stretching across vast acres of farmland that also produced prunes, almonds, peaches, oranges, lemons, and apples. Beginning in the 1930s, the area turned more to poultry, flowers, and nurseries, but maintained its qualities as a rural, agricultural environment well into the 1970s (Corbett, 2011). Growing up in the Mission San Jose neighborhood of Fremont in the 1960s, Paula likened her experience to "growing up in a Garden of Eden." She recalled that most of her childhood was spent playing outside and climbing fruit trees. "It was a bucolic environment for a child," she said. Likewise, Sam who grew up in the Irvington neighborhood during the same period, recalled that it had the feeling of a small agricultural community where a curious kid on a bike like him could roam free. Both Sam and Paula, like most of their other neighbors at the time, were white and middle class.

But there was also another side of Fremont. Small, but established, working class minority communities could be found in the area from the turn of the 20th century, largely tied to work in canneries, nurseries, and salt mining. Mexican migrants often contracted to work in the agricultural fields or the canneries as seasonal laborers and tended to live in Alvarado in an area known as "Little Tijuana" (Sandoval, 1985). Only a handful of African Americans lived in Fremont prior to WWII. One of the only legacies that survived from their presence is an area, which dates back to the 1850s, are sparse references to "nigger's corner," a saloon owned by two African American men, which later became the heart of Irvington (Knoll and Dennis, 2003). Asian Americans began arriving in the Santa Clara Valley in the mid-1800s as laborers. Chinese and Japanese Americans helped to build the San Jose-San Francisco rail line that went through Niles, and a few were able to later settle in the area as merchants, tenant farmers, and even nursery owners. Japanese Americans were especially well established in the Alvarado and Decoto. Prominent Japanese landowning families included the Kitama Brothers, the Nikitas, Hondas, and most notably the Fudennas, who gave up five acres of their land for city hall to be built and for whom the Washington High School football stadium is

currently named (Sandoval, 1985). Though notable because of their landholding status, according the Country Club of the Washington Township et al. (1965), authors of the *History of the Washington Township*, the "Japanese have never been numerous enough to warrant trouble" (25). During World War II, Japanese in the Washington Township were forcibly detained in relocation centers, through many later returned to the township. A small number of Filipino, Asian Indians, and Hawaiian families, most of whom came in different waves of agricultural workers, could also be found in the area from as early as World War I (Sandoval, 1974).

The Postwar Rush to the Suburbs

The postwar period dramatically changed the landscape of this small agricultural community. America's precipitous rise as a postwar suburban nation occurred at the same time as the West and South emerged as centers of new growth. Sunbelt states, like Texas, Florida, and especially California, whose population spiked after the war, were quickly suburbanizing. While California's population doubled between 1950 and 1970, becoming the most populous state in the U.S. in 1962, its growth occurred mainly in outlying areas around extant urban regions (Findlay, 1992; Hise, 1997). In the San Francisco Bay Area, the core cities of San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda, and Berkeley, which before the war contained up to four-fifths of the population, by 1960 contained less than half the population (Vance, 1964). Meanwhile, suburban style development was spreading across the vast landscape of former agricultural fields in the South Bay, with its center in San Jose. Between 1950 and 1970, the San Jose region increased in population eight times, in part due to an aggressive annexation campaign of its surrounding agricultural lands to make room for new suburbs (Thorough Institute, 2012).

The Bay Area's postwar pattern of suburbanization was characteristic of many Sunbelt states. Federally underwritten FHA and VA loans drove an unprecedented suburban building boom that helped to accommodate returning veterans and their families that were often "doubling up" in deteriorated urban housing. New housing and transportation technologies, and federal support for highway construction through the 1956 Federal Highway Act focused most heavily on the Sunbelt states and helped to drive California's image as the "the economic miracle of the mid-20th century" and its prominent role in America's postwar suburbanization and prosperity (Findlay, 1992; Abbott, 1993; Hise, 1997). But the postwar suburban dream was an exclusive one. While exclusionary measures were in place before the war, American racial cast system focused on the suburbs in a way that it never had before during the postwar period. In Fremont, the first battle lines were municipal incorporation.

Exclusion, Incorporation, and Planning the Garden City Suburb

One of the most effective means of preventing race and class integration that suburban municipalities had at their disposal was incorporation. As both industry and their working class residents were expanding out of central city Oakland and San Francisco in the postwar period, many East Bay municipalities incorporated to control the pace and character of development and secure their borders against poor and minority migration (Self, 2003). In the 1940s, the population of the unincorporated areas of

Alameda County increased 150% (Loyd, 2000). By the early 1950s, many unincorporated areas were being swallowed up by rapidly expanding municipalities just north of the Washington Township like Hayward. Concerned by the possible encroachment of Hayward and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, the chambers of commerce from each of the eight unincorporated towns that made up the Washington Township met to discuss the possibility of incorporating into one city in 1953.

Supporters of incorporation trumpeted the value of maintaining and increasing local control over the character and growth of their towns, taxes, and "way of life" (Oral History Associates and Mission Peak Heritage Foundation, 1989). In 1952, an editorial entitled "Halt Toadstool Growth" exemplified the tone of the incorporation debates. "This Township wants its master plan [from the County Planning Commission] and wants it in a hurry – before shacks over-run our industrial land, before factories are jammed against our homes," it argued (Bartels, 1956, 31). The Citizens' Committee, which favored incorporation suggested that incorporation would allow Fremont to solve "the troublesome 'fringe' problem which vexes so many communities" (Bartels, 1956, 72). The decision was also praised by local boosters and business owners who sought to capitalize off the area's impending growth. While supporting growth liberalism, Fremont officials and residents simultaneously engaged in NIMBY localism that prized controlled growth, and with it, the influx of lower-class (and presumably minority) residents.

In 1955, Hayward applied to annex a 337-acre housing development and surrounding agricultural land just north of the Washington Township. As a direct result, Alvarado and Decoto, the two northernmost towns, incorporated together to form Union City. Months later, the town of Newark incorporated on its own. And in January 1956, the remaining five towns in the Washington Township—Niles, Irvington, Warm Springs, Mission San Jose, and Centerville—incorporated to form the third largest city in California geographically, with a total of 96 square miles and a population of only 22,000, under the name of Fremont (Oral History Associates and Mission Peak Heritage Foundation, 1989). According to the 1960 Census, around the time of incorporation, Fremont has less than a 2% non-white population. ¹

Incorporation gave municipalities the right to control their own budget, adopt a city council, secure municipal services, levy taxes, and perhaps most importantly plan for future growth. Fremont used its new powers of planning to control growth and create the kind of city that officials' wanted it to be—an upper-middle class Garden City. As imagined by some of its leading U.S. proponents, like architect Clarence Stein and urban critic Lewis Mumford, the Garden City was a fully self-contained, self-sufficient, well-planned suburban city. Jack Stevenson, Fremont's first mayor, argued Fremont was to be antidote to the problems of city life. "Fremont stirs the imagination of those who fled the city to seek a better life beyond. It must excite those who look upon the tangled problems of the nation's older cities and wish they could start again," he said. (Bartles, 1956, 99).

To achieve this ideal, planning and zoning were immediate priorities. Following incorporation, city officials hired two consultants to draw up a master plan even before officially establishing their own planning board. The General Plan, drafted only eight months after incorporation, set out a vision for Fremont as an orderly, pastoral suburb with low-density, well-defined neighborhoods, a civic center, commercial core, and

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¹ This number is likely underestimated, because the in 1960 U.S. Census categorized groups like Latinos and East Indians as white.

industrial district—all surrounded by agricultural land that acted as a greenbelt (fig. 2.1). The opening of the Nimitz Freeway in 1957, which connected San Jose to Oakland and ran directly through Fremont, provided even further rationale for planning. Within a year of its completion, Fremont's development was "going wild," explained Jack Stevenson, "People started coming at us from a number of directions"—from Oakland, San Jose, across the Dumbarton Bridge, and through Niles Canyon (Bartles, 1956, 4).

Planning was such a central endeavor in Fremont that the city received national recognition for its efforts by an award from the American Institute of Planners in 1962. Jack Robbins (2010), who served as Director of City Planning and Community Development in Fremont from 1972 to 1976, said that well into the 1970s, many of the members of the planning department were idealistic about making a model new town in Fremont. "The idea that we could plan just in the air," he explained.

But while many model Garden Cities like Radburn and Sunnyside Gardens aimed to create housing for a mix of different social classes, Fremont's vision was a more exclusive one. Suggesting the kind of middle and upper-middle class homes and residents that the city hoped to attract, the city zoned most of its neighborhoods for large lots of about two to 4.5 families per acre. Similar to other Garden Cities, however, issues of racial exclusion were largely elided in Fremont. Jack Robbins explained that during his tenure, the city had very little concern for the ethno-social interests in the city government primarily because they did not imagine themselves as having diversity within the city. Largely ignored was that one of the main reasons why Fremont lacked of diversity was its exclusive planning regime.

Incorporation was not the only, but was by far the most effective means of exclusion that the city had at its disposal. As in many other postwar suburbs, Fremont also guarded themselves against the in-migration of the poor and people of color through various other exclusive mechanisms. Primary among these were the use of racerestrictive covenants, which were ruled unconstitutional in 1948 (*Shelley v. Kramer*), but remained on home deeds and continued to be unofficially enforced by individual homeowners intent on avoiding integration well into the 1970s (Fogelsong, 2005); discrimination in FHA and VA mortgage loans that were denied to mixed-race and inner city neighborhoods with older housing stocks (Jackson, 1985); discriminatory lending and real estate practices like racial steering, blockbusting, and redlining; and individual and collective acts of violence and discrimination, that caused urban historian Arnold Hirsch (1987) to label the 1940s and 50s as the "era of hidden violence."

The Suburbanization of Industry and Unrealized Utopias

For an American Garden City, Fremont was unique in its ability to attract industry.² In 1962, General Motors (GM) announced their plans to locate a new plant in Fremont. With the relocation, came the addition of 5,000 new jobs, and GM immediately became the city's largest employer (Sandoval, 1985). To lure GM and other subsequent industrial development, Fremont made vast amounts of low cost land available (fig. 2.2).

Fremont was not alone. Industry, especially defense industries, played a particularly important role in shaping the postwar urban landscape of many California

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² While Radburn had plans to attract industry, these plans never materialized because of the stock market crash in 1929. Instead it largely became a residential commuter suburb.

communities. During the War, California received approximately 10% of all production contacts and over \$1.3 billion federal investment in war worker housing, particularly near San Francisco, the "gateway to the Pacific Theatre" (Hise, 1997). Suburbs like Fremont provided industry with low-cost open land for expansion, which reduced their cost of production and provided access to suburban living for workers, away from the central cities with increasing civil strife and deteriorating social, physical, and economic conditions (Findley, 1992). Aided by wartime investments in transportation technology, especially highways, many industries left urban downtown areas, bringing with them thousands of jobs and residents. During the war and immediate postwar period, the influential Bay Area Council, a business-sponsored, public policy advocacy organization, promoted industrial growth in the suburbs as part of a "dispersion campaign" targeted towards new and emerging industries, particularly those in defense (O'Mara, 2006). These policy and economic investments in suburban industrial growth led to growth of "defensive enclaves" (Findlay, 1992) in South San Francisco, Vallejo, and Richmond.³ For many minorities, war and postwar industrial dispersion provided their first opportunities at suburbanization.⁴

The opening of Fremont's GM plant, however, did not immediately lead to large-scale suburban minority migration. Robert Self (2003) noted that many of GM's employees could not afford homes in Fremont and often lived outside the city. But many residents that I spoke to recalled many former GM employees who had lived in the city in working-class neighborhoods like Irvington, a neighborhood that has historically been home to many of Fremont's Latino and African American residents. Until its closure in 2010, GM, which in the 1980s joint ventured with Toyota to form the New United Motor Manufacturing, Inc. (NUMMI), remained Fremont's number one employer. The incorporation of industry in Fremont created and helped to sustain the conditions for Fremont's increasing diversity.

Robert Self (2006) describes Fremont as a suburb that by the 1960s had "arrived," meaning that it had secured FHA and VA mortgages, restrictive covenants to guarantee its race and class homogeneity, and new industry to ensure its low tax rate and to attract middle class residents. Yet the founders' visions were also somewhat contradictory to its working class industrial realities. While the city had found a formula to keep taxes low and neighborhood residential quality high through planned and strategic growth, that formula included the incorporation of working class industry and to some extent working class residents. In its early development, Fremont was already a multi-layered, complex, and diverse landscape. It was a bedroom community for middle-and upper-middle class professionals, a farming community, and home to an increasing number of working class residents. Through its population was mainly white at the time,

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³ Hise (1997) notes that due to its wartime employment in shipbuilding, Richmond's population increased 250% between 1940 and 1943.

⁴ The postwar suburbanization of industry opened up many new opportunities for minorities. Kaiser Shipyards in Richmond, for instance, became the largest employer of African American labor on the West Coast (Davis, 2000). When the Ford Motor Company relocated from Richmond to the town of Milpitas, just south of Fremont in 1953, the company negotiated the integration hundreds of its African American workforce into the Sunnyhills neighborhood. As the first planned interracial community west of the Mississippi, Sunnyhills also included Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiian, Canadian, Irish, German, French, Indian and other groups (Ruffin, 2009)

the inroads made by early minorities and industry would later serve as important avenues for racial and ethnic minorities making claims on suburban space.

Civil Rights Suburbanization (1965–1980)

While Fremont city officials were busy planning for new growth and development, inner-city San Francisco and Oakland were falling into decline. Dollars directed to housing and industrial development on the urban periphery, took jobs, residents, and tax dollars away from the central cities. Beginning in the 1950s and continuing well into the 1970s, federal policy favored inner city dispersion and slum clearance of "blighted" poor and minority communities like the Fillmore District in San Francisco to make way for shopping malls, office towers, and other downtown urban renewal and redevelopment schemes. In return, much of the housing replacement promised under the 1954 Housing Act never materialized, while racially segregated, high-rise public housing projects became more prominent fixtures within increasingly poor and isolated neighborhoods with little access to social networks, jobs, and resources (Wilson, 1987; Massey and Denton, 1993). The Nimitz Freeway that brought massive growth to Fremont cut directly through West Oakland, leaving a once the thriving mecca of the African American community in ruins.

Economic restructuring, deindustrialization, and urban race riots, also hastened the outward migration of jobs and white and minority middle class residents, and exacerbated the conditions of a growing "urban underclass" (Hirsch, 1987; Sugrue, 1996). Industries once located in inner city Oakland and San Francisco were moving south to San Leandro, Milpitas, and Fremont, or headed overseas. Resistance to the increasingly poor inner city conditions came largely in the form of urban race riots, like the 1965 Watt Riots in L.A., and militant movements like the Brown Berets out of San Jose, the Black Panthers in Oakland, and the Yellow Panthers in Berkeley.

The decline of central city neighborhoods, their stark contrasts to suburban neighborhoods, and urban race riots were important impetuses for legal Civil Rights reforms, including the Civil Rights Housing Act of 1964 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which prohibited discrimination by race in the administration of both public and private housing. In 1975, the New Jersey Supreme Court cases of *Mount Laurel I* ruled exclusionary zoning unconstitutional.

These judiciary rulings, however, were slow to impact conditions on the ground in Fremont, as elsewhere. In the absence of race-restrictive covenants, CIDs that put in place homeowners' associations and covenants, codes, and restrictions (CC&Rs) requiring the maintenance of certain "standards" of home and neighborhood design and homeowners associations, translated racialized exclusions into more sophisticated class-based mechanisms (McKenzie, 1994). As will be discussed in chapter four, two of Fremont's earliest subdivisions used these mechanisms as a way of maintaining the exclusivity of their upper-middle class communities well into the 1990s. Racial discrimination also shifted to more informal practices of housing discrimination, especially towards African Americans. In 1968, Tom, who is African American, said that he and his wife looked at over 103 apartments for rent in Hayward and were consistently told that they were unavailable or required extraordinary deposits to secure them. They were steered away from purchasing a house in Fremont. When they bought

in Newark instead, Tom said they paid about \$4,000 more for the house than his neighbors and that five local police officers launched a community-wide petition to prevent their purchase and continued to harass them after they moved in. "There is nothing much that has been done in the way of the force of law that has terribly altered the practices that are in place. They have just shifted in how they implement those practices," explained Tom. As Arnold Hirsh (1987) argued, violence and intimidation, especially towards African Americans might have actually increased as the legal restrictions waned. Because of discrimination and violence towards African Americans in the South Bay, they tended to cluster into suburban neighborhoods like East Palo Alto and Russell City in Hayward, where they were permitted to rent or purchase homes. Few settled into Fremont.

While generally not met by the same level of hostility, Asian and Latino suburban newcomers to Fremont also met resistance. Sundeep, an Indian immigrant, recalled that when he and his wife moved into Fremont in 1972, kids threw eggs at his home and toilet papered their yard. A good friend of his, also an Indian man, had rocks thrown at their house and as a result moved out of Fremont. Other early Asian American residents described the environment as isolating, but not necessarily any more hostile than that of other suburbs where they had lived or had friends and family.

Social networks played an important role in the decision of many Asian Americans and other minorities to migrate to Fremont. Often the easiest places to settle were in areas with or close to extant minority communities. In Fremont, the long history of Japanese and Mexican American residents, made it decidedly easier for Asian and Latino newcomers, who often came by word of mouth to neighborhoods like Brookvale in Northern Fremont. Asian Americans commonly came from inner suburbs like Daly City, where they had gained a foothold in the postwar period. Andrew, a Chinese American developer, explained that there was a quite typical experience that brought many Asian American families like his to Fremont in the 1970s:

Chinese, Filipinos. They may have a town home or house in Daly City. They got invited by their friends and they bought a home in Fremont. They would invite them over for Saturday afternoon barbecues. It would be 80 degrees. They enjoyed it tremendously. They would go back to Daly City where it would be 45 degrees on Saturday night...Sunday morning, they would drive to Fremont again, looking for a house....The house prices were comparable and the weather was much better.

As Andrew's comments indicate, it was not only social networks that drove early minority suburbanization, but a range of other factors as well. Andrew emphasized Fremont's nice environment and access to affordable and quality housing. Others said that minorities locating to Fremont during the period were driven by the same motivating forces as their white counterparts. "My generation came to escape the 'urban ills'," explained Tom, "There was black flight from the city for the same reasons as white." Many others described wanting good schools, larger and more affordable homes, in safe and less crowded environment. Joe and Judy, who are both American-born Chinese, said that they were able to purchase a two-bedroom home in Fremont for \$21,500 in 1974, and pay less on their mortgage than they were spending to rent in Oakland. In addition, Judy had just gotten a job in South San Jose, and Fremont's highway access provided her

with an easy commute and allowed Joe to continued to work in Oakland. Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) opened up a new Fremont station in 1972, connecting Fremont to Oakland and San Francisco, which further eased Joe's northbound commute. Bill, whose Chinese American roots in the Bay Area date back to the 1850s, said that in 1963 his working-class parents were able to purchase a four-bedroom home in Irvington for \$21,000 that offered them a different sort of lifestyle and opportunities than they had in their former residence in Oakland:

I think it was just different. Fremont was just starting out. It was already a city, but it was a spread out community. Spread out meaning in between the neighborhoods that had sprung up at the time, we had farms and cow pastures. It was a different kind of living. It was country living. We just wanted to get away from the inner city, so to speak, and get back to the country...I think they wanted a fresh start.

In Fremont, Joseph moved into a home on a brand new street, with a new high school nearby and all the neighborhood amenities that his family required. His parents continued to commute to Oakland for work.

As early minority suburban pioneers, these migrants often found themselves surrounded by a sea of white faces. In 1970, Fremont's minority population was still less than 15%. Bill recalled that he was one of only two Chinese students in his entire elementary school in Mission San Jose. Tom said running into another African American in public was such a rare occurrence that he would immediately introduce himself and make friends. These were largely young, American-born families who had struggled to afford entry into the suburbs and were looking for communities to which they could belong, outside of their sometimes unwelcoming, local neighborhoods.

To establish a stronger sense of community and retain their cultural ties, several early ethnic and cultural associations developed in Fremont. The South Bay Chinese Club began in Fremont in 1965, and the Organization of Chinese Americans started California's first chapter in Fremont in 1974. In 1980, the African American Historical and Cultural Society began a tri-city effort to bring African Americans from Union City, Fremont, and Newark together to celebrate and support their cultural traditions and history.

Despite efforts to develop a sense of community rooted in their common suburban experiences, many minority suburbanites continued to rely on established communities in the central cities as their primary centers of social and cultural life and for their daily necessities. Nadia, an African American woman who bought her house in Fremont in 1977 went to Oakland nearly every weekend for 30 years to go to church, get her hair done, and see friends. Many early Chinese Americans returned to Oakland and San Francisco Chinatowns on the weekends to do their grocery shopping and eat out; Indians often returned to University Avenue in Berkeley, where clusters of stores and restaurants could be found near the University of California campus; and Latinos to San Francisco's Mission District. These areas were not just service centers, but also provided moments of cultural relief and a meeting point for those that had left their ethnic and cultural communities behind when they moved to the suburbs.

New Immigrant Suburbanization (1965–1990)

The 1960s not only marked a turning point in the growth of American minorities in the suburbs, but also immigrants. Due to increasing pressure on Congress to change immigration laws that had historically given preference to European immigrants, Congress passed a revised Immigration and Naturalization Act in 1965, known as the Hart Cellar Act. The new law allowed all continents except for the Americas to have an equal quota of 20,000 visas per country per year. It also set up a preference system, whereby 80% of visas were granted for family reunification, and 20% for skilled labor and professionals. The latter targeted well-trained professionals and laborers in fields with a domestic shortfall. Implemented in 1968, the Act significantly increased immigration from non-European countries, especially from Asia and Latin America, which rose 80% between 1970 and 2000 (Jones-Correa, 2006). The largest impact of the new law was on Asian immigrants, who were especially likely to be among the professional class. In the 1970s and 80s, Asian immigrants were not only being pulled by the increasing employment in the U.S, but also pushed by political uncertainly in Taiwan, the U.S.'s military involvement in Indo-China, and Hong Kong's impending return to China (Li, 2006).

Beginning in the 1970s, many Asian immigrants began to settle in the Bay Area to work in the emerging technology industries centered in Santa Clara County that became known as the Silicon Valley. As the beneficiary of major defense and aerospace contracts in the Cold War era, Stanford University was a central site for a new alliance between industry and research (Findlay, 1992). Stanford Industrial Park, built in 1951, represented the culmination of Stanford engineering professor and later University Provost, Frederick E. Terman's vision of bringing together a "community of technical scholars" (O'Mara, 2005). It also served as the model for high tech research parks in the Silicon Valley and elsewhere throughout the ensuing decades. Between 1960 and 1980, Silicon Valley companies generated a series of important waves of technical innovation—from microelectronics, to the semiconductor, and finally to the personal computer. Each new wave demanded a higher educated and technically skilled workforce, which was increasingly met by Asian immigrants (Saxenian, 2006).

Each innovation wave also brought massive growth and expansion to the region. Several towns adjacent to Stanford University like Palo Alto reacted with no growth policies that pushed development further out and raised the cost of industrial and residential land in the core of the Valley. By 1975, 84,000 people commuted to Sunnyvale, Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Santa Clara, from outlying cities on a daily basis (Findlay, 1992). Intent on attracting some of the new growth, Fremont rezoned much of its industrial land to industrial research and provided generous tax incentives to attract high tech companies (Johnson, 2000). Fremont was uniquely positioned take advantage of such opportunities. Not only was it strategically located directly across the bay from Palo Alto and north of San Jose, it also had vast acres of undeveloped land available for new development. Indeed Silicon Valley workers and companies in search of less expensive options found relief in Fremont, where homes and industrial land were about half the price as in the core of the Valley (Oral History Associates and Mission Peak Heritage Foundation, 1989).

By 1989, Fremont city officials had projected a future name for itself—Silicon Valley North. This unofficial naming was both a reaction to the realities of what Fremont had become and the hopes that Fremont would join the ranks of its prosperous southern neighbors. By the 1980s, Fremont was well on is way. It hosted national and international high tech companies, including Apple, who produced their first Macintosh computer in Fremont in 1981 (Dennis, 2011). Between 1990 and 2000, around 1,200 high tech firms set up shop in Fremont (Johnson, 2000). According to longtime Mayor Bob Wasserman (2011), before the high tech crash in 2000, Fremont had more high tech headquarters than San Francisco. It was also reportedly the number one city in the U.S. for Taiwanese high tech companies, including over 100 high-tech firms with Taiwanese connections (Akizuki, 1999). Even companies relocating or expanding their operations from overseas found advantage in Fremont's inexpensive industrial and warehouse space, its strategic location within the Silicon Valley and to other emerging global high tech markets along the Pacific Rim, and its growing community of highly skilled immigrants.

As many prominent companies began to settle into Fremont, so too did their upper-middle income workers, especially Asian immigrants. Fremont's main attractions were the availability of new and affordable homes, sunny weather, extant new immigrant community, and increasingly good schools. Dan was common of many immigrants moving to Fremont at the time. Having emigrated from Taiwan in the 1960s, he completed his degree in the U.S. and began working in Michigan at Ford Aerospace. In 1982, his company set up a new office in the Silicon Valley and transferred him. When he arrived, a friend took Dan and his wife to look at houses throughout the Valley. While he considered moving into a small older home in Palo Alto that was available for around \$150,000, they chose to live in Fremont because they were able to purchase a three year-old 2,100 square foot home for \$200,000. It was just 10 minutes from Dan's office in Milpitas, and the schools in the Mission San Jose neighborhood in which they settled were known to be good and getting better.

By the 1980s, Fremont was also beginning to develop a reputation as a city that was "good for new immigrants," especially those from Taiwan, China, and India. Like many of the immigrants that had come to Fremont in the postwar period, many simply came because of word of mouth to stay with friends, family members, or university classmates from overseas. They started businesses together and networked amongst each other and built their own version of the American Dream. When I asked Anil, a second generation Indian American, why his family relocated from Chicago to Fremont in the early 1990s, he spoke of the importance of immigrant networks and the ideals that surround Fremont and the larger Silicon Valley as a land of opportunity for new immigrants. "We had heard that's where all the immigrants went," he explained, "It was a community of people driven by the same principles. [My parents] really connected with that. They felt that this was going to be a good place with people like us." While Anil's father had trained as a computer engineer, he moved to Fremont to fulfill his lifelong dream of starting his own business. Fremont represented a land of opportunity and the fulfillment of his American Dream. Mitra Kalitas argues that for many post-1965 Indian Americans, the American and suburban dream have been deeply intertwined. "For many [Indians], homeownership in a place with a good school district and soccer leagues, strip malls and picket fences, signified the completion of the American Dream," wrote Kalitas (2003, 3).

This was a generation of immigrants who had largely come to the U.S. for an American education and had been trained in the U.S. as professional doctors, engineers, and scientists. Many had lived in other U.S. cities before migrating to the Silicon Valley and more specifically Fremont, for work, schools, family, and opportunity. It was a generation who had saved up and sacrificed to purchase their piece of the suburban dream. They bought homes in affordable neighborhoods that were easily accessible to their jobs in emerging technological hubs of Palo Alto, Sunnyvale, Menlo Park, and other South Bay suburbs.

Slowly but surely, this generation of suburban minority newcomers extended the work of the previous one and set up grocery stores, restaurants, community institutions, and places of worship. Sundeep recalled becoming the 16th subscriber to *India West*, an Indo-American newspaper that started in Fremont in the early 1970s and now circulates throughout California. The Guardwara Shahib, one of the largest and most influential Sikh temples in the world, was founded in Fremont in 1978 (Guardwara Shahib, 2012) (fig. 2.3).

By the middle of the 1980s, Fremont had become a premier destination for new immigrants. Irene, a Chinese immigrant, described her experience of coming from New Jersey to Northern Fremont, an area where many new immigrants tended to cluster, in 1983:

I almost felt like I'd moved to another country. This is not the America that I was used to. When I go to the playgrounds the people speak in their different languages. So the Indian moms would be together speaking in Punjabi or whatever. And the Chinese moms, the Taiwanese moms would be speaking Taiwanese dialect to each other. The ones from, back then very few from Mainland China, and then very few, already, very few Caucasian moms.

Fremont's transition from a white, working and middle class community to a global hub of the new immigration had begun.

Suburban Refuge

During the same period that Fremont became the hub for the first generation of Silicon Valley high tech immigrants, it also became the home of many residents rarely thought about as suburban—refugees. To accommodate the flood of refugees seeking asylum in the U.S., Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980, which separated refugees from the immigrant quota system. Prompted by the fall of Saigon in 1975, the Vietnamese refugee population became the largest in U.S. history, with the first waves being largely well educated and middle class, followed by subsequent waves of non-educated "boat people" (Alba and Knee, 2003). In the Bay Area, many moved into the center of the Vietnamese community in San Jose, but others found their way to suburbs like Fremont. The 1970s was also a popular time in Fremont for refugees coming from the Middle East, particularly Iranians seeking asylum after the Shah was disposed, and civil wars in Lebanon and Pakistan. After the U.S. got involved in the Afghan-Russian conflict in the 1980s, Afghani refugees began applying for asylum in the U.S. While initially dispersed all over the country, many found their way to Fremont in part because

of its proximity to the port of entry in San Francisco, its good weather, and former migrants who reported they had found a nice immigrant haven in Fremont. As the pace of migration picked up in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Fremont came to have the largest concentration of Afghanis of any municipality in the U.S. An estimated 10,000 Afghans lived in Fremont in 2001, out of the around 40,000 in the San Francisco Bay Area (Ritter, 2001). Many Afghans clustered around the business district in the historic Centerville area that gained the unofficial designation of "Little Kahbul" (fig. 2.4).

Cosmopolitan Suburbs (1990–2010)

In the last 20 years, much has changed in Fremont. First came the dot.com boom (approximately 1995–2000), then came the dot.com bust (2000), and since has grown a majority minority suburb that is both ethnically and economically diverse, and is changing the way that scholars think about 21st century suburbs. In various writings about the Silicon Valley, scholars have recognized the increasingly globalized, diverse, and distinctly suburban character of a high tech industrial development, which unlike that of the early 20th century industry is not based on manufacturing and fixed, intensive land uses, but instead on the production of new technology and information and takes advantage of horizontal networks, flexible space, and a more global and skilled workforce.

Various characterizations of the Silicon Valley indicate that the changes in the global production of knowledge and technology are deeply embedded in the changing social and spatial form of contemporary suburbs. Saskia Sassen (2001) called the Silicon Valley a "global city," referencing its important role in global financial capital; Manuel Castells (1994) called it a "technopole," indicating the increasingly important role that technology plays in creating new forms of urban settlement; Aiwah Ong (1999) labeled the region as a "suburban techno-citadel" emphasizing the neoliberal regimes of governmentality that produce high tech suburbs; Margaret O'Mara (2005) called the Silicon Valley the "gold standard of cities of knowledge," urbanizing regions that arose amidst elite post war suburbs that serve as modern centers of industrial capital; and Wei Li and Edward Park (2006) called the region a "technoburb," referencing ethnoburbs driven by the demands of high tech. These various characterizations indicate that the Silicon Valley is not only part of an information revolution, but also a suburban revolution that has created more diverse and globally connected suburbs than ever before. In this final section, I highlight the changes in the Silicon Valley over the last two decades that have led to Fremont's emergence as a *cosmopolitan suburb*—a place with an ethnically diverse, globally connected, economically and geographically mobile population, but also ripe with racial, ethnic, and economic disparities that have set the stage for myriad social and spatial conflicts over growth and change in the city.

Booming Immigration and Transnationalism

According to Lang and LeFurgy (2007), Fremont is among the nation's fastest growing cities with populations over 100,000. For its growth between 1990 and 2000, they ranked it forth among the nation's "boomburgs." But Fremont has not just grown; it has grown in particular ways that distinguish it from other types of suburbs. In the same

study, Lang and LeFurgy named Fremont as nation's number one "cosmoburb," suburbs that are growing with high numbers of foreign born and highly educated residents, especially whites and Asians. Similarly, Fremont appeared on Glassesers and Shapiro's (2003) list of "high fliers," those cities in the U.S. with a population of 100,000 or more that grew by more than 10% in the 1990s, which they note tend to be Western cities with high human and financial capital. Between 1990 and 2000, Fremont grew by 17%, and between 2000 and 2010 by another 5% to a total of just over 214,000 residents.

Many factors have contributed to the continued importance of Fremont as premier destination for immigrants, especially high income and highly educated Asians. Perhaps most importantly, have been changes in immigration laws since 1965 that have vastly increased the number of foreign-born residents in the U.S. generally, and the Silicon Valley in particular. In 1990, Congress passed a new Immigration and Naturalization Act, effective October 1, 1991, that tripled annual immigrant quotas in the areas of employment-based immigration, especially for "priority workers" like professionals, researchers, executives, and managers to 140,000. Under the new law, 10,000 of these jobs were set aside for "employment creation," which applied to immigrants who established commercial enterprises worth \$1 million or more and created at least 10 jobs. stimulating a category of new immigrants that Ley (2010) has termed "millionaire migrants." Following the high tech boom, Silicon Valley companies pressed Congress to make significant changes in immigration laws to allow for more high tech employment. In 1998, the American Competiveness and Workforce Improvement Act significantly increased the number of H-1B visas that allow for temporary migration of workers, targeting "investors", "professionals," and "skilled workers." Between 2000 and 2003 alone, the number of H-1B visas increased from 65,000 to 195,000 (Li, 2009). Under ongoing pressure from high tech companies. Congress has continued to expand the number of visas since. The H-1B visa allows residents to work in U.S. for six years with the option of pursuing a green card while working.

Together changes in immigration law and increasing opportunities for high tech employment in the Valley allowed the region to attract the best and brightest from around the country and the world, including an unprecedented number of foreign-born engineers from China, Taiwan, and India. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of foreign-born engineers in the Silicon Valley workforce rose from 33% to 53% (Saxenian, 2006). In 1990, 74% of these foreign-born workers were from India or China, including Taiwan (English-Leuck, 2002).

As for previous generations of Silicon Valley migrants, Fremont has proven to be a particularly popular choice for young, highly educated, and often high-income immigrants. Between 1990 and 2010, its immigrant population rose from around 20% to 43%. A 2001 *New York Times* report called Fremont a "magnet for immigrants" (Brown, 2001). This generation has continued to be attracted by the area's convenient location with easy access to Silicon Valley jobs, good schools, affordable housing, and extant immigrant community. Ellie, a Chinese American Fremont resident, also underscored the important role of previous Asian settlement to the region's current demographic, "Immigrants who are moving in America, they are thinking like, 'Oh, where am I going to fit in? Where am I going to make a transition the easiest?' In Fremont, Bay Area because there's so many Asians here already." The efforts of the first generation of immigrant pioneers to create a community that accommodated their needs and desires for

suburban American life also made Fremont a more convenient and desirable locale for a new generation. As Dan explained, everything that he and his family need to feel in touch with their culture and their homeland can now be found in Fremont. "We have all the conveniences we want and don't have to speak English," he explained, "We haven't been to Chinatown in 10 years." They get the Chinese newspaper delivered to their door, get all the television stations that they used to have in Taiwan, eat out in Chinese restaurants on a daily basis, and have several choices of Asian markets right down the street. Likewise to Sundeep, Fremont "feels like you are in India." Fremont has adopted a number of informal names, including "Little Taipei," "Little India," and "Little Kahbul," all of which evidence how different immigrant groups have found a comfortable home away from home in Fremont. Many said that the diversity of minority groups in Fremont influences their sense of inclusion and belonging. Lenny, an immigrant from Taiwan who had lived in the mid-West for 30 years before moving to Fremont, said that he had always felt like a minority before coming to a city where "everyone is a minority."

Fremont's population has become not only more immigrant, but also more transnational. Unlike previous generations of immigrants settling into the Valley who tended to be educated and remain in the U.S. for employment, Silicon Valley's newest migrants are more likely to be what Ong (2003) has termed "hypermobile cosmopolitans," who travel between the U.S. and China, Taiwan, India, Kong Kong, or elsewhere to engage in business as well as maintain their cultural and family ties. Wei Li (2009) characterizes these new global elite as a "new type of sojourner as comfortable crossing oceans as main street" (39). Saxenian et al. (2002) found that about half of Silicon Valley's foreign-born professionals travel to their native country for business at least yearly, and five percent make the trip five times or more per year. These "astronauts," who make frequent Pacific Rim migrations, are often Taiwanese, who are the most likely nationality in the Silicon Valley to return home on a regular or even permanent basis, followed by Indians and Chinese mainlanders (Saxenian et al., 2002).

Several of the residents that I spoke to led extremely mobile lives. Cindy, a second generation Chinese American, explained that her father began a start up in the Silicon Valley, which now has a branch in Shanghai, where he lives part of the year. She grew up going back and forth between Fremont and China as did many in her peer group. Comparing recent Taiwanese immigrants to the previous generation, Andrew explained that today so many people that he knows travel overseas for work, "You want to get everybody together for a barbeque, its not as easy as before." These frequent migrations have also altered Fremont's international relations—establishing important human and business connections among different high tech regions like Hsinshu Park in Taiwan, Shanghai and Guangdong in China, and Bangalore, India. Andrew reported that with more and more manufacturing going to China, it is common for Taiwanese immigrants to run a company where the manufacturing occurs in China, the business headquarters are in

⁵ Such fluid relationships among national borders has led scholars to conclude that the old model of global migration, characterized by high tech "brain drain" from global south to the north is today more appropriately characterized as "brain circulation" (Saxenian et al., 2002; Ley, 2010).

⁶ China has returnee incentive programs and underwent its own high tech bubble in the 1990s that created many jobs for returnees. India has only had a significant number of returnees since 2000, and returnees largely operate in isolation, rather than as part of the larger national economy (Saxenian, 2006).

Taiwan, and the family home is in Fremont. In 1993, Fremont adopted Jaipur, India at its sister city.

More Ethnically Diverse, Less Racially Diverse

As the Silicon Valley has grown as a premier destination for new immigration, it has also become a hub of ethnic diversity. According to Lewis (1993), a typical team of engineers at a Silicon Valley company includes engineers from Bangladesh, Canada, China, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, and the U.S. Likewise, Fremont has become a magnet for migrants from all over the U.S. and the world. Its residents come from as many as 147 different countries and speak over 150 different languages (Youngdahl, 2009). Its diversity ranks among the top three large cities in California, which itself is the most diverse state in the U.S. (Sandoval, 2003). As Marech (2002) wrote, Fremont is a "global village in the middle of the 'burbs'."

But as Fremont's has become a burgeoning hub of ethnic diversity, its racial diversity is declining. Between 1990 and 2010, Fremont lost African Americans as a percentage of the population. And while the percentage of Latinos has increased, it has done so by less than 2%, compared to 9% overall in the Bay Area. Meanwhile, whites as a percentage of the population, decreased from 63% to 26%, while the Asian American population grew from less than 19% to over 50%. (table 2.1). According to the U.S. Census, Fremont ranked ninth in the nation for cities over 100,000 with large Asian American populations in 2000.

Chinese and Indian growth has far outpaced those of other Asian ethnic groups. In 1970, when Fremont had only a 7% Asian population, Filipinos (40%) and Japanese (31%), who largely worked as farm workers in the area, were the largest Asian ethnic groups. Whereas in 2007, Chinese and Indians together made up 71% of Fremont's Asian American population (37% and 34% respectively) (table 2.1). Fremont contains the state's largest Indian population (Shankar, 2008). While Silicon Valley is known to be the home of the integrated circuit (or IC), when locals refer to the Silicon Valley as being built on ICs, they are often referring to Indian and Chinese engineers (Saxenian, 1999). Noting the dramatic shifts in the immigrant populations in Fremont from a city dominated by Portuguese immigrants to Chinese and Indian immigrants, Samira, an Indian immigrant, noted that the "Sousas used to the be longest name in the phone book, now its the Patels or Chens."

Though Chinese and Indians are the predominant groups within Fremont and the Silicon Valley, they come from all over the world, including many Chinese from Vietnam and Indonesia, and Indians from different parts of Africa. Irene described the Indian and Chinese families on her block of 10 houses in Mission San Jose. They included two Indian families, one from India and the other from Pakistan, and six Chinese families from Vietnam, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China, and one who is American-born.

Within the last two decades, the trends in Chinese and Indian immigration have changed. While the majority of early immigrants were Chinese from Taiwan, immigrants today are more like to be from Mainland China, and especially India. Between 1990 and 2010, as a percentage of the Asian population, the Indian population rose by 18% (from 16% to 34%), while the Chinese population increased by only 3% (from 34% to 37%),

and actually declined between 2000 and 2010. Ong (2003) points out that Indians are more likely to be employed in the high tech sector, whereas Chinese residents include more "global businessmen" and entrepreneurs who tend to lead more mobile lives. In 2000, Indians were granted 48% of the H-1B visas in the U.S. and Chinese only 9% (Saxenian, 2006). Mary, an Indian immigrant, explained that these population dynamics were most apparent in Fremont during the dot.com bubble:

So basically like starting at '95, '96, a lot more Indians came here for jobs. They were young, they were not married and then a few years down the line, they got married and started having families. By the time 2005, 2006 came around, they were all having kids.

To exemplify these vast shifts in Fremont's demographics, Mary shared the class directories from her two sons' first grade classes, one from 2000 and the other from 2009. In 2000, five out of 36 students had Indian last names, and 19 had Chinese last names. By 2009, 19 out of 39 students had Indian last names, and 15 had Chinese names. Especially after high tech bubble burst in 2000, many Chinese immigrants returned to China, where the economy was booming. But as Naomi, a Fremont resident noted, "It's not as attractive to go back to India, which may have high tech regions, but as a whole, the country is not doing as well as China where you have billionaires."

Increasing Racial and Socioeconomic Stratification and Segregation

Nationally, the Silicon Valley has one of the highest concentrations of millionaires in the country, and is among the wealthiest regions in the country, if not the world (Pellow and Park, 2002). Asians Americans are among the Silicon Valley's most highly educated and professional groups. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2007, Asian Americans in Fremont had a median income of \$119,994, which was 29% higher than the average resident, and Fremont's median income was nearly 30% higher than average for the Bay Area—one of the wealthiest regions in the U.S.

Despite Asian Americans apparent financial success, racial and ethnic barriers are still present in the workplace. Studies show that Asians working in high tech industries, often face a glass ceiling, and otherwise suffer discriminatory treatment in the workplace. Wong (2005) found that Chinese Americans in the Silicon Valley are paid around 14% less and promoted less frequently for entry-level high tech jobs. The lack of advancement opportunities for Asians has been associated with their higher levels of entrepreneurship and the creation of ethnic professional associations (Saxenian, 2006; Wong, 2005). Wong (2005) concluded that, "despite stories of those [Chinese] who have beaten the odds, even those who are doing well are not doing as well as their white peers" (44).

U.S. and three-fourths were professionals (Alba and Knee, 2003).

⁷ This holds true on the national scale as well. In 2009, the average Asian American household earns \$91,270 annually, about 26.5% higher than the national average, and 49.4% of Asians in the U.S. of age 25 or above hold a bachelor degree or higher compared to 27.4% of the national average (Kuk, 2010). In 1990, 71% of Indians were college or post-grad. They are the most highly educated ethnic group in the

The widely held perception of Asian Americans or immigrants in the Valley as uniformly financially successful is also misleading. There are many Asians, immigrants, and other people of color, especially women, working in low-wage unskilled jobs. The Silicon Valley, in fact, leads the nation in the number of temporary workers per capita, gender wage inequality, and non-unionized labor (Pellow and Park, 2002). Immigrants and people of color, especially South Asians and Latinos, tend to be concentrated in the most hazardous occupations, especially computer manufacturing, and live in the Silicon Valley's most environmentally polluted neighborhoods (Pellow and Park, 2002; Pitti, 2003). Ong (2003) estimated that about 45,000 of the Silicon Valley's 120,000 Vietnamese population were employed as temporary workers assembling wire boards, with no legal protections. In 2000, 54% of janitors in the Silicon Valley had Hispanic surnames (English-Leuck, 2002).

Exploitative working conditions are not only a problem for low-wage workers, but also for highly skilled immigrants. The practice of "body shopping," whereby companies lease out high tech labor on short term contracts, was especially popular during the dot.com era among immigrants from India (Kalita, 2003). Ong (2003) refers to the practice as a kind of "illegal immigration of skilled work," that produces "glamorized indentured servants" (164). Likewise, the H-1B visa program has been critiqued as producing a class of "high tech coolies" who do not have the same legal protections as American citizens (Kalita, 2003).

The divide between the well-to-do and the most marginalized communities in the Silicon Valley are becoming more apparent as manufacturing has declined (ironically heading to China as many Chinese immigrate to the Silicon Valley for jobs in high tech). In 2010, after over 40 years as Fremont's number one employer, the 380-acre NUMMI (formerly GM) plant closed, laying off approximately 5,440 workers. That same year, Solyndra, one of the nation's leading producers of solar panels, opened a new \$733 million state-of-the-art robotic facility in Fremont that employed around 3,000 new highly skilled workers. While the plant quickly shut down in 2011 and became the center of controversy over President Barak Obama's stimulus plans (for having received over \$500 million in federal loan guarantees), it exemplified the city's increasingly important role as the "gateway to the Silicon Valley" that is helping some achieve their American Dreams (though a fragile one) and leaving many others in the shadows.

The increasing social divide between rich and poor is evident in Fremont's landscape. Housing and land prices have increased at least five times since the 1980s. Dan and Patty bought their house in Mission San Jose in 1982 for \$200,000. In 2009, their neighbor sold a similar home for \$1.2 million. This dramatic spike in real estate values has pushed many low-income groups out of Fremont. Tom mourned the loss of Fremont's black middle class, which although never very large, are increasingly moving to exurban suburbs like Pittsburg, Stockton, Vallejo, and Tracey—areas with more affordable housing, longer commutes, and higher rates of poverty and foreclosure. Within Fremont, there are now several highly exclusive gated communities. The Avalon, the 275-homes premier gated community was built by an Asian developer, and according to Lenny, who has lived in the Avalon for the last nine years, Asians are by far in the majority (fig. 2.5). Just a few miles away, one can see the Avalon sitting on the hill from

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⁸ From as early as the 1980s, somewhere between 85% and 90% of U.S. semiconductor assembly was being completed overseas (Pellow and Park, 2002).

327-space Southlake Mobile Home Park, one of three mobile home parks in Fremont. In Southlake, its homes sell for as low as \$20,000, but plot rental rates are consistently on the rise, as land prices in the Valley have gone up. In 2009, residents of the 236-space, 55 and older Besaro Mobile Home Park in Northern Fremont were threatened with closure if tenants did not accept proposed rent raises, which were up to 49 percent for some tenants (Artz, 2009).

These increasing divisions in the economic and ethnic geographies of Fremont residents have led to a real disconnect among some groups. When I asked Lenny about other ethnic communities in Fremont, said he had no idea where Afghanis and the Filipinos lived. As a retired couple living in the Avalon, he and his wife admittedly lead a pretty secluded life—leaving their home usually only to go to Chinese restaurants, Asian markets, and shopping in Cupertino and Milpitas, two hubs of the Chinese American community in the South Bay. Others that I spoke in Fremont's wealthy southern neighborhoods of Warm Springs and Mission San Jose, expressed similar sentiments—though they lived in a "diverse" community, their lives were connected largely to their same-class and ethnic communities and they simply did not see or feel the diversity in their everyday lives.

The emergence of high tech, high-income suburbs in the South Bay has also created both a social and spatial divide between older and newer Asian immigrants—between urban ethnic enclaves and new immigrant suburbs. While the older generation of Chinese in the Bay Area tend to live in Chinatown, speak Cantonese, and are often from Hong Kong or China's Guangdong Province, the newer generation tend to live in the South Bay suburbs, speak Mandarin (as well as English), and hail from China and Taiwan (fig. 2.6). According to Saxenian (2006), these two groups coexist, but with very little social or professional interaction. And with all the services and amenities now available to Asian immigrants in the South Bay, most of the younger generation no longer return to Chinatown for shopping, eating, or socializing. As Omara (2005) observed, the rise of the Silicon Valley has resulted in a pattern of residents moving from the "suburbs in which they live to the suburbs in which they work" (225).

These patterns are also indicative of a shift away from the cities like San Francisco as the centers of new immigration to the Silicon Valley. Whereas in 1970, San Francisco had the highest percentage of foreign born residents in the Bay Area, by 2007, San Jose eclipsed San Francisco with a total of 39% foreign born, compared to San Francisco's 36%. In 2000, 44% of San Jose's suburbs contained about a quarter of all foreign-born population, compared to 27.5% of San Francisco's suburbs (Hanlon et al, 2006). The Silicon Valley suburbs are indicative of what Singer et al. (2008) characterized called "new immigrant gateways."

Over the last two decades, Fremont has fully emerged as a high tech suburb with a booming high-income, highly skilled and educated immigrant population that is both economically and geographically mobile. But while Fremont has become more ethnically and internationally diverse, it has also become less racially and economically diverse. Rapid growth in the region has made it increasingly unaffordable for many poor and working class immigrants, minorities, and even many whites. The increasing racial and socioeconomic divisions between high-wage engineers and researchers and low-wage, low-skilled Silicon Valley residents have created geographic and ethnic divides within Fremont, between Fremont and other suburbs, and between Fremont and urban

enclaves. Contemporary Fremont is a complex landscape of race, ethnic, class, and cultural difference and diversity.

Conclusion

Minorities and immigrants have struggled to define a place for themselves in Fremont from the time its incorporation as five small agricultural townships at the end of WWII until today. In the postwar period, the incorporation of Fremont under the model of a Garden City significantly deterred minority settlement in the region by enacting new forms of exclusive zoning, but also laid the groundwork for future minority migration through the introduction of working class industry and neighborhoods. During the period of civil rights suburbanization, minorities vigorously fought for equal rights in suburban housing and carved out a space for a small community of early suburban pioneers. At the same time, new immigration laws and the rise of the Silicon Valley on its southern border spurned the immigration of many American-educated, professional immigrants as well as various refugee communities that helped to develop Fremont's reputation as a place that was "good for immigrants." In the contemporary period, Fremont has become a highly desirable residential and business location for Silicon Valley executives and other uppermiddle income, high tech workers as well as a fair number of low-wage Silicon Valley workers.

In telling this history, I have emphasized several critical factors that have led to Fremont's emergence as a hub of new immigration and diversity. Among them, are the city's location in the West, California, and the San Francisco Bay Area—areas with their own unique histories of immigration, suburbanization, and multiculturalism. The historical presence of minority and immigrant communities in Fremont and the South Bay helped to build and sustain migration and information networks, and formal and informal community resources that made it easier for subsequent generations of suburban immigrant newcomers. As one of California's largest land area cities, Fremont's low population density combined with its abundance of cheap, open, and available land enabled it to easily entice new industries as well as residents. Asian immigrants' were especially drawn to the availability of new and affordable houses, good schools, easy access to work, and Fremont's wealth of immigrant-related services and amenities. Civil rights legislation and especially new immigration laws favoring the migration of highand low-skilled immigrants, and refugees have also significantly impacted Fremont's demographics. And perhaps most critically, the suburbanization of industry that began in Fremont in the prewar period with the growth of agricultural industries, and transitioned to manufacturing and later high tech, has helped to make a place for working class minority communities, low-skilled immigrant communities, and high tech transnational immigrants.

This account provides an intersectional history of many minority and immigrant groups that have contributed to Fremont's emergence as a contemporary cosmopolitan suburb. But it has also raised questions about what diversity and inclusion mean in the context of increasing economic inequality and geographic segregation—where Asian Americans immigration has occurred alongside the outmigration of and growing disparities among African Americans, Latinos, and other low-income residents, including whites—a place where gated communities overlook trailer parks, filled with elderly

residents and low-skilled, low-wage Silicon Valley workers. While I have stressed that Asian Americans, like all other suburban minorities, have faced significant challenges in building a home in Fremont and discrimination in the workplace, the rising wealth of Chinese and Indian immigrants, in particular, has distanced them socially and spatially from other Asian groups and minorities, and even previous generations of Chinese and Indian immigrants. In the next three chapters, I will show how this new generation Asian immigrants are reshaping the contemporary suburban landscape, while also examining how these underlying race and class tensions are being fought out in struggles over planning, design, and development in Fremont.

A Quality Education for Whom?

Education has always been at the center of suburban politics.

Michael Jones-Correa (2008, 313)

Nestled in the Fremont foothills is Mission San Jose, a neighborhood that up until about twenty years ago was known primarily for its historic landmark and namesake, the 18th century Spanish Mission. More recently, Mission San Jose has become internationally recognized for another landmark—Mission San Jose High School (fig. 3.1). Up until the mid-1990s, Mission San Jose High was a "typical" suburban American high school, made up of a largely white, middle class student body. But within less than three decades, it has transformed into a premier destination for wealthy, highly educated families from all over the world, especially Asia.

Mission San Jose High is not alone. In 2010, California's top five public schools were all majority Asian American and largely suburban. The high academic performance of Asian American students has stimulated many popular and scholarly debates about the model minority myth, the role of culture, parenting, and structural conditions that constrain and promote Asian American achievement (Pearce, 2006; Zhou, 2000; Zhou and Li, 2003). But Asian Americans' and schools have received far less analysis from a spatial perspective. Scholars have rarely looked at schools not just as a setting in which prescribed social meanings, identities, and practices take place, but also as spaces that actively shape them.

In this chapter, I investigate how schools and differing educational values have shaped spatial politics and racial geographies in Fremont. In a case study of Mission High, I argue that schools have been the major catalyst for the social remapping of Asian and white geographies in Mission San Jose. One the one hand, schools have served as the primary factor drawing Asian immigrant families to relocate to the neighborhood from around the Silicon Valley, the U.S., and even abroad. For many Asian immigrants, education is viewed as being the primary means of social and economic mobility, and thus families often make highly strategic, calculated decisions about their children's education, often at great personal and economic expense. On the other hand, the migration of large numbers of Asian immigrant families into the Mission San Jose neighborhood for the schools has been met by the departure of large numbers of white families from the neighborhood. This trend has been driven primarily by a sense of interracial academic competition, stress, and concerns over the changing social and academic culture of the schools. Families have often left Mission San Jose to go to less competitive and academically rigorous schools that offer a more "well-rounded" or "balanced" education. This is not only true of white families, but also increasing numbers of American-born Asian families, who perceive the area as becoming too heavily driven by Asian immigrant values.

This case study extends the ways that scholars have typically approached issue of race and segregation in suburban schools. These accounts largely focus on whites' efforts to seal

¹ The schools in order of their rankings included Gretchen Whitney High with a 70% Asian American student body, Oxford Academy (59%), Lowell High (66%), Mission San Jose (83%), and Monta Vista High (75%). With the exception of Lowell High in San Francisco, these schools are all located in suburban areas.

themselves off from school integration because of fears of property decline or racism, especially towards African Americans (Massey and Denton, 1993; Wells and Crain, 1997; Orfield, 2001; Kruse, 2005; Lassiter, 2006). In contrast, I show how academic competition and different educational values play a prominent role in Asian-white suburban segregation. And as opposed to previous scholars' focus how school segregation has reinforced the urban-suburban divide, I analyze how Asian-white segregation has created divides within and among suburban schools and neighborhoods.

Further this study shows how the politics of education in suburbia have shifted in the last half-century of new Asian immigration. The questions facing minorities are no longer solely about access and integration into white suburban schools, but are increasingly about a right to different values and ideas about what constitutes a quality education. Asian immigrants' non-normative views about educational quality expose the presumptions regarding minorities made by current public policies aimed at creating "equitable" and "balanced" schools, and suggest the need for a greater attention to a more diverse range of educational values and ideals that residents' hold.

Methods

This chapter is based on interviews, participant observations, interviews, and archival research on the Mission San Jose neighborhood and its schools. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 22 current and former Mission High parents, 12 students, and 10 school administrators. Among parents, 14 were Chinese immigrants, two were Asian Indian immigrants, and six were native born whites. Among students, eleven were American-born and one was a foreign-born student, raised in the U.S. Three students identified themselves as white, three as Chinese American, two as Indian American, one as Japanese American, one as Korean American, and two as having mixed ancestry (Caucasian and Afghani, and Caucasian and Chinese). School administrators included five Mission High administrators, four teachers, and one Fremont Unified School Board member.

To investigate changes in the neighborhood and school racial and ethnic demographics, I analyzed U.S. Census data for Fremont and Mission San Jose from 1960 to 2010, and demographic data on Mission San Jose High from the California Department of Education (1980 through 2011) and from the school administration (2009 through 2011).

For insights on Mission High's changing academic culture and the school boundary debate, I reviewed archives of its student newspaper, *The Smoke Signal*, from 1974 to 2011 as well as local, regional, and national newspaper databases for reports on Mission San Jose and its schools. Over the course about a year and a half of research, I sat in on several classes and otherwise informally observed students in their daily lives at Mission High.

From White to Asian American Schools and Neighborhoods

Immigration reform, globalization, and economic and political restructuring in the later half of the 20th century has changed the face of many neighborhoods throughout Fremont and the larger Silicon Valley region. But not all neighborhoods have been equally affected. Mission San Jose in southern Fremont is known to be the hub of high tech Asian immigrant families in Fremont, especially those from China, Taiwan, and India. According to U.S. Census, in 2010 Mission San Jose had the highest concentration of Asian residents of any neighborhood in

Fremont—66% compared to 51% overall for Fremont.² Among Asian American residents in Mission San Jose, 64% are foreign-born.

Mission San Jose residents that I spoke to overwhelmingly said that schools were the most important factor driving Asian American, and particularly Asian immigrant settlement in the neighborhood. Asians immigrants of various ethnic backgrounds consistently reported that schools were among their top reason for locating to Mission San Jose, or Fremont more generally. In the 1980s, Asian immigrants settling in the Silicon Valley tended to reside more heavily in Cupertino, Sunnyvale, and Menlo Park, more established communities that are closer to the Valley core and traditionally had higher-ranking schools. But Fremont and particularly Mission San Jose, offered families an enticing alternative—increasingly good schools and new upper-end housing at a more affordable price. Tina and her husband John, both immigrants from Taiwan, purchased a home in Mission San Jose rather than Cupertino in the early 1990s because they said the houses in Cupertino were small and old, and most importantly, Fremont schools were beginning to outperform those in Cupertino.

Many others did the same, following good schools and new homes in what became a rather familiar path to many early Asian immigrants in Fremont. Irene's migration history is similar to many other Asian immigrant families in Mission San Jose. When she first moved to Fremont in the early 1990s, she and her husband rented a house in Ardenwood, an area in northern Fremont with smaller and more affordable homes than Mission San Jose and highly ranked elementary schools. They enrolled her son into the Chinese bilingual program at the Forest Park Elementary, the first of its kind in the California. After several years, they had saved up enough money to buy a house in Mission San Jose. They made the move right after her son graduated from elementary school, to avoid sending him a lesser-ranked middle and high school in the Ardenwood area and get him on track to attend Mission High. Since the dot-com boom, many Asian immigrants have been able to afford to settle directly into Mission San Jose.

The correspondence between good schools and the rise of Asian immigrant population in Mission San Jose was cyclical. As more Asian immigrant families of means moved into the neighborhood for the schools, the schools got better—and as the schools have got better, more Asian immigrant families located within its borders (fig. 3.2). And only three decades (between 1980 and 2010), Mission High went from middle-of-road, relatively unknown local public school to the number one public school in California, with an internationally recognized reputation. In 2008, 2009, and 2010, Mission was ranked as the number one comprehensive high school in California, based on its standardized test scores. In 2009, *U.S. News and World Report* rated Mission High as the 36th best academic school (among both public and private schools) and 4th best public open enrollment high school in the nation. William Hopkins Junior High, its feeder school, had the highest standardized test scores among public junior high schools in California in 2005 and 2007. Its four feeder elementary schools all rank amongst the top performing schools in the state.

During the period of Mission High's academic ascent, its student population, as well those in all other Mission schools, changed from predominantly white to Asian American. Paula, who grew up in the area, recalled that Mission High used to be referred to as "Little Scandinavia" for its predominance of blond-haired, blue-eyed students well into the 1980s.

²² Throughout this chapter, demographic data for the Mission San Jose neighborhoods refers to U.S. Census tracts numbers 4420, 4421, 4422, 4430.01, and 4431.03, which approximate the Mission San Jose school attendance boundaries, unless otherwise noted.

When the district first began recording racial demographics in 1981, Mission High was 84% white. Mexican and Japanese families that had lived on and worked the local farms, nurseries, ranches, and orchards, made up the vast majority its minority residents.³ But as Lisa, a longtime resident of Mission San Jose, recalled, "The 1990s marked the end of the dominance of the white, blond haired group at Mission High." Between 1981 and 2009, Mission High's white population declined to 14%, while its Asian American population grew from 7% to 83%. The growth in the number of students of Chinese and Indian descent far outpaced those of other Asian groups. In 2009, Chinese Americans made up 49% of Mission's Asian students, Indians 17%, Korean and Vietnamese both 3%, and Japanese less than 1%. Although neither Mission High nor the district records parental country of origin, most Chinese immigrant families are reportedly from Taiwan, a trend that is consistent with the larger neighborhood.⁴ Both Latino and African American student populations, although never very substantial at Mission, declined between 1981 and 2009 from 7% to 2% for Latinos and from 1.5% to 0.5% for African Americans (table 3.1). At graduation time, it is now common for students to be divided up by 'C's and 'W's, reflecting the large number students with the last names Chen and Wong. Today, the dominant profile a Mission High student is an American-born Asian student with immigrant parents employed in the Silicon Valley. In 2010, 76% of Mission High's Asian students were American-born, and 69% spoke a non-English language at home.

The changes at Mission High over the past few decades have not only been in the racial and ethnic composition of the student body, but also their wealth. Today, many students arrive at school in Lexuses, Audis, and BMWs, otherwise known as "Basic Mission Wheels." Joseph, who graduated from Mission in the early 1980s, said that in his day everyone just drove "a car to get around in," whereas today the majority of students have fancier cars than him. In 2009, less than 4% of Mission High students qualified for free and reduced lunch, compared to 19% district-wide. And in 2005, Mission San Jose was ranked on *Forbes* magazine's list of the 500 most affluent communities in the United States, with a median income of over \$114,000.

In recent years, the popularity of the schools has driven up the neighborhood's home prices. Houses in Mission San Jose regularly sell for \$200,000 above those of other Fremont neighborhoods. In October of 2010, the neighborhood's median home value was around \$940,000 compared to Fremont's median of around \$663,000 (Zillow.com). Because of its highly ranked schools, real estate agents often describe Mission San Jose as a "diamond area," a neighborhood where prices simply will not drop. Mission's student newspaper, the *Smoke Signal*, runs a regular column entitled "MSJ Cribs" featuring the most extraordinary homes of Mission students.

Mission San Jose's top performing public schools has distinguished it as a desirable place to live for many families, but particularly among well off and highly educated Asian immigrant families. The schools have become such a defining feature of the area that residents often refer to their neighborhood by their local elementary school. In Mission San Jose, these labels carry real social cache—at least among most Asian immigrant families.

Global and Local Strategies for Obtaining a High Quality Education

³ In 1981, Latinos made up 7% and Asians 7% of Mission High's minority students.

⁴ In 2000, 51% of Mission San Jose's Chinese residents were born in Taiwan. These numbers are based on the 94539 zip code.

The migration of so many Asian immigrant families into the Mission San Jose attendance area did not happen by accident. Asian immigrant families often sacrifice for, and are highly strategic about, their children's education. Decisions about where and how to obtain the best education are highly calculated and rigorously analyzed. Education is a major driver of Asian immigration to countries all over the world, but particularly to the U.S. (Ong, 1999, 2003; Waters, 2005; Collins 2006; Ley, 2010). Chang and Lung Amam (2010) showed that Taiwanese families often plot out decisions regarding children's education from a very young age, based on their priorities for obtaining dual citizenship, bilingual education training, Chinese cultural education, and American university degrees.

Informal and formal networks play a critical role in helping Asian immigrants find information about good schools. Ads for Mission San Jose homes and schools can be found in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and India (fig. 3.3). Mission San Jose schools' API scores are also widely circulated abroad and among Asian immigrants in the U.S. Tina and John, who emigrated from Taiwan, said that while living in Texas they had heard reports from their friends that Fremont was a good area for education. The *Chinese New Home Buyers Guide*, circulated widely throughout the South Bay, features many homes in the area with the prominent tagline, "Mission San Jose schools." Explaining the importance of schools to Asian immigrant families, Diana, an immigrant from Taiwan, explained, "If you ask them, 'what's the score of this and that for this school?' They all know."

Within Asian immigrant households, education is often placed on such a high pedestal that families undergo transnational commutes and even familial separation to have their kids attend the world's best schools (Saxenian, 2006; Li, 2009; Chang and Lung Amam, 2010). Mission High students include a fair number of transnational students whose families regularly shuttle back and forth between multiple countries for educational opportunities. Though the number is difficult to estimate, Mission's Principal Sandy Prairie said it is not uncommon for her to receive phone calls from Taiwan or China, sometimes just because a child scored poorly on a test. School administrators also expressed concerns about the increasing number of "parachute kids" at Mission—immigrant youth left in the United States with relatives, friends or "caretakers" to pursue their education while their parents remain abroad—a trend that has been noted in other schools with large numbers of Asian immigrant families as well.⁵

The educational strategies of Asian immigrant parents sometimes involve purchasing a house only for the amount of time that the children are enrolled in school. Mary, an Indian immigrant whose youngest son is a freshman at Mission High, explained that she and her husband "only need Mission for another four years." After that, they will likely move out of the Mission attendance area to a neighborhood with less expensive homes. "I think that the majority of the families will just move out when their kids are done with their school unless they want to keep the homes for their kids, to send their grandkids [to Mission High]," she said. To many Asian immigrant families, the main value of their homes is the schools.

Especially among Asian immigrant families, Mission schools are considered such a prized assets that families that will sometimes rent or buy much smaller homes than they can afford, fake addresses, and shuttle several related or unrelated family members through a single house in order to stay within the attendance area. Others studies have found that Indian

⁵ Scholars have found that these transnational journeys have various negative impacts on parents, children, and relations between spouses. Families have become preyed upon, children are unruly, and marital affairs are common (Waters, 2005; Bartley and Spoonley, 2008; Ley 2010).

immigrant families will sometimes double or triple up on homes or convert rooms into garages in order to afford prized neighborhoods with good schools (Kalita, 2003; Shankar, 2008). In Fremont, several interviewees noted that immigrant families often pool their resources to purchase or rent homes in the attendance area. A *Smoke Signal* exposé entitled "Living Out of Bounds" reported that 34% of Mission High students surveyed knew someone who attended Mission High illegally (Biyani, 2004). Sally, who is Korean American, attended Mission schools illegally for years by using her aunt's address before her mother was able to afford to purchase a home in the neighborhood. She claimed that the practice was quite common amongst her peers.

Despite the many rumors that circulate through Mission of overseas investors purchasing million dollars homes in cash, the majority of Asian immigrant families work hard to make ends meet. While their salaries may be high, many are two-parent working households that rely on their salaries to support the high cost of living in the Mission area. Mary explained that most parents in the Mission area rely on their jobs as the sole means of their survival. In addition to the high cost of living, Asian immigrant parents often invest a lot of time and resources into making sure that their children succeed academically. They spend substantial sums sending their kids to afterschool programs, tutoring, and some even hire drivers to shuttle their children around to various programs while they are busy working. While certainly economically privileged above most other Americans, Mission High is in large part comprised of families that have undergone a lot of sacrifices, both in time and money to provide their children access to the best schools in the world—a sacrifice that they hope will pay off.

While the rise of high tech jobs in the Silicon Valley and changes in immigration law have provided many Asian immigrant families with both the resources and access to high performing schools like Mission San Jose, Asian immigrant parents have been highly strategic and detailed in planning for their children's education. Their sacrifices to provide their children with the best educational opportunities they can afford, suggests that many Asian American students hold their families' hopes and dreams in their hands. It is both a unique opportunity for many 1.5 and second generation Asians in America and a unique burden that they hold.

The Value of Education in Asian Immigrant Households

While many middle and upper-income families in the U.S. place a high priority on their children's education, the strategic planning and sacrifices that many Asian immigrant parents undergo for their children's education are notable. Why do Asian immigrant families place such a high priority on schools? The most easily identifiable reason are derived from educational practices in Asia, where one's level of education often serves the primary indicator of one's social status, and one's test scores the primary signifier of academic achievement (Dang, 2000). Excelling academically is the prime vehicle for gaining social status and socioeconomic privilege. As Randy, an immigrant from Taiwan put it, in most of Asia, "you take the one test and that decides your life." He described the rigorous exam system that he went through in Taiwan to that allowed him to be able to come to the U.S. for gradate school:

You have only one chance to take the high school exam nationwide and rank it. Number one high school, number two high school, all based on your score. It's nothing to do with your activity, nothing else, talent, nothing. Strictly that. When you apply to college, it's the same. One exam decide everything.

In both Taiwan and China, exams at the elementary level will determine what high school students will attend and if they will be able to go to college. Exam time is treated as seriously as most national holidays (Charney et al., 2003). In India, only students scoring the highest on college entrance exams are able to study medicine and engineering, the next best can study business, while those scoring in the bottom tier have far fewer options. "For Indians its more like, if you're not a doctor or an engineer than you're nothing," one Mission High student told a National Public Radio reporter Claudia Sanchez (2004a). In Vietnamese, one of the biggest insults you can give someone is "Do mat day," which means that one has lost their education (Hull, 2000). For many Asian immigrant families, education is considered *the* pathway to a brighter future (Marech, 2002).

While culturally derived educational values of the home country are assuredly significant to many Asian immigrant families, there is good reason to be cautious of such explanations. Focusing solely on culture at the expense of other factors can propel the model minority myth that denigrates the abilities of other minority groups, fails to acknowledge the performance of Asian Americans across a spectrum of different groups, and helps to upholds the racial status quo which marginalizes all students of color (Lei, 1998; Coloma, 2006). Asian immigrants' educational values also need to be situated with reference to other identities, experiences, and socio-political contexts and histories.

Some of these other factors emphasize the vulnerability and fragility of Asian immigrants' social and economic position in the Silicon Valley. For economically successful Asian immigrant families, education is often a critical part of their success stories, and one of the only ways that they know to help their children succeed. Irene emphasized this point while contemplating why she and other Asian immigrant parents at Mission High seemed to hold such high expectations for their children academically:

Maybe because of our own experiences, thinking that education is so important, because I'm first-generation. The way I see it is I did well. So I did fine so far in life. You know I progressed, did well, because I have a pretty good education from school, so I don't really know any other way of achieving because of my own experience.

Other parents said that education was an important legacy that they wanted to pass on to their kids. "[For the] majority of immigrants, there is no family wealth, there is no inheritance," explained Mary, "the only thing that you can give [your kids] is the skill to make it on their own." Even though Asian immigrant families in the Silicon Valley have achieved new heights of wealth and professional success, as the first generation of wealth in their families, their economic status is still precarious. Having children that succeed educationally seems like the most likely course to secure their legacy. Alba and Knee (2003) suggest that it is common for all immigrants, not only Asians, to emphasize education among the second generation for success in the U.S.

Other scholars have found that Asian immigrants often associate American degrees with a high social status and economic mobility. Degrees from U.S. colleges are important forms of social capital that demand monetary returns and job security in Asian countries (Ong, 1999;

Louie 2001; Waters, 2005, 2006; Chang and Lung Amam 2010; Ley 2010). Among Asian immigrants, Ong (2003) points out good schools "ethnicize and index their cosmopolitan citizenship" (160). A family's ability to put their kids in the world's best schools shows that the have "made it" not only in the U.S. or their countries of origin, but in the larger global economic system. Education can also serves as a means by which Asian immigrant parents seek to protect their children from the effects of racial discrimination (Louie, 2001). If children can succeed in education, parents believe that they will stand a much better chance of being accepted into American society.

Education can also serve as a means of geographic mobility and American citizenship or residency, which has its own value. Most Asian immigrants arriving in the U.S. in the post-1965 era been able to come to the U.S. because of their educational successes, either on educational or professional work visas. Like many other Indonesians of Chinese decent, Natalie was sent to the U.S. for college in the 1970s, both to get an American education and avoid social unrest during the period. After she gained citizenship, the rest of her family was able to immigrate. Ong (1999) observed that Hong Kong immigrants often strategically use their children as a kind of "health insurance" by selecting different sites for their education that will help them to get green cards and expand real estate holdings. For those children that are not able to gain entry into competitive programs in Asia, U.S. schools can serve as a means of ensuring that their kids can still attend college (Waters, 2005; Ley 2010). For students from Taiwan, an American education can serve as a means of avoiding compulsory military service (Li, 1998).

Asian American students' presence in high performing school districts has been driven by the cultural, social, political, and economic value of a high quality American education in Asian immigrant households. For many Asian immigrants, education is not considered one of the many credentials upon which they can rely, it is *the* primary vehicle to raise their social and class status and assure their families' economic and even political security. Given the high stakes of educational success for many immigrant families, it is not something to be taken for granted or lightly. The very real pressures and vulnerabilities of immigrants in the U.S. increase the burden of success placed on their children and shows what is at stake in their academic failure.

A Changed School Culture

The migration of so many highly educated Asian immigrant families to the Mission San Jose neighborhood to ensure that their children receive a world-class education and the value placed on children's academic success has changed the academic and social culture at Mission High. In its early years, Mission was widely viewed as an average neighborhood high school—roughly equal in performance to two of the other five high schools within the Fremont Unified School District (Akizuki, 2000). By 1974, Mission High had become well regarded in Fremont, but students' level of academic achievement was still poor by today's standards. Students averaged GPAs between 2.0 and 3.0 and often took classes in wood, auto, electric and metal

⁶ American degrees are so highly sought after in Asia that immigrant students are easily exploited. Ley (2010)

found that many fake institutions have been established to take advantage of Asian students seeking Western degrees. Waters (2006) showed how school districts in Vancouver used private agents to recruit students in Asia and strategically place them within under-subscribed schools in the district.

⁷ Taiwan's policy is a mandatory two years of service for all males at the age of 18. If an eligible military enrollees study at a university, he is given the option of waving the mandatory inscription.

shop (Staff Writers, 1974). Shane said when his kids were going to school at Mission in 1982, a time that he describes as before its "transition," there were many bad students. In 1987, 65% of students went to college, 40% to 4-year institutions and 25% to a community college (Walter, 1987). But since 2000, Mission High has maintained a near 100% graduation rate and in 2010 graduated 31 (out of 512 total graduates) valedictorians, all with grade point averages exceeding a 4.0. Eighty-one percent (81%) of students were on the honor roll and 94% of the 2010 graduating class enrolled in college. Sixty-four (64) students went on to study at the University of California, Berkeley and several others went to prestigious institutions like Stanford, Princeton, Harvard, Cornell, and M.I. T. In recent years, Mission High has become a school of both national and international distinction. "All the Ivy Leagues know about Mission," said Annie, a parent of two Mission High students.

Driven largely by Asian students' and parents' demands for more and harder classes, Mission High now offers primarily honors and advanced placement (AP) courses, particularly in the math and sciences. In the 2009-2010 academic year, 77% percent of juniors and seniors completed one of Mission's 52 AP sections, 85% of which were in math and science-related fields. In 2011, Mission was rated as number one among *U.S. News and World Report's* "Best High Schools for Math and Science." Principal Sandy Prairie (2011) said that the school administers around 1,800 AP exams per year (for a student body of 2,150 students). In 2005, Mission had the highest AP statistics exam pass rate of any school of its size in the world (Aboumrad, 2005). Principal Prairie attributes their success rate in part to the school's policy of insisting that students take basic prerequisites before enrolling in APs, but admitted that the policy has faced heavy parental criticism. "It's been a huge fight and struggle with our parents group because they don't understand why their kid can't take [AP Biology or Chemistry] in the tenth grade," she said.

As the students have advanced academically, so too have the faculty. Jan Frydendahl is one of four math teachers at Mission with a Ph.D. According to Frydendahl (2010), he pursued his Ph.D. while teaching at Mission because he realized that he needed to "evolve" to better meet the needs of his students. In 2010, eight out of the 31 students in his AP finite mathematics class went on to study at M.I.T.

Long gone are reports of girls' locker room break-ins and wild homecoming parties. Instead *The Smoke Signal*, dishes out advice on managing academic stress, getting enough sleep, keeping up grades, and selecting the right college. Ohlone Community College is popularly called "Mission on the Hill" because of the large number of Mission High students who attend classes there on weekends and over the summer. S.A.T prep classes, professional tutors, and other academic services proliferate throughout the Mission San Jose neighborhood. Students often attend afterschool and weekend Chinese classes, academic summer camps, and are even known to study their textbooks and get tutored on coursework the summer before classes begin. A popular Mission High cheer reaffirms the school's reputation: "Cosine, sine—cosine, sine—3.14159—2400s on S.A.Ts—and yes, we all take five APs."

The social life of the school has also been transformed. In the 1970s, administrators complained about the lack of student involvement in clubs. One student joked that the most popular student clubs were those with "no constitution, no officers, no dues, and no meetings" (Rosen, 1978). Today, administrators debate whether students start too many clubs to pad their college resumes. Mission High's long list of student clubs focus on a range of Asian cultural activities including bangra dance, bollywood cinema, Chinese yo-yo, Japanese animae, Asian pop music, and raising money for Chinese orphans.

Sports serve as another indicator of social and cultural change. Up until the 1980s, Mission High was largely known as a football school and was ranked among California's top teams for several years running. But for the past couple of years, it has struggled to even field a varsity football team. And in 2002 coaches canceled the season for lack of interest among upper classmen. According to Coach Kevin Lydon, trying to muster enthusiasm for football on the Mission campus was "like trying to sell electricity to the Amish" (Somashekhar, 2003). Students now joke that the only reason to go to a football game is to get physics extra credit (as the physics teacher is also the football coach). Meanwhile, the badminton team is larger than the football team and, like Mission's chess and debate teams, is highly competitive regionally and nationally.

In only a few short decades, Mission High has been transformed into an internationally renowned academic institution of predominantly Asian American students from upper-middle class immigrant families who place great weight on their academic success in a competitive and rigorous environment that places particular emphasis on science and math. The concentration of immigrants with economic resources and a new set of educational values, expectations, and standards have redefined the academic and social life of this once "typical" suburban American high school.

Tiger Moms, Stressed Out Students, and the Pressure to Succeed

Another significant change in the culture at Mission High has been an increase in the level of academic stress, competition, and pressure placed on students' academic success. But while stress and competition in top performing high schools is not unusual, the particularly high levels of stress and stressors facing many Asian American students are unique. It is one of the downsides of their model minority "success stories."

In the 1970s, Mission held a reputation as a somewhat "wild" school. One *Smoke Signal* reporter described it as a place where "profanity bounces off the walls in the hallways and during lunchtime [and] students are ambushed with food in daily lunchroom free-for-alls" (Amos, 1976). More recently, Mission became nationally recognized as one of the first schools to participate in Stressed Out Students (S.O.S), a program started by a former Mission teacher that instructs students and parents on managing stress. Noting troubling trends in the numbers of students seeking permission to study at home because of stress and severe mental health problems, S.O.S. was brought to Mission in 2007 by then Vice-Principal Sandy Prairie (Aratani, 2007). Today it is one of Mission's most active student clubs. According to a Mission S.O.S. survey of 1,175 students, more half showed signs of depression or burnout (Noguchi, 2009). Another report found that Mission High students average about five hours of sleep per night (Hopkins, 2011). And some say that stress has led to rampant problems with cheating at Mission High. In one extreme case, six Mission High students broke into the district's server and altered their grades and official transcripts (Aiyer and Ricci, 2003).

While the culture and peer pressure at Mission contribute to the high levels of stress and competition for all Mission High students, Asian Americans appear more stressed out, and face a different set of stressors than many of their white peers. Paula, a Mission High teacher, claimed that S.O.S. has been particularly helpful for the Asian students and parents, "because it addresses stress and Asian ethnicity and the pressure that these Asian students are under." Further, she noted that levels of attempted suicides and other self-destructive behaviors in her classroom have been more prevalent among her Asian students, particularly Taiwanese. She recalled one

Taiwanese kid who passed out in her class over a 'B' and a Taiwanese girl who tried to hang herself in the bathroom over stress and grades.⁸

One source of stress for Asian students at Mission High is their parents. Asian parents are often stereotyped as overbearing and strict. They are often described as the proto-typical "Tiger Moms," a term made popular by the controversial book *The Battle Hymn of the Tiger* Mom, in which author Amy Chua (2011) contrasts the relaxed parenting styles of Westerners to those of traditional Chinese parents. While her kids were expected to make straight 'A's, speak Chinese fluently, and compete internationally in violin and piano, they were not allowed to have sleepovers or play dates, participate in school plays, watch television, or play computer games like many of their white friends. Similarly, students at Mission often share stories of Asian parents who go to the extremes to ensure their children's academic success. They talk about parents who coach their kids to be valedictorians, scrutinize every grade, quiz and test, call or email their teachers on a weekly basis, request extra credit homework, and will even do homework assignments for them. They joke about gray-haired, stressed-out students, who will throw away an 'A' minus for fear of getting punished by parents willing to withhold meals from kids with bad grades. And they refer to the "Asian grade scale," wherein A=Average; B=Bad; C=Catastrophe; D=Disowned; F= Forever Forgotten (Noguchi, 2009). Alice, who is white, recalled that when her daughter was in elementary school, Asian parents were often anxious for the job of stuffing Wednesday folders so that they could get to know who the best students in the class were or as she said, "who the competition was." She was appalled when the winning Wednesday morning folder mother requested a play date so that Alice's daughter could teach her child how to read. While few of the Asian immigrant parents that I spoke to fit the Tiger Mom stereotype, many felt that they held higher or at least different expectations for their children than white parents. John, who said that his Chinese friends often question him and his wife's nontraditional Asian parenting style, explained, "We give our kids freedom, but not as [much] freedom as white people give to their children."9

The pressure many Asian American students feel is not only parental, but also cultural. A *Smoke Signal* survey found that most Mission High students cited pressure from family related to culture as the number one cause of their stress, anxiety, and depression (Lin and Kao, 2002). In a CNN report entitled "Are Asian Students Smarter?" that featured Mission San Jose, Stanford Cultural Psychologist Hazel Marcus argued that many Asian American families consider academic success a child's duty to their family. "It's the most important role. It's your job. It's what you are supposed to do, is to bring honor to the family by becoming educated," she said (Nguyen, 2007). Zhou and Li (2003) explain that Chinese immigrant parents often measure their own success by their children's educational achievements. "If a child goes to an Ivy

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⁸ Nationwide, Asian Americans have the highest rate of suicides at 16.8% of all adults, age 25-34 (Noguchi, 2009).
⁹ Importantly, not all students experience the amount of attention placed on academics in Asian immigrant families as stress. Upset by a 2004 report on National Public Radio about Mission High that implied that Asian parents were to blame for the high levels of stress at Mission High, *Smoke Signal* columnist Rebecca Gao (2009) wrote that, "We aim towards our definition of success not because our parents expect us to, but rather because we know what we are capable of." In an interview, Gao (2011) explained that while Asian immigrant parents may foster in their children a desire to succeed and a respect for hard work, by the time they get to high school, it is the children who push themselves. "By that point it becomes so ingrained in our personalities, in our characters. How do we know that this desire to succeed isn't us? It is us, by that point. It's not our parents anymore," she explained.

¹⁰ Many students at Mission San Jose contested the way that they were portrayed by the CNN report. One *Smoke*

Signal editorial argued that the report reinforced the model minority myth and the "misconception of the typical MSJ student as a parent-dependent, textbook regurgitating drone" (Editorial Board, 2007).

League college, his or her parents will feel rewarded and are admired and respected as successful parents. If their children are less successful, they lose face," they noted (67-68).

At Mission High, cultural priorities regarding children's academic success are often compounded by the many sacrifices that Asian immigrant parents made to get their kids into Mission. Responding to a 2006 *Wall Street Journal* article on hyper-involved "helicopter parents," Melony (2006), a second-generation Chinese American student at Mission, wrote:

When I think about everything my parents have been through in order to provide me with the opportunities that I have, I'm extremely grateful and in turn, put pressure on myself to excel. This is the main force that propels me into taking challenging courses and achieving good grades.

Like many other Asian American students at Mission, Melony puts pressure on herself to succeed not only because its what her parents expect, but also what she feels that she owes them.

The pressure that Asian American students feel about their academic success also stems from the model minority myth. Scholars have pointed out that the model minority myth holds Asian American students to a higher standard than many other groups and is a major source of stress, both for those that succeed and those that do not (Shankar, 2008). Cindy explained, "Since we're Asian, we like all the benefits that goes with being a model minority. Except we also have all the pressures, as well. We always have to be perfect. We've got to get those 'A's."

Mission High is now a place where high grades, high stress, and academic competition are an integral part of its culture (fig. 3.4). This environment has produced in part by the stresses that second-generation Asian American students face in upholding the dreams and expectations of their parents, peers, and the larger society. Many are tasked not only with upholding the model minority myth, but also their families' legacies and futures.

Dumb White Kids, Asians Nerds, and the Ethno-Academic Divide

Academic stress, competition, and changes in the social and academic culture at Mission impact everyday social relations. Disputes over Mission's education values, its curriculum, homework, and the academic performance and disparities among students, have strained social relations, particularly between white and Asian American students. The social strains elicited by academic competition and educational values affect relationships between and among Asian Americans and whites students at Mission High, and their parents, school administrators, and neighbors.

Racial and ethnic segregation is an everyday part of life at Mission High. A 2010 survey found that 72% of students thought that ethnicity played at least a "somewhat important" role in social relations on campus (Bernstein et al., 2010). Social groups tend to segregate themselves primarily along racial and ethnic lines, between whites, Chinese, and Indians. Indian students are sometimes accused of thinking of themselves as white and more assimilated than the Chinese students, and according to many, mix better with the white kids. Immigrant students are often labeled F.O.B ("fresh off the boat") or "fobby," suggesting they are non-assimilated and thus uncool. Among immigrant students, the social lines are often further delineated based on familial histories in different regions, social castes, and language groups. While students from Mainland China sometimes refuse to work with students from Taiwan, students from Hong Kong sometimes reject Chinese mainlanders. Cindy quipped that at Mission High, "instead of the

Bloods versus Crips, we have Chinese versus Taiwanese." Social hierarchies, castes, linguistic, skin color, caste, and even religious differences among Indian students can determine whom kids will work with in class and are critical identity markers (Shankar, 2008). Mary said that Indian students often accuse her son of not being a "real Indian" because he is Christian.

While racial and ethnic divisions are common to most schools and stem from several factors including peer and parental pressures and cultural differences among students, at Mission High and other high performing schools, racial and ethnic divisions often center on students' academic performance. Competition over grades and cultural stereotypes about academic intelligence drive wedges between and among different groups. "Mission High is made up of two student bodies," explained *Smoke Signal* reporter Jennifer Kao (2005), "those in Honors and those in non-Honors classes." At Mission, these are often racial and ethnic dividing lines as well.

The academic disparities are most evident between white and Asian American students (who the California Department of Education considers to be the only "statistically significant" racial groups at Mission High). In 2009, Mission High's Asian American students, including students of both Chinese and Indian decent, had a 966 base API score compared to 890 for white students. Whites make up the majority of students in the lower-division and special education courses at Mission, while Asian American students are overrepresented in the honors and advanced placement courses, particularly those in math and science. This academic divide means that white and Asian American students are less likely to be in the same classes and form friendships.

The academic divide has also generated crude stereotypes about students' intelligence and work ethic that reinforce their social divisions. White students are often labeled the "dumb white kids," "blondes," "jocks," "rah-rahs," or "theatre kids" while Asian American students are sometimes referred to as "curve busters," "nerds," and "grade robots." The racial labels extend to all kinds of social actions—those perceived as being studious and academically oriented are called "Asian" and those considered non-academic are termed "white" and those Asian American students who do them "white-washed." These derisive racial labels reflect tacit reinforcement of the model minority myth about Asian American academic success, and in contrast a prevalent assumption that white kids, especially white girls, do not get good grades or study hard. "My best friend and I are blonde, light-eved and in honors' classes. When we walk into the room, you can tell from the body language [Asian students are] thinking 'Why are you in this class'?" said Lindsay (Brown, 2001). Reacting to what she deemed as "reverse racism," Smoke Signal staff writer Anamarie Farr (2002) wrote, "I am part of a minority that is the object of discrimination at [Mission High]. No, I'm not a Gupta, Chan, Chen, Wu, or Wong. I am Farr and non-Asian...Just because I don't weigh myself down with 4 or 5 or even 6 AP classes does not mean that I lack intelligence." Alice recalled how when her daughter was in elementary school, the students organized a class vote over who was the superior race—Chinese, Taiwanese, Indians, or Caucasians. Her daughter, one of only a handful of white students in the class, did not win.

Beyond the social divide, academic performance plays a significant role in many Asian American students' identities. Those students who perform well are socially valorized by their Asian American peers, whereas that perform poorly are more likely to be socially marginalized. Because Maxine, who is of mixed Chinese and Caucasian ancestry, is in honors classes, active in school clubs, and hangs out with mostly other Asian students, said that she felt more Asian at Mission than white. Whereas Sally, who is Korean American and described herself as nearly

failing out of Mission High, said that her poor academic performance made her feel like an outsider at Mission, and led her to hang out primarily among the few African American and Latino kids at school—the ultimate Mission outsiders. Alice explained that because her daughter, who is white, had high test scores and grades she was often deemed an "honorary Chinese" or "blonde Chinese" and was more socially accepted by her Asian American peers than many other white students.

Crude racial stereotypes about intelligence and hard work not only reflect the way that students perceive of and treat each other inside the classroom, but also the way that they operate outside the classroom. Several students noted how hanging out with the white kids or even hanging out in general could be interpreted as a sign of one's academic failure. Alternatively, hanging out with the Asian kids tends to suggest that you have no social life at all. Alice said that even through her son is in honors classes with mostly Asian students, he does not have many Asian friends. She claimed that this is largely because his classmates usually talk about homework and projects and he's "not willing to become one of those robots." Sam, who is white, attributed Asian educational values to his son's struggle to live a "normal" teenage life at Mission High:

The Asian culture does not operate like ours in a social sense. They don't come over to visit [my son] after school...I wouldn't say that they're not allowed, but they're not encouraged to go and hang out with—I don't think that they're encouraged to hang out even with other Asian families. There's a lot of studying that takes place. Most of the extracurricular activity is pretty limited to either music or traditional stuff like taekwondo or martial arts or things like that.

While many of the Asian parents and students that I spoke to rebutted Sam's claims, his comments point to the prevalent perception of Asian American students and parents.

While stereotypes about academic performance and intelligence shape relations between white and Asian students, a sense of academic competition often also affects social relations among different racial and ethnic groups. Though both Indian and Chinese students tend to perform well academically, their academic performance is still subject to interracial stereotypes. Mary explained that several Indian parents have made comments to her about Chinese students being more competitive than Indians and have felt threatened by their academic success. Ellie commented that while racial and ethnic stereotypes surround the academic performance of different groups, most people compete with their friends and those in their classes, who are more than likely of the same ethnicity as they. Between white and Chinese, she explained, "We don't really compete with them because we're not like friends with them."

Competition, the pressure to succeed, and different values and expectations of academic success, have contributed to serious social divisions between and among Asian American and white students at Mission High. Both stereotypes about intelligence and the real disparities in the academic performance between affect students' identities, social lives, and as I will show in the next section, their lived geographies.

New Neighborhood Geographies of Race

The changing culture of Mission High and increasing tensions between Asian and white student and parents has not only furthered the racial and ethnic divide among students, but also

impacted neighborhood and regional geographies of race. While many Asian immigrant families move into the area in search of a competitive, academically rigorous education for their children, many established white residents have left in search of less academically rigorous, competitive schools that offer a more "well-rounded" or "balanced" education in a less stressful environment. In a clear departure from the traditional pattern of white flight based on fears of declining property values and neighborhood quality, in Mission San Jose, the rapid decline in the white population has proceeded amidst rising housing values and the entry of more well to do residents because of educational competition and values differences. A far less recognizable trend is that some native-born Asian families are also leaving the area for the very same reasons as whites. The departures of both white and non-white families from the area underscore the importance of schools in shaping the Asian-white segregation in ways that defy the typical black-white, urban-suburban paradigms.

The New White Flight

In a 2005 article in the Wall Street Journal entitled "The New White Flight," Suien Hwang (2005) argued that whites were leaving Silicon Valley schools that they perceived to be too competitive and too narrowly focused on academics, especially math and sciences, at the expense of the liberal arts and extracurricular activities. ¹ The article focused on the Monta Vista High and Lynbrook High in Cupertino. Few scholars have analyzed the issue, but residents and the news media picked up on the debate—some claiming that white flight was a reality, and other that it was not (Chen, 2005; Chien, 2006; Gokhale, 2007). The controversy became so heated in Cupertino that comments made to the Wall Street Journal by the District Superintendent, Steve Rowley, was cited by some as a reason for his firing two years later (Gokhale, 2007). In an interview with the *India-West* newspaper, former Mission High Principal Stewart Kew weighed in on the issue. According to Kew, because Asian students were leaving the district at the same rate as white students and because the drop in white enrollment had been in his words "gradual," there was not support for the "white flight" thesis (Gokhale, 2007). On the contrary, my findings reinforce many of the Hwang's claims. White students' departure out of the Mission San Jose neighborhood has not simply been a "natural" process of neighborhood turnover. Rather race and cultural disputes over education have figured prominently in the decision of many white families to leave the attendance area.

A common trend reported by many Mission San Jose residents is that every time a white family moves out, a Chinese or Indian family moves in. There are several explanations as to why. Many describe it as "natural" neighborhood turnover. Older residents who have lived in the neighborhood for years and are done raising kids sell their homes to younger families. Especially as prices of houses have shot up in recent years primarily because of the schools, many older people can cash out on their homes and purchase homes in other areas that better meet their current priorities.

While this may explain why some older residents have left the area, the exodus of families has been particularly notable among white families with young children. Between 1981 and 2010, the white population at Mission High declined from 84% to 12% of the population, a drop in the overall enrollment of white students from 1,405 to 273 students, during the same

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¹¹ This is not the same phenomenon described by William Frey (1994) as "the new white flight," in reference to poor whites leaving communities in which minority immigrants are settling.

period that enrollment overall grew by 471 students. According to many that I spoke to, the predominant trend among white families has not been to leave the area for other states or regions or to enroll their kids in private schools as many claimed be the case in Cupertino. Rather, many families have left for communities that are within only a few miles of Mission San Jose, like Pleasanton, Livermore, Foothill, and Sunol Hills. These are areas that have high-ranking schools (but not as high as Mission) and high-end homes, but unlike Mission, far higher percentages of white students, or what Leslie described as more of a "feeling for the white community." What explains the departure of white families to these nearby neighborhoods? Some credit this to the overall decline in the number of white enrollees and the swelling class sizes as the result of Asian student enrollees (Gokhale, 2007). Two parents that I spoke to also said Mission's overcrowded and poor facilities have reduced the quality of its learning environment. Newer schools built in the surrounding areas often offer smaller class sizes, better facilities, and additional funding for extracurricular activities, academic enrichment, and other amenities. ¹³

A more commonly cited reason, however, was that white people feel uncomfortable living in a predominantly Asian immigrant community. Tanya said that when she attended Mission High in the early 1990s, she and her friends used to joke about whites leaving Mission San Jose because "no one wanted to stay with us Asians." Some said that amidst such rapid demographic change, many white students and parents simply felt out of place in an area where they were no longer the majority. Several white parents shared stories about friends that left the neighborhood because their son or daughter did not get invited to birthday parties or otherwise felt like they did not fit in with the dominant Asian culture. Nina, a white Mission High senior, explained the sense of discomfort that both she and her mother have felt amidst such vast demographic changes:

When I was going to school in elementary school, like walking to school, like all the parents and all the kids would be speaking Chinese or another language so like I couldn't even understand them and like and my mom I know that she would get kind of like kind of upset because she felt kind of like excluded in a way cause like they would be like a few white moms, but that is it. And most of them like Asian talked their language and you don't know what they're saying and stuff like that, so that bothered me too, because people did it in school sometimes.

Alice said that when her kids were in elementary school, she would often hear other white parents make comments like, "What are they saying behind our backs?," when parents spoke to each other in Chinese. These comments reflect a sense of social displacement and social isolation that has contributed to some white families' decisions to leave the area.

¹² In 2000, whites in Pleasanton, Livermore, and Sunol Hills constituted 76%, 74%, and 86% respectively of the population compared to 41% in Fremont. In 2010, API scores for Pleasanton high schools were 888 for Foothill High; 883 for Amador Valley High; and 531 for Village High compared to 953 for Mission High.

¹³ Overcrowding and the declining facilities at Mission High are a perpetual problem, brought on by the popularity of Mission schools and state cut backs that have affected Fremont schools far worse than outlying cities. Mission High is part of the Fremont Unified School District, with four other high schools that serve a large array of income groups. Unlike Pleasanton and Sunol Hills that serve more uniformly wealthy homeowners, Mission High parents share their tax base with the entire district, which as a whole receives less state funds on a per pupil basis than outlying districts because of its statewide designation as a "rural" school district. Most parents and administrators that I spoke to described its facilities as poor if not appalling.

While multiple factors play into the loss of white students at Mission High, overwhelmingly the most commonly cited reason among those parents, students, and administrators that I spoke to was academic competition, stress, and the culture of Mission schools. Many white parents expressed grave concerns about the amount of homework assigned to students, the selection of course available to non-honors students, student's ability to participate in non-academic activities, the level of academic stress, and a desire for their kids to have a "normal" high school experience and receive a "well-rounded" education. By "normal," many referenced more active social lives, football games, and homecoming dances. "Well rounded," generally indicated the desire for a greater focus on sports, extracurricular activities, and the liberal arts, especially music and theatre.

Among the white parents and students that I spoke to, academic competition was also often a central concern—particularly white students' declining academic performance relative to Asian Americans. Lisa, a Mission High teacher, explained that academic competition drove many white students to transfer from Mission to nearby Irvington High, a school with a much higher percentage of white students, and lower division classes and a reputation for less stringent courses and homework, through their magnet arts program:¹⁴

Many white parents felt that there wasn't any way that their kids could compete [at Mission] so "why bother?" And to get into schools, they wanted to get their kids into the top 15% of the class and they knew they could do it if they went to Irvington. So we began to see a migration out.

Other white families moved out of Fremont altogether because they felt that their children could not compete. Natalie explained the attitude of many white families that she knew was that their children would be "a bigger fish" somewhere other than at Mission High. Alice described how families sometimes strategize to keep their kids competitive in school. One white family that she knew from the Mission area had two kids—one who was performing well in Mission schools and the other who was not. While maintaining their house in the Mission attendance area, the family purchased a condo in Pleasanton for the child who was performing poorly to enroll in an easier school, while the more competitive child continued to attend Mission schools.

Other white students and parents expressed concerns over the academic focus of the school, including its heavy math and science-based curriculum, the small number of lower division courses, and large amounts of homework and academic stress. Paula recalled discussions she had with white parents that elected to send their kids to Irvington, who explained to her that they were making the move because they felt that Mission "catered to the Asian students." She described their sentiment as:

You don't honor the needs of the white students. You've shut down all electives. The woodshop is shut down, which only the white kids sign up for. There are no electives available for the white students that the parents felt were appropriate. All you're doing is

discussed later in this chapter.

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¹⁴ In the 1999-2000 school year, Mission High had an API score of 910 compared to Irvington High's 692. Irvington's student population was 54% white, 20% Asian, 15% Latino, and 4% African American. Fifteen percent of Irvington High students were on free or reduced lunch compared to Mission San Jose's 3% (Dang, 2000). I use 2000 data on Irvington here, because these numbers have changed substantially in light of boundary changes as

upping the advanced placement this, advanced placement that. This is no longer a traditional, regular high school that is amenable to a regular kid. 15

Maxine said that she has known several people who have moved out of to nearby neighborhoods and speculated that it was because, "A lot of people, white people in particular, they would rather go to a school that's not so amped up on Chinese culture, in terms of the pressure cooker."

White families that leave the Mission San Jose area for nearby schools often focus on locating schools that will provide their children with a more "well-rounded" or "balanced" education, less academic stress, and a more "normal" social life. Leslie and Brandy, two white Mission High seniors, said that they considered transferring to Irvington High. Leslie said that her central concern was having a more "diverse" (and also white) student body, where she felt like she would be able to grow more socially. Brandy felt that at Irvington she would less like to be stereotyped—"You're not every day hearing that you're white, you're dumb, there you might hear it once a week." Alice, who is white, said that she is happy that her two kids are at Irvington High and not in the Mission "pressure cooker." Her daughter is a cheerleader and her son plays baseball, and she said that the lack of academic pressure at Irvington has allowed them to explore more sides of themselves socially.

Often enough, however, the distinctions between wanting to a different type of education and less competitive and stressful schools, and feeling uncomfortable about living in a predominantly Asian area can be a bit blurry. Alice said that the families that she knew who are sent their kids to the outlying district of Sunol Hills, were either white or mixed white-Asian families that said they were looking "less homework," "more balance," and "more Caucasians." "And they're pretty direct about it," she added.

White families leaving the Mission San Jose schools appear to be making the same kind of strategic educational decisions as Asian immigrant parents to try to give their kids the most educational, social, and economic advantages they can. While many Asian families believe that they can best prepare their kids by assuring their entre into the world's most highly ranked schools, white families tend to stress the value of a more "well-rounded" and "balanced" education in which their children can better compete.

Asian Overflow

Ironically, the good schools in Pleasanton and Livermore to which many white families have relocated to, are beginning to attract more Asian American students—a phenomenon which Alice said some whites in Pleasanton call the "Asian overflow" out of Fremont. Between 1990 and 2007, the percentage of whites in Pleasanton decreased from 91% to 68%, whereas the Asian population grew from 6% to 20%. Asian growth, particularly among new families settling into the area, can be explained by some of the very same factors that led to the Asian influx into Mission San Jose—the availability of good schools and new homes. But among those Asian families that have left the Mission attendance area, it also elucidates important interracial and

¹⁵ Mary disagreed, noting that Asian parents have become a scapegoat for many changes in the school. Woodshop, she claimed, was not shut down because of the Asian American students, but because of cuts in the statewide education budget. "There are kids that are just regular kids among Asian kids. There are in non-honors classes and would have preferred those classes," she said, "This has nothing to do with Asian and non-Asian."

interethnic divides among native-born Asians and Asian immigrants regarding the value of schools.

A point made by several interviewees is that some Asian families, particularly Americanborn Asians, leave Mission San Jose schools for the very same reasons as white families. These families tend to see the intense pressure to succeed educationally as an Asian *immigrant* value and, like white families, feel out of place in a predominately immigrant community. Natalie, who was born in China but raised in the U.S., said that she considered leaving Mission San Jose because she neither speaks Chinese nor feels that it is "healthy" to have her kids in such a competitive academic environment. She also felt isolated from her many American-born Chinese friends who have moved out to Pleasanton and Livermore and often encourage her to do the same:

They all left. I could name like five families that I used to know, lived here, our girls grew up together and one day they're just kind of go "Uh, no we're not coming here anymore" because it's foreign to them. They don't feel comfortable. Being an American, they don't speak Chinese anymore.

Maureen, who came to the U.S. from Taiwan at the age of five, lives in the Mission attendance area but chose to send her eldest son to Irvington High. She cited a number of reasons for her decision, including her son's learning disability, a desire for less homework and competition, and more family time, social diversity, space to have a social life and pursue his personal passion—marching band. "I thought, 'You know, it would be really suck to play in the marching band for a constantly losing team'," she explained. Interestingly, however, Maureen said that her youngest son is getting ready to graduate from middle school and wants to continue on to Mission High with his friends. Maureen said that she is considering allowing him to do so, mostly because he looks "more Asian," has more Asian friends, and performs better in school than his school. But she added that she and her husband (who is white) decided that he will not be allowed to take honors classes. "We don't need him to be so stressed out that all the academic curiosity is squeezed out of him," she explained, "I don't believe that's healthy."

The geography of race in Mission San Jose and its surrounding areas has been highly affected by academic competition and the differing cultural and social values regarding education. While many scholars tend to rely solely on factors of race and class in explaining patterns of race and ethnic segregation, especially in the suburbs, the Mission experience suggests that other factors needs to be taken into account. At Mission High, ethnic competition and differing social and cultural ideas about what constitutes a "good education" have both created and exacerbated patterns of segregation, both between whites and Asians and among Asians.

The Cultural Politics of School Boundaries

In 2000, a new school boundary plan announced by the Fremont School Board catalyzed race and class tensions that had engulfed Mission schools for over a decade. Like patterns of ethnic flight out of the district, the boundary controversy showed how racial and ethnic competition and different educational values helped to structure geographies of race and social relations within Fremont's schools. It also underscored the important role of public policy in shaping racial and ethnic segregation through attendance boundaries, and raised questions about

equity and diversity in predominantly Asian and white schools. While many Fremont School Board members and established residents argued that Asian immigrants in the Mission San Jose area were reaping a disproportionate share of public resources that needed to be spread equally around the district, Asian immigrants argued that they were targeted for boundary changes because of their race and academic achievement. Asian immigrants' fought hard to maintain their "segregated," but high performing schools.

For nearly a decade, between 1991 and 2000, boundary disputes embittered and embattled the Fremont Unified School District. The central foci of the debate were Mission schools. In 1991, Mission schools had the highest test scores among all five Fremont attendance areas, the largest percentage of Asian students, and the largest problems with over enrollment. That same year, the Fremont School Board began discussions about redrawing school attendance boundaries to equalize numerical enrollment, facilities, and "program equity" across the district by redistributing students to new attendance areas. These proposed boundary changes signaled that some existing Mission students would no longer be tracked into the esteemed Mission High. After several years of debating which Mission San Jose elementary school was to boundaried out and flip-flopping on whether boundary changes would occur at all, the school board finally settled on Fred E. Weibel Elementary. Weibel was the highest ranked Fremont elementary school, the third highest-ranking elementary school in the state, and had the largest percentage of Asian students in the school district (75%). The plan directed Weibel students to Irvington High, where APIs were more than 200 points lower than Mission High and white working class students were in the majority. In the plan directed Weibel students working class students were in the majority.

The reaction of parents to the boundary changes underscored how deeply invested Mission parents were in its schools. When the school board was trying to decide which Mission elementary school was to be redirected to Irvington High, Ellie, who was enrolled in a Mission San Jose elementary school at the time, recalled heated parent meetings that sometimes spilled over into arguments between parents at her brother's Boy Scout meetings. "Basically all the parents cared about is that 'Move them. Not us'," said Natalie. School board meetings often brought out hundreds of angry parents opposing any changes to the Mission San Jose district. Various protests were also organized. One included around 175 cars driving by Irvington High. Susan, a Mission High administrator, recalled that at the time some parents help up placards reading, "Our kids will never go here!" "It got very nasty," she said. At least four different parent groups opposing the boundaries were formed. Stacey, an immigrant from Hong Kong, who had moved into the Weibel attendance area for the schools, described how she and other Weibel parents sent fliers to every home in the area, collected donations, built a website, organized parents to attend school board meetings, and began a campaign to recall several school board members. Superintendant Sharon Jones, who proposed and defended the plan, was accused of "social engineering," among other things (Hull, 1999). Parents booed, hissed, and shouted profanities at school board meetings, while bearing signs that read, "No, no, no boundary change or see you in court" (Rockstroh, 1999). Several witnesses recalled meetings in which not only the students and parents were crying, but also school board members. Police officers were present at several meetings, in which hundreds of parents signed up to address the school board in conversations that often lasted well into the evening. Tanya, who served as

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¹⁶ See footnote 14 for 1999-2000 Irvington High demographics. In the 2000, the year that the boundary changes took effect, Weibel was 250 over capacity, Mission High 600 over capacity, and Irvington maintained room for another 450 to 500 students (Dang, 2000).

Mission High's student representative to the board at the time, said that she was sometimes scared to leave the meetings alone.

The disputes also underscored the differences between Asian and whites regarding the value of Mission schools. Through some residents argued that both Asian and white parents were equally upset by the proposed boundary changes, most agreed that Asian parents were the most upset and active in opposing them. Part of the reason was simply because Weibel was 75% Asian at the time, but there were other reasons as well. Stacey explained Asians were the most involved because "the whole reason that they had moved to the area is because of the school." Through working on the campaign against the boundary changes, she said that she learned that there were white parents who thought sending their kids to Irvington was a good idea because it was less competitive and their kids would have a better chance to "shine." But none of the Asian families that she knew felt the same. "Asian parents want to give their child most, how do you say, competition. They think that you challenge the children in order for them to succeed. You don't put them in an easy environment so they could feel good," she explained. Alice, who is white, had two children enrolled at Weibel at the time and did not oppose the boundary changes because she thought that her kids would do better at a more "well-rounded" and "balanced" school like Irvington. Letha Saldanha, an Indian immigrant that served on Fremont's Unified School Board's Equity Commission during the boundary dispute, explained to National Public Radio reporter Claudia Sanchez (2004) how Asian parents thought differently about the issue than members of the school board, who were at the time, mostly white:

[Asian parents] just don't take a chance with our children's education and most of us make a lot of sacrifices. This is one of the cultural differences....You don't go into a meeting with Asian parents and tell them that test scores are not important and that it really doesn't matter—your child will do well wherever they go—which is what the traditional administration tries to tell us.

Differences in educational values held by Asian immigrants, white residents, and the school board members were central issues in the debate.

The boundary disputes also showed the mounting tensions around competition, educational values, and race within Mission schools and the larger district. Asian parents were sometimes the target of criticism at school board meetings. They complained of white parents who mimicked and mocked their accents, accused them of "abusing" their children by "forcing" them to study, and charged them with making Fremont into another Chinatown. Students and parents complained of being referred to as excessively wealthy, elitist immigrants, who were not assimilating into American culture. "The fact that [Mission parents] feel Irvington area schools are somehow inferior to theirs is insulting," said Lunette Rawlin, whose children attended Irvington at the time, "They feel that we somehow don't value our children's education as much as they do, and I find this attitude elitist" (Hull, 2001).

The boundary changes were finalized by a four to one school board vote in early 2000. Anna Muh, the first and only Chinese-American member of the school board and the first successful Chinese immigrant to run for office in Fremont, cast the lone vote against the plan. The boundary issue, many said, figured prominently into her election to the school board as it

helped to galvanize Asian Americans around an issue.¹⁷ The other four members of board were white and three were known longtime advocates for Irvington High (Hull, 2000c). When the boundary changes were announced, angry parents stormed out of the meetings, shouting statements like "lynch the board" as they left (Reang and Akizuki, 2000)—an ironic statement given the torrid racial history of school desegregation in the U.S.

In response, Weibel parents initiated a series of legal battles that underscored questions of equity and difference that were at the heart of the debate. Among them was a racial discrimination suit filed by twenty Asian parents against the Fremont Unified School District (FUSD), the School Board, and the Superintendent. The suit alleged that the district's plan was racially motivated and designed to divert high performing Asian students to other schools to boost academic scores around the district. The lawsuit read:

The basis of the new boundaries was not equal convenience or equal facilities, but in fact to remove Asian students from the higher performing schools to schools that needed performance scores boosted. The Board and Superintendant Jones implemented the boundary changes for the purpose of singling out Asian students (Hull, 2000).

The suit claimed that the districts' effort to seek a "racial balance" in the school district was a violation of equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment and sought compensatory damages related to any loss in home property values.¹⁸

Meanwhile many Weibel parents shifted their focus away from legal action to the creation of a separate Mission San Jose school district. Weibel parents collected over 7,000 signatures in support of the district (as large as the proposed district student population) raised over \$100,000 in donations, and filed their petition in Alameda County (Hull, 2000b). This was the first time that the state of California had ever seen a new school district petition sponsored by a majority Asian coalition of parents. The proposed district would be over 60% Asian.

Race and class "equity" were the central grounds for the county and state's concerns over, and ultimately for their denial of the proposed district. In an editorial to the *San Jose Mercury News*, Fremont Superintendent Sharon Jones (2000) commented that the creation of a new Mission San Jose district would "promote racial segregation, cause substantive economic hardship to both resulting districts, and significantly erode educational opportunities for all students." The Alameda County School Board unanimously rejected the proposal, stating in a

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¹⁷ Susan Chan (2011), the Vice-Mayor of Fremont and the first Chinese-American to hold this position, credits Muh with making a place for her and other Asian Americans in Fremont politics. She said that the school board has since served as an important stepping-stone for many Asian American political candidates. All Asian representatives on the school board have come from within the Mission District. Mayor Bob Wasserman (2011) said that the election of Anna Muh was important for getting Chinese Americans registered to vote for the first time. "There was not a better thing to get them registered than, 'our school'," explained Wasserman, "That really made them active in politics." Li (2006) notes that Asian Americans often start with schools, especially school boards, as their entre into politics.

politics. ¹⁸ Indeed the real estate market showed the effects of the desirability of Mission schools to Weibel homes. At the height of the dot-com boom, Weibel homes stayed on the market for inordinately long periods of time during the boundary debates. Alice, who moved into the Weibel attendance area in 1999 right before the boundary decision, bought a home that had been on the market for three or four months. "It was a stale property because it was currently at the time it was in the Mission District. And it was known that it might not be," recalled Alice. The uncertainly regarding the boundary decision, gave her negotiating power and she reported that she got a great deal on the house.

report that it would carve out an "enclave of privilege" and violate state rules prohibiting racial imbalances (Staff Report, 2000). On appeal, the State Board of Education reversed Alameda County's finding regarding ethnic segregation, arguing that because the proposed district would match the ethnic composition of the neighborhood, it did not constitute segregation. They did, however, unanimously uphold the county's decision to deny the split. Instead of race, their denial was largely based on the class composition of the new school district, as the board ruled that the proposed district would leave FUSD with more low-income students.

The redistricting plan, largely achieved the district's goal of promoting greater "program equity" across the district. Since the boundary changes, Irvington High's API scores raised from a base score of 715 to 831, earning Irvington a ranking among *U.S. News and World Report* top 1% of American public schools in 2009 and 2010. More AP classes are now offered at Irvington, in part due to a compromise with Weibel parents to drop legal action in exchange for, among other things, increasing the number of honors and advanced placement courses offered at Irvington High and allowing students the opportunity to take electives that were not at Irvington at Mission High. Meanwhile, Weibel Elementary dropped from the number three-rated elementary school in the state, to the number three rated elementary in the district.

The plan left many Asian parents highly upset. Mission High Principal Sandy Prairie contrasted the experiences of white parents whose kids went to Irvington and were for the most part "very, very happy," with the experience of Asian parents, who "resolved their issues" and "made it work." Saldanha explained the sense of disappoint felt by many Asian parents:

There a myth going on that everything is so peaceful in Fremont after the boundary change and everybody is happy. It's not that everybody is happy. It's that the people who were impacted have given up and aren't seething and have just said, "Hey, they're not going to listen to us so, we are going to work though it (Sanchez, 2004).

Ironically, one of the ways in which many Asian families chose to "work through it" has reinforced the racial and ethnic divisions between Mission and the rest of the district, which were at issue in the boundary dispute. According to several residents, after redistricting Asian families were more likely than white families to send their kids to private schools, move into the new Mission attendance area, or out of the district altogether. Randy and four other Chinese immigrant families that he knew moved from Weibel into the new Mission High boundaries following the redistricting. To do so, he sold his 3,500 sf. custom-built house and moved into a 1,500 sf. older ranch-style in the Mission Ranch, a neighborhood that he felt would not redistricted in the future. Stacey allowed her daughter to finish at Weibel and then sent her to private school for two years while her son completed his last two years at Weibel. Right after her son graduated, they moved into the new Mission district. According to Principal Sandy Prairie, the district's underestimation of the value that people placed on Mission San Jose schools is why the plan failed to reach its population targets:

What I think the Superintendent and school board never dreamed would happen is that people then would be willing to sell their houses once they got out of junior high and move into the attendance area when they hit high school. And that's what we started to see happen. And that's why our population never, ever really went down.

¹⁹ Irvington High's Asian population also increased from around 24% to 50% between in 2000 and 2009.

The boundary debates did not resolve, and in some ways exacerbated extant racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic dividing lines between Mission San Jose and other Fremont schools.

The boundary changes and students', parents', and administrators' reactions heightened social tensions over the race and class composition of Mission schools and its values. To many Fremont residents and city officials, the debates exposed how deeply Asian immigrant families felt about Mission schools and what was at stake in their academic success and failure. The debates also highlighted the differences between many white and Asian immigrants over the definition of a "high quality education." And it exposed an important dilemma that Asian Americans face in education. Their status as "model minorities" made them the target of policies designed to academically balance the schools. But this "value" of a balanced and "wellrounded" education that integration is designed to foster, is not a value that is widely held by Asian immigrants. Responding to a recent proposal by the Fremont school district to eliminate the honors classes in middle schools, Fremont School Board member Ivy Wu (2010), the second Asian immigrant to hold this position, responded, "We want to close the achievement gaps, so that people can advance at the same level. But that's not the reality. Society wants to serve the lowest. But what about those that are performing well? Who's going to motivate them?" Her comments point to the very real challenges facing schools in areas with high Asian and immigrant populations, and the differences in educational values and ideals with which all schools much wrestle.

Race, Segregation, and the Politics of Education

In this chapter, I analyzed the role of high performing schools in affecting new geographies of race in the Silicon Valley suburbs. I have shown how Asian immigrants' congregation in high performing schools exposes a set of values and meanings about American education. For many high income and highly educated Asian immigrant families, education serves as a means of economic, social, and political mobility and security, and thus parents often make many sacrifices and are highly strategic about planning for their children's education. Their priorities for and strategies to achieve a high quality education have changed the culture of schools like Mission High into more academically rigorous, stressful, and competitive environments. Increasingly, these schools are being deemed undesirable by many white families as well as some American-born Asian families, who tend to value a more "well rounded" education and less competitive schools. Conflicting values about what constitutes a "high quality" education and academic competition among groups has resulted in new patterns of neighborhood and regional segregation. The debates over school boundaries brought these divisions over the value of Mission school and the social tensions they produced to a head and showed the important role of school policy in shaping social relations, neighborhood segregation, and the challenges of affecting change.

This case study has further underscored the need for scholarship that looks at race, segregation, and schools beyond typical black-white and urban-suburban perspectives. In this case study, I have shown that academic competition and different educational values play a prominent role in Asian-white suburban segregation. But racial and ethnic segregation, however derived, deserves scholarly scrutiny. It can serve to reinforce the structures of racialized power and privilege that continue to disparately impact all minorities. In this case, many of the Asians immigrants that I spoke to did not want their children going to predominantly Asian schools, and

felt that the departure of white families left them in more "ghettoized" communities that were subject to various stereotypes. But they also felt as though they had little choice if they wanted to keep their children enrolled in the high performing schools for which they had moved to the neighborhood in the first place. Many Asian immigrant parents also worried about sending their kids into the "real world" after having raised them in the Mission San Jose "bubble," a protected sphere in which they experienced little direct racism and are in the majority. In a society in which power and opportunity are not equally distributed based on one's merit (or test scores), neighborhood segregation may fail to provide Asian Americans with the social capital to break through the glass ceiling. In other words, the "new white flight" like the old, may still perpetuate conditions of racialized privilege, even for minorities of means. Such questions should be the subject of further study.

This chapter has also raised questions about diversity and equity in school policy. Consider for example the 1994 lawsuit filed by Chinese American parents against the San Francisco Public school system, which charged that their policy of capping the number of enrollees from a given racial or ethnic group at 40% of the student body—a policy which was implemented under a consent decree aimed at *integrating* the public schools—was racially discriminatory. The complaint charged that the policy implied that Chinese American students must outperform whites for admission to San Francisco's most elite magnet school. Chinese Americans won their case, and Lowell High School is now among the top five public schools in California with a 66% Asian American majority. The lawsuit was trumpeted as a success story by Ward Connerly, author of Proposition 209, the bill that end anti-affirmative action in California. As these examples and the boundary disputes in Fremont show, issues of fairness, equity, diversity, and segregation in schools need to be revisited in light of new Asian immigration and the high academic achievement of Asian American students. It is not accurate to assume that Asians have the same levels of educational, economic, or social privilege as whites, as many anti-affirmative action advocates might argue, but the increasingly complex intersection between race and class privilege in education needs to be better understood and addressed in public policy.

And finally, this case has raised questions about the kinds of educational values that are prioritized by most public schools. In the school boundary debates, Asian immigrant families challenged that widely held beliefs about "well-rounded" and "balanced" schools privileged white students and instead attempted to forge a space in which their educational values and practices were normalized and valued. Their challenge foregrounds questions about whether the goal of many public schools to produce "well-rounded" students may reward some groups more than others. Susan's story suggests the complexity of this proposition. Her daughter, who is white, graduated from Mission with a 2.8 G.P.A. and went on to attend the University of California, Berkeley on a soccer scholarship. Lisa described her daughter's encounter with an Asian American Mission High student, who had graduated at the top of her class:

She was walking across campus her freshman year, and one the Asian students who went to Berkeley said, "What are you doing here?" And [my daughter] says, "Well, I go to school here." And she says, "You couldn't have. There's no way." [My daughter] says, "Well I play soccer. I got in through soccer." [My daughter] said it was like this thing passed over her face like, "This is totally not fair, I worked so hard." But [my daughter] walked away thinking, "I worked hard too. I worked really hard to be a great soccer player.

As Lisa's story suggests, Asian Americans' reliance on education as their primary means of social mobility may be at odds with the dominant view of education that rewards "white" educational values, and may reinforce a racially stratified system of social opportunity. In the next chapter, I explore how Asian immigrants' decision to build large homes in Fremont also challenged the dominant social and cultural norms of planning and design policies, professionals, and processes.

That "Monster House" is My Home

The hearing adjourns and one has a feeling of incompleteness, of missing information. There is more here than an issue of housing sizes. On the surface the old and young quarrel over lifestyles, while underneath the silent stream of distrust cuts chasms between races and cultures, between generations.

David Ley (1995, 200)

"Let me tell you a very sad story," began Wen-Wei Lee (2008) in his address before the Fremont City Council. "My family needed more space. We decided to add a second story to our house [in] Mission Ranch two years ago. [The] city approved my permit," he recalled. But after his neighbors became aware of his plans, he said that he and his wife began receiving harassing emails and were reported to the school system for allegedly falsifying their address. "We felt completely alone, as we were targeted and made to feel that we were somehow going to hurt the neighborhood by doing what others had done, which is simply to add on to their home," Lee said. Feeling frustrated and humiliated, the Lees abandoned their remodeling plans and moved out of the Mission Ranch neighborhood to a two-story home nearby.

The neighborhood effort to stop the Lees' building plans marked the beginning of a four year battle over the practice of tearing down existing homes or significantly remodeling them to build much larger homes (colloquially referred to as McMansions, monster homes, or teardowns) in Fremont. Between 2006 and 2010, a coalition of residents, made up primarily of established white residents, led a virulent and organized campaign against these homes that were occupied and supported by mostly Chinese immigrants like the Lees. The battle was mediated by planners and policy makers in a public debate that ended in the adoption of a new design review process and guidelines for all new two-story homes and second-story additions in Fremont, as well as specific development standards and design guidelines for Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens, the two neighborhoods whose residents led the fight against these homes.

Fremont is not a unique case of neighborhood protest over or regulation of large homes. In response to growing opposition over the teardown trend that has affected as many as 500 communities nationwide, cities around the U.S. have adopted planning and design policies to regulate the construction of large home development (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2008). Nasar et al. (2007) found that 57% of the 103 cities they surveyed had used either newly adopted or existing policies to regulate large homes in existing neighborhoods, commonly through the use of building height limits, design reviews, floor area ratios, and bulk and mass controls. In the Silicon Valley, many communities have used similar regulations. To draw up their new guidelines and standards, Fremont city officials reviewed the large home policies of at least eight other Silicon Valley communities. Curiously, amidst this increasing regulatory climate, few scholars have questioned the meaning and value of these homes to their occupants or the potentially disparate impacts of McMansion regulations.

¹ Throughout this chapter, I refer to these properties as teardowns, large homes, or McMansions. The term McMansion can refer to large homes built in subdivisions of similarly scaled properties or in existing neighborhoods (Nasar and Stamps, 2009). The latter is the definition used is this chapter.

This chapter questions the seeming mechanistic neutrality of design reviews, guidelines, and development standards used to regulate large home development. I argue that such policies often contain dominant social and cultural norms about what constitutes "good" and "appropriate" design and development. They tend to privilege extant suburban landscapes and their embedded values, meanings, and ideals, and thereby naturalize and normalize established, and most often white, residents' privileged sense of place. At the same time, these regulations tend to disparately impact new immigrants, minorities, and other suburban newcomers who do not share the dominant social and cultural norms of housing and landscape design. While most exclusionary policies tend to discourage poor and working class minorities from purchasing homes in suburban neighborhoods, McMansions expose the way that planning and design professionals, processes, and regulations can marginalize middle and upper-middle class minorities and their sense of belonging and inclusion in suburbia.

This chapter situates the Fremont debates and regulations within the existing literature on McMansions and contemporary exclusionary suburban practices and policies. Following a review of my methods, I provide a brief history of the demographic and landscape changes that have taken place in Fremont since the boom of high tech in the Silicon Valley, showing how McMansion and their inhabitants challenged the social and spatial exclusions upon which these neighborhoods had been built. The next and most substantial section of this paper analyzes the implicit social and cultural norms contained in Fremont's McMansion regulations regarding neighborhood character, housing size, historic preservation, aesthetics, privacy, outdoor space, and a sense of community. I then show how city officials' and planners' personal and professional norms and the planning process drove policy decision-making. I conclude with the implications of this case study for planning and design policy in today's dynamic and multiethnic planning contexts.

McMansions Regulations and the Perpetuation of Suburban Inequality

[S]patial distinctions did not merely reify existing social hierarchies, but they helped shape ideas and understandings of them in ways that perpetuated them through time. In building suburbia, Americans built inequality to last.

Becky Nicolaides and Andrew Wiese (2006, 6)

Few U.S. scholars have studied the development of large homes in existing neighborhoods as an emerging and important phenomenon. Those that do are often extremely critical of the trend. They tend to describe these homes as market-, developer-, and profit-driven mass consumer products reflecting Americans' ever-increasing penchant for bigger and better homes (Weinberg, 2001; Fine and Lindberg, 2002; Kendig, 2004; Devlin, 2010)—or what Hinshaw (2002) calls Americans' "nouveau riche excess" (27). These scholars claim that McMansions' lack quality craftsmanship, appropriate scale, contextual features, and that they tend to diminish a neighborhood's sense of character, identity, history, and community—"the epitome of public rudeness," according to Hinshaw (2002, 27). Knox (2008) calls large homes the "nurseries of the neoliberalism that place property rights and individual consumption above public amenities and civic infrastructure" (173). Further, critics argue that McMansions promote gentrification and displacement of low-income residents by increasing the value of neighboring properties (Fine and Lindberg, 2002; Kendig, 2004). McMansions also inform larger critiques of suburbia. Robert Bruegmann (2005) reviews the aesthetics critiques of suburbia in which

McMansion are often implicated. "McMansions are the newest culprit of taste critiques against suburbs," Bruegmann argues, "judged as excessive in size and sylistic pretension" (151). Knox (2008) argues that suburbia (or as he call it "Vulgeria"), like McMansions, is characterized by "bigness and bling," "conspicuous construction," and "nouveau riche tackiness at an unprecedented scale" (163).

In contrast, only a few scholars note the potential benefits of McMansions, including that they contribute to urban infill, encourage residents to age-in-place, promote neighborhood revitalization, and increase property tax revenues (Lang and Danielson, 2002; Danielson et al., 1999; McMillen, 2006). Yet even most of these scholars favor their regulation. Lang and Danielson (2002), who have analyzed both the cost and benefits of McMansions, have also devised a toolkit to help neighborhoods develop design standards and covenants to regulate large homes. The anti-McMansion rhetoric is so popular in the scholarly discourse that the question is not about *if* these practices should be regulated, but rather, *how* (Knack, 1999; Fine and Lindberg, 2002; Lang and Danielson, 2002; Kendig, 2004; Szold, 2005; Nasar et al., 2007; Nasar and Stamps, 2009).

Critics of McMansions have also received the endorsement of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). NTHP serves as an advocate and resource for local communities combating teardowns and McMansions. The questions they raised about these homes in their literatures expresses the rather alarmist tone of McMansion critics. They ask, how can homeowners stop this "teardown epidemic" in which developers "roam their streets, looking for their next 'teardown target'?" (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2008a). How can neighborhoods avoid the fate of others that have "passed the point of no return" and are now filled with "jumbled oversized homes sitting uncomfortably next to forlorn-looking older homes waiting for the wrecking ball?" (Fine and Lindberg 2002, 6). National Trust President Richard Moe, argued that teardowns are the "most serious threat to the character of neighborhoods since urban renewal" (El Nassar, 2006).

In their effort to discourage McMansion development, especially in existing neighborhoods, many American scholars have ignored evidence about the contested nature of McMansion regulations.² Particularly striking has been the lack of scholarly engagement with the literature that developed around the Vancouver, Canada "monster home" controversy. In the 1980s, several of Vancouver's middle and upper-middle class suburbs erupted in debates over large homes that were built and occupied largely by recent Hong Kong immigrants. Canadian scholars and other observers struggled with questions about how race and class factored into residents' support of or opposition to these homes. Some claimed that Euro-Canadians' objection to new development was an expression of their racist fears over the "Hong Kongization" of their neighborhood (Mercer, 1988; Li, 1994; Ray et al., 1997). Others claimed that their concerns were based more on class antagonisms brought about by the threat of a new global elite (Gutstein, 1988; Wong and Netting, 1992). And still others argued that both race and class played decisive roles in Euro-Canadians' fears and anxieties over neighborhood change that were, at their base, efforts to preserve their economic, social, and political power and reinforce

² A few exceptions exist. In Monterrey Park and Cupertino, California, scholars note that established residents often view the building of McMansions by Chinese immigrants as evidence of their inability to conform to American ideals and values (Li, 2005; Li and Park, 2006). In Cupertino, Li (2006), wrote that, "The tension over 'pink palaces' [McMansions] may have gone beyond aesthetic concerns, representing some longtime residents' uneasiness and resentment about the economic wealth and financial resources brought by some recent Asian residents" (126).

their class status (Stanbury et al., 1990; Majury, 1994; Ley, 1995; Mitchell, 1998; Ley and Murphy, 2001; Rose, 2001).

Particularly important to my argument is Katheryne Mitchell's (1997) observations about on the ways that Euro-Canadians attempted to normalize and naturalize their position in the landscape vis-à-vis Hong Kong immigrants. Henri Lefebvre (1991) argues that dominant cultural meanings tend to get reproduced in the landscape in ways that make them appear natural or commonplace and serve the interests of those in positions of power. Many scholars have argued that landscapes are particularly well suited to masking issues of race, power, and privilege because they appear as natural and neutral spaces (Schein, 2006; Harris, 2007). Landscapes have the power to turn the "social into the natural," wrote geographer Donald Mitchell (2000, 256). But landscapes are never "neutral," Harris (2007) notes, "They are always power symbols and containers of cultural values, just as they simultaneously work to construct culture" (4). In the U.S., scholars have shown how suburban landscapes and homes tend to normalize white elite and middle class norms regarding proper aesthetics, form, and use of landscapes and homes, while hiding the social and economic privileges accrued by them (Duncan and Duncan, 2004; Harris, 2006, 2007).

Through this case study, I show that planning and design professionals, processes, and policies are implicated in the ways that dominant social and cultural ideas, values, and meanings of suburban homes and neighborhoods are normalized and reproduced. By putting in place design standards, guidelines, and review processes that reinforce dominant social and cultural norms about the proper or desirable form and function of a home and neighborhood, McMansion regulations signal to newcomers that their values, ideals, and preferences are not welcome. Like other contemporary suburban design and planning tools including exclusive zoning, gated communities, and CIDs, McMansion regulations often disparately impact poor and working class minorities by raising the cost of homeownership and enforcing certain standards of development and design (McKenzie, 1994; Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Self, 2003; Low, 2004; Fogelson, 2005). In addition, they can disparately impact minorities of means by marginalizing their suburban values and meanings. This distinction makes McMansion regulations particularly important to understanding how race and ethnic privilege not only through white Americans' class privilege, but also their *cultural power* to shape the landscape and its meanings, especially through institutionalized planning norms, policies, and processes.

Methods

This study is based on semi-structured interviews, archival research, and observations in Fremont. I conducted interviews with seven city planners, including Fremont's Director of Planning during the planning debates and two staff members involved in drafting the large home policies; three city council members who presided over the debates; the urban design consultant for the Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens design guidelines and development standards; and 20 neighborhood residents. Nine residents that I interviewed lived in Mission Ranch and were actively involved in the debates, either through neighborhood activism or their appearance at public meetings (five were against large home development and four supported it). Eleven residents that I interviewed lived in Glenmoor Gardens and Mission San Jose, the larger neighborhood in which Mission Ranch sits, but were not personally active in the debates. They included one Indian immigrant and four long-term white residents who opposed large home development in existing neighborhoods; four Chinese immigrants who supported it; and one

long-term white resident and one Chinese immigrant who both expressed mixed opinions about the issue. I contacted residents based on a list of 53 residents who spoke in city public hearings either for or against McMansions. Using public phone listings, I requested interviews with the attendees on both side of the debate, and from those that responded I collected a snowball sample of other neighborhood residents.

The primary source of archival data came from public Fremont City Council and Planning Commission steno notes from the 13 meetings held about McMansion development between 2006 and 2010. Other archival sources included media reports, resident correspondence with city officials, Fremont Planning Department reports, community meeting notes, resident surveys, and documents shared with me by neighborhood residents about their homes, neighborhood mobilization efforts, and the planning debates. I analyzed demographic changes in the neighborhood using U.S. Census data from 1970 to 2010.

To understand the visual qualities of large homes and their neighborhood context, I observed the exterior landscape and architectural design features of several controversial large homes and the interiors of three ranch-style and two large homes in Mission Ranch. I also reviewed publicly available subdivision maps, real estate tax assessments, and sales data on several controversial large homes in Mission Ranch.

Silicon Valley Immigration and the Rise of McMansionization

While new large homes could be found in several existing neighborhoods throughout Fremont, not all residents were equally opposed to them. Indeed, in working class neighborhoods like Irvington, large homes went largely unchallenged by many residents, at least publicly. Instead, protest emerged from within Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens, two of Fremont's oldest and traditionally most elite neighborhoods. Completed in 1961 and 1966 respectively, Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens were among the first neighborhoods built in Fremont following its incorporation in 1956. Both included ranch-style, single-story, two- to four-bedroom homes averaging around 1,700 square feet (318 in Mission Ranch and 1,624 in Glenmoor Gardens) on generous lots of around 7,000 square feet.

Like most postwar middle and upper-middle income white suburban neighborhoods, part of what defined the elite character of these neighborhoods was their racial and ethnic homogeneity and pastoral landscapes, both of which were enforced through planning and design mechanisms (fig. 4.1). These neighborhoods were among the early beneficiaries of Fremont's exclusive zoning regime in which large areas of existing farmland were set aside for large-lot single-family homes. Such exclusive zoning was made possible by incorporation, which itself was primarily a defensive act against working class and minority encroachment from Hayward and inner city Oakland (Self, 2003). In addition, early Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Garden residents took advantage of FHA and VA financing in which the standards for racially and ethnically exclusive housing developments were embedded (Jackson, 1985). Even more, both neighborhoods initially employed CC&Rs that dictated minimum house sizes, costs, setbacks, heights, and landscaping. For nearly a half-century, these restrictions protected the homogenous racial, ethnic, and spatial character of these neighborhoods.

Because of these protections, the populations of Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens were slower to change than many other Fremont neighborhoods. But in the 1990s, when the Silicon Valley experienced unprecedented growth as a result of high tech boom, the composition of Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens began to change. Because of its location within the

prized Mission San Jose High attendance area and because its homeowners association had long since disbanded, Mission Ranch experienced the most dramatic changes. According to the U.S. Census, between 1990 and 2010, Mission Ranch's white population decreased from just over 90% to less than 28%, while its Asian population grew from around 7% to 67%, mostly among residents of Chinese descent (table 4.1).³ A 2006 city directory of Mission Ranch residents showed that about 50% of residents had Chinese last names at the time the controversy began.

Alongside new Asian immigration in the Silicon Valley came feverish development and dramatic changes in housing sizes and styles. Many new large home developments were built throughout Fremont, and especially in Mission San Jose. Established residents who could recall that these areas had only years before been filled with strawberry fields, apricot and olive groves, cow pastures, and ranches often objected to the pace, density, and character of this new development. Expressing many established residents' distaste for the character of new development, one observer compared Mission San Jose's "densely packed" residential development filled with "tasteless monster homes" to its older homes that "proudly display beautifully mature gardens and palm-lined streets" (Loyd et al., 2000). Fremont's pro-growth city council, eager to attract the Silicon Valley wealth into its fold, allowed the growth of "greenfield McMansions" (Nasar and Stamps, 2008) to continue largely unabated.

But housing supply was not able to meet the demand. Competition was stiff and home prices soared throughout the dot-com era and beyond. Existing neighborhoods, especially those in desirable areas with relatively small and affordable homes on large lots like Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens, offered prospective homebuyers the opportunity to expand or rebuild a small house, often for less than the cost of purchasing a new or existing home in a large home subdivision. By 2006, two existing single-story homes had been torn down in Mission Ranch to make way for new homes between 4,000 and 5,000 feet and three others soon followed (fig. 4.2). Four out of the five of these controversial new homes were built and occupied by Chinese immigrants.⁵

It was not only the size of new homes that raised the ire of many established residents, but also their design. While older homes had low-pitched roofs, rustic exteriors, patios, porches, picture windows, large lawns, and lush landscaping, newer homes like a house on Covington Street in Mission Ranch, had none of these familiar features. It had palatial Italianate doors framed by an arched grand entryway, a Mediterranean red tile roof, and was finished in pink stucco. A high wooden fence secured the entire perimeter of the property and the front yard featured a triple-tiered cascading fountain, elaborate stone path, and very little lawn or shrubbery (fig. 4.3).

Throughout the Silicon Valley and in many new Fremont developments, such homes were common. So much so that they had generated the popular nickname of "pink palaces" or "pink elephants" for their signature color and size (Li and Park, 2006). Though considered an

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³ In 2010, the census block boundaries for the Mission Ranch neighborhood changed, making it difficult to compare 1990 and 2010 data. However, these figures consistent with the larger Mission San Jose neighborhood.

⁴ Housing projects slated for the open space have often been fiercely contested in Fremont. For example, in 1994 the developer of the Avalon, a gated community built along the famed Mission Peak hillside, was forced to set aside 1,500 acres of open space for the city because of neighborhood protests (Viloria, 1996). Such compromises, however, have been by far the exception not the rule in Fremont.

⁵ The number of homes that were had been rebuilt in Mission Ranch was small compared to city as a whole. At a city council meeting in June 24, 2008, the Planning Director Jeff Schwob reported to the city that they had receive about 98 applications in the last year and a half city for second-story additions and major home remodels.

eyesore by many established residents, these housing styles and sizes were permitted under both Mission Ranch's and Glenmoor Gardens' existing zoning. But this practice of tearing down or significantly remodeling existing homes to build homes of twice or even three times the original house size generated backlash from established residents and raised serious concerns among city officials and planners.

The Politics of Design Regulation

They think, "You come here driving a Mercedes. You live in big houses, we live in small houses. You get all the sunshine, we get all the shadows."

- Ben Liao, Cupertino, CA resident (Stocking, 1999)

The controversy began in 2006, when the Lees approached their neighbors about plans to demolish their ranch-style Mission Ranch home and replace it with a new 4,200 square foot home. One of the Lees' neighbors, Nishit Vasavada, who had emigrated from India, opposed the changes and at the refusal of the Lees to change their plans, began to rouse his neighbors in opposition to their proposed development. Vasavada and other residents began a letter writing campaign to the owners and petitioned the planning department to intervene. When the planning department refused to do so, noting that the home was being constructed in accordance with citywide regulations, they petitioned the city council to change the regulations. In December 2006, members of the newly formed Preserve Mission Ranch presented a petition to the city council calling for a moratorium on the construction of all new two-story homes in Mission Ranch.

Between 2006 and 2010, both supporters and opponents of large home development engaged in heated public debates about these homes. Both sides aligned largely, though not exclusively, along racial and ethnic lines. By most accounts, members of Preserve Mission Ranch and other opponents of large home development were mostly older, white, long-term residents. Among the 30 residents that spoke out against McMansion development publicly, 23 had European last names and many reported in public meetings that they had lived in Mission Ranch or Fremont for many years. Vasavada, one of the co-founders of Preserve Mission Ranch, was the only Indian American resident to publicly speak out against large home development. In contrast, supporters of large homes were largely Chinese immigrants. Of the 23 members that publicly spoke in support of large home development, 18 had Chinese last names. Among those that I spoke to, all were recent immigrants.

The debates resulted in the adoption of two new city policies. The first came out of the city's attempt to find an "interim solution" to the problem. The planning department suggested a citywide design review process and design guidelines for all two-story single-family homes, second-story additions to existing homes, and any project that involves "substantial expansions," which the city council unanimously approved in 2007 (City of Fremont, 2009). City officials then directed their attention to resolving the issues raised in Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens directly. In September 2008, the council imposed a moratorium on construction permits for all new two-story homes in these neighborhoods while they drafted new neighborhood-specific design guidelines and zoning standards. In April 2009, the city adopted the design guidelines and zoning standards on a trial basis and in July 2010, both the planning commission and the city council unanimously voted to make them permanent. The design guidelines provide planners with a sense of what they should consider when approving building or remodeling plans

in these neighborhoods. The development standards changed these neighborhoods' zoning designations, maximum permissible floor-to-area ratios, setbacks, and number of floors.

City officials proclaimed that the new guidelines and standards represented a compromise and a fair resolution to the debate. But I argue that they largely reflected the interests of McMansion opponents and not those of supporters. In 2010, just before the passage of the Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens' design guidelines and standards, supporters of large homes collected 100 signatures opposing the new guidelines—85% of which were from residents with Chinese last names. Of the large home proponents that I spoke to, no one agreed with the regulations or felt they represented a fair compromise. City officials' conciliatory claims reinforced an illusion that the new guidelines and standards established a neutral set of policies and principles to promote good design. But in fact, Fremont's McMansion policies made several normative claims about the proper and appropriate uses, values, and meanings of suburban homes and landscape design, including those regarding neighborhood character, housing size, historic preservation, aesthetics, privacy, outdoor space, and sense of community that favored the positions of McMansion opponents and reinforced the dominance of their claims.

Respecting and Retaining a Neighborhood's Existing Character

The central concern of large home design and planning policies was to maintain the "character" of Fremont's existing neighborhoods. The new citywide design review process was designed explicitly to consider the design of new two-story homes and proposed additions "in the context of the surrounding neighborhood" (City of Fremont, 2009, 1). Mission Ranch's design guidelines explain that maintaining a visual fit among properties ensures that a building's or a site's character not be "irreversibly damaged or diminished" by introducing "inappropriate" materials and "unrelated" features or by removing or changing its elements (Hardy et al., 2009, 16). The neighborhood's "character defining features," the guidelines state, are *the* primary contributors to its "enhanced value and special standing" among Fremont neighborhoods (Hardy et al., 2009, 18). Accordingly, all alterations or additions to existing properties should be "compatible" both in size and architecture with the established neighborhood design. To achieve compatibility, the design guidelines establish specific design and landscape features that planners should "encourage" and those that residents should "avoid." Designs that are encouraged reflect traditional ranch-style architecture and landscape design. Enhanced by illustrative sketches of ranch-style home elements, the guidelines specify features such as façade and roofing materials, trim and decorative details, and garage door styles. In contrast, sketches of McMansion homes provide illustrative examples of design elements to avoid that are equally specific. These include wrought iron fencing, "grand entries," and Victorian, Italianate, or other "ornamental" front doors that are "unrelated to prevailing materials and character-defining features of the neighborhood" (Hardy et al., 2009, 20) (fig. 4.4).

The guidelines' emphasis on design conformity reinforced the primacy of existing development patterns and responded to complaints by McMansion opponents that cheap, modern, and "out-of-scale" building practices were producing housing styles that failed to "blend in" and "fit in" with the rest of the neighborhood. Lisa Gaines (2010) complained that a neighboring large home was "over-the-top" and "looks like it belongs in Malibu" rather than her "quaint little neighborhood" of Mission Ranch. "People that live in Mission Ranch want it to

⁶ In this chapter, though most references are based on the Mission Ranch guidelines and standards, similar, if not the exact same, wording is also contained in the Glenmoor Gardens' guidelines and standards.

stay Mission Ranch and not let it become Mission Mish-Mosh," argued Janet Barton (2008). Mission Ranch resident Robert Tavares (2010) commented that McMansions created "an eclectic neighborhood and that's just not *our* neighborhood" (emphasis added).

McMansion owners and supporters, however, did not feel that conforming to the existing styles of development enhanced the value of their properties or neighborhood. In fact, supporters claimed that their modern additions and improvements to their homes were raising their property values and those of the entire neighborhood. Mission Ranch resident, James Chen (2008) argued that large, remodeled homes represented the "organic growth" of the Mission Ranch neighborhood that made the entire city a more attractive place in which to live.

Moreover, McMansion supporters did not agree that the value of their homes stemmed from their particular ranch-style design. Instead, the main value of these homes was their affordability and location in one of the nation's best school districts. Mu-En Stegg (2008) said that she looked at over 100 houses throughout the San Francisco Bay Area before settling in Mission Ranch. "We did not move into our house because we wanted a one-story ranch. I moved in here because I wanted to give my children the best education in the best home that I could afford," Stegg explained. Several families had moved from the nearby Weibel neighborhood after the Mission San Jose High attendance boundary was redrawn in 2000 to exclude Weibel. Because Mission Ranch was within walking distance of Mission San Jose High, moving into the neighborhood ensured that their children could continue to attend Fremont's most highly ranked schools and would be safe from any future attendance boundary changes.

The Value of Small Single-Family Homes

Another central aim of the McMansion regulations was to control the size and bulk of new homes. In Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens this was done through the adoption of special neighborhood zoning standards, R–1–8–MR (for Mission Ranch) and R–1–6–GG (for Glenmoor Gardens). These standards increased the front, rear, and side yard setbacks and reduced height limits and floor-to-area ratios (F.A.Rs). In Glenmoor Gardens, the standards forbade the construction of two-story homes—a restriction favored by Glenmoor Gardens HOA officials who publicly spoke about their distaste of the 1.5-story limit contained in their existing CC&Rs. In Mission Ranch, two-story homes were permitted, but their maximum F.A.R of 0.3 was 40% less than the citywide standard, and 10% less than the standard for one-story homes, which was supposed to encourage residents to expand out rather than up. Taken together, these new standards reduced the maximum allowable square footage of Mission Ranch homes from around 7,000 to 3,100 square feet for two-story homes and to 4,100 square feet for one-story homes, and in Glenmoor Gardens from around 5,600 to 3,600 square feet for one-story homes (fig. 4.5). Residents were permitted to add on to their homes, but only in ways that maintained their relatively modest size and enhanced the single-story character of the neighborhoods.

These standards explicitly responded to opponents' complaints about the height and bulk of new homes. McMansion opponents claimed that the new homes were out-of-scale with their existing small, single-story homes. Many said there were plenty of other neighborhoods in Fremont where one could purchase two-story homes. "If you want a McMansion move up on the hill," wrote one Mission Ranch resident in response to a planning questionnaire about the

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⁷ In 2007, Fremont adopted a maximum citywide F.A.R of 0.7 for all residential properties. These numbers compare the maximum build out in 2006, the year that the controversy began and before citywide F.A.Rs were imposed, and 2010, the year that new development standards were passed.

new regulations (Anonymous, 2010). Others argued that neighborhoods that were built as single-story should be required to remain that way to protect the "integrity" of the neighborhood.

The new standards, however, made few concessions to McMansion supporters who argued that the increased size of homes served several purposes. First, larger homes helped residents realize the value of their investment. Many felt that their home was first and foremost an investment—both in their children's future (giving them access to Mission San Jose schools) and in their own financial futures. Building their homes to the maximum allowable size and with the most modern features maximized their resale value.

Another argument made by McMansion supporters for bigger homes was that larger homes accommodated greater family densities. Asian immigrant households commonly respect joint family systems customary of their native countries, and invite parents and other extended relatives to live with them. Steve, an American-born Chinese resident of Mission San Jose, explained for Chinese, making room in your household for extended family members is a way of taking care of your family. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 9.6% of Fremont's Asianheaded households include three or more generations, compared to only 3.7% of non-Hispanic whites. These numbers are likely low, given that many of the Asian immigrants I spoke with said their parents live with them for only part of the year, for periods as short as a few weeks to as long as 10 months out of the year because of their parent's temporary visa status. Huang Kai (2008) lamented that if he was not able to build a second story onto his existing home in Mission Ranch, he might have to send his parents to a senior home. "We are not looking to build a fancy house," Kai told the city council, "we just need a functional house [where] we can take care of each other at home. A home carries hope and happiness. We want [the] ability and options to create a better home the way we need it to be." McMansion supporters told me that two-story homes were particularly important because it allowed them to have two master suites—one for their parents on the first floor and one for themselves on the second. With more people in their households, they argued, came the need for bigger homes.

In addition, supporters argued that the size of new homes reflected the modern middle-class standard. In 2007, Daniel Lau, an immigrant from Taiwan, presented studies to the city council showing that in the San Francisco Bay Area new homes typically ranged from around 2,200 to 3,700 square feet. Homes built in the 1950s and 60s to accommodate small nuclear families, Lau (2007) argued, were simply too small to support new families who required space for home offices, gyms, guest bedrooms, and kids' playrooms.

Preserving the Historic and Unique Elements of a Neighborhood

One of the more contested aspects of the new design guidelines and standards was their special application within the two neighborhoods whose residents were most vocal and active in opposing large home development. City officials defended their actions based on the need to preserve the "historic" and "unique" features of these "treasured" Fremont neighborhoods. Comparing Fremont to Palo Alto, which had adopted similar design guidelines to protect postwar homes built by renowned architect Joseph Eichler, Councilmember Anu Natarajan (2006) argued, "although we don't have Eichlers, some of our ranch-style homes are as symbolic and need to be preserved." The design guidelines for Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens placed great emphasis on defining and preserving their "historic" elements. To draw up the design guidelines and standards, planners hired an architectural historian to study the neighborhoods and to assist their urban design consultant in identifying their "distinctive elements."

McMansion opponents also placed great emphasis on preservation. "Mission Ranch is a unique and treasured neighborhood, and we want to preserve its integrity, its ambiance, and the quality of our life here," reads the Preserve Mission Ranch (2007) website. "Leave it to Beaver Style Forever!" wrote one resident in response to a neighborhood survey about the new guidelines and standards (Anonymous, 2010a). For some, it seemed that architectural preservation was entangled with a way of life they enjoyed and which McMansions threatened. For others, architectural preservation was simply a tool to maintain the existing character of the neighborhood.

The guidelines' focus on historical preservation, however, did not respond to McMansion supporters, who said they did not consider older homes particularly valuable. Instead, McMansion supporters described old homes as headaches—prone to multiple problems that cost valuable time and money. The Lees claimed that the reason they planned to tear down a substantial portion of their Mission Ranch house was that a structural engineer said it would be as costly to add onto their old house as to build a new one (Fernandez, 2006). For immigrant professionals who often worked late into the evening or whose U.S. residency was based upon maintaining employment, taking time off to do home repairs was considered very costly.⁸

The guidelines also failed to respond to McMansion supporters' desires for modern, new homes. "One thing you need to understand about the Chinese is we prefer to live in new homes," said Fremont resident Steven Wang (DelVecchio and Pimentel, 2001). Every Asian family that I asked agreed. Both Chinese and Indian immigrants commonly described new homes as a practical means of creating wealth and stability in a new place. Many claimed that new homes gained in value quicker than old homes, required less maintenance, and were better suited, or could be customized to suit, their modern lifestyles and multigenerational households. In Fremont, McMansion supporters tended to see the design guidelines as attempting to freeze the neighborhoods in time and refusing to embrace the current times and modern design values.

Aesthetic Critiques of McMansion Design

Fremont's new regulations also placed great emphasis on housing and landscape aesthetics. The new citywide design guidelines stress aesthetics in various elements including massing, articulation, and materials. The guidelines, for instance, warn against square or "blocky" homes with minimal architectural detail and urge avoiding the "relentless, dull, and overwhelming appearance" created by the use of a single material (City of Fremont, 2007, 4). Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens' design guidelines suggest that aesthetic quality should be measured by how well a property fits with its existing surroundings. For instance, the guidelines recommend traditional ranch-style home practices like painting front doors in signature colors, while cautioning against properties that attract "undue attention" and elements found in new homes like copper gutters and simulated stone roofing, which is "coarse, conspicuous, and lacks subtlety" (Hardy et al., 2009, 22).

These aesthetic guidelines responded to McMansion opponents' concerns that large homes were in poor taste, "tacky," and "outlandish." And indeed, the planning commission report that urged the city council to adopt the neighborhood guidelines argued that they were

⁸ Many immigrants in the Silicon Valley are on H-1B visa status, which requires that they be sponsored by an employer and maintain employment to remain within the U.S.

⁹ Preferences for new, modern homes that require little maintenance have also been found among Chinese in Vancover, Monterrey Park, and in Hong Kong (Ho and Bedford, 2006; Lo, 2006; Li, 2009; Ley, 2010).

necessary to address the negative impacts of large homes on current residents' "aesthetic sensibilities" (City of Fremont, 2010).

Notably absent from the report is a concern for the aesthetic sensibilities of McMansion supporters, who often said that they preferred the look and function of modern-style housing. "We strongly welcome more new homes to be built," wrote supporters in a group letter to the city council, "so that we can live in modern and more beautiful communities" (De Benedetti, 2007). In China and Taiwan, such modern, and ironically, European-inspired housing styles are commonly associated with the rising middle and upper classes and are well regarded as attractive and desirable (Chang, 2006; Zhang, 2010). The contrasting views about the beauty of McMansion design between supporters and opponents underscore Duncan and Duncan's (1997) point that, "There is no such thing as 'mere aesthetics.' There is always a politics of aesthetics, and an aestheticization of politics" (170). John Archer (2005) argues that aesthetic values of both older and newer suburban homeowners should be equally recognized and valued:

Just as homeowners who have bought uniform tract houses and those living in stringently regulated master-planned communities have not regarded them as oppressive of their own senses of taste and beauty, those who make individualized alteration do not see their homes as sore thumbs or affronts to their neighborhood's spatial cohesion. Rather, a given house with its sometimes idiosyncratic improvements not only suits the family's practical needs, but because it is the product of the owners' endeavors, becomes an extension of the residents' aesthetic conventions (363).

Fremont's McMansion policies, however, did not give equal weight to the aesthetic considerations of both older and newer housing and residents, but rather privileged the former.

A Man's Home is His Castle

Another social and cultural norm embedded in the new regulations concerns the issue of privacy. According to new citywide guidelines, "back yards are typically private and more personalized. These should be designed for privacy from neighbors" (City of Fremont, 2007, 4). They suggest plantings in front of windows and, in Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens, locating windows "to minimize visual intrusion into adjacent properties" (Hardy et al., 2009, 19). Visual distance is further established by increasing the required setbacks to adjacent properties from five to nine feet on the first floor and from five to 12 feet on the second floor.

Privacy concerns were paramount to McMansion opponents. Many complained about McMansions' security cameras and second-story additions providing views into their back yards. "We want to maintain the privacy afforded us by the single-story homes that surround us. This privacy, that we value highly, is destroyed by a two-story home or addition," reads the Preserve Mission Ranch website. Some spoke of their privacy as an inherent right of homeownership.

Among McMansion supporters, however, the issue of privacy was much less important, whereas their rights as property owners were paramount. McMansion supporters argued that, like all previous owners, they should be able to build what they wanted as long as it fell within the existing planning regulations. Mission Ranch resident Yencheng Chen (2010) argued that the restrictions constituted "a fundamental violation of the constitutional rights of individual freedom." Other McMansion supporters argued that imposing strict regulations and standards on some neighborhoods and not others placed an unfair and disproportionate burden of time and

money on new residents. "Taking away the right to add additional living space with two-story homes," wrote Daniel Lau in a letter to the city council, "simply violates the basic rights for others as part of the American dream" (De Benedetti, 2006).

The Value of the Great Outdoors

Another area in which Fremont's new design guidelines and standards favored McMansion opponents involves the use and value of the outdoors. The new citywide design guidelines state that, "independent of the setbacks required by each zoning district" each lot shall be provided with a "reasonable flat usable rear yard area" no less than 15 x 20 feet (City of Fremont, 2007, 9). In addition to the increased setbacks, the design guidelines for Mission Ranch suggest that second stories be located and configured to retain existing views to and of the hills, which "add to the value and enjoyment of each property and contribute to the neighborhood's very distinctive sense of place" (Hardy et al., 2009, 21).

These guidelines reinforce claims made by McMansion opponents that outdoor space is intrinsically valued and valuable. The guidelines quite explicitly respond to opponents' complaints that McMansions cast shadows over their existing properties, impair views to the bay and hills, and reduce access to sun. More implicitly, they responded to opponents' claims that the original neighborhood design's emphasis on outdoor space should be respected. Preserve Mission Ranch's website contrasts the value placed on the outdoors in McMansion and ranch-style homes:

[W]ith more space and amenities inside, and smaller yards outside, the entire "value" of newer homes is inside the home. Significant amount of value for ranch style homes is outside the home—in the large, private backyards, and the openness and warmth of the neighborhood. And that is what goes away when you put 4000+ sf homes on relatively small (about quarter acre or less) lots.

McMansion supporters did not completely disagree. Several Mission Ranch Chinese immigrant residents told me that neither they nor their children use outdoor space as intensively as their white neighbors. Rather they desired homes with playrooms, piano rooms, and rooms for entertaining guests, which they considered more important than lawns, landscaping, or views. Many also perceived the requirement to maintain greenery as both time and energy intensive. Daniel Lau (2011) said that Chinese immigrants will often let their lawns die because of the time and expense of maintaining them, but added that a benefit of this practice is that these homes are more "environmentally friendly" than those with large lawns. In a further rebuttal of ecological critiques of McMansions, Lau noted that newer homes that were well insulated with new windows and upgraded systems might be just as energy efficient as the older homes. In the Vancouver monster homes debates, scholars also pointed out that according to fengshui principles, outdoor greenery, especially trees, obstructs residents' *qi* (or life force according to Taoist beliefs) and is considered undesirable by many Chinese (Marjury 1994; Ley, 1995; Mitchell, 1998).

A Deteriorating Sense of Community

The new guidelines also make implicit claims about the value of a neighborhood-based

sense of community. Fences are discouraged, as the guidelines state that they reduce a neighborhood's sense of "openness" and "friendliness" (Hardy et al., 2009, 12). Instead, the guidelines emphasize maintaining traditional ranch-style elements like their "informal but inviting front doors" that "beckon, shelter, and welcome visitors and connect the interiors—and the owners—to the street and to the neighborhood" (Hardy et al., 2009, 14).

The guideline's emphasis on the value of maintaining a sense of openness and friendliness reinforced claims made by opponents that McMansions threatened their sense of community. Many Mission Ranch residents feared that speculative investors, rather than "real" residents, were developing the large homes (through four out of the five controversial homes were rebuilt by the same residents who occupied them). Sam, who was raised in Glenmoor Gardens and now lives in a neighborhood of Mission San Jose that, like Mission Ranch, has been dramatically changed by McMansions, argued, "they built McMansions because their lives were contained in those homes, whereas we all had small houses and our lives were more outside" (emphasis added). Newer residents, he said, often "simply built their McMansions and shut the doors." Mission Ranch resident Janet Barton (2007) suggested that McMansions violated the time-honored principles of good neighboring. For some established residents, new development was experienced as a sense of loss over the shared values that once held their neighborhoods together. While many could remember a time when kids rode their bikes freely in the streets and neighborhood block parties, Fourth of July barbeques, and trick-or-treating were the norm, they associated McMansion development with the loss of this way of life.

McMansion supporters found the assertion that they and their homes were responsible for a declining sense of community troubling. In contrast to many opponents claims about the speculative investors, Fred, a Chinese immigrant McMansion supporter, described the families that built larger homes in Mission Ranch as "down-to-earth nice family [that] want to live in this nice neighborhood. Start up their family, and they're very simple. They're all new immigrants. They work very hard." It was unrealistic, Fred and others claimed, to expect two working parents, who had limited English language proficiency and spent their evenings and weekends shuttling their kids around to various activities, to engage with their neighbors in the same way that families did in the 1960s or 70s. Further, it was unrealistic to assume that immigrant families or anyone else locate community primarily or solely within the boundary of a neighborhood. For many McMansion residents and their supporters, the homes into which they welcomed their friends and families and connected with those overseas, were just as, if not more, important spaces for creating and fostering their sense of community.

Fremont's McMansion debates provide a lens into the social and cultural politics of suburban development and regulations, especially in neighborhoods impacted by the new global economy and immigration. While McMansion opponents claimed that respectful neighboring included conformity to the existing form and character of development, supporters claimed a right to different priorities, uses, values, and meanings of the home. While McMansion opponents spoke about the value and beauty of their small homes designed for single-family nuclear households, supporters noted the value of large homes to accommodate multigenerational households, maximize the value of their investments, and provide access to Mission San Jose's esteemed schools. While McMansion opponents spoke of the importance of their historically rooted practices, supporters claimed the need and desire for new and modern housing and its aesthetic. And in contrast to many McMansion opponents' ideal of a community in which the values of privacy, use of outdoor space, and active neighboring were commonly

held, supporters claimed a neighborhood should respect their private property rights and their different ideals of community (table 4.2).

Planning Processes and Marginalized Minority Voices

Why were established residents able to gain such a foothold in this debate and influence city policy in such significant ways? Leonie Sandercock (2003) argues that planning processes and professionals consistently marginalize minority voices and their participation. Following Sandercock, I argue that city officials, planning professionals, and the public process gave established residents the upper hand. Planners and policy makers tended to share established residents' view that "good design" was grounded in spatially homogenous, relatively static and stable neighborhoods. In addition, the public process favored organized, vocal, and articulate residents that understood the importance of and easily worked within the established system.

Some city officials were inclined to agree with the views of established residents, in part because they were also long-time Fremont residents. On the 2010 city council, which fought hard for regulations, three out of five members were white and had lived in the area for at least 35 years. One had grown up in Glenmoor Gardens. Each of these members showed their support of McMansion opponents early on in the debate. In 2006, Mayor Bob Wasserman (2006), a long-time Fremont resident, expressed his support for new regulations based on the principle that, "[P]eople should be allowed to do things that fit the neighborhood, and they shouldn't be allowed to do things that distort the neighborhood."

Another important factor to both the city councils' and planners' support of the established residents' views was their adherence to professional planning and design norms, especially around maintaining a neighborhood's existing character and preservation. Anu Natarajan, who was born in India and was the only foreign-born resident on the council, was trained as an urban designer and planner. In 2006, Natarajan stated that her support for the regulations rested on the premise, "if it does not fit, do not permit"—a common urban planning maxim. When I asked Sue Chan (2011), an American-born Chinese councilmember, about her position on the issue, she said that council's main concerns was to ensure that the new regulation "honors the character of the neighborhood" and that homes "maintain the feel of the ranch-style" while not infringing on residents' right to adapt their properties. The Planning Director at the time, Jeff Schwob (2009) argued that the basic principle underlying new design guidelines and standards ought to be "to make sure that everything we build fits in the neighborhood."

Similar comments pervaded the opinions of those on the Planning Commission, which included four white long-term residents, one Chinese American, and two Indian American representatives. In a direct response to a question about the extent to which the commission should address the issue of multi-generational families, Commissioner Rakesh Sharma (2010), one of the Indo-American members, sharply dismissed the claim, stating that, "the issue was whether someone could go into the established neighborhoods and destroy their character because of their economic decision." Policy makers' and planners' ethnicity did not seem to matter so much as their professional planning norms in shaping what they considered to be "good" and "desirable" development.

Another critical factor to the outcome of the debates was the planning process. Anti-McMansioners were highly organized and sophisticated in their efforts. They established a website to distribute information to their members and the larger neighborhood, and regularly held neighborhood informational sessions. They maintained consistent contact with city officials

by showing up in large numbers at all the city council meetings held between 2006 and 2010, and sponsoring several letter-writing campaigns. Mission Ranch residents researched the history of the neighborhood and policies adopted in other areas and shared their findings with city officials. They prepared their members to speak in the two minutes allotted for individual public comments at city council and planning commission meetings and spoke eloquently about their position. Their sustained efforts were enabled by the fact that several of the regular public meeting attendees were retired, and most were American-born, long-term residents who understood the public process. McMansions supporters argued that opponents also had more political clout because established, older residents in Fremont are the most likely residents to attend public meetings and vote.

In contrast, McMansion supporters were relatively disorganized and unsophisticated in their opposition to the regulations. For the first two years of the debate, Daniel Lau was the lone voice at public meetings opposing the city's plans. It was not until 2008, when the city began to push for a single-story zoning overlay that Lau was able to organize other McMansion supporters to speak out at public meetings. Lau estimates that he and other organizers were able to get between 100 and 130 residents to show up to the meeting in which city council members decided to reject the single-story zoning overlay in favor of new design guidelines and development standards. But McMansions supporters' efforts were short-lived. By 2010, when the final guidelines and standards passed, Lau had left his lead-organizing role and the movement struggled to maintain its momentum. Not a single McMansion supporter was present at the final city council meeting to adopt the Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens' guidelines and standards, even though a petition signed by 100 residents declaring their opposition to the guidelines was submitted to the city council for their consideration.

Lau (2011) and others said that they faced several barriers to organizing residents. First, the majority of residents that opposed the regulations were Chinese immigrants who were unfamiliar with the public process and were often afraid to speak out publicly on the issue. One Mission Ranch supporter told me that she supported the cause financially, but never spoke at a public hearing because she was too shy. For others, language was a significant barrier. While Lau said that he tried to prepare residents to speak at the public hearings, the transcripts showed that McMansion supporters were far less articulate and organized in their comments than opponents. Another barrier was time. Many of the pro-McMansion residents were professionals in the Silicon Valley and had two-parent working households. According to organizers, many simply did not have the time to participate in the campaign in any sustained way. Finally, organizers complained that it was difficult to find information about the hearings and proposals, and that the city did a poor job of notifying residents about the meetings. Only those that had been to previous meetings received announcements about subsequent meetings, which privileged the continued participation of opponents, rather than getting new residents involved. As required by law, all meetings notifications were made in the local newspaper.

The social and cultural norms privileged in Fremont's large home policies stemmed both from McMansion opponents' mobilization against them, and from larger issues of personal and professional norms and the public processes by which design and development decisions are made. While city planners and council members tended to be sympathetic and active listeners to the concerns of established residents, Asian immigrants struggled to find a place in this discourse. But in increasingly diverse contexts the traditional models and norms of design and planning require rethinking.

Design as Social and Cultural Politics

Fremont's McMansion debates offer many important lessons for designers, planners, and policy makers operating in diverse social and cultural contexts. First, design guidelines and standards are not neutral. They judge the world as it *should* be and assert what is "appropriate" and "inappropriate" architecture and landscape design, and are fraught with questions of social power and control. They normalize the development practices and preferences of some and marginalize those of others. They mediate residents' sense of belonging and place by managing spatial relations, ideologies, and norms. And they often reinvest in dominant social and cultural norms that can naturalize white privilege, particularly in suburban landscapes historically created by practices of racial and ethnic exclusion. Fremont's McMansion debates were not simply about housing size, aesthetics, history, or "character." They were also about *whose* norms would be used to judge these properties and who got to decide.

This case study also shows that urban designers, planners, and policy makers need to be concerned with how their practices and policies impact not only poor or working class minorities, but also those of means. Design and planning policies can serve as tools by which residents seek to protect their neighborhoods from unwanted social and spatial changes, including those brought about by a globalizing economy and residents with new sources of capital. Several scholars have noted how anti-development and managed growth campaigns often emerge in the face of new immigration as expressions long term residents' anxiety over geographic and economic displacement, and their sense of place and spatial identity (Fong, 1994; Ong, 1999; Smith and Logan, 2006; Li, 2009). In the face of a new elite whose taste for large, modern, and highly stylized housing threatens to undermine dominant home and landscape values, meanings, and practices, planning and design regulations can reinforce hegemonic norms that sustain help to sustain white power and privilege by inhibiting change and difference. McKenzie (1994) has pointed out that, in the past, terms like "stability," "character," and "integrity," have been used as euphemisms for racial segregation and to exclude groups that are considered a threat to property values. In this case, it was not property values that were being threatened, but rather the stability of the social order and residents' place in it.

By giving attention to the city officials, planning professionals, and public process behind the regulations, I have shown that it is not necessarily racist intent, but rather embedded institutional practices and norms that often perpetuate minorities' unequal ability to shape the meaning, value, and form of the built environment. In the course of regulating McMansion development, Fremont planners and city officials, who claimed to be voices of moderation and neutrality, legitimized and reinforced the norms, preferences, and values of established residents, while simultaneously dismissing many of the claims made by Chinese immigrants. They did so, in part because their personal backgrounds and professional norms were in accordance with McMansion opponents, and also because the planning process enabled the voices of established residents to be heard most clearly. In the next chapter, Asian malls provide another case in which to view Asian immigrants' spatial meanings, values, and uses and the norms that guide the regulation of their landscapes.

Mainstreaming the Asian Mall

On a typical Friday afternoon in Fremont's Mission Square Shopping Center, known to regulars as "Little Taipei," Chinese grandmothers stake their turf on parking lot benches to chat with friends and compare their grandchildren's latest feats. Outside Ranch 99, elderly men stand around variously smoking, playing card games, scratching their lotto tickets, and reading newspapers from their hometowns of Beijing, Saigon, and Manila. A few middle-aged women convene at an outdoor table, wearing facemasks, arm covers, and big brimmed hats to shade them from the afternoon sun.

By three o'clock, school has let out. Many of the elders and mothers have left to take care of the kids, while teens from nearby Mission San Jose High crowd around the tables at the milk tea and frozen yogurt shops chatting, listening to the blended beats of American, Taiwanese, and Hong Kong pop music blaring over the shops' speakers, and browsing the magazine racks for gossip on their teen idols from around the world.

By evening, a new crowd has arrived. Many teens have left for their afterschool enrichment programs, replaced by older youth that will fill the cafés until they close at 2:00 or even 3:00 in the morning. Families arrive with three generations in tow—grandparents holding their grandchildren's hands while waiting in line outside popular restaurants, like the Aberdeen Café. A parking lot dance begins as a swirl of Toyotas, Hondas, and Lexuses with lace-covered seats, hello kitty trinkets, Buddha figurines, and Ivy League decals fight for the few remaining slots. The neon lights of the restaurants have come on, and one is briefly transported to the streets of Taipei and Bankok.

"Little Taipei" is one of Fremont's five Asian malls, and one of approximately 140 found throughout the U.S., most predominantly in the Silicon Valley and L.A. (Asia Mall, 2008) (fig. 5.1). In this chapter, I ask about the ways in which Asian malls expose how immigrants are reshaping suburban space—its forms, uses, meanings, and politics. I argue that Asian malls are an emerging design typology that is neither Eastern nor Western, neither Chinatown nor typical American mall. Rather, they are a uniquely Asian American and suburban form that reflects the growing economic and geographic diversification of Asian immigrants in the Silicon Valley and their practices of everyday life, social and cultural identities, cultural and community life, and connection to the Asian diaspora. In Fremont, however, city officials have not seized on Asian malls as a successful development model, but rather have often treated them as planning problems. Their Chinese language signage, condo ownership, tenant mixes, and designs have inspired new planning and design regulations that are putting a more mainstream face on the Asian mall. At the same time, the city has used Asian malls to showcase their racial and ethnic diversity for economic and political gain.

Asian malls offer a useful lens into the diversity of lived landscapes, experiences, meanings, and everyday practices that constitutes 21st century suburban American life. As spaces of meaningful and valuable social and community life, Asian malls challenge popular critiques about the homogenous and sterile suburban landscape that have been particularly directed at suburban shopping malls. And yet, the regulation of Asian malls underscores the ways that diversity is controlled, regulated, and managed through suburban development,

planning, and design. Asian malls are spaces through which questions about suburban diversity, inclusion, belonging, and exclusion are being fought.

Asian Malls and Mainstream Suburban Mall Studies

Asian malls are a highly understudied space both in the U.S. and elsewhere. In fact, like McMansions, most scholarship on Asian malls has come out of the experiences of Asian immigration and suburbanization in Canada. Lai (2000, 2001, 2009) analyzed the characteristics of "Asian-themed malls" in Vancouver as a marker of "new suburban Chinatowns" and how their development was impacted by changes in Canadian immigration policy. Other Canadian scholars have assessed variations in their architectural styles, tenant compositions, and other defining characteristics (Qadeer, 1998; Preston and Lo, 2000; Lo, 2006). Of particular interest to scholars has been their "strata-titled" or condo ownership, and its relationship to ethnic entrepreneurship and the development of suburban ethnic economies (Li, 1992; Wang, 1999; Kaplan and Li, 2006; Lo, 2006). Case studies of neighborhood controversies over the building of Asian malls and local planning regulations adopted to address residents' concerns have demonstrated the contested and political nature of these malls (Lai, 2000; Preston and Lo, 2000; Edington et al., 2006).

In the U.S., there is far less work on Asian malls. Wood (2006) examined the role of a Vietnamese mall in northern Virginia as a site of political refuge and free speech. Studies of Monterrey Park and the Silicon Valley have made reference to Asian malls, but not systematically studied them as a spatial form or social space (Li, 1998; Li and Park, 2006). Shenglin Chang's (2006) analysis of the function of Asian supermarkets for transnational Taiwanese families is notable, but insufficient to understand this emerging development type and its connection to the changing social and spatial landscape of the American suburbs. This chapter is important in defining Asian malls as a uniquely American development model and situating it within the American suburban landscape and its development politics.

This work is also useful as a counter to a view of American suburban shopping malls as sites of spectacle, carceral, and Disneyfied places devoid of sociality and meaningful community life (Davis, 1990; Duany and Plater-Zyberk, 1991; Sorkin, 1992; Kunsler, 1993). Rather, I contend that Asian malls more closely reflect the visions of early social reformers, like Victor Gruen (1973), the preeminent American mall builder, who dreamed of shopping centers as sites of socialization and community life. They are places that can help to change the scholarly discourse on U.S. suburban shopping malls, from a focus on critique to analysis of the values and meanings they hold for their patrons and as an important space of everyday suburban life. Glaeser (2007) argued that, "While traditional urbanists may find [suburban American] malls no substitute for the market of the Ponte Vecchio, people do seem to be voting with their feet or at least their tires. It makes more sense to put effort into humanizing the mall than into reinvigorating many older downtowns" (ix). While I do not agree with Glaeser's trade off between downtown and suburban malls, I do agree that the effort to "humanize" suburban shopping malls is sorely needed. Asian malls offer a complex, vibrant form of suburban shopping centers that can lend in this effort as well as a broader rethinking of the suburban landscape.

Methods

This chapter is informed by interviews with six Asian mall managers, developers, owners and brokers; six city planners and officials; 22 storeowners and employees; and 43 customers. The majority of customer, storeowner, and employee interviews were conducted on-site, and included semi-structured questions about their use and the meaning of Asian malls. All other interviews were key informant in-depth interviews that focused on Asian mall form, history, city planning and design regulations, and the politics of Asian mall planning and development in Fremont. I supplemented interview accounts with archival research, including primary design and development data from developers, local newspaper and online articles on Bay Area Asian malls, and city planning, design, and development documents. To better understand the patterns of use and Asian mall design, I conducted behavior, place, and participant observations at ten malls in the Silicon Valley in six cities, including Fremont, Newark, Richmond, Union City, Milpitas, and Cupertino.

Asian Malls as Hybrid Space

The architectural form of Asian malls draws on aspects of mainstream American strip and regional malls, Chinatown streets, and Asian malls abroad. But they are distinct forms that mix these multiple cultural traditions in a space that reflects Asian immigrant suburban life. In this section, I analyze the defining characteristics of Asian malls in the Silicon Valley. I show that they are typically modern and spacious shopping centers anchored by an Asian supermarket and banquet restaurant, and include a fairly standard array of independent service and food-oriented shops. They are usually built in the form of a neighborhood shopping center, but draw their customers from a much larger region. Their spaces are flexible, especially in condo projects, a form of ownership common and unique to Asian malls. And they are built by and support translocal and transnational connections amongst businesses, developers, and consumers. I will address each of these characteristics in turn.

Modern and Spacious Design

Asian malls do not look like the streets of Chinatown, and in many respects this is precisely their point. They are designed to fulfill the needs of a different market. "In Chinatown, the merchandise prices are a little bit lower and it is almost all the Asian, they don't speak English at all," explained Tony, who has developed two Asian malls in the Silicon Valley, "Parking is difficult and it is dirty. It is very different than here [at the Asian mall]. Totally different clientele. This is a couple of steps up from Chinatown." Likewise Philip Su (2011), the developer of both the largest Asian mall in southern California, San Gabriel Square, and the largest in northern California, Milpitas Square, explained that Asian malls fulfill an unmet market outside of Chinatown. "In the past people went to Chinatown," he explained, "It is dirty, it's filthy, it's hard to park, and we want to have another center that is very clean, and have easy access, and why wouldn't that be very clean with lots of variety." While Chinatown is for the older immigrant groups, Asian malls are the preferred destination of many post-1965 suburban immigrants.

The Anchor

Roger Chen, a Taiwanese immigrant, founded Ranch 99 in Los Angeles in 1984. Its first store was located in West Minister, California—the heart of Little Saigon. Since then, Ranch 99 has become the largest Asian supermarket chain in the U.S. with 24 stores nationwide, many of which anchor Asian malls. Averaging around 30,000 square feet with brightly lit, wide isles, and a modern look and feel, Ranch 99 markets resembles a Safeway supermarket more so than a typical Chinatown market. Buyers can pay with credit cards, rather than in cash. Prices and products are labeled, both in English and Chinese, and are non-negotiable. But Asian markets also retain their unique character from mainstream American markets as well. Beyond their range of pan-Asian products, Asian supermarkets also commonly incorporate bakeries, cafés, live fish markets, and stalls selling milk tea, a popular Taiwanese drink. In the Silicon Valley, other popular Asian supermarket chains include Lion Supermarket and Marina Foods.¹

While Asian supermarkets can serve as the sole anchors of Asian malls, it is becoming increasingly popular for malls in the Silicon Valley to have two anchors—both a supermarket and a banquet hall restaurant. "A powerful restaurant is so important to an Asian mall," explained John Luk (2011), President of GD Commercial, a brokerage firm in the Silicon Valley specializing in Asian malls.² In Asian culture, it is common to hold weddings, banquets, birthdays, and other important events in a restaurant. Like supermarkets, banquet restaurants have several popular chains, including Mayflower, Asian Pearl, King Wah, and ABC. As they have grown in number, these chains have also grown in size and popularity. Upon its opening in Milpitas Square, Mayflower Dim Sum's 10,000 square foot restaurant was the largest dining facility in the South Bay (Grant, 1996).

Satellite Stores

Compared to many mainstream American strip malls, Asian malls include a fairly standard assortment of satellite tenants that are more service-oriented, especially towards food. They typically host a range of pan-Asian independent retail stores, restaurants, and professional and personal services, many of which seek to capitalize off of their location next to popular supermarkets and restaurant chains (Thomas Consultants, 2005). In reference to Ranch 99, commercial broker Brian McDonald explained, "There's no other market out there that has the drawing power that this market has. [Its] got quite a following" (King, 2002). When Ranch 99 opened their first store in San Jose, the mall received nearly 700 applications for its 28 store slots (Grant, 1996). Typically, the satellite stores include a standard array of goods and services, including dentists, bakeries, banks, restaurants, cafés, travel services, massage, acupuncture, books, music, jewelry, clothing, herbal medicine, and hair and nail salons.

Asian malls range of products and services fill a niche in the marketplace for affordable, Asian-oriented products that are either not available or available only in a limited variety and at a higher price elsewhere. While Asian mall patrons may go to Macy's or Kohl's to buy clothes, they will head to the Asian mall to purchase live fish, cheap vegetables, and an assortment of

¹ Most Silicon Valley Asian supermarkets are Chinese-owned, including Ranch 99 and Marina Foods. A Chinese-Vietnamese family owns Lion Supermarket. Korean and Japanese supermarkets also anchor some malls, but are far less numerous (Thomas Consultants, 2005).

² Luk has been involved in some of the largest Silicon Valley Asian malls developments, including Milpitas Square in Milpitas, Fremont Times Square and Pacific Commons II in Fremont, and Lito Faire in Newark.

Asian goods that they cannot find elsewhere. "I prefer [Ranch 99] to the local supermarket," said Rao Kondamoori, who is of East Indian descent, "there's a lot more variety and the prices are better" (Wu and Eljera, 1998).

In Asian malls, like in Asian culture, food is the central focus. "Asian malls are essentially food courts," explained Steve, a Silicon Valley developer who has been involved in several Asian mall projects. In Milpitas Square, the Bay Area's largest Asian mall, 30 of its 62 shops offer food-related services. To many observers it may seem that many of the restaurants serve the same kinds of foods, but John Luk explained that there are so many different kinds of Asian foods that one mall can support several different types of noodle shops with little overlap. One of the main functions of the malls, said Tony, is to give Asians more choices about where to eat.

Forms of Ownership

While many Asian malls in the Silicon Valley are leased, one of their innovations in the U.S. is their retail condominium form of ownership. Retail condos are typical in many highdensity Asian cities, like Hong Kong and Taiwan, but not the U.S. The reason for this form of ownership in Asian malls has typically been ascribed to culture. "The Chinese culture is made up of entrepreneurs," explained Steve, "everyone is a hustler and wants to open a shop." Others said that Chinese and other Asian ethnic groups simply prefer to be owners rather than renters because they can save money; avoid possible eviction and unexpected rent increases; use selfemployment as a means of coping with a lack of English language skills; and use their real estate and business investment to gain equity, stability, and even citizenship in the U.S.³ Lap Thanh Tang, who was involved in the development of two Asian malls in San Jose, explained that Asians, "like to own something for their lifetime, for their children—instead of paying rent" (Conrad, 2006). One storeowner in Fremont Times Square told me that she would not be able to afford to maintain her business in the mall if she did not own the space. From the developers' perspective, condos means that they can quickly cash out without much long-term carrying costs or responsibility for the property. This can be important to Asian mall developers, who tend to work on relatively small-scale projects.⁴

Neighborhood Shopping Center Form

Most Asian malls in the Silicon Valley look like neighborhood shopping centers. They are typically single-story, auto-oriented, outdoor shopping plazas. Like most strip malls, providing adequate, if not excessive, parking is the key factor shaping their form. At Milpitas Square, its 62 stores support over 1,100 park spaces. Many malls move into existing spaces, formerly operated by supermarkets, or in the case of the Pacific East Mall in Richmond, a former furniture store. Others have been built from the ground up. While a few have chosen to

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³ According to the 1990 Immigration and Naturalization Act, by starting a business that employs up to 10 people, foreign nationals are eligible for U.S. citizenship.

⁴ Many of the Asian mall developers that I spoke to were critical about the success of condo projects. Philip Su's reaction was quite typical. Upon asking him about condo ownership, his immediate reaction was "It won't work." Pressed further, Su explained that the lack of centralized management creates too much competition between stores. Further, he argued that these projects are also not good for tenants because after the developer cashes out, tenants are left with the responsibly of maintaining the property without enough organization or technical knowledge. To be successful, Su argued, condo projects need to be in higher density environments with access to public transportation.

integrate Asian themes in their architecture, most maintain fairly traditional American styles. Outside of the Chinese signage on the stores and a large fish fountain that serves as a symbol of wealth and prosperity, Milpitas Square otherwise resembles many other American strip malls. When I asked Philip Su if he had considered an Asian theme, he replied, "Architecturally, it's a very attractive good looking project. So why does have to look like Chinatown? Why it couldn't be a very contemporary, very clean, and have a lot of choices?...I did something attractive for young generation."

The size of Asian malls reflects the limited market for Asian goods as well as the high cost of operating an Asian mall compared to traditional American malls. According to John Luk, the cheap price of goods at many Asian grocers means that owners of Asian malls make very little profit from their main anchor and thus, have to charge high rents to other tenants to make up for their loss. Shenglin Chang (2006) notes that high rents strategies in Asian malls can also serve as a purposive deterrent to non-Asian businesses that can find cheaper rents elsewhere.

The neighborhood shopping center, car-oriented, single-story form of Asian shopping malls in the Silicon Valley are far different than high-rise malls in Asia and in Vancouver or Toronto, where higher density Asian populations, foot traffic, and freezing temperatures have led to many multistory, indoor malls.

Location and Catchment Area

Though they resemble a neighborhood strip center in form, Asian malls typically have the same drawing power as regional shopping centers. Customers may be drawn from up to 50 miles away, depending on the proximity of its competitors. One Pacific East Mall employee told me that the original catchment area for the mall was about 30 miles, and has decreased only in response other regional Asian mall developments. Two Asian American college students that I met standing in line at the Japanese noodle shop in Milpitas Square confirmed that they regularly travel around 30 miles to hang out at the mall and eat good, but inexpensive food with their friends.

Conventional location factors like placement near a freeway with good visibility and access are important to Asian malls. But the overriding factor dictating their location is their proximity to a large Asian population. "It's not rocket science," explained Steve, "all you need to know is who's living there." It is a tried and proven formula. "I had this revelation 20 years ago," explained John Luk, "whenever the Asian population hits 30 to 40 percent, that's when its time to open an Asian mall" (Conrad, 2010). And that is just what Luk has done—scouted out areas around the Silicon Valley with large numbers of Asian Americans and tried to recruit developers to build Asian malls on prime sites.

Flexible Uses and Spaces

When Asian malls are condo-owned, they offer opportunities for owners to rent space to

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⁵ Ranch 99, Lion Foods, and several other Asian supermarkets have been at the center of labor controversies because of their refusal to hire unionized labor. Luk argued that the slim profit margins of Asian supermarkets mean that they cannot afford to hire union labor. But labor union leaders accuse Asian supermarkets of attempting to keep profits high by using a divide and conquer strategy, which uses language barriers to keep immigrant laborers from organizing for higher wages or other benefits (HuKill, 1999).

multiple tenants, sell an unlimited number or variety of goods, and open as late or as early as the owner wants. But even leased Asian malls tend to maintain longer hours and include stores that offer a larger variety of goods and services than traditional American shopping malls. Both Milpitas Square and its adjoining Ulfrets Center remain open till past 2:00am on Friday and Saturday nights. At the Pacific East Mall in Richmond, a security guard reported that he often has to kick patrons out at 4:00am on Friday and Saturday nights, when the mall finally shuts its doors. Die-hard singers from around the Bay Area patronize KTV Music Karaoke and mix with those attending Stogies' Smoke Shop regular weekend all-you-can smoke hookah and DJ nights. A Stogies' employee explained that because the store has been able to supplement their main business of selling tobacco-related products with DJ parties and lottery services, in the first year in business, they were named "Retailer of the Year" for the highest grossing sales of any small business in California. Though it is centrally managed, Pacific East still allows stores to sell a wide range of products and stay open late for additional earnings. "You have to be very flexible. We are not a corporate mall," explained one Asian mall developer, "[it] gives you this survival edge."

Transnational and Translocal Connections

Asian malls rely on business networks that extend from the local to the transnational and are often tied to specific geographies. In the Silicon Valley, the business and customer networks of many Asian malls are connected to one another as well as Chinatown San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose. Several of the popular mall restaurants got their start in San Francisco and still have branches there, like ABC Seafood and Mayflower. Other stores that began in the South Bay have spread out to nearby suburbs, linking towns like Cupertino, Milpitas, and Fremont through a flow of business resources, networks, and customers. Professional associations, like the Chinese Real Estate Association, a group of Chinese and non-Chinese real estate professionals throughout the Silicon Valley, also facilitate these networks. They provide business connections that can help target and stream Asian businesses into malls and serve as important sources of information about such things as Asian-oriented publications for advertising. Angela Tsui, former Fremont Economic Development Coordinator, explained that informal networks have played an important role in bringing Asian businesses to Fremont. "In the past five years, we have seen a growing number of Asian-owned businesses and the clustering of such businesses," she said, "Word get out that this area is good and that encourages other retailers to join them" (Conrad, 2008).

Asian malls are also connected to specific regions of the U.S. outside of the Silicon Valley. Phillip Su explained that, when building the San Gabriel Square near Los Angeles in the 1980s, he recruited about 20 stores from Northern California to go open new branches. Likewise, when building Milpitas Square, he recruited many successful businesses from San Gabriel Square, who were "anxious to get on the waiting list" (Wong, nd). Most of the Northern California developers that I spoke to had visited L.A. before starting their first Asian mall projects to investigate different models and potential tenants. John Luk recruited the developer of the Ulfrets Center from L.A, who has since gone on to build other Asian malls in the Silicon Valley.

Relationships among mall tenants, developers, and customers extend beyond national borders to Vancouver, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, and elsewhere. John Luk said that his brokerage business has offices in Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong, and Guangzhou, which allows

him to easily tap foreign companies wishing to expand their holdings in the U.S. (Simonson, 2008). Many popular mall chains originated in Asia, while others simply adopt the names of popular stores and centers from overseas that are well known to patrons. Cross-national business associations and transnational financing also help support the development of Asian mall projects. For instance, Phillip Su received the assistance of Asian international banks that he had established relations with in Asia to facilitate the development of Milpitas Square (Wu and Eljera, 1998).

These are not one-way connections between East and West, but rather networks that influence landscapes and social geographies on both sides of the border. John Luk said that many Asian malls developers and real estate professionals like him, who have made their money in the U.S., are beginning to invest in China and Taiwan. Mama Liang's, a popular restaurant that began in the San Gabriel Valley and now has several locations in the Silicon Valley, advertises that they are looking for sites in China to expand (Liang's Kitchen, 2012). Ironically, however, Phillip Su pointed out that many new malls in China are looking for American companies like Wal-Mart as their target anchors.

Geographic and Economic Differentiation of Asian Malls

While a common set of characteristics help to define Asian malls in the Silicon Valley, there are many variations of this model. In this section, I follow the evolution of Asian malls in the Silicon Valley from the first Asian mall built on Tully Road in San Jose in 1982 to Fremont Times Square, which was completed in 2010. This examination shows that Asian malls provide a lens into the increasing ethnic and economic diversity and segregation of Asian Americans in the Valley.

During the first significant migration of Asian Americans to the South Bay in the 1970s and 1980s, many of these early suburban pioneers maintained a pattern of returning to San Francisco or Oakland Chinatown to fulfill their daily life functions—to go grocery shopping, eat out, get married, or get a haircut. As the numbers of Asian Americans grew in the South Bay in the 1980s, the first hub of Asian commercial activity emerged in San Jose. Jerry Chen, a Chinese immigrant from Vietnam, built Grand Century Plaza in San Jose in 1982—the first Silicon Valley Asian mall. Because there were no other Asian supermarket chains in the Silicon Valley at the time, Chen began his own, Lion Supermarket, which now has four locations in the Silicon Valley.⁷ In 1991, a second mall, Pacific Rim Plaza, was built less than five miles away from the first. For a brief time, this mall was operated by a franchise of Ranch 99, rather than its usual owner-operated stores. As both Tony and Steve reported, Ranch 99 was still expanding in the Southern California and was not yet convinced of the viability of the Northern California market.

The proximity of these first two markets underscored the geographic concentration of various ethnic Asian immigrants in South Bay urban centers throughout the 1980s. But in the mid-1990s, as the height of the dot.com boom, Asian malls began popping up in many South Bay suburbs. Two Asian malls were built in Fremont—Northgate Ranch 99 mall in 1995 (the first owner-operated site of Ranch 99 in the Silicon Valley) and "Little Taipei" in southern

⁷ Chen has since moved into residential development. He specializes in developing feng shui subdivisions and homes catering to Asian American buyers (Ha, 1999).

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⁶ Several scholars have written about the relationship of Asian banks to the development American ethnic economies. For a discussion of this literature see J. Fong (2010).

Fremont in 1998. Milpitas Square was completed in 1996, just months after City Square also opened in Milpitas. Cupertino Village opened in 1997 and others opened in Daly City and San Jose during the mid 1990s. "Boom, suddenly, all this in three years, four years, boom, all open," explained Tony. According to Steve, Peter Pau, the developer of Cupertino Village, was sent on a mission by the owners of Ranch 99 to scout out locations in the Bay Area to expand to—a clear signal that Asian Americans in the South Bay had arrived.

The geography and design of Asian malls reveal the increasing economic and geographic divide and diversity of Asian Americans' in the South Bay. One the one hand, the range of high end uses in Asian malls reflects the wealth of many new high tech immigrants. Fremont Times Square has two investment firms and a "five star" pet grooming business. Milpitas Square hosts Jade Galore, a high end jewelry store, and Atelier Collection, which sells Versace jeans from anywhere between \$155 and \$400 dollars a pair and carries such exclusive brands as Giorgio Armani, Dolce, and Salvatore Farragamo (Wu and Eliera, 1998). On the other hand, Asian malls show the growing social and spatial fragmentation of Asian Americans in the Silicon Valley. For instance, Fremont's two early malls—Northgate Shopping Center and "Little Taipei," which both began as relatively modest strip malls, are today quite different. Surrounded by older apartment complexes and small single-family homes. Northgate near Ardenwood reflects a diverse hub of Asian American middle class life. In contrast, Little Taipei in the Warm Springs neighborhood near Mission San Jose in southern Fremont is surrounded by newer, larger, and more expensive single-family homes. Recently, its anchor, Lion Supermarket converted to a high-end Ranch 99, an indication of the growing wealth of southern Fremont and the concentration of Chinese (and especially Taiwanese) in the area. According to Steve, if Lions is the Kohl's of Asian supermarkets than Ranch 99 is the Macy's. Ranch 99 markets now anchor most Silicon Valley Asian malls. Meanwhile, the Grand Century Mall, once the premier Asian mall for a pan-ethnic Asian community centered in San Jose is now the center of "Little Saigon," with Lion Supermarket as is anchor tenant.

As the Asian American community in the Silicon Valley has grown and dispersed, new models of Asian malls are emerging that differ in significant ways from the typical model. In Fremont and many other Silicon Valley suburbs with a number of high performing Asian students. Asian academic malls are becoming more popular. They typically incorporate academic enrichment programs, like Chinese schools, dance studios, music schools, math classes, and SAT prep and tutoring services. These complementary services allow parents the convenience of dropping their kids off at one location and obtaining a full suite of enrichment activities. Academic enrichment programs are also more commonly found in Asian malls like Fremont Times Square, which now has three afterschool enrichment programs. Pacific Common II in Fremont is one of the first Asian "destination dining" malls in the Silicon Valley, featuring Asian restaurants and cafés without the traditional supermarket anchor. Philip Su said that he was interested in the mixed-use possibilities of Asian malls, especially incorporating senior housing. There are a few models of mixed-use Asian malls, he explained, but all currently on a very small scale. Asian malls have also become more geographically concentrated than in the past. In one five stretch along Warm Springs Boulevard between Fremont and Milpitas, there are now three Asian malls. Ulfret's Center is located on the same block as Milpitas Square and is one of the Silicon Valley's only two-story malls—a model once thought to be impossible in the California's car-dominated culture.

Asian Malls as Centers of Suburban Social and Cultural Life

Thus far, I have shown that Asian malls are an important emerging suburban form that reflects the diversity of Asian Americans in the Silicon Valley. In this section, I show the functions of Asian malls in the everyday lives of their patrons. Asian malls are spaces that reflect and reinforce Asian American suburbanites' practices of everyday life, their personal and collective identities, their sense of community and place, and connection to the Asian diaspora.

Places Both Special and Mundane

Asian malls service many ritual functions of everyday Asian American suburban life. One of the more important functions is as a source of information—a resource for finding out what is happening in the local community, the region, and among the Asian diaspora around the world. In the various stands found outside Asian supermarkets, patrons can pick up the *Chinese New Home Buyers' Guide* or get information on food services, senior living care facilities, recreation, transportation, shopping, entertainment and professional services, in Chinese, English, and several other languages. On the billboards located outside of every Ranch 99 supermarket, patrons can find out about houses for rent, baby-sitting services, tutoring, or items for sale. One elderly Chinese man standing outside the Ranch 99 supermarket in the Northgate Shopping Center in Fremont, who spoke no English, explained how he had located his apartment on one such bulletin board, and how convenient it was to now be able to walk to the market.

Asian malls also offer a range of essential services like medical, dental, and eye care with attention to common cultural practices. In Fremont Times Square, the Asian Medical clinic provides an array of health care services that combine an understanding of Eastern and Western medicines and address Asian Americans' common health concerns. All doctors speak Chinese. Other "essentials" for many Asian Americans are access to good food and quality educational services. Youth are often shuttled to Asian malls to participate in Chinese language, music, and other afterschool activities, while adults make their ritual trips in and out of the grocery stores and restaurants. Milpitas Square has sponsored job fairs and career days, among many other community events. And in 2010, the federal government stationed census takers in Ranch 99 supermarkets across the country, showing that Asian malls are important sites of political participation and citizenship.

Asian malls serve as much of a place of special occasion as ritual life. Many Asian Americans go to the mall to get married, celebrate holidays, birthdays, graduations, and other important life events. Weddings are such a popular part of the business of many banquet restaurants like ABC in Milpitas' Ulfrets Center, that they try to encourage customers to get married in the "off peak" times of the years by offering certain perks. One ABC deal suggested that if a couple were to get between January and April 2012, the restaurant would provide a complementary one-night hotel suite and bottles of wine for every table in addition to its standard wedding package of cake, photographer, flowers, a karaoke machine, and entertainment by the Leung's White Crane Lion Dancers.

Spaces of Comfort, Acceptance, and Identity

Asian malls are familiar and comfortable places for many of their patrons. They are places where immigrants gather, speak their native languages, and purchase familiar goods and

products within a familiar cultural space. Sally, a second generation Korean American, described the comfort that her mother feels from shopping at Asian malls as opposed to going to Safeway:

She feels a lot more comfortable [at Asian malls] in her element. I mean I would too. When she looks at something, she knows exactly what it is. If she needs help, she knows how to ask for help and feels comfortable with that. With English, even thought she's pretty good with English, pretty proficient, there's still just that moment of hesitation. If she needs to ask for help, she will probably just ask me to ask...I think it just gives immigrants specifically comfort, like you've come all this way but this doesn't have to be as foreign as you think it is. You can come into this little enclave that we've made and feel at least at home.

Asian malls serve a similar function as urban ethnic enclaves as spaces that help immigrants adapt to life in a new places.

For second-generation youth, the mall does not so much provide comfort by reminding them of their home overseas, but their sense of home in the American suburbs. The mall connects youth to their families and culture—it is a place where they go to "feel Asian." Several interviewees confirmed what Patrick (2006) recalled as having been "practically raised" in Ranch 99. They grew up being shuttled to and from Asian malls for art and piano lessons, shop, and eat out with their families. After they leave home, the mall is still a place where many return with their families during holidays and other special occasions. A college student visiting Pacific East Mall said that he spends most of the time during his trips home to Los Angeles being taken out by his parents to their local Ranch 99 mall, just as he remembered doing for all the other out-of-town guests for as long as he could remember. It is a place of first jobs, dates, and childhood memories—an intimately known and familiar space. "They remember the Asian mall," said John Luk in reference to second generation Asian American youth.

Asian malls also reinforce a sense of acceptance for immigrants' everyday cultural practices. At Ranch 99, those wanting to celebrate Thanksgiving with non-traditional fare can pick up an entire meal consisting of roasted turkey, crispy fried shrimp balls, grilled beach short rips, sautéed lotus root with Chinese cured pork, braised rock cod, and chow mein noodles in soy sauce. This alternative to the "traditional" American holiday, normalizes and celebrates a different set of cultural practices. "In Ranch 99, I don't feel I am a minority at all," explained one customer (Chang, 2006, 105).

This sense of comfort and acceptance extends not only to Chinese immigrants, but also second-generation youth. At the Pacific East Mall in Richmond, I met a group of four Asian American teens break dancing in the hallways. When I asked them whether they felt comfortable to dance in this space, they responded that their presence is scrutinized by mall security, but was generally tolerated, especially compared to other malls they visited. The nearby café sometimes played their requested songs and it was a familiar place where many of them had come regularly since they were in middle school. Now as juniors and seniors, although they could go elsewhere to hang out, they still come to the mall up to three times per week. Taking a phone call during our interview, one teen referred to his location as simply "Ranch"—a destination that was apparently well known amongst his peers.

Asian malls also offer opportunities for patrons to appropriate mall space for their own purposes and develop a sense of ownership and identity. On billboards at the J&S Coffee and

Tea House in the Pacific East Mall, youth leave love notes in Japanese animae, and express their poetry, art, or simply their love of boba in many different languages. Outside the Milpitas Square Ranch 99, employees and patrons regularly gather around tables to smoke, gamble, talk, and play cards. Through these daily acts of appropriation, mall space comes to reflect the identities and meanings of its many users.

The mall can also help Asian Americans straddle between their Asian and American identities, by reflecting aspects of both. Chang and Lung Amam (2010) have shown how Asian malls act as important spaces of identity for transnational youth that spend their lives shuttling back and forth between Taiwan and the U.S. Among many Asian American youth, urban ethnic enclaves are considered too old-fashioned or "traditional," whereas Asian malls offer more "hip" and "modern" products like cell phone gadgets and car accessories that they feel better reflects their lifestyles and preferences. Milk tea chains featuring funky modern decors and blaring Taiwanese and American pop music are popular youth hangouts. At Milpitas Square, Quickly's "In Board" reports on both Asian and American news of importance to Asian American youth from the death of Steve Jobs to the latest Chinese pop star drama. Its shelves are lined with Asian American magazines like East 38, which is written in Chinese and about Chinese pop and music stars, but is marketed only in northern and southern California. Likewise for Asian immigrants, Asian malls are a meeting point between two worldviews. Phillip Su described the importance of Asian malls' wide food selection as it relates to Asian Americans' sense of identity in the U.S, "When I go back to Asia, maybe from time to time I want to have doughnuts. I feel like you need to have burger to feel like American, and from time to time [in the U.S] you feel like you need to have some rice to feel like Chinese."

Spaces of Hybridity and Experimentation

At Asian malls, patrons not only encounter the culturally familiar, but also unfamiliar people and practices that promote experimentation and border crossing. Asian mall patrons are not exclusively Asian Americans, nor are they from one Asian ethnic group. Through most malls in the Silicon Valley serve predominantly Chinese customers (especially those anchored by Ranch 99 and Marina Foods), Fremont's Northgate Shopping Center only has about a 50% Chinese clientele, according to one Ranch 99 employee. Latinos, African Americans, and East Indians make up the majority of its other patrons. But even among Asians, the range of languages, cultural traditions, practices, and preferences are quite varied.

The mall promotes the coming together of these different groups, and creates opportunities for daily exchange and interaction. Patrons frequently interact at newspaper stands, grocery isles, parking lots, and other banal spaces of the mall. Ash Amin (2002) argues that these microgeographies of everyday space contain the greatest potential for intercultural exchange that build respect and tolerance for difference. One retired Pilipino immigrant that I met at the Northgate Shopping Center said she came to the mall everyday to pick up newspaper. While she mostly reads about Filipinos in the U.S. or abroad, because the mall has papers in 12 different languages covering many cultures, she said that she also regularly reads other ethnic newspapers so that she can "learn about other cultures" (fig. 5.2).

For many patrons, food is one of the primary means of experimentation. Asian malls generally maintain a broad selection of pan-Asian cuisine and its supermarkets sell foods from Asia, Latin America, and the U.S. Asian mall restaurants also imbibe this sense of hybridity. Two of the more popular restaurants in Milpitas Square are Coriya Hot Pot City and Darda

Seafood. Coriya describes itself as an all-you-can eat restaurant "where Japanese shabu shabu meets Korean barbecue to create Taiwanese hot pot." Darda is a popular Chinese Halal restaurant where Islamic prayers and pictures of a ritual Hajj hang alongside Chinese New Year banners. Philip Su explained that most patrons seek out opportunities to experiment with new cuisine. "Every time we have a new restaurant, that join our shopping center, there's always a draw because everybody wants to try something new," he explained, "People want to come here, and say wow, look these restaurants, let's try this one."

For non-Asians, Asian malls are often an interesting space to try out different ways of being and seeing the world. For many, Asian malls offer not only the opportunity to try new foods, but a whole range of new activities and products. At Pacific East Mall, I spoke to a white teen that was visiting the mall for the first time. He explained that he typically hates malls, but "this is different." It is an exciting place to try out new things as well as try on different roles and identities. At KTV Music, a karaoke café that offers over 110,000 English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, and Korean music videos, an employee reported that non-Asian patrons appeared particularly drawn to singing in Japanese. As Drew (2001) observed, during karaoke one is able to "position themselves physically, socially, and culturally through the choice of songs and renderings," or what he called, inhabiting "vocal alter egos" (22).

Cultural Community and Socialization

Many Asian mall patrons visit often and for long periods of time. In Pacific East Mall, it is not at all uncommon to find customers spending up to three or four hours on any given visit, especially on Friday and Saturday nights, when one generally has to circle the mall to find a parking space (Brown, 2003). "It appears as if Asians do not go to the mall to shop, but rather to take their weekend vacations," quipped marketing scholar Roger Blackwell (Brown, 2003).

Part of the reason for the popularity of Asian malls is that they serve as cultural and community centers for Asian American suburbanites. They are places of gathering for everything from Chinese New Year celebrations to religious ceremonies. To Blackwell, they are "family places, symbolic of a culture that is able to take commercial and cultural interests and blend them" (Brown, 2003, 7). Malls often host cultural events like lantern and kite making, calligraphy workshops, fine art demonstrations, folk dances, puppet shows, and drama and music performances. L.A.'s Asian Garden Mall holds weekly night markets in their parking lot. "The objective of these planned events is to create a social atmosphere to expand the role of an Asian shopping center from purely commercial. By creating a gathering place, it is intended that the center form a social hub that attracts Asians from a wider trade area," concluded a report on Asian malls commissioned by the City of Fremont (Thomas Consultants, 2005, 10). On opening day for Milpitas Square, more than 10,000 residents from around the Silicon Valley participated in the festivities, which included lion dancing, kung fu demonstrations, and a Chinese orchestra (Lyons, 1996). The prominent role of food in Asian malls also enhances their role as a community and cultural space.

Patrons come to the mall to socialize, and build and renew friendships. They come with friends and commonly run into friends at the mall, sometimes even old friends from Taiwan or China (Chang, 2006). Shenglin Chang (2002) found that the "housewives club," an international network of Taiwanese transnational women, regularly held their meeting at Ranch 99 in Milpitas. "Food is the ostensible attraction [of Asian malls] but the real draw is the chance to renew one's identity by casually rubbing elbows with other Asians," wrote Nahm (2011).

Ranch 99 serves as such an important social hub that a trip to the Ranch 99 Market by a dating couple can serve as almost a couple's official "coming out" to the larger community (Chang, 2006). One Chinese immigrant customer at Pacific East Mall explained that, "This is the place to meet each other and have comfortable conversations just like traditional bowling alleys and movie theatres" (Brown, 2003). This is especially the case for the elderly. In Milpitas, the Self Help for the Elderly sponsors regular trips to Milpitas Square for its Asian seniors (Wong, nd). Asian malls provide a chance to renew and revive connection to one's cultural communities.

Asian malls are also places to strengthen the bonds of the family. Mary, who is Indian, said that her husband will not let her cook on the weekend, so that the family can spend time together eating out, often at an Asian mall. "It's a family event on the weekend," explained John Luk, who reported that families will reward the grandparents for working hard during the week watching the kids by taking them to the mall. "It gives them happiness," Luk said. It is not at all uncommon to see families at the mall with three generations in tow. For these multigenerational families, Asian malls have both traditional and modern amenities that promote cross-generational ties. Nahm (2011) wrote that Asian malls offer, "a way to show our kids and their non-Asian pals that Asian culture offers shiny modern attractions as well as old dusty ones."

Further, Asian malls attract customers from different social classes and ethnicities that help to build a sense of interethnic and interclass community. "There is a sense of the mall integrating different waves of ethnic Chinese immigrants from all over Asia. They may come from different classes, but the mall represents common ground," argued Aiwah Ong, "a place where different streams of Asians become Asian-American," (Brown, 2003). Although Asian malls have become more geographically and economically diverse, at any given mall in the Silicon Valley, most still have a variety of a pan-Asian restaurants, stores, customers, and shops selling products ranging in quality from high-end to cheap, knock-offs and knick-knacks. At Milpitas Square, luxury clothes and jewelry stores are just doors away from stores with crowded isles and boxes stacked up in front of the doors and windows. At most of the restaurants, even the most popular and seemingly exclusive ones, lunch can be bought for less than \$10.00 a plate.

Transnational Connection

Asian malls not only connect Asian Americans to their local communities, but also provide a bridge to loved ones overseas and to everyday life in their countries of origins. They serve as points of connection to places that are geographically distant, but ever-present in the minds of many patrons. They do so in part by offering a wide selection of brands and products that one would find in Taiwan or Hong Kong. Popular youth magazines like éf and *Body* run hot off the Taiwanese presses with the latest in overseas fashion. Music from popular Taiwanese bands like Girl's Generation and Super Junior can be found in mall stores. Japanese and Korean animation comic and films are widely available and often streaming from laptops and smart phones in mall cafés. Dan said that when he and his wife first moved to Fremont in 1982, they used to bring back lots of things that they missed when visiting with family in Taiwan. Now they can find everything they need at their local Asian mall.

Mall patrons can also virtually "link in" to everyday life in Asia. Televisions in several restaurants broadcast overseas news and popular Korean, Chinese, and Taiwanese dramas and music videos. At i.tv in Fremont Times Square, customers can sign up for 12 channels of Chinese television through the Internet. According to one i.tv employee, some of their competitors offer as many as 88 channels. Cheap phone cards can be bought for calls to Asia,

travel arrangements can be made for return visits, and money can be sent to relatives at any one of the many Asian bank branches (fig. 5.3). East West Bank, which specializes in international banking, bills itself as a "financial bridge." Its patrons can use the ATM anywhere in the world without fees and change money into almost any Asian currency. According to Joe Fong (2010), Asian American banks, "provide the missing link between the global hemispheric domains and the Asian diasporic regional field," connecting the local to the global and global to the local (53-54).

Asian malls also provide a touchstone to distant places through the lived experience of the mall itself. To some, watching the neon lights come up on the signs, getting stuck in an overcrowded vegetable isle, or passing a door plastered with fliers and advertisements can feel like walking down the streets of China, Korea, or Japan. "It's amazing how much like Singapore or Hong Kong these malls are," observed Ong (Brown, 2003). While I have argued that there are distinct differences between Asian malls abroad and in the U.S., the experience may at times be similar for its patrons. During the Chinese New Year, the mall is filled with red banners and signs, wishing patrons good luck in the coming year. Fights break out in the grocery isles and in parking lots, and just like in the streets of China, everyone stops to stare. A violin and piano duet plays classical Chinese ballads outside a music store, while an adhoc group begins ballroom dancing through the hallway. I too sometimes feel as if I am watching a Shanghai street scene.

Asian malls are spaces that serve many ritual functions of everyday life and are places that have a special meaning and function in the life of their patrons. For many, they are spaces of comfort and acceptance for their cultural practices and identities; places of hybridity that present opportunities for experimentation with different ways of being and understanding the world; places of community and socialization; and places where they can connect with loved ones overseas and to a larger sense of themselves as part of a global diaspora. These different functions shows that, for many Asian Americans in the Silicon Valley, Asian malls are very much a part of what it means to be suburban.

Asian Mall Backlash and Regulation

While Asian malls are a significant site of identity and meaning for Asian Americans in the Silicon Valley, non-Asian residents as well as city officials have been highly critical of them. In this section, I describe the central issues raised about Asian malls and what Fremont city officials have done to address these concerns, including the adoption of new regulations and planning scrutiny over Asian mall projects. The complaints about Asian malls and their regulations demonstrate how Asian malls are often treated as problem spaces—spaces that need to better "fit in" and adapt to the norms of their suburban context.

Asian Malls as Problem Spaces

A thread on the Tri-City Beat, a popular Fremont blog site, sums up many residents' complaints about Asian malls. A posting discussing the failure of the city to attract Whole Foods led to several heated criticisms of Asian malls. Jen asked, "Why does every center around have to become Asian themed? I think there are enough of those" (Artz, 2011). Marty commented, "I don't take issue with a demographic being represented. But I take issue when an entire retail

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⁸ I am using here the pen names of those that posted comments to the site.

project is dedicated to a specific ethnic group. It promotes segregation and a fractional community." Jen complained, "Asian shopping centers are not exactly welcoming to those that are not (primarily) Chinese" and that too many of the new centers in Fremont "catered" to Asians. "Why is it so many of the Chinese retail establishments are so inclined to put the name of their store in Chinese characters on their store fronts?" asked Vor, "It certainly tells me who the owner is attempting to attract and who they are not." As these comments indicate, the most common complaints among residents about Asian malls is that they are segregated spaces, unwelcoming to non-Asian customers, contain non-English signage, and there are simply too many of them in Fremont.

City officials have their own complaints about Asian malls, most often regarding their condominium ownership. Though not prevalent in Fremont, this type of ownership is common in Asian malls in other cities, a scenario that city officials have proactively tried to avoid. The conclusions of the 2008 *Fremont Market Analysis and Retail Strategy*, a report commission by the city to assess its retail landscape, summarizes the opinions of the city officials I spoke to (Strategic Economics, 2008). The report gave a great deal of attention to the issue of retail condos, even through there were few in Fremont at the time, concluding that retail condos promote excessive use of signage that is "visually unappealing" and an "undesirable clustering of businesses" that can lead to "overpowering competition" among businesses and higher turnover rates. Fractionalized ownership also makes redevelopment difficult for the city, it explains:

Historically, cities could use their power of eminent domain to assemble such centers for redevelopment. As the courts and public opinion have pushed for limiting the use of eminent domain, however, this tool for facilitating redevelopment is no longer viable. Therefore, retail condo projects have a built in functional obsolescence that will be almost impossible to address (68).

Angela Tsui (2010) explained that retail condos from the city's perspective were simply "too hard to control."

The concerns of both residents and city officials have been addressed through new regulations and planning scrutiny of Asian mall projects. The heightened level of review came in response to the conclusions of the Assessment of Asian-Themed Retail City of Fremont, a study commissioned by the Fremont Economic Development Department (Thomas Consultants, 2005). According to the report, its purpose was to assess "the potential for Asian-themed retail centers in Fremont, particularly vis-à-vis their suitability to the City's intended strategy [for retail development]"(1). When I asked Fremont Community Development Director Jeff Schwob (2011) why the city felt compelled to conduct the report, his response indicated that the study was also meant to address the complaints and questions of residents and the city. "As I say, there's fear in the unknown, so there's a desire to figure out at least what [Asian malls are]? What are the fears? How do we address those?" The report spoke directly to residents' and the city's concerns by proposing a series of key issues that should be addressed before the approval of any future Asian mall project. These issues, which have been shared with city planners and the economic development staff, include the quality of maintenance and design of Asian malls, their signage, especially ensuring that the signage is not "excessive and of lower quality," discouraging condo ownership, and encouraging malls that attract more non-Asian customers.

While many city officials saw the report and their heightened review of Asian malls projects as their attempt to better understand these types of projects, many developers viewed the

report as a targeted attack on Asian malls. Steve argued that the fact that the city felt compelled to commission the report showed their bias towards Asian malls:

Now, what would the outcry be if they said "You know what? We're going to do [a study] about African Americans." Or, "We're going to do one about Native Americans." Why are you commissioning the study and why are you spending the money on a firm that's not even in this area, from Vancouver, to come in here and give you an analysis of all the shopping centers here. Because are you trying to inhibit their growth? Are you trying to control them in a certain way rather than let the market dictate what it is? That, to me, was quite disturbing.

Diana, a Fremont developer, responded that she too felt that the study was done because the city was already fairly skeptical of allowing Asian malls, and it simply served to reinforce their biased perspective.

Moreover, developers complained that the city's distaste for Asian malls had resulted in several potential projects having been turned down or delayed. They cited a propensity for stalled applications, and excessive study periods and planning requirements. "We fight through this, that, and then the city would just hold our application, just leave it as 'no, no, no. No Asian, no Asian," explained one Fremont developer. Referencing a proposed Asian mall project that took nearly four years to go through planning review, one developer explained that the planning department "threw everything in the way." Manny, a Fremont city planner, agreed that the department had "discouraged" Asian mall projects in the past, especially those with smaller shops because the city was interested in larger and more "upscale" retail.

While most city officials denied any inherent distaste of Asian malls, they were openly hesitant about condo-owned projects and adopted regulations to address them. The 2008 retail study concluded that, "Although this is relatively new territory as most cities have not adopted such policies, Fremont would be well served by taking a proactive approach to the future and actively addressing the retail condominium issue as quickly as possible, rather than waiting for more serious problems to arise" (Strategic Economics, 2008, 69). And in 2009, by a unanimous City Council vote, the city adopted two new regulations regarding retail condominiums.

The first was a zoning text amendment that established new standards for the design and operation of all new retail condominiums or condo conversions in the city. Under the new law, retail condos are issued a conditional use permit, which subjects them to an additional level of planning review. To receive full approval, developers need to show their compliance with a set of standards that include a review of the size of the units to ensure that they are "typical and customary to the zoning district." Developers must also establish a property owner's association "to warrant the continued viability of the project, avoid conditions of neglect and blight, and retain aesthetic consistency and conformity, and ensure a mechanism for funding the maintenance and replacement." The association is required to have initial reserve funds equal to five years of annual maintenance costs and to hire a licensed, professional management firm. In addition, associations are required to adopt CC&Rs that cover among other things, "promoting a high quality and professional physical appearance and cohesive operation...that avoids deteriorating and inconsistent conditions including but not limited to design, architectural

treatments and features, and signage." The emphasis of the ordinance on condo unit sizes, and malls' look, maintenance, and signage, indicates that the regulations were adopted largely to deal with Asian mall condos. The city sought control over these projects to ensure their development was consistent with other retail projects and they fit into their neighborhood context.

The regulations also addressed the city's desire to make way for future redevelopment opportunities. This was made most clear in the second component of the ordinance, which applied additional standards to commercial, industrial, and other non-residential condominiums within a half-mile of current or proposed rapid transit stations. It emphasized the need to "limit fractionalized ownership" within these zones designated by city plans as areas for future high-density development. According to Max, a Fremont city planner, this component also came as a direct response the proposal to build Fremont Times Square, Fremont's first condo-owned Asian mall (fig. 5.4). The draft ordinance adopted in 2007, two years before its final adoption, stated that part of the reason for the regulations was that the city "anticipated one or more condominium development applications in the coming months," and specified that the regulations would apply to any approved project whether or not regulations had been fully adopted at the time of approval.

The timing of the draft ordinance gave the city the ability to work with the developers of Fremont Times Square to ensure that they complied with the city's terms. The mall was required to adopt CC&Rs, have a management team in place, and ensure that their units were "appropriately" sized. According to one planner, the city worked with developers to structure the CC&Rs and ensure that provisions were made for the units to maintain a minimum level of visibility on its widows and that the majority vote within the property association was vested with its anchor tenant, Marina Foods. Thus, if the city wanted to redevelop the site, they only had one owner to contend with, not the owners of its other 63 stores. Fremont's ordinance enabled the city to control "the problem" of retail condos, before they began.

Putting Asian Malls in their Place

While regulations and review processes have been used to control, and perhaps at times restrict, the growth of Asian malls in Fremont, their development has been further inhibited by the city's vision of "desirable" retail. This vision focuses on attracting retail establishments that are "typical" for an upper-middle income suburb like Fremont. Despite Asian malls apparent popularity and the critical functions they serve for Fremont's Asian immigrant population, Asian malls are not a part of the city's plans for advancing its retail. Instead, city officials have often used Asian malls as opportunities to showcase Fremont's racial and ethnic diversity for financial and political gain.

Just a Normal Upper Middle Class Suburb

While Asian malls have been the subject of much debate and regulation in Fremont, they are not part of the city's strategic retail vision. Fremont's General Plan lays out a goal for attracting retail in "targeted" sectors, including upscale groceries, and high end eating and drinking establishments. Nearly every city official and planner I spoke to about retail mentioned

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⁹ Fremont sign ordinance does not require, but rather "encourages" English language signage, unlike some other English language signage requirements that have affected Asian malls in Cupertino, Monterrey Park, Flushing, New York, Vancouver, and elsewhere (Fong 1994; Horton, 1995; Domae, 1998; Li, 2006; Smith and Logan, 2006).

the city's consistent efforts to try to attract high-end retail establishments, especially white table restaurants and Whole Foods. "We are not getting the higher-end, traditional places," explained Mayor Bob Wasserman (2011), "We would like to get some nice, white tablecloth restaurant. We always have, and we've always gone after them." In a brochure put out by the Office of Economic Development, the city advertises that it is looking for "high-quality retail," including "more boutique shops, outdoor dining and cafes, and entertainment venues" (City of Fremont, nd). The vision of future retail emphasizes getting the city up to par with the kind of development common for its upper middle income demographic, but is not nearly so focused on the needs of its Asian and immigrant demographic.

Ironically, some city officials said that the main reason why Fremont has been unable to attract upscale retail establishments is its Asian demographic. When I asked Mayor Wasserman why the city had not been successful in attracting high-end restaurants and stores, he responded, "That has a lot to do with our demographics, unfortunately. Like Whole Foods. Whole Foods will never say it publically, but the reason they're not here is because of our ethnicity." Wasserman and other city officials argued that many large retailers view Fremont an Asian suburb and make assumptions about what their population will and will not purchase. Angela Tsui explained that it can be difficult to bring in national chains that look at Fremont demographics and say, "I don't really think that your Asian population is really going to come and eat at a Claim Jumpers. But lo and beyond, we were able to get one and it does very well." Likewise, Mayor Wasserman explained that Fremont's stigma is unfounded. "I know that they're wrong, but how do you tell Whole Foods that they're wrong?" he said, "You can't tell them they're wrong. They don't listen." Interestingly, in July 2011, Whole Food announced that it had found a suitable location and would be opening a new location in Fremont.

The Asian mall developers and customers that I spoke to, however, were skeptical about whether the city's vision of desirable retail accurately reflects the needs of its largely Asian immigrant population. "Fremont has been talking about Whole Foods for 20 years," explained John Luk. But, he argued, they were not able to make it happen because retail is market driven and what is desired by the market are Asian malls and stores. Diana doubted that Asian immigrants in Fremont really would shop at the kind of establishments that the city was trying to attract. "I'm not sure about it. Asian, they will spend money on housing, education," she said, "They will spend money for their kids to play but in turn they wouldn't spend money to dine at the fine tablecloth restaurant." Steve characterized the Fremont planning department as, "basically a bunch of white males, middle aged," whose vision of the city is "sort of a yuppified version of things." Thus, he argued that when someone wants to build an Asian mall, the planners tend to react by saying, "we're not really for that over here. We want to see an upscale supermarket."

While the city has begun to realize their vision for high-end retail, Asian malls are not included in this vision. This lack of attention to the development of Fremont's Asian mall market runs counter to the findings of the 2008 retail report, which concluded that, "The predominance and growth of the Asian population suggests that specific strategies should be developed to assist Asian business owners and encourage Asian-oriented retail in order to create a more vibrant and successful retail environment" (Strategic Economics, 2008, 46). When I asked Mayor Wasserman about the city's efforts to attract Asian businesses, he responded that the city does not have to "woo" the Asian businesses; they just come. But John Luk argued that

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¹⁰ Claim Jumpers is a popular restaurant serving traditional American fare. Fremont officials often site this among the city's retail successes.

Fremont had still not managed to attract the type of quality Asian retail that a city of its size demands. Luk noted that unlike Cupertino and Milpitas with comparably high percentages of Asians but much larger and well-known Asian malls, "Fremont is almost 50% Asian, but lacking quality Asian malls." No city officials that I spoke mentioned their efforts to "woo" Asian malls or businesses to Fremont. Quite the opposite, many said that Fremont already had enough or speculated that the market for Asian malls in Fremont was built out. Interestingly, one Asian mall project that was tied up in the planning department for nearly four years was changed to a proposal to build a mall anchored by Berkeley Bowl, a well-known northern California organic food chain. Perhaps its developer had a sense of what the city wanted to see and what it did not.

Diversity for Sale

While city officials have been reluctant to promote Asian mall development, they have strategically used Asian malls to promote Fremont's diversity and attract other types of investment in the city. Fremont's *Assessment of Asian-Themed Retail* study recommended the use of Asian malls to "showcase" the city's diversity in its downtown:

Asian retail would play a key role in Fremont's future International Street development to showcase its multicultural diversity. Given that the raw ingredients for a unique Downtown Fremont are being pursued along the freeway interchanges, the alternative opportunity to be a part of the 'heart' of Fremont should be vigorously marketed to developers (Thomas Consultants, 2005, 31).

Accordingly, as development applications for Asian malls come to the city, planners should ask, "Would the proposed mix of retail be better suited to Downtown Fremont (such as the development proposal to showcase all Asian communities in its offering)?" This strategic positioning of diversity is meant to attract new business and other investments to the city. As Sharon Zukin (1995) observed in New York, culture is viewed by cities as a marketing tool.

It was especially critical that the 2005 report suggested putting Asian malls at the center of Fremont's Central Business District. For nearly 60 years, the city has tried to bring its five original town together under a central downtown that could enhance and develop its sense of place, identity, and desirability. Plan after plan has been proposed over the years, but most officials recognized the city's failure to produce a vibrant downtown, relative to other Silicon Valley suburbs like Mountain View and Palo Alto, or as Councilmember Sue Chan (2011) put it to put the "there in the there." Interestingly, in the latest reincarnation of its Downtown Community Plan, the centerpiece is a new cultural arts center and one of the main objectives of the plans is to "reflect Fremont's cultural diversity." While it does not appear that the city has tried to follow up with the report's recommendation to try to attract an Asian mall to the downtown, the city is strategically showcasing its diversity in the heart of its retail landscape.

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¹¹ One exception was reportedly when Mayor Wasserman encouraged Asian Pearl to locate to its current Pacific Commons II location. This arrangement, however, was set up by the developer John Luk rather than as a part of the city's own proactive marketing efforts, as has been the case for other high-end retailers (Luk, 2011).

Visions of a Multicultural Suburb

Another example of how Fremont city officials have strategically positioned ethnic diversity within its retail landscape was evidenced by the city's handling of the Globe Mall project. In 2000, Fremont received a proposal for what its developers called, "the first internationally-themed lifestyle center in the United States." According to its marketing materials, the Globe Mall sought "to create an environment that is inclusive of the different cultures of the world and to express them through the design of the architecture as well as the types of products and services offered" (Imperial Investment and Development Company, nd). The mall was proposed as a 250,000 square foot and later expanded to 700,000 square foot, which would have made it one of the largest developments in Fremont. It included retail, restaurant, and entertainment space, representing 12 regions of the world at its various centers— Pacifica, Saigon Village, Little India, Europa, China Village, Little Tokyo, Korea Town, Australia, New Zealand, North America, South America, the Middle East, and Africa. "The Heart" of the project was where all its parts would come together to "celebrate cultural differences while at the same time promoting discovery of our commonalities," through art, music, dance, lectures, fashion shows, cooking competitions, and other community events (Imperial Investment and Development Company, nd). The mall proposed that it would showcase and celebrate the diversity that was the world and also Fremont.

This grand multicultural vision reflected the kind of inclusionary space that many city officials and residents felt Asian malls lacked. The Globe Mall thus presented the city with the opportunity to at once showcase an ethnically integrated model of retail and the city's diversity. The former was highlighted in the 2005 Asian mall report, which concluded that, "new Asian-themed development in Fremont should demonstrate a degree of cross-cultural appeal" and "new Asian development proposals should demonstrate a clear strategy to attract non-Asian Americans through merchandise mix and 'soft programming' of public events" (Thomas Consultants, 2005, 30). In addition, "development proposals that cater to multiple closely-linked Asian markets (such as Japanese and Korean or Chinese and Vietnamese) should be preferred to those that target a single group" (31). The Globe project was the right project at the right time.

Fremont city officials were excited by the mall's prospects. "With restaurants and upscale shopping, it could be like (Disney World's) Epcot Center," noted Mayor Wasserman (De Benedetti, 2007a). "This could be magic," said Fremont Councilmember Anu Natarajan (Fernandez, 2006a). The city moved forward quickly with project approval. While the project was proposed in January 2005, by March 2006 the Fremont City Council had unanimously voted to rezone the property from industrial to high-volume retail, the critical step that gave the developer the go-ahead for the plan.

The emphasis of several of the comments surrounding the plan suggested that the multicultural appeal of the mall was critical to its popularity. Roger Shanks, former Fremont Planning Director and consultant to the developer for the project, publicly distanced the Globe from the image of ethnically exclusionary retail space. "We want it to be inclusionary, not exclusionary," Shanks told the City Council, "Fremont is such a culturally diverse city. We really want to celebrate that." (De Beneditti, 2007).

Yet the city's dream soon became its nightmare. In 2009, with only one section of mall complete and only a few tenants, including East West Bank, the institution that had financed the project, Saigon Village, LLC, the owners of the Globe filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy (fig. 5.5). In explaining the failure of the project, city officials offered various explanations. "Their

business model wasn't sound," said Councilmember Sue Chan (2011), who voted to approve the project. It was a combination of bad economic times and an inexperienced developer with big aspirations, explained a city planner who had worked on the project. But the Asian mall developers that I spoke to saw something else. They saw a city that was so eager to support this multicultural vision of an inclusive shopping center that it blurred the city's assessment of it as a do-able project.

Ironically, however, the end product of the Globe was essentially an Asian mall. The only section of the site that got built was Saigon Village, and its only tenants today are Asian. Max observed that in the beginning, many people thought "oh, its just another Asian mall, which has turned out to be partially true because those are the most marketable properties here in Fremont." While the Globe held the possibility of concretizing the multicultural and inclusive vision that the city wanted to project, it instead came to represent the opposite—just another Asian mall.

"It appears that Fremont is facing significant challenges in overcoming its historic development patterns to create a more vibrant, retail environment for the community," concluded Fremont's 2008 retail study. To improve this condition, city officials have been actively trying to locate new retail opportunities, but its vision of desirable retail has been limited to an appeal to mainstream, upper-middle class establishments that may not be addressing the needs of the city's predominantly Asian and immigrant patrons. Asian malls, while often viewed by city officials as an opportunity to improve the visibility of diversity in the city, are not integrated in this vision.

Conclusion

Asian malls in the Silicon Valley are an emergent suburban form that brings together aspects of traditional American shopping malls, Asian malls abroad, and urban enclaves, in a space that is uniquely Asian American and suburban. Countering many of the depictions of suburbia as a bland, boring, and homogeneous landscape, they show that the suburbs as home to hybrid and complex spaces that bring together multiple cultural traditions in a dynamic and diverse visual field. Asian immigrants are crafting new spaces as reflections of their diverse needs, desires, and ideals of suburban American life.

Asian malls also provide a view into Asian American histories and geographies—the experiences of "other suburbanites" as they have built their lives and livelihoods on suburbia's contested and conflicted terrain. In the Silicon Valley, Asian malls show the increasing diversity and differentiation of the Asian American community within the past few decades as the region has emerged as a hub for new immigration. Alongside Asian immigrants' increasing prosperity has been a growing economic and geographic divide and diversity. Asian malls not only reflect this diversity, but also help to shape it, as they draw residents seeking access to their unique services and amenities.

Asian malls serve many critical functions of Asian American suburban life. They are places of everyday life that reflect Asian American suburbanites' sense of identity and place, and serve as important sites of sociality and culture that connect Asians in the Silicon Valley to each other and to a larger diasporic community. The vibrant social and cultural life of Asian malls counters contemporary critiques of American suburban shopping centers as places devoid of meaningful social and community life. Asian malls may thereby serve as useful places for planners and designers to rethink the value of mainstream malls and ways to "humanize" them to better reflect the values, needs, ideals, lifestyles, and identities of their patrons.

If Asian malls are emerging sites for the expression and analysis of different ways of viewing, experiencing, and seeing suburbia, they are also spaces to analyze how a suburban politics of difference and diversity are being fought out within planning, design, and development. In Fremont, city officials and planners have tended to view Asian malls as problem spaces that need to better fit in and blend in with their environment, and regulations have been designed to put a more mainstream face on the mall and showcase the city's diversity for economic and political gain. But rather than to control and manage diversity to meet a normative visions of "good" and "desirable" retail in the city, planning, design, and development tools might better be used to respond to the needs of particular groups and their calls for landscapes of difference. Asian malls are central sites of discourse about inclusion and belonging in the Silicon Valley suburbs, and the equitable and respectful treatment of social and cultural differences.

Cosmopolitan Suburbs

What happens when we realize that suburban culture has quietly deepened over the past few decades and become more dense and interesting?

David Brooks (2004, 6)

I began this dissertation seeking to learn from the everyday landscape about new ways of living together and managing our differences in an ever expanding and globalizing metropolis. I wanted to know how planners, designers, and policy makers could impact the ways that people made home and place with and among their differences. As a place in which issues of race, immigration, and demographic change are being fought over and through the landscape and the politics of planning, design, and development, Fremont has offered many insights into these questions. It has shown how the contemporary metropolis is being socially, physically, and politically reshaped and re-imagined by immigrants and minorities and the struggles, challenges, and opportunities that attend these changes.

As the U.S. becomes increasingly suburban and diverse, Fremont and the larger Silicon Valley are the bell-weathers for social and spatial changes happening in other cities and suburbs around the U.S. (Johnson, 2000; English-Leuck, 2002; Sanchez, 2004a). In this final chapter, I will discuss the implications of this study for theories about diverse suburbs, "minoritized" landscapes, and cosmopolitan planning and design as well as practical lessons for practitioners and policy makers working in increasingly diverse suburban contexts.

Beyond Central City Diversity

The geography of race in the U.S. has changed over the last half century. Metropolitan areas are no longer characterized by chocolate city and vanilla suburbs, but by many shades of grey. This study has shown that the suburbs are the spaces of new American diversity that are changing the way that metropolitan environments look, feel, and function. It challenges scholarship focused on central city diversity to engage with the rapid demographic changes occurring across the metropolis, and the problems and possibilities that this new geography proposes for thinking about America's racial and ethnic divide. Urban scholarship over the last century has been based on the common assumption that minorities and immigrants were located largely in racially and ethnically segregated and isolated inner city communities, while the urban periphery was the exclusive and privileged zone of the white middle class and elites. As this paradigm has shifted, so too must the ways that scholars and practitioners think about the issues facing communities of color and other marginalized groups in cities, suburbs, and metropolitan regions.

Suburbs offer opportunities to reframe issues of race, diversity, and immigration and bring about new challenges to addressing them. These challenges include the increasing fragmentation of metropolitan environments that makes addressing the issues faced by many suburban communities increasingly difficult. Scholars of suburban poverty are becoming increasingly concerned with how the suburbanization of the poor is depleting communities of needed resources, services, and social safety nets (Lucy and Phillips, 2000; Vicino, 2008; Hanlon, 2010). Many of these scholars call for metropolitan and regional cooperation to bring disadvantaged communities into the metropolitan fold. While Fremont's size and wealth have helped to maintain its services and facilities, the lack of regional cooperation and coordination makes addressing some of the issues raised in this study more difficult. Changes in high performing schools, Asian mall development, and McMansionization are occurring throughout the region. But rather than to coordinate research about best practices and problem-solve across municipal lines, Silicon Valley suburbs have come up with their own plans and policies to address these issues, sometimes by referencing the experiences of other communities, but often relying on their own resources and capacities.

The suburbanization of minorities and new immigrants also present new opportunities to addressing these issues. Its built environment is more open, flexible, and adaptable and can support a more diverse array of users and uses from multigenerational housing, fengshui subdivisions, and increasingly diverse variations of Asian malls. Further, suburban landscapes lend themselves to experimentation and creativity in ways that can generate new developments and alternatives to meeting the needs of increasingly diverse communities.

Everyday Spaces of Diversity

This study investigated three everyday suburban landscapes that challenged the scholarly focus on traditional public spaces like urban parks and plazas as the sole, or even primary, sites of racial and ethnic diversity. Following the insights gleaned from cultural landscape studies and other writings on the everyday landscape, I showed that diversity occurs in the many different places, including mundane suburban neighborhoods, schools, and shopping centers. Urban scholarship must expand beyond stereotypes or assumptions about where diversity occurs and begin to investigate the *lived space* of diversity—where and how people encounter difference in their everyday lives.

I have shown that everyday suburban spaces like schools, homes, and malls are places that residents care deeply about and in which residents engage in substantive interactions and engagements on a regular basis. These are places in which discourses and contests about difference are taking place and planners, designers, and policy makers are being asked to intervene. The lack of scholarly attention to these spaces has failed to adequately inform practitioners about the issues at stake and develop effective strategies to support meaningful and long-lasting change.

High Tech Suburbs as Centers of Diversity

The experiences of Asian immigrants in the Silicon Valley broaden the scope of the literature on "ethnoburbs." I have shown that neoliberal economic policies, global

economic restructuring, and changing immigration laws have largely driven ethnic diversity in the Silicon Valley. High tech suburbs are *cosmopolitan spaces* characterized by dynamic, hybrid, flexible, and fluid landscapes and ethnically diverse, globally connected, and geographically mobile populations of high income and highly educated immigrants from all around the world, especially China, Taiwan, and India. They are not only the spaces where scientific knowledge and technology are produced, but also places that are creating new suburban racial, ethnic, and class geographies. Many new centers of technological innovation are also emerging in places like Austin, Texas, the Research Triangle in North Carolina, Route 128 in Boston, and Northern Virginia. Fremont and the larger Silicon Valley shed light on the issues that these communities are or will likely face in the future.

As high tech areas have become increasingly transnational and globally connected spaces, they have changed the relationship among residents, businesses, and cities. Neither high tech suburban municipalities nor their residents are nearly as dependent on central cities as the manufacturing suburbs of even a half-century ago. Both their residents and businesses are tapped into globalized economies that span multiple national and cultural borders. The emergence of high tech regions like the Silicon Valley forces scholars to reconsider the relationships between cities and suburbs, as well as the very idea of a suburb as evolving from an urban core. I have highlighted the increasing disconnect that many suburban immigrants feel to inner city ethnic enclaves and the different histories and experiences of their residents. While I have shown that regional connections continue to matter, Asian immigrants in the Silicon Valley are often more tapped into what is happening in their countries of origin than in Chinatown, San Francisco or Oakland. Insights from emerging fields like global metropolitan and transnational urban studies are important arenas that will help scholars to further understand the extent to which the processes, people, and products producing urban and suburban forms are linked to and being reproduced in other regions around the globe.

Suburbs as Diverse, Interesting, and Meaningful Places

Urban scholars and the media have consistently caricatured suburbia as a homogeneous, bland, and boring landscape devoid of social life and meaning. In contrast, I have provided vignettes of vibrant, dynamic, and rich suburban landscapes that counter these stereotypes and act as important spaces of community and cultural life. McMansions, Asian malls, and high performing schools are places that reflect Asian immigrants' needs, desires, identities, priorities, values, meanings, and preferences for their own suburban lives and landscapes—the value of a high quality education and convenient cultural products and services, the meaning of home and community, and the importance of multigenerational households, among others.

These landscapes reflect a different sense of what it means to be suburban to Asian immigrants than white, middle class residents. Extending the work of suburban revisionists on the diverse lived experiences, meanings, and values of "other suburbanites," I previewed landscapes that showed how Asian immigrants have constructed, in the words of historian Andrew Wiese (2004), suburban "places of their own." McMansions, Asian malls, and high performing schools are all expressions and embodiments of new suburban identities and ideas about a quality suburban life. These

are spaces through which ideals are concretized and materially constructed and reconstructed.

In contrast to much of the planning and design literature that assumes that users' hold relatively static and stable identities and cultures, I have stressed the fluidity, flexibility, and hybridity of many immigrants' place identities. Their hybrid landscapes reflect the synthesis of multiple cultural spaces and traditions, including those of their home countries and the Silicon Valley suburbs. As Michel Laguerre (1999) argues, "Immigrants construct space, not only to remind them of their home country or to maintain ongoing relations with a homeland, but also to serve as markers of their new identities" (79). Neither Asian immigrants' lives nor the landscapes exist solely on one side of the Pacific or the other. Their sense of identity, home, and community are not confined to their local neighborhoods or municipalities, but constantly straddle and move among multiple national and cultural borders, both real and imagined. Spaces are needed that better accommodate Asian immigrants' lifestyles and identities with more temporary, flexible, and fluid spaces that are easily manipulated and subject to change.

Looking at Suburbia

Many scholars have critiqued suburbia, but far fewer have engaged with real suburban communities or their material forms in substantive ways. The lack of detailed portraits of suburbanites and the nuances of their social and spatial lives has failed to break down many of the stereotypes and highlight suburbia's contemporary diversity and complexity. Such narratives are especially needed in minority and immigrant suburbs. whose stories are just now beginning to be told. In this study, I used in-depth interviews, oral histories, and residents' own place narratives to provide nuanced views into Fremont's vast landscape, politics, and residents. I used place and behavior observations and design analysis to investigate the form and use of these landscapes. With close observations. I quickly found that seemingly homogeneous places were not. What at first seemed like a landscape of tract homes and strip malls began to reveal a variety of lived experiences and meanings—dynamic and vibrant places full of many stories that had not been told, but held many lessons for the planners, designers, and public policy makers. These landscapes spoke in ways that opened up new lines of inquiry, interpretations, and questions that led me to deeper analysis and insights. Close observation and ethnographically inspired ways of looking at suburbs can help other urban scholars and practitioners develop new lenses for analyzing suburbia, and making its landscape better reflect the needs and values of residents. They empower residents to articulate their place narratives and treat them as experts of their own landscapes and experiences.

Geographies of Diversity and Qualities of Diverse Landscapes

This dissertation showed how and why Fremont and the larger Silicon Valley became a hub of immigrant and minority diversity in the latter half of the 20th century. I highlighted the particularly important roles played by schools, new and affordable housing, manufacturing and high tech industries, mixed-income housing, migration networks, immigration policy, and Fremont's position with the larger regional geography of the West, California, and the Bay Area. Although much of the new suburban

scholarship recognizes suburbia's increasing diversity, few studies have shown why diversity occurs more in some suburbs than others and the forces that drive particular racial and ethnic geographies.

Scholars and practitioners interested in creating places and policies that support diversity need to know about the environmental qualities that matter to different groups. For most planners and designers, "designing for diversity" means setting aside affordable, mixed use housing. But this strategy only addresses a narrow set of concerns, largely those of access and affordability. Planners and designers need to expand their tool kit to include an ability to address differences in residents' lifestyles, tastes, preferences, and everyday social and spatial practices. Looking at the lived landscapes of diversity and finding new ways to tap into what residents' value in their cities and neighborhoods will expand and enlighten existing strategies.

An understanding of what residents' value in their landscape will also help scholars and practitioners better analyze new and emerging geographies of race and ethnicity. I showed that Fremont's racial geography has been produced from a combination of forces, which include both segregation (or discriminatory policies and practices) and the voluntary congregation of groups. Asian immigrants came to Fremont in search of good schools, new housing, and convenient lifestyles with access to jobs and community and cultural amenities. But these same qualities of the landscape have contributed to the departure of many established white residents. Urban scholarly discourses about racial and ethnic segregation and congregation need to be revisited in light of Asian immigrant communities with wealth, connections, and economic capital. Adopting planning and design strategies to meet the specific needs of different ethnic and cultural groups, while also fighting the forces of segregation is a hard balance that municipalities must find and scholarship must better articulate.

Landscapes of Difference as Problem Spaces

Suburbia has produced new modes and spaces of marginality and inequality. Especially in suburbs that were developed on principles of social and spatial control, homogeneity, and exclusion, minorities' presence and spatial practices have consistently been contested, marginalized, and politicized—not taken for granted or naturalized in the same way as they have for whites. In Fremont, planners, designers, and policy makers tend to view minority spaces as a problem spaces that are in need of greater control and regulation. They are critiqued for not blending in and fitting in with dominant white middle class norms of design, planning, and development.

The primary mechanisms that Fremont city officials have used to deal with social tensions surrounding these landscapes are new regulations aimed at ordering and minimizing visual expressions of difference. Throughout much of suburban history, property regulations have been used to control and order the landscape to maintain neighborhood stability, secure property values, and resist both social and spatial change, including race and class integration. Today, the legacy continues in part because of many established residents', planners', and policy makers' insistence that suburbia remain a relatively static, stable, and homogeneous physical space. Public policies requiring a unified visual landscape perpetuate the exclusion for poor people of color by preventing access to suburbs, and also create barriers for minorities and immigrants of means by

denying them the ability to make changes in their homes and neighborhoods to reflect their new place identities, values, and meanings.

Diversity requires more messy and complex landscapes than many suburban planning and design policies permit. As John Archer (2005) argues, "Efforts to limit the messiness and difference that ordinarily animate an open society may originate as well intentioned efforts to refine the [American] dream. But all too readily they become unpalatably undemocratic" (348). Archer further argues that by "welcoming difference, negotiation, and hybridity" and "affording opportunities for individual distinction and social differentiation" that suburbia can better sustain its vitality and serve the interests of its residents (357). Further, I contend that planners and designers need to give residents more choices and the power to co-opt and craft spaces that support their dynamic and diverse uses. They need not rely on such narrow visions of aesthetic quality, and may instead learn to find beauty in seemingly disordered and messy landscapes (Nassauer, 1995).

Further, planners, designers, and policy makers might better begin to think about diversity in the physical landscape as less of a problem and more of an opportunity for expanding suburban municipalities' capacities to address a wide range of residents' preferences and needs through new models of development and increasing their vibrancy and vitality. Landscapes of difference provide spaces to engage different ways of viewing and acting in the world, and the different place values, meanings, and ideas, that inform built forms and residents' use and enjoyment of them. They also offer a space to bridge intolerance and inequalities through education and proactive, progressive planning and design efforts aimed at creating opportunities for collaborative community engagement.

The Problem with Development and Design Controls

Underlying many of the fights over Fremont's changing landscape are residents', politicians', and planners' fears about changes in and disruptions to the established suburban social and physical order. Landscapes of difference have upset the presumed stability and exclusivity of the suburban landscape and many established residents place in it—their property values, sense of community, and place. Historically, suburbia's standardized form has reinforced established residents' sense of power and privilege. But in the face of rapid demographic change and immigration among minorities of means, established Fremont residents have sought out greater control and protection of their landscapes and appealed to planning, design, and development regulations to aid them.

At a time when fears about the decline of the U.S. vis-à-vis Asia are common, it is perhaps not surprising that physical spaces that appear to confirm this stereotype are heavily fought. Many established Fremont residents feel that Asians are "taking over" their community, and as Sam explained to me, that diversity is being "shoved down their throat." Aiwah Ong (1999) argues that wealthy Asian immigrant groups in America induce a sense of displacement among groups that they are do not feel that they are benefitting from globalization to the same extent. In a globally connected and diverse world, these "unhomely" moments of contact are ever more frequent (Bhabha, 1994). Residents' fears and frustrations over the changing social order often manifest themselves in challenges to growth, development, and change.

Although planning and design is often called upon to intervene, professionals need to be very careful about when they take up these issues and think critically about what is at stake. The sordid history of minorities in suburbia means that planners and designers can easily and unwittingly perpetuate the legacy of racialized exclusion by adopting antigrowth and development controls. As Garnett (2007) writes, "It is difficult to avoid concluding that changing the rules of the development game at this time is tantamount to pulling the suburban ladder out from under those late exiters who previously were excluded from suburban life by economic circumstance, exclusionary zoning, and intentional discrimination," (300). Other scholars have also argued that battles over environmental conservation, growth controls, and taxes have produced a new suburban conservatism that prizes slow growth, low taxes, privatization, and individual rights, which whether intentionally or not, negatively impacts communities of color (Davis, 1990; Self, 2003; Hirsh, 2006). Growth controls tend to favor those groups who have historically benefitted from suburbia's past exclusions. They tend to direct dollars away from suburbs, where minorities are moving in greater and greater numbers, and toward the redevelopment (and perhaps gentrification) of cities. In this study, I have shown how housing and retail development regulations and design controls can have similarly discriminatory impacts.

Instead of simply trying to stop or severely restrict growth and new forms of design and development, planners and designers might better become more strategic about managing these issues and invest their resources in finding out what suburban residents want out of their homes and neighborhoods. People usually live in suburbia not because they are forced to, but because they want to. Developing strategies that give residents what they want in sustainable ways can provide win-win solutions for planners and designers concerned with suburban sprawl and residents who want suburban homes and amenities. McMansions can be made more environmentally sustainable with investments in new technologies and policies requiring the use of sustainable materials, while also allowing multigenerational households that increase the density neighborhoods. Too often, however, planners and designers make assumptions about the incompatibility of sustainability and suburbia, and fail to think creatively about new solutions. Just growth, development, and design policies might better assess their impacts of these controls across different groups and the ideologies, interests, and assumptions that drive them.

Expanding and Complicating the Urban Social Justice Paradigm

While most social justice scholarship focuses on the most socially vulnerable and marginalized communities, this study suggests the need for a broader attack on systems of racialized power and privilege, and the ways that race and inequality are reproduced in and through space and planning, design, and development processes and institutions. In Fremont, policies and planning practices adopted regarding homes, malls, and public schools show that for minorities of means, it is not necessarily their race or class differences, but their social and cultural differences and preferences that are the basis of their exclusion and marginalization. Planners and policy makers' ability to define what is "good," "appropriate," "desirable," or "normal" design and development and their consistent privileging of established landscapes and residents marginalize new

immigrants, minorities, and other suburban newcomers, even those of means. It is not only class exclusion, but also white cultural hegemony that keep minorities on the margins of suburban life and planning, design, and development processes. Although Asian immigrants' new found wealth may have bought them access into elite neighborhoods with good schools and big houses, even the most well off "model minorities" are subject to persistent racial and ethnic segregation as well as public policies and institutions that perpetuate and reward dominant, white spatial values and practices and reinforce a racially stratified system of opportunity.

Social and cultural differences need to be given more attention within the urban social justice literature. A broad social justice platform that hopes to confront racist practices, policies, and institutions cannot be limited to the issues that effect poor people of color. Rather their scope must include the issues that confront *all* people of color. It must go beyond thinking about disadvantage as tied only to categories like race, class, gender, and sexuality, to include other identities that shape social positions and privilege, including whether residents are established or newcomers, old or young, immigrant or non-immigrants, first or second generation, their nationalities, and histories of migration. The failure to acknowledge residents' social and cultural differences often results in "one size fits all" solutions that reinforce the kind of homogeneous and sterile environments planners and designers often scorn, and marginalize communities of color and their needs.

My focus on the struggles of Asian immigrants of means in the Silicon Valley also spoke to the privilege they hold relative to other groups. I highlighted the increasing racial and ethnic divide socially and geographically in and among Asians as well as between Asians and other minority groups, and poor and working-class whites. As Fremont has shifted from a city with large amount of open, undeveloped land to a highly desirable locale of Asian immigrants throughout the Silicon Valley and even the world, it has become less and less affordable for poor and working class groups. The rise new global elites are shifting the context in which scholars are used to talking about race and class privilege, and has raised a number of complicated public policy issues, most evident in the case of Asian students in high performing schools.

A comprehensive planning and design approach would address the issues of displacement, rising housing costs, and create new affordable housing to meet the needs of low-wage Silicon Valley workers and other poor and working class communities. Because so much of the urban and social justice literature has focused on affordable and inclusive housing policies. I do not believe that these strategies need repeating here. Rather I would argue that an important contribution of this work is the use of intersectional analyses that look at the ways that factors such as race, class, culture, and other measures of difference and disadvantage show that all of these categories can matter simultaneously, without one necessarily being privileged over the other. Rather than to suggest that race or culture are no longer important factors in light of class-based privileges of high tech Asian immigrants, my analysis has stressed that the race and class differences compound to produce multiple layers of disadvantage and inequality for poor minorities, but also continue to impact those of means. An intersectional approach pays attention to all measures and modes of inequality and the ways that they interrelate to create a system of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989). In policies about school equity and choice, an intersectional approach sheds light on seeming need to be choose either raceor class-based public policies, and instead highlights both as important and linked factors of inequality.

The Politics of Difference in Suburban Planning and Design

In an era of increasing globalization and mobility, the politics of development, planning, and design are more socially and culturally complex and contested than ever before. In Fremont, high income, highly educated Asian immigrants have defied stereotypes about passive and quiet model minorities and instead become quite vocal about their landscape values, meanings, and uses, and their rights *not to* conform or assimilate with dominant social and cultural norms. As Li (2006) argues, since new Asian immigrants often deal in international trade and finance with their home countries, "blending into the U.S. society does not have to be their first priority" (39). They are engaging in a politics that seeks to make a space in which their differences will be acknowledged and respected. As sites of active political engagement, landscapes of difference give voice to what John Archer (2005) calls "suburban counterpublics" by challenging dominant social and spatial norms and their institutionalization within planning, design, and development policies, processes, and professional norms. The persistence of Asian immigrants' ethnic communities and cultural practices, spaces, and networks in the suburbs, suggests new grounds for scholarly research on the politics of difference as both a social and spatial anti-assimilationist agenda.

Further, as the number of economically and spatially mobile minorities able to cross the historically hardened racial and ethnic boundaries of middle and upper class suburban neighborhoods have increased, this study has shown that the traditional position of racialized minorities with regard to suburban planning and development has changed. They are no longer only on the sidelines fighting for access to suburban homes, schools, and jobs; they are also part of suburbia and have helped to shape its physical form and social, cultural, and political life. These suburbanites are fighting to maintain and enhance their roles as shapers of their own physical and social worlds, and to cultivate a sense of place, belonging, and inclusion in their homes and communities. Planning, design, and development issues are central realms of debate, providing the forums in which residents are able to mobilize and express their various place values, ideals, and identities and demand their right to difference.

Diversity as a Planning and Design Objective

While many cities include diversity as an objective, few do little to foster and support diverse spaces. Fremont's ethnically diverse population came together because of a variety of economic, social, historical, and environmental factors, that had very little to do with the proactive actions of planners and city officials. Instead city officials have often tried to put diversity "in its place" to make landscapes of difference more visually acceptable and mainstream. At the same time, the city has celebrated certain symbols of diversity that properly mark its projected image as an inclusive and multicultural place for profit and political gain.

While diversity and differences ought to be celebrated, municipalities might better engage diversity as a tool to educate residents about difference, build better community

relations and cross-cultural alliances, and sustain and support the cause of social justice and equity. Deep diversity that goes beyond the numbers and superficial claims about inclusion, requires cities to work with residents to help them learn to respect and appreciate each other's differences. It requires the political will to wrestle with hard questions about how diversity works, to accommodate the needs of different groups, and deal with conflicting and competing interests. Deep diversity requires community engagement and policies that support places of meaning and value to multiple groups.

The Roles of Planners, Designers and Public Policy Makers

This study showed that planners, designers and public policy makers often inhibit rather than help to sustain differences in the physical and social landscape by imposing strict controls on non-conforming uses and non-normative suburban residents' ability to shape it. To support diverse places, planners, designers, and public policy makers need to be become more familiar with the wants and needs of the different communities they serve. This requires a multicultural literacy as well as recognition and reflection upon their own subjectivity, including prejudices, stereotypes, and assumptions that may impact decision-making (Sandercock, 2003). Having more diverse planning and policy makers bodies can offer alternative viewpoints and open up the lines of communications with disaffected communities.

Inclusive planning and design practices may require practitioners to play new roles and gain new skills. They ought to provide safe spaces for intercultural dialogue, and help communities work through their fears and frustrations over social change and difference in productive ways (Baum, 2000). This may require that planners and designers act in a variety of capacities, including those of mediators, collaborators, facilitators, listeners, advisors, organizers, advocates, or cultural interpreters (Sandercock, 2000). They may need to provide residents with information, options, and access to resources, help people articulate what they know, and be responsive and appreciative of various forms of knowledge and means of expression (Sandercock, 2003). They should learn to read cultural codes, cues, symbolic, and non-verbal evidence in the physical landscape (Sandercock, 2000; Low et al., 2005). As Sandercock (2000) argues, a practitioner's role is not to maintain the status quo, but rather that of "mediating memories and hopes, and facilitating change and transformation" (29). Planning, design, and development debates create opportunities to educate residents, planners, and public policy makers. Conflicts do not always need to be resolved or result in consensus or compromise, but may rather sometimes simply serve as an opportunity for residents' to air and learn to respect others' differences.

Changing Planning Processes

I have shown that the marginalization of people of color occurs not only within suburban space, but also through planning and design processes that tend to silence the voices of already marginalized groups. Socially inclusive processes acknowledge different forms of spatial knowledge, practices, values, meanings, and identities, and allow multiple visions and voices to be heard. To foster participation, practitioners need to identify stakeholders and reach out to underrepresented communities. They need to

develop trusting and long-term relationships with key community leaders and seek feedback about the barriers to participation, which may include such things language, information, cultural traditions, transportation, language, social power, and fear (Sandercock, 2003).

In public meetings, public policy makers, planners, and designers need to be sensitive to cultural issues, such as the reasons why some groups may feel uncomfortable to speak (Sandercock, 2003). They should address language barrier that prevent clear community and the free expression of ideas and opinions. And they need to learn to hear different voices, even those they do not agree with. As the McMansion debates exhibited, elected officials tend to be beholden to certain groups and listen to the most powerful and vocal groups

For those groups that do not participate in the public process, practitioners should find alternative forums of participation (Sandercock, 2003). They should consider formats that draw upon residents' different traditions of participation and community engagement. They might use community mapping or have meetings in places like Asian malls that resident regularly visit and use to address issues of access, comfort, and convenience. They should make information, notices, and plans easily accessible and adaptable through a variety of mediums, including models, maps, and online presentations, forums, and surveys to generate participation and feedback.

To ensure that residents' needs, rather than those of planners or policy makers, drive the process, practitioners should consult the community early and often. Practitioners can assist residents in coming up with their own visions and articulating their needs and desires in community-driven processes that help turn residents into stakeholders, users, and caretakers of their own spaces and empower them to guide the planning and design process (Hester, 2006). Open and democratic planning processes support multiple viewpoints, help residents locate common ground, and promote more tolerant and respectful relations among groups (Hester, 1984).

Planners and designers also need to assess the impact of their policies and adapt them to the changing needs of residents. They need to maintain open lines of communication with community leaders and residents and seek regular feedback on policy changes. Incremental and iterative changes allow practitioners to test out ideas and leave projects open and adaptable to future changes.

Changing Professional Norms and Policies

Planners' and designers' personal and professional norms often reinforce dominant social and cultural norms about "good" and "desirable" design, planning, and development. Institutional norms around such issues as contextual design, neighborhood stability and integrity, and even environmentalism can marginalize already disaffected groups because of their presumptions about the values and meanings that residents *should* hold in common. Such perspectives tend to silence alterative viewpoints and reinforce the dominant social and political structure.

While all planning and design is to some extent value-driven, the professions need to critically analyze where their norms come from, how they become invested in policy and practice, and to what effect. In suburban planning and design, it seems that many of the professional norms stem from the desire to maintain property values and

neighborhood stability, which whether purposely or not, tends to privilege already privileged groups and perpetuate the legacy of suburban race and class exclusion.

An alternative set of planning, design, and development norms might aim to foster respect for difference and diversity and protect the rights of residents to maintain and express their different place values, meanings, and identities in urban form. They might not assume a set of similar values or forms across different spaces or groups, but rather seek to acknowledge contestations and differences. They might be based in democratic, participatory, and community engaged design and planning processes that seek to capitalize off the capacities, capabilities, and concerns of residents who live in and with these spaces—user-centered norms that puts people before aesthetics, conformity, property values, or profit.

A Cosmopolitan Ethic of Planning and Design

Existing planning and design ethics recognize the need for diversity, but do not address residents' rights to difference—to express, create, and represent their own beliefs and identities in the landscape. A cosmopolitan ethic of planning and design has a quest for social change and spatial justice at its core. It seeks to recognize and deconstruct the ways that social privilege and power work through landscapes as well as professionals, processes, and policies that systematically marginalize and disempower certain groups. It seeks to change the system through a radical politics of design and planning that puts difference first. It calls for groups to be given more choices and opportunities to express their differences in the built environment. And that planning and design policies challenge the common assumptions that new urban or suburban dwellers should simply fit in and adopt the practices, norms, and values of the dominant white culture.

This ethic offers an important counterpoint to theories of assimilation and multiculturalism that prize unity and agreement among groups, and instead articulates an ideal in which the central concern is the fair and respectful treatment of social and cultural differences. It is does not rely on the cohesion, consensus, or understanding among groups, but rather a common awareness and respect for differences. A cosmopolitan ethic of planning and design demands that residents be given the right to difference—to express their beliefs and identities, participate in the construction of their own spaces, and invest their landscapes with their own place values, meanings, and identities. It requires that multiple voices and visions be heard, encouraged, and allowed to coexist and be reflected in the landscapes of residents' everyday lives. Integrating this ethic into the ways that scholars, practitioners, and public policy makers think about and work with differences will help cities and residents better manage the task of living together in an increasingly diverse and suburban world.

Tables and Figures

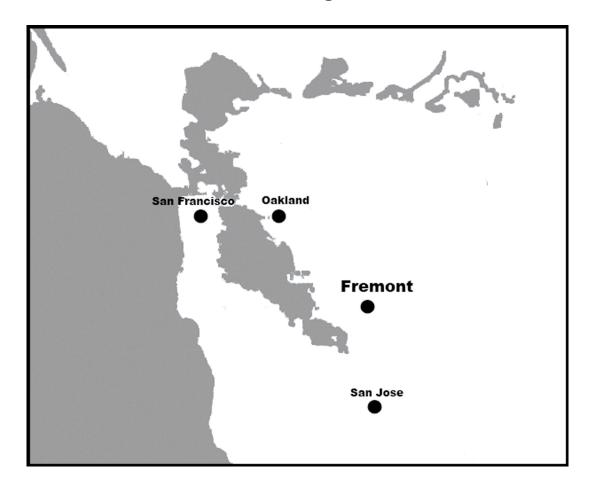


Fig. 1.1: Fremont is located in the San Francisco Bay Area. It is widely considered a Silicon Valley suburb because of its large number of high tech companies and residents employed in high tech industries. Image by author.

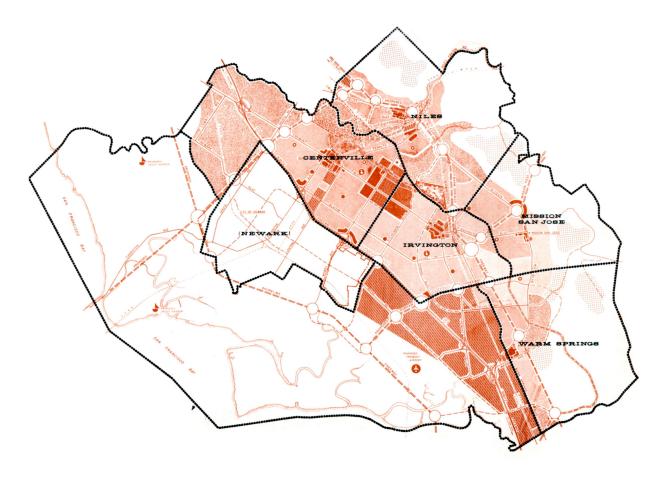


Fig. 2.1: Upon its incorporation in 1956, Fremont brought together five towns to form the third geographic largest city in California. Its general plan shown above set forth a vision of Fremont as an exclusive, pastoral Garden City suburb. Image by Sydney Williams (1961).

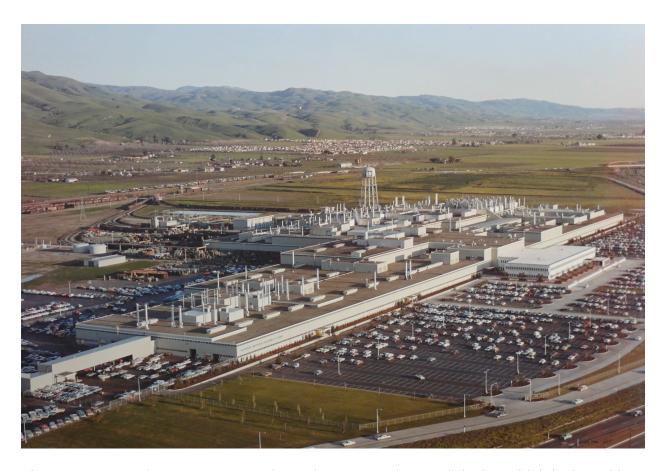


Figure 2.2: General Motors Company located to Fremont in 1958 bringing with it both working class industry and neighborhoods that contrasted with city founders' vision as an upper-middle class suburb. This picture shows the plant in 1961 surrounded by agricultural farmland. Courtesy of Arnold del Carlo.



Figure 2.3: The Guardwara Shahib, one of the largest and most influential Sikh temples in the world, was founded in Fremont in 1978. It was a served as a symbol of Fremont's rise as hub for new immigrants from all over the world, especially China, Taiwan, and India. Photo by author.



Figure 2.4: Beginning in the 1980s, Afghanis began arriving in Fremont as refugees. Today, Fremont is reported to have one of the largest populations of Afghanis outside of Afghanistan, who tend to cluster around the area known as "Little Kabul" in Fremont's historic Centerville neighborhood. Photo by author.



Fig. 2.5: Inside the Avalon, one of Fremont's premier gated communities, which has an Asian American majority. Photo by author.

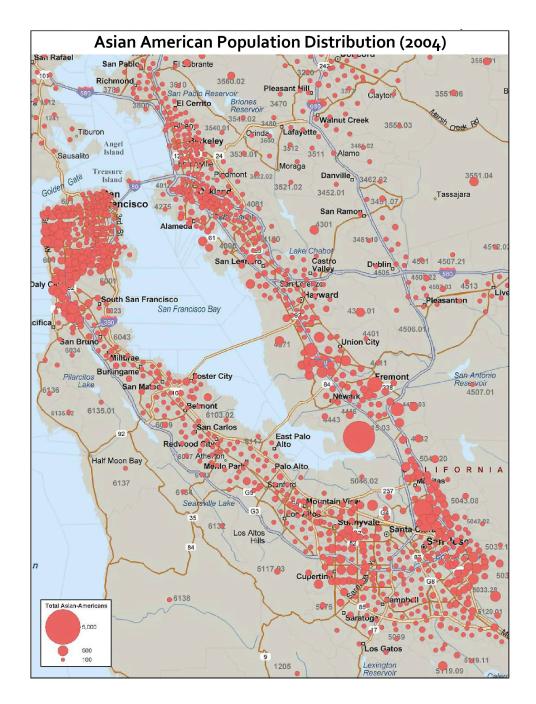


Fig. 2.6: The growth of the Silicon Valley has created a dual geography of Asian Americans in the Bay Area between older immigrants residents living in urban centers like San Francisco and Oakland and new immigrants in the South Bay suburbs, especially in and around Fremont. Courtesy of Thomas Consultants (2005).

		1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Fremont	White*	98.3%	96.8%	85.1%	70.0%	47.7%	32.8%
	Asian	1.5%	2.0%	7.3%	19.4%	37.4%	51.1%
	Hispanic	11.8%	9.9%	13.9%	12.9%	13.5%	14.8%
	Black	0.0%	0.4%	2.6%	3.8%	3.1%	3.3%
	Other	0.2%	0.8%	5.0%	6.1%	11.8%	12.8%
	Foreign- Born**	4.9%	5.0%	10.0%	20.0%	37.0%	43.1%
	Income***			\$25,342	\$51,231	\$76,579	\$87,385
Metro	White	89.8%	86.4%	76.1%	68.9%	58.1%	52.0%
	Asian	3.2%	4.8%	8.9%	15.3%	19.5%	23.9%
	Hispanic		8.2%	12.2%	14.9%	19.4%	23.5%
	Black	6.7%	7.9%	9.0%	8.9%	7.5%	3.1%
	Other	0.4%	0.9%	6.0%	7.0%	14.7%	16.9%
	Foreign-Born	10.0%	10.2%	15.1%	20.0%	27.4%	31.8%
	Income			\$20,607	\$41,595	\$62,024	\$73,027

^{*}All racial categories include Hispanic populations for all years to facilitate comparison of data across time. The U.S. Census did not account for non-Hispanic by race until 1990.

Table 2.1: Within the last half century, Fremont has gone from a white, middle-class suburban area to become a hub for highly educated, high-income immigrants from around the world, especially Asia. The table compares Fremont's racial, foreign-born, and median household demographics to the San-Francisco-Oakland-San Jose Metropolitan Statistical Areas between 1960 and 2010.

^{**}Foreign-born populations are U.S. census statistical estimates.

^{***}Income is a measure of median household income. All data are 100% data, except for 2010.



Figure 3.1: Mission San Jose High School has become an internationally renowned public high school, especially among Asian immigrants settling in the Silicon Valley. Photo by author.

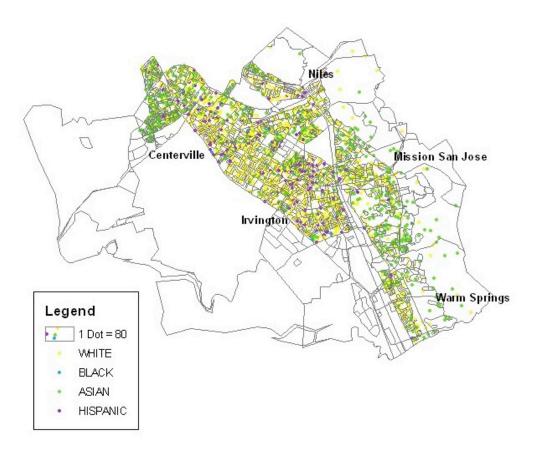


Fig. 3.2: Fremont's 2000 racial demographics show the cluster of Asian Americans residents within the Mission San Jose neighborhood, which has some of the top performing schools in the state. The other cluster of Asian American residents (in the upper left) is around the Ardenwood neighborhood, which also has high performing schools. Image by author.



Fig. 3.3: Mission San Jose homes often appear on television and print ads in Taiwan, India, and China. This listing for a single-family home on a Taiwanese real estate site emphasizes its location within the Mission San Jose school district (Yibada, 2010).



Figure 3.4: Mission High students often suffer from high levels of stress over their grades. Image by Cassie Zhang, published in *The Smoke Signal*. Used with permission.

		1981*	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Race	White	84%	81%	71%	53%	39%	19%	12%
	Asian	7%	10%	25%	41%	57%	58%	84%
	Hispanic	7%	6%	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%
	Black	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
	Other	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	20%	1%
API Scores**						882	935	951

^{*1981} is the first year that the state of California began recording racial data in schools.

Table 3.1: Mission San Jose High's student population went from predominantly white to Asian American in only a few decades. At the same time, the academic standards of its students have increased.

^{**}California's current Academic Performance Index (API) standardized testing system began in 1999.

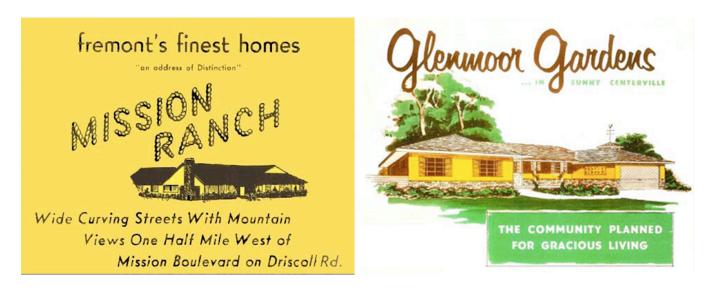


Fig. 4.1: Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens were two of the earliest subdivisions built in Fremont, whose residents led the citywide debate over large home development. These early neighborhood advertisements emphasize that the elite character of both neighborhoods were defined by their highly planned pastoral landscapes, which were upset by McMansion development. Images published in Hardy et al. (2009, 2009a).



Fig. 4.2: Mission Ranch became ground zero for Fremont's McMansion home debate. Highlighted above are two large homes built before the neighborhood's new large home design guidelines and development standards were passed in 2010. These homes are pictured with their single-story ranch-style neighbors. Photos adapted from Google Maps.

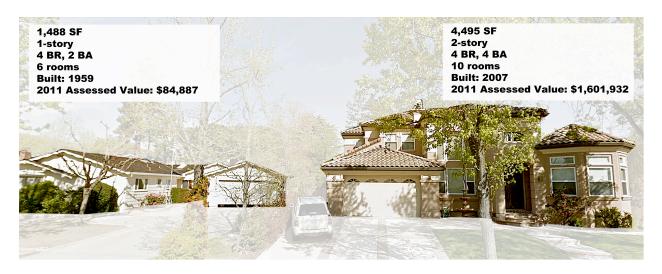


Fig. 4.3: The house on the right on Covington Street in Mission Ranch became a rallying point for neighborhood opposition to large homes in existing neighborhoods in Fremont. The captions compare the size, configurations, and tax-assessed values of this home and its neighboring property. Note that the tax-assessed value of the ranch-style home is not a reflection of its market value. In California, Property 13 has significantly limited property tax increases on long-term homeowners. In Mission Ranch, long-term homeowners were not displaced by rising taxes due to the building of McMansions. Photo adapted from Google Maps.

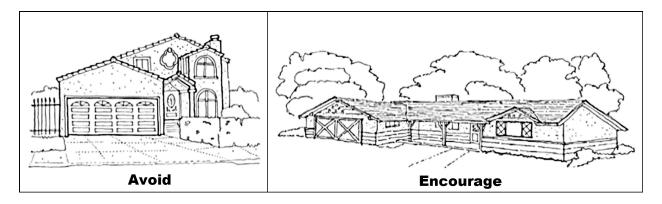


Fig. 4.4: These images appear in the Mission Ranch design guidelines as illustrative examples of housing and landscape elements that residents should "avoid" based on large home designs and for planners to "encourage" based on ranch-style home designs. Images published in Hardy et al. (2009, 2009a).

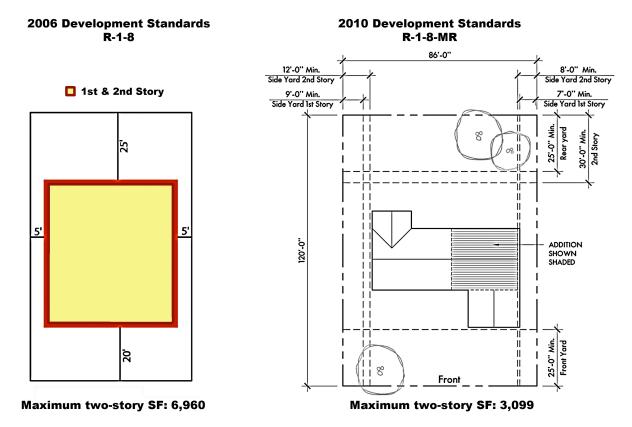


Fig. 4.5: Under its new R-1-8-MR zoning designation, Mission Ranch's new development standards reduced the build out for two-story homes by more than 50% from 6,950 to 3,100 sf. It increased setbacks, and reduced height limits and floor-to-area ratios, especially on two-story homes. Images published in Fremont Planning Department (2006) and Hardy et al. (2009).

		1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Mission Ranch*	White**				90.3%	66.6%	27.9%
	Asian				7.5%	27.9%	67.4%
	Hispanic				5.4%	4.3%	4.3%
	Black				0.8%	0.6%	0.4%
	Other				1.4%	5.0%	8.6%
	Foreign- Born***				13.6%	12.0%	41.6%
Glenmoor Gardens	White				86.1%	69.3%	52.5%
	Asian				7.2%	17.6%	26.2%
	Hispanic				11.2%	15.1%	18.1%
	Black				2.6%	2.6%	4.0%
	Other				4.2%	10.5%	17.3%
	Foreign-Born				22.6%	28.9%	27.9%
Fremont	White	98.3%	96.8%	85.1%	70.0%	47.7%	32.8%
	Asian	1.5%	2.0%	7.3%	19.4%	37.4%	51.1%
	Hispanic	11.8%	9.9%	13.9%	12.9%	13.5%	14.8%
	Black	0.0%	0.4%	2.6%	3.8%	3.1%	3.3%
	Other	0.2%	0.8%	5.0%	6.1%	11.8%	12.8%
	Foreign-Born	4.9%	5.0%	10.0%	20.0%	37.0%	43.1%

^{****}Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens data is based on census tract and block groups. In 2010, the census block group boundaries for the Mission Ranch neighborhood changed, making it difficult to compare 1990 with 2010 data. However, these figures are consistent with the larger Mission San Jose neighborhood. In 2010, the census block group data for Mission Ranch's foreign-born population has not yet been published, so census tract data was used.

Table 4.1: Mission Ranch and Glenmoor Gardens race and foreign-born populations were slower to change than many other Fremont neighborhoods. The table compares the neighborhoods' demographics to Fremont from 1960 to 2010.

^{**}All racial categories include Hispanic populations for all years to facilitate comparison of data across time. The U.S. Census did not account for Hispanic by race until 1990.

^{***}Foreign-born populations are U.S. census statistical estimates. All other data are 100% data counts.

	McMansion Opponents	McMansion Supporters
Character	Respect and retain a neighborhood's existing character	Neighborhoods as dynamic and providing access to good schools
Size	Value of small, single-family homes	Homes as investments and for multigenerational households
Preservation	Preserve the historic and unique elements of neighborhoods	New homes as means to wealth and stability
Aesthetics	New homes as ugly and tasteless	New homes as modern and beautiful
Privacy	A right to privacy	Property rights as paramount
Open Space	Views, lawns, and sun as valued and valuable	Homes for busy, modern families
Community	A place-based community of shared values	Communities of difference that go beyond the bounds of neighborhood

Table 4.2: The arguments of opponents and supporters in the Fremont's debate over large homes debate included different social and cultural ideas about the value and use of homes and neighborhoods.



Fig. 5.1: Fremont's "Little Taipei" is one of approximately 140 Asian malls in the U.S. Asian malls blend Eastern and Western traditions to create a uniquely Asian American suburban space. Photo by author.

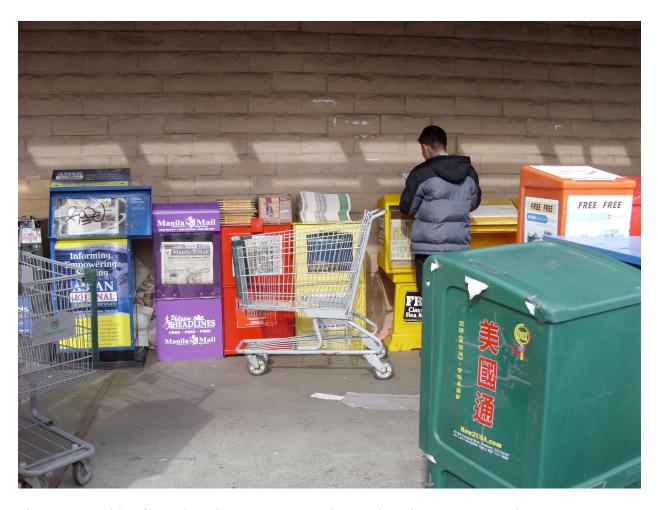


Fig. 5.2: Outside of Ranch 99 in Fremont's Northgate Shopping Center, stands carry newspapers from 12 different language groups. This is an important place of everyday intercultural interaction. Photo by author.



Fig. 5.3: Asian malls serve many important everyday life functions for its patrons. These include the ability to connect with loved ones overseas by sending money using one of Asian malls' many Asian bank branches, or as this ad outside a Ranch 99 suggests, Western Union. Photo by author.



Fig. 5.4: Fremont Times Square is Fremont's first condo-owned Asian mall. Because the city passed a retail condo ordinance just before the mall was built, planners were able to manage and control the development process to ensure the property fit a with mainstream mall configurations and could easily be made available for redevelopment. Photo by author.



Fig. 5.5: The Globe Mall filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2009, turning the city's multicultural dreams into a nightmare. The only section of the mall that was built was Saigon Village, and its only tenants are Asian. It is consider by many today to be "just another Asian mall." Photo by author.

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