

EXCEPTIONAL VISIONS: CHINESENESS, CITIZENSHIP, AND THE  
ARCHITECTURES OF COMMUNITY IN SILICON VALLEY

by

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## CHAPTER 1 Introduction

Starting in the mid-1990s and well into the early 2000s, many white residents of Cupertino, California were fed up with the growing numbers of Chinese immigrant neighbors and what they thought to be the subsequent loss of “community” in their neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup> One of fifteen incorporated cities and towns of Santa Clara County, Cupertino witnessed a nearly two-fold increase of the city’s Asian population from 23% to 44% between 1990 and 2000 while the white population dropped from 74% to 52%. White residents were saddened by loss of Cupertino’s “outwardly-facing” culture and ethos.<sup>2</sup> These residents bemoaned what they perceived to be the disappearance of neighborhoods where parents congregated, daily, at mailboxes with their neighbors, spent time landscaping their yards, and watched their children play together in the streets. In contrast, new Chinese immigrant families, most of whom if not all of who were participants in the regional and globalized high-technology industry associated with Silicon Valley, did not seem to share the same interests. White residents complained that these Chinese families instead chose to live individual lives, driving straight into their garages and going right into their homes. Once inside their homes, white neighbors

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<sup>1</sup> Cupertino, California is one of the fifteen incorporated cities and towns of Santa Clara County. As I will go into more detail later in the introduction, Cupertino’s origins centered on racial homogeneity and border containment contradicts its reality as a desirable residence for Chinese and, more recently, Asian Indian high-tech workers and their families.

<sup>2</sup> As I discuss in chapter 4, white residents’ define “outwardly facing culture” to mean a separation between public/private, work/leisure associated with their ranch homes. In that chapter, I argue that white residents deploy this term “outwardly facing culture” as indicative of community behavior to contain the pervasiveness of neoliberal economic policies. In several interviews, white residents used “outwardly facing culture” to describe American culture versus Chinese immigrant cultures.

assumed, Chinese parents forced their children to commit all their time to schoolwork than timeless American activities of childhood leisure.<sup>3</sup>

White residents were saddened by how these high-tech Chinese families transformed not only who now demographically made up the community but also how one defined and practiced what constitutes a “community” in Cupertino. In order to mediate neighborhood tensions between white and Chinese residents, the city manager Dave Knapp helped in revamping the existing Neighborhood Block Leader Program (NBLP) to find common ground between these seemingly disparate cultures. Under Knapp’s guidance, the NBLP was meant to help white and Chinese residents find community through collective action (Che 2003a). For Knapp, this included such things as neighborhood watches, traffic issues, and emergency preparedness. White residents were startled by the totalizing effect of this Chinese directed high-tech industry. Residents and local cultural critics complained that Silicon Valley industries breed a workaholic obsession for wealth at the expense of timeless values of marriage and family time. Within the context of their neighborhoods, white residents complained the tearing down of one-story tract ranch homes in order to construct their dream “monster homes” was just another example of how Chinese families made decisions solely motivated off economic rationality. With respect to “monster homes,” white residents were disturbed that their Chinese neighbors built homes for equity, creating dimensions and layouts that maximized the land values. According to white residents, such decisions were

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<sup>3</sup> I use Chinese, Chinese American, and Chinese immigrant interchangeably. I understand that there are differences based of immigration, nationality, dialect, and class. In Cupertino, this refers to Chinese people from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China. At times, these differences matter as Cantonese Chinese may attend Cantonese-language Chinese language schools. And older Taiwanese immigrants may not talk to Mainland Chinese people due to cross-strait relations. But in Silicon Valley, the high-tech economy is the commonality that has made “Chinese culture” a trans-Pacific business strategy that overcomes all geopolitical conflicts of the past.

intrinsically constituted by the Silicon Valley culture and thus led to the decimation of the “rural” ways of Cupertino (Che 2003b).<sup>4</sup> Literally spilling into the streets, these tensions were mounting, so what was Knapp’s solution? He decided to try to convince white residents that their highly educated, entrepreneurial Chinese neighbors and their high achieving children were boosting their property values and local school rankings (Knapp 2010).

I begin this dissertation with Dave Knapp because my interview with him and many others reveal the crucial roles that race and place play in debates about the fate and future of the idea of “community” in Cupertino and the trans-Pacific high-tech development in the production of the ideal Silicon Valley subject.<sup>5</sup> Knapp’s privileging of Chinese immigrant ways of life as the local common denominator among residents seems to reflect an inversion of the region’s previous racial hierarchies (Ku and Marino 1998; Pfaelzer 2007; Chang 1997; Tsu 2006). Unlike earlier Chinese communities either forcefully driven out of Santa Clara County or expected to conform to regional white cultural norms, Knapp’s comments reflect a growing regional perception that high-technology companies and the Chinese immigrants that either own or work for them anchor Cupertino and Silicon Valley identity. Like the “monster homes” that now dot the Silicon Valley, these high-tech campuses cast a large shadow upon the physical and cultural geography of the city. Corporations and regional government understand the financial value that Chinese immigrants of high-tech industries bring to Silicon Valley

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<sup>4</sup> monster home refers to a style of residential vernacular architecture that Cupertino residents consider to be “non-American” because of its size and conventions. I discuss this in more detail in chapter 4.

<sup>5</sup> Typically, Silicon Valley refers to the region of the greater San Francisco Bay Area known as Santa Clara County, which sits at the southern end of the bay. Other cities not in Santa Clara County, such as Mountain View and Fremont, home to many high-tech firms, are also included in the spatial boundaries. In this dissertation, I tend to use Santa Clara County and Silicon Valley interchangeably. But when narrating the history of the area as it shifted from a predominantly agriculture to high-tech, I use Santa Clara County and Silicon Valley as temporal markers.

present and future growth. The discursive binding of Chinese immigrants and culture *as* high-tech industries demonstrates how civic life and regional economic priorities converge. Regional economic development policies have gone so far as encourage investment in Chinese neo-Confucianism as a business strategy to aid in transpacific business.<sup>6</sup> It has become common sense within high-tech industries that these timeless notions of Chinese cultures function as forms of labor discipline, which dovetail perfectly with the mantra of Silicon Valley where work *is* play.<sup>7</sup>

In this dissertation, I examine the relationship between Chinese immigrants and economic development in the late twentieth-century and twenty-first century Silicon Valley as the region was transformed from a Cold War suburb founded on military defense research of high technology to a trans-Pacific hub of Chinese high-tech business. I examine the relationship between regional government's investments in Chinese material and visual cultures and the daily practice of Chinese culture by Chinese immigrant high-tech entrepreneurs within the context of U.S.-Greater China economic development.<sup>8</sup> I argue that the figure of the Chinese immigrant entrepreneur plays an essential role in Silicon Valley's self-portrait of achieved multiculturalism and this form of multiculturalism enables and encourages the proliferation of neoliberal economic policies.

The debate about who should and should not represent Cupertino's history hinges upon the on-going naturalization of transnational Chinese people, culture, and high

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<sup>6</sup> For more on Neo-Confucianism as a discourse of Chinese diasporic culture and globalization, see (Dirlik 1999)

<sup>7</sup> The local obsession with work, permeating all forms of social life, is considered one of the great but also worrisome things about Silicon Valley life. Rather than separating work and play as two temporally and spatially distinct activities, high-tech workers, instead, view work (innovation) as a form of play. I talk more about this in chapters 4.

<sup>8</sup> By "Greater China," I refer to the places of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

technology business. As a Pacific Rim hub of high-tech business, Cupertino and Silicon Valley's alleged cosmopolitanism as a transnational space of Chinese cultures and commodities is more than just an abstract set of cultural practices of its recent Chinese immigrant communities. That is, Chinese immigrants are commonly written into Silicon Valley narratives as contained by the success of their small businesses and multi-million dollar high-tech firms. These particular spaces and the local encouragement of Chinese cultural visibility and consumption offer a unique lens towards understanding how coordinated spaces of transpacific business between Greater China and Silicon Valley produce contemporary racial hegemonies regionally. Thus, in this project, I analyze the built environment of economic activities, but I show that the description and analysis of must not be limited to a focus on high-tech firms. Rather, this dissertation takes into account a wide range of non-high-tech sites in order to provide a fuller and richer portrait of social and economic life in Cupertino: retail businesses, city parks, groceries, educational institutions, and residences.

I show how urban planners, elected officials, city boosters, and residents collectively debate with one another on building density, landscaping, and the interior and exterior design of commercial and residential zones. By paying attention to these debates, I show how various Cupertino actors articulate and communicate their beliefs, which are raced and classed, about how Chinese subjects should populate and reproduce the neoliberal economic conditions that have led to the region's economic success. In addition to paying attention to these debates and conversations, I focus on the architectural and landscape style of these built environments because they work so powerfully to convey and confirm Silicon Valley's reinvention of itself as a cosmopolitan

Pacific Rim hub that is tolerant of Chinese immigrants. But I also examine how residents re-interpret existing iconic Silicon Valley places as means of situating themselves within a this gradually changing region. Particular places contribute to narratives of Silicon Valley's boom and bust mythology and Chinese immigrants re-imagine spaces through their daily activities to re-orient Silicon Valley as a place conducive to Chinese economic success and transpacific business with Greater China. It is these reinvented narratives of the region's alleged exceptional standards of living wherein Silicon Valley distinguishes itself from the rest of the United States.

I situate this dissertation within contemporary debates about U.S.-China economic partnerships and how these policies are implemented at the local and regional level. While many regions across the United States have tried to revitalize their regional economies and center cities by considering implementing federal immigration programs aimed at luring international Chinese capital investment, contingent issues regarding urban-planning and "multiculturalism" are a windows towards discussing pertinent issues such as who are the ideal people to rebuild and reside in these new transnational economic hubs and who, ultimately, will be left out from these discussions. Silicon Valley has been particularly important in these national debates about future directions in urban-planning because of its purportedly remarkable blend of higher educational institutions, high-tech firms, and Asian cultural diversity driving the wealth of the region. According to statistics collected by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2000, the median price of a home in Santa Clara County is more than double that of the rest of California (2000). The median household income of Santa Clara County was nearly \$27,000 more than the rest of the state (2008). The idealized upper-middle class Silicon Valley Chinese

immigrants are part of why various redeveloping U.S. metropolitan areas seek foreign direct investment from China.

But my research shows, the highly racialized nature of debates over who should own and live in Cupertino – which leisure activities, child rearing philosophies, work ethic should be encouraged and which should not – reveals multiple conflicting views and narratives about Santa Clara County’s past and Silicon Valley’s future. In the regional and national imaginary, Cupertino symbolizes a home away from home for Chinese immigrants, but it also exemplifies Asian American achievement in the political arena (Gonzales 2009; Glantz 2011). In 2009, Cupertino was the third city in the country and the first in Northern California to have a city council with an Asian American majority (all three members were Chinese). In Santa Clara County alone, the Asian population grew 25% between 2000 and 2010 (Glantz 2011). In 2000, people of Chinese descent were nearly 24% of Cupertino’s population and over 53% of the Asian demographics (Santa Clara County, Ca 2000). Cupertino’s high-standards of living are attributed to the growing Chinese population, many of whom either work as engineers or as CEOs of their own start-ups. Between 1980 and 2000, the median family income in Cupertino jumped more than 200% from \$33,249 to \$100,411 (Santa Clara County, Ca 2000; Santa Clara County, Ca 1980). That figure exceeds by more than \$25,000 than the median family income of the rest of Santa Clara County (State and County Quickfacts: Cupertino, Ca 2000 2009).

But Cupertino’s geographical location also merits attention. The city is sandwiched between the sprawling racial polyglot of San Jose and Santa Clara directly to the east and the white NIMBY-ism cities of Los Altos and Los Gatos to the west, this

locating Cupertino at the nexus of another set of conflicting narratives about the region's history of racial formation and economic development.<sup>9</sup> Before incorporating in 1955, Cupertino went by the name of "The Old Westside," which referred to the hinterlands of San Jose when downtown was once seen as a distant 6 miles away. Cupertino began as an intersection that was neither here nor there. Simply known as "The Crossroads," a service station and a general store anchored the beginnings of expanding settlement in what would later become Cupertino. Though for the longest time, "The Crossroads" existed as a place where local farmers from towns and cities miles away would come by to pick up more supplies. Because of Santa Clara County's agricultural history, the region was nicknamed "The Valley of Heart's Delight" for its deep groundwater and rich topsoil, which led to a global market of fruit orchards and wineries at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. White transplants and immigrant Europeans bought parcels of land in the Old Westside and began producing apricots, prunes, plums, and wine.

But after World War II and with the growth of the burgeoning high-tech industry largely funded by military defense contracts, many of the original Cupertino families gradually foresaw the economic boom associated with land development. Some sold their land to developers to build subdivisions for newly educated white high-tech workers and their families. Some landowners sold their property while also starting their own construction firms, cashing in on the erasure of Cupertino's agricultural history in more ways than one. The industry of land-speculation was well underway throughout other

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<sup>9</sup> NIMBY is an acronym that stands for "Not In My Back Yard." The western border of Santa Clara County, which also aligns itself with the region of the bay area known as the "peninsula," is known for stringent building policies with the aims of restricting growth to low-density single-family housing. The hills of the peninsula are seen as the exclusive residences of many of the Bay Area's wealthiest people, which include Silicon Valley's high-tech rock stars.



parts of Santa Clara County as many speculators purchased declining farms and resold them to developers for huge profits (Downie Jr. 1971). The memory of these families now exists as mere street names, which border the sprawling corporate headquarters of Apple Computers. These high-tech firms have become more important local landmarks for visitors to see than the historical tourism the city promotes.

Cupertino's contemporary view of itself as a "small town," however, partially developed because of the contrast between Cupertino and the sprawling and unplanned growth of San Jose during the 1950s, a period when the goal of San Jose's city manager A.P. Hamman was to do everything in his power to make San Jose the Northern California equivalent of Los Angeles. With local city planning commissioners and Chambers of Commerce in the hands of merchant boosters and other powerful businessmen, it was inevitable that San Jose would annex more and more land to increase personal profits and city tax revenue streams (Downie Jr. 1971; Findlay 1992). In order to defend itself against San Jose's "tentacle"-like growth, the place informally called "The Crossroads" formalized its boundaries and Cupertino sought incorporation, which became official in 1955.<sup>10</sup>

Because San Jose sought to acquire more and more of Cupertino's land for further economic investment, some Cupertinoans pursued incorporation in order to protect their area's autonomy. These advocates of incorporation felt that San Jose didn't have its region's best interests in mind as this "distant government" had little desire to "preserve the rural character" and protect "farmers. . . against urbanization and industrial forces

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<sup>10</sup> A popularly reprinted image of Cupertino's annexation campaign shows a map of Santa Clara County with the proposed Cupertino's borders shaped like a jigsaw puzzle piece. Octopi named after different Santa Clara County cities surround Cupertino with their tentacles wrapped around proposed Cupertino city borders. The slivers of land extending off the main bulk of land demonstrate how regional annexation was piecemeal and also rapidly occurring all over Santa Clara County.

from neighboring communities” (*Cupertino Chronicle* 1975). Cupertinoians were not against economic growth, but seemed wary of having it in their city. But most importantly, the advocates desired to preserve the city’s community, which has been narrated to me by local historians and older residents as manifesting in mutual financial support among residents and businesses. According to the City of Cupertino website, San Jose’s development still exists symbolically to determine Cupertino’s “community character” (*History*). But Cupertino’s racial proximity to the restrictive development of its richer and whiter neighbors to the west also factors into the relationship between white and the theme of rurality. This relationship manifests in Cupertino’s present day re-telling of its own historical narratives. In the late twentieth century, these contemporary notions of community, however, transformed into racially charged cultural, economic, and political exclusion towards the growing Chinese immigrant population.

Between the 1950s and the 1970s, Cupertino’s expanding subdivisions signified the arrival of a new economic regime. New residents, many whose life chances and opportunities in California were shaped by federal government subsidies, became active agents in the making of Silicon Valley history. When VALLCO shopping mall opened its doors in 1976, an odd exhibit juxtaposing local history of apricots and electronic manufacturing and innovation welcomed mall patrons.<sup>11</sup> But it also reflected a city divided over the benefits and costs of development (“Doyle’s Passion for History: How They Named It Cupertino” 1977). Landowners had varying ideas of how best to develop the land and residents were torn over whether issues such as education, sewage, and parks were better uses of land than a larger shopping center. But the dominant contemporary

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<sup>11</sup> VALLCO refers to the principal developers of the shopping mall and adjacent business and industrial park. The names include the Varian Associates and the “original” Cupertino families: Leonard, Lester, Craft, and Orlando.

narrative of Cupertino's history as only agricultural erases the reality that many of its families were interested in redeveloping the land for their own financial benefit. While agricultural and viticulture existed as dominant industries up until the 1950s, the contemporary notion that Cupertino's anti-development authenticity strategically forgets the pro-development interests of many of its residents. This brief retelling of the building of VALLCO historicizes how Cupertino is stuck between competing ideologies of its past and present. The *site* and *sight* of development demonstrates the relationship between the built environment, economic development, and local subject making.

Currently, the class geography of Cupertino, from the hills of the west to the flatlands of the east, is indicative of these competing ideologies and the way that race is central to residents' spatial understanding of an authentic Cupertino. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, wealthy San Francisco capitalists spent their summers in the Monta Vista neighborhood along the foothills. Today, this neighborhood is still considered an exclusive area and, also, the other original downtown in local histories. I strongly believe that the race and class characteristics of this neighborhood's past are why it is represented as a historical landmark in the era of increased Chinese immigration. The peninsula has been a racially segregated place, which white residents utilize local civic organizations to police the racial and cultural characteristics of the residential landscape against Chinese immigrants (Ong et al. 1996). In several informal conversations about Cupertino's incorporation, residents claimed that the flats to the east, bordering the cities of Santa

Clara and San Jose, were “ghetto,” citing the racial differences and lack of landscaping typically seen in Cupertino neighborhoods.<sup>12</sup>

Beginning in the 1980s, the need for more office space to accommodate the growing high-tech industry meant that remaining older structures in the city, some historical residences or businesses that had either been abandoned or vandalized beyond repair, had to be torn down. As transpacific business between Silicon Valley and Greater China grew in the 1990s as did the Chinese populations, the new visual and material economies of meanings of race and high-tech contradicted the whiteness that Cupertinoans had secured with incorporation in 1955. Ironically, many of Cupertino’s postwar high-tech population retreated to “the rural,” a romanticized yeoman past of manual labor they never experienced. Or if they did, these white middle-class engineers experienced it merely as consumers.

The conflicts in Cupertino are not just about racial economic competition, but the stakes in the visual and material cultures of the city, which race and power are bound together. Contrary to the regional, if not national, perception of Silicon Valley as a place of colorblind meritocracy, my project departs from these dominant myths to show how racial hegemonies undergird changes to regional economies. A study of Silicon Valley is particularly timely given the presence of Chinese investment in U.S. economies and vice versa. While recent scholarship on technology in Asian American Studies focuses on the production of transnational community formations through high-speed telecommunications and other digital media, I instead focus on the political economy of technological development in the United States. I argue that politics of technological

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<sup>12</sup> When attending local Cupertino civic organization meetings, some members were very enthusiastic about telling me about Cupertino’s distinctive characteristics vis-à-vis San Jose. Even today, the specter of San Jose’s unyielding development seemed to still haunt these resident’s sense of self and community.

development is significant to our understanding how Asian American and Asian immigrants, particularly Chinese immigrants, make sense of their national and racial subjectivities. Several studies on contemporary Chinese communities in Silicon Valley claim that Chinese identity formation and cultural retention exists external to economic or political structures.<sup>13</sup> In my dissertation, however, Chinese immigrants situate their understanding of “America” and “Chinese” within a larger historical trajectory dating back to U.S. Cold War diplomacy centered on hegemonic political and economic expansion into Asia. Histories of U.S. aid towards developing Taiwan as an economic ally to strategically contain the spread of communism in Asia show how technological industries, whether through manufacturing or educational exchanges, guide Taiwanese immigrants identities and their identification with “America.” U.S. high-tech immigrant development, Cold War geopolitics, and their relationship to global economic restructuring show how contemporary and historical narratives of American technological progress constitute Chinese immigrant subjectivities.

This project also departs from conventional scholarly discourses of suburbanization, which tend to focus on the white-black dyad of suburban formation and policy-making. By exploring Asian American and Asian immigrant suburban community formations, this project emphasizes the ways that racialized subjects are, at times, included within suburban planning projects. Scholarly discourses of urban redevelopment tend to situate white middle-class residents and workers as the ideal

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<sup>13</sup> See Bernard Wong. *The Chinese in Silicon Valley: Globalization, Social Networks, and Ethnic Identity* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2006). Shenglin Chang. *The Global Silicon Valley Home: Lives and Landscapes Within Taiwanese American Trans-Pacific Cultures* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006). Wei Li and Edward J.W. Park. “Asian Americans in Silicon Valley: High-Technology Industry Development and Community Transformation.” *In From Urban Enclave to Ethnic Suburb: New Asian Communities in Pacific Rim Countries*, ed. Wei Li. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006).

subjects of revitalization, often at the exclusion of blacks and Latinos. More recently, studies of historical preservation and tourism of ethnic districts demonstrates the limited ways that culture as entertainment, but not politics nor collective historical memory, exists within cultural geographies of neoliberal city planning. The commodification of culture reveals how economic development contains the ways communities of color are allowed to occupy the city. In the context of U.S.-Greater China economic development, I consider how Chinese people and culture contribute to city planning decisions. Cities and metropolitan areas across the United States and the world attempt to recreate the proper blend of Silicon Valley's civic and cultural institutions in hopes of maximizing wealth. With its historical and contemporary economic ties to "greater China," Silicon Valley's cities exist as "models" for other regional economies that have and hope to invest in high-tech. As "The China Century" exists as a discourse of U.S. economic development, the study of Asian American communities in Silicon Valley can contribute to the scholarship on "American cities."

But the inclusion of Asian Americans within urban planning projects cannot be purely be understood through existing frameworks of inclusion and exclusion. This project contributes to studies of Asian immigrant suburbanization by considering the limits and possibilities of economic citizenship. Social scientists theorize the clustering of ethnic economies and ethnic residential spaces through enclave theory or more recently ethnoburbs to explain how the push and pull factors of global economic restructuring create migration patterns away from city centers towards suburbs and exurbs. These studies show how suburbs and exurbs have become ideal locations for global capitalist investment, naturally drawing a range of skilled and semi-skilled Asian

labor in white-collar jobs. Contrary to analyses of urban enclaves, suburban studies tend to celebrate Asian middle-class achievement through spatial economic and residential integration throughout the suburban geography. While these studies focus on Asian and “mainstream”(white) relations, they only emphasize the question of Asian economic proximity to white residents as the benchmark for national belonging. My project extends this discussion to critique of the conditions of economic citizenship and to ask what kinds of race and class exclusions are enabled by these alleged suburban racial and class equivalences between Asians and white residents. By historicizing the relationship between whiteness and suburbs and whiteness and Asian American community formations, this project contributes to growing scholarship that demonstrates the racialization of economic citizenship. Further, this dissertation necessarily examines how these paradisiacal portrayals of Silicon Valley’s Asian and white harmony is sustained through the material and discursive exclusion of particular race and classed subjects, particularly African Americans and Latinos.

In the following section, I describe the theoretical framework that informs how I understand the production of Chinese immigrants as the ideal subject of Silicon Valley. Also, I discuss, briefly, my methods and the topics of the following chapters.

### **Chineseness as Cultural Citizenship**

I situate my interpretation of “Chineseness” within U.S. political and economic interests with Greater China, Silicon Valley’s reliance upon transnational Chinese business, and U.S. multiculturalism. Due largely to increased capital investment from Greater China, Chinese-owned businesses in Silicon Valley has drawn local, regional, and national attention. Due to this dynamic, learning and respecting Chinese culture has become an

economic priority for various localities. Following the post-World War II project of U.S. multiculturalism, the institutionalized tolerance of Chinese cultural practices within public education, civic organizations, and tourist industries contributes to Silicon Valley's aim at recruiting more of Greater China's seeming untapped and never-ending foreign direct investment. I see the presence and circulation of Chineseness in Silicon Valley as a cultural performance of regional belonging based on the intertwining of race, everyday behavior, and market logics.

I understand the regional practice of Chineseness through what Aihwa Ong describes as "cultural citizenship." Drawing from Michel Foucault's concept of subjectification, Ong theorizes cultural citizenship as a relationship between individuals and the state:

[t]he cultural practices and beliefs produced out of negotiating the often ambivalent and contested relations with the state and its hegemonic forms that establish the criteria of belonging within a national population and territory. Cultural citizenship is a dual process of self-making and being-made within webs of power linked to the nation-state and civil society (1996, 738).

In her research on wealthy Hong Kong business people and Cambodian refugees, Ong examines the cultural processes by which various civil institutions and social organization mark Asians racially across a black-white spectrum based on economic value and productivity. In the form of race and class-based accumulation of skills, knowledge, and taste cultures, human capital facilitate the ability of Asians to leverage their national belonging and access to resources.

Andrea Louie's study of "Chineseness" as an open signifier that gains its meaning within a variety of political, economic, and cultural contexts has also influenced my analysis. Recent Chinese mainland (PRC) interests in the Chinese diaspora for global



economic reinvestments, according to Louie, are a different project than the assimilationist bend of U.S. cultural citizenship. While both nation-states contain and restrict the meanings of “Chineseness,” Louie’s study shows that Chinese are asked to perform exoticized and decontextualized forms of culture that marginalizes them from the American mainstream (Louie 2004). While Louie’s notion of Chineseness as cultural citizenship takes stock of mainland politics, Lok Siu’s diasporic critique of cultural citizenship shows how geopolitics connects nation-states together. In analyzing Taiwan’s annual convention for the Chinese Association of Central America and Panama, Siu adds that cultural citizenship within a nation-state thereby grants access to transnational community formations and resources. Siu’s understanding of cultural citizenship shows how homeland and diaspora become discursively bound places where meanings of Chineseness are negotiated and agreed upon (Siu 2001).

My understanding of Chineseness as cultural citizenship is also informed by Inderpal Grewal’s concept of “transnational connectivities” (Grewal 2005). By interrogating how middle-class Indian Americans and Indian nationals were produced in the 1990s as neoliberal subjects, Grewal defines “transnational connectivities” as transnational networks that create “subjects, technologies, and ethical practices” (Grewal 2005). She reads the gendered and class representations of these neoliberal Indian diasporas within the context of marketing of both Indian Barbie and magazines for non-resident Indian re-investment in India’s growing economy. Grewal argues that class matters to how India and the United States appropriate rights discourses, such as feminism and civil rights, to incorporate previously excluded identities into the nation-state. Through institutionalized practices and discourses, nation-states make and

mobilize these particular subjects within the global economy in order to open up and exploit new global markets for economic development (2005). By nurturing particular race, class, and gendered subjects within emerging transnational connections, citizenship is restrictive and exclusive. It is through this framework that I interpret Chineseness as an everyday cultural process of citizenship within Silicon Valley life. It is through the imperatives of international, national, regional, and local interests in Chinese foreign direct investment that I interrogate the local desire in promoting Chinese cultural tolerance and practice within various institutional spaces.

### **Neoliberalism and the Silicon Valley Exception**

Public and academic debates over the factors that contribute to Silicon Valley's success, defined by the celebrity-hood of risk-taking overnight-millionaire entrepreneurs, collectively confirms that the mobility of labor is what drives innovation. In Silicon Valley, the notion of mobility refers to the collaborative culture of individuals, who may come together many times across competing firms to develop their ideas, innovate new technologies, and leave their jobs to create their own start-ups. Gone are traditional notions of company loyalty and the standardized 9-5 workday. Part of the allure and the intrigue of Silicon Valley's life, its seeming inversion of social hierarchies through its democratization of cool starring tech nerds and geeks, is the privileged status of high-tech knowledge, which exemplifies the particular "West Coast" culture of labor that breaks all the rules of work and play in the United States. AnnaLee Saxenian describes "the culture of the valley" as a "culture of change: the peer pressure and social pressures support risk-taking and people changing jobs a lot. The velocity of information is very high – much higher than the rest of the country" (Saxenian 1994). Saxenian's observations point to

the totalizing life of high-tech labor that engulfs individuals, families, and friend-networks through everyday practices of happy hour socializing at bars, weekend dinner parties in the comforts of homes, and/or slumber parties at work. Even though the culture of collaboration is encouraged within and across firms, the high-tech entrepreneur, the risk-taking individual working to be his own boss, represents the ideal career-trajectory. On-going myths of meritocracy circulate and constitute Silicon Valley as a world of opportunity where anyone can be an entrepreneur regardless of race, age, and social status. So long as you network and build your human capital, individuals can transform that human capital into other kinds of capital and wealth.

In order to understand the seeming exceptional place of Silicon Valley, I draw from studies of neoliberalism. While neoliberalism is commonly understood as economic doctrine centered on deregulation, dismantling the welfare state, reducing educational spending, minimizing the size of government, and increasing the role of the private sector, the labor cultures of Silicon Valley show that neoliberal economic policies cannot be separate from political and cultural arenas (Duggan 2003). Due to the economic priorities of Silicon Valley, various public and private institutions collaboratively work together to shape regional evaluative judgments of what is appropriate and inappropriate everyday conduct. For these reasons, neoliberalism also operates as a form of governing. Following Michel Foucault's concept of "governmentality," which refers to the array of techniques that systematically guide and regulate everyday conduct, neoliberal governmentality involves "extending and disseminating market values to all institutions and social action" (Brown 2003). More specifically, neoliberalism "interpellates individuals into entrepreneurial actors in every sphere of life," encouraging idealized

citizenry constituted by the overlapping language of personal responsibility, self-enterprise, and individual ambition (Brown 2003). Moreover, neoliberal ideology “relieves the discrepancy between economic and moral behaviors by configuring morality entirely as a matter of rational deliberation about costs, benefits, and consequences” (Brown 2003). In Silicon Valley, the desire to accumulate wealth through entrepreneurship reflects the institutionalization of neoliberal ideology within overlapping political, economic, and cultural contexts.

Silicon Valley’s allegedly unique cultures of innovation, tied together by themes of labor discipline and U.S. multiculturalism, demands further inquiry into the spatial particularities of neoliberalism. Beginning in the 1980s, national and regional media’s coverage of Silicon Valley’s high-tech success framed Chinese immigrants as instrumental to the multibillion-dollar regional and global economy. This visibility contributed to existing but also reinvented myths of California’s cultural exceptionalism. My understanding of Silicon Valley cultural exceptionalism is informed by Aihwa Ong’s notion of “exceptions to neoliberalism,” which she defines broadly as institutionalized practices that depart from neoliberal policy to exclude and include certain subjects. The neoliberal developments between Asia and the United States, Ong argues, relies upon the coordination between spaces, sutured together by the planned circulation of capital, knowledge, and people. The transpacific expansion of neoliberal economic development necessitates systems of governmentality to coordinate these “special spaces of labor markets, investment opportunities, and relative administrative freedom” (Ong 2006). I use Ong’s formulation of exception to describe the cultural exceptions of Silicon Valley high-tech economy, which include ethnicized notions of labor discipline. Neo-

Confucianism is understood as a set of hierarchical cultural relationships between family members. Within Pacific Rim and globalization discourse, Neo-Confucianism becomes an exclusive transpacific business culture, shaping how transnational Chinese businessmen and women conduct business across time and space. Silicon Valley is a particularized place that strategically includes Chinese students, engineers, scientists, and entrepreneurs, and their families, who are the privileged and mobile individuals who possess the human capital to align with local terms of citizenship.

### **Space, Governing, and The Architectures of Community**

In Cupertino, California, local debates over who and how one constitutes “community” often revolves around changes to the built environment. With residential, educational, and commercial spaces renovated and reorganized to cater towards the growing Asian population in the city, white residents complain that changes to these local spaces have altered the “culture” of the city forever. By culture, residents describe not only what they see – homes, shopping centers, and schools – but their everyday experiences of moving through these spaces. These particular relationships that white and Chinese residents create between the built environment and everyday behavior extend beyond questions of economic competition between different raced-communities. The local stakes in the design and utility of spaces demonstrate how architecture matters to changing global economic priorities in the region and its totalizing effect on everyday life.<sup>14</sup> Race,

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<sup>14</sup> For studies of the relationship between Silicon Valley high-tech industries and its distinct way of life or effects on identity formations, see: J.A. English-Lueck. *Cultures@SiliconValley* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). Shalini Shankar. *Desi land: teen culture, class, and success in Silicon Valley* (Durham: Duke University Press). Elsa Davidson. “Success Stories: Young People’s Aspirations and the Politics of Class in Post-Boom Silicon Valley.” (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2006). I position myself differently from these texts as my project focuses on the ways that Chineseness is deliberately encouraged at the local and regional government level to be part of everyday life.

production, and market forces shape not only how architecture symbolically includes and excludes people from community, but also how architecture produces the ideal subjects of community.

Through the term “architectures of community,” I describe this relationship between architecture and governing through everyday conduct. Although the term derives from the title of Peter Katz’s book on New Urbanist design, *The New Urbanism: Towards an Architecture of Community*, my analysis critiques his analysis of design philosophies and its affect on community building (Katz, Scully, and Bressi 1994). The questions of community in Cupertino echoes what Katz (and other architects) had been lamenting, which was the loss of “community” resulting from sprawling, unplanned suburbs and exurbs. With the distinct zoning patterns of suburban sprawl, Katz argued, public life was decentralized. In response, Katz and other New Urbanist supporters and practitioners, such as Peter Calthorpe, encouraged vertical-oriented high-density mixed-used structures, which allegedly offered more everyday spaces of social interactions that suburban car culture and single-family housing had destroyed (Calthorpe and Poticha 1993). In addition to improving social life, New Urbanism was also meant to alleviate environmental pollution and to create economic sustainability. Like many critics of New Urbanism, I, too, connect discourses of community directly to the social reproduction of race and class exclusion.

My usage of architectures of community derives from geographer Denis Cosgrove’s theorization of landscape as “a way of seeing the world” in which we “discover its link to broader historical structures as a social product.” That is, historic context and power relations situate the normative “mode of life” portrayed within a re-

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iterated representations of a place (Cosgrove 1984). Suburban studies of whiteness have also informed my understanding of both the material and aesthetic production of racial hegemonies through the built environment. My analysis of the material production of space draws from studies of institutionalized racial segregation such as George Lipsitz's analysis of "the white spatial imaginary," which refers to the exchange value linked to the laws and policies constituting white property ownership (Lipsitz 2007). My analysis of architectures of community also draws from visual cultural studies scholar Dianne Harris' concept of "habit of perception." She theorizes how whiteness was reproduced by the photographic conventions of seeing race in post-World War II housing advertisements. Harris argues that the re-iterated ways of looking at particular residential spaces, such as the angling of images, the scenes of domesticity, and the absence of black people in advertisements, normalized the racial expectations of place and conduct within suburbs across the United States (Harris 2007). I am not only interested in how places are materially constituted, but also how places are strategically designed towards visualizing ideologies.

Architectures of community emphasizes the centrality of space to the production of power. This idea draws from Michel Foucault's theoretical framework on the extensive proliferation of power within all areas of social life. As Foucault's explains, "Power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday life" (Foucault and Gordon 1980). For Foucault, power requires consent, meaning that people and institutions necessarily matter to the reproduction of power. He introduces the idea of "disciplinary power," where the principle of institutional "surveillance" becomes a

mechanism of power and social control. In historicizing “surveillance” of various institutions, such as hospitals, prisons, military barracks, and workplaces, Foucault shows that the arrangement and organization of spaces and contingent modes of surveillance create knowledge of individuals that normalize particular kinds of behavior and subjects. The knowledge of an institution, how it is rationalized as a space, and how individuals are evaluated within these spaces are central to what Foucault describes as “Power-Knowledge.” Through the lens of “surveillance,” Foucault argues institutional places and the contingent forms of knowledge production are what enable power to proliferate.

### **Methods and Chapter Outline**

In order to understand the relationship between neoliberal market forces, Chineseness, and space in Silicon Valley life, I utilize both historical and ethnographic methods. While this dissertation engages with neoliberalism as economic policy, archival methods are unable to account for how neoliberalism permeates in non-economic institutions and creates racialized power relations within social life. I spent over 16 months in the San Francisco Bay Area conducting research and the deliberate range of sources that I chose to collect reflect the topics but also the institutions that collectively enable neoliberal ideology to proliferate. For my ethnographic fieldwork, I conducted thirty in-depth interviews with publicly elected officials of Cupertino, parents and volunteers of three different Chinese schools, volunteers and historical re-enactors at the Cupertino Historical Society, festival organizers, and real-estate developers and real estate agents. I attended ten Cupertino Historical Society events, observed three Chinese Schools spending over forty hours observing events, classes, and meetings. I have attended various civic meetings including the Cupertino Chamber of Commerce, Planning



Commission, City Council, Rotary Club, and the Cupertino Historical Society. These generous research participants shared their time, thoughts, and memories and on various occasions invited me over to their homes. I also spent a lot of time at several coffee shops and cafes around town meeting with research participants. These spaces are important to take note of given the fact that different city institutions considered these sites of economic activity as symbols of successful urban planning and the creation of civic life.

I chose to study particular Chinese people and expressions of Chinese culture based on how both contributed to the economic priorities of Silicon Valley. The white and Chinese residents that I interviewed were as active in city and community development as representatives on city council, planning commissions, city of Cupertino and Chinese language school boards, the Cupertino Historical Society, and local service organizations. These particular institutions play an important role in the fate and future of Cupertino community. My observations of people and institutions led me to conclude that “culture” in Cupertino and Silicon Valley referred to such places as grocery stores, shopping centers, residential architecture, and natural landscapes. Local practices of Chinese culture, however, went beyond this to include dance, martial arts, language study, study habits, food and drink, filial piety and homeownership. But both groups, white and Chinese residents, hegemonically interpreted “culture” as an economic practice. Through my research, white and Chinese residents explained the stakes in protecting and encouraging particular kinds of everyday behavior that allowed them to claim place and resources in Silicon Valley.

The juxtaposition between white and Chinese residents, however, does not mean that I see these two racialized groups to be ideologically different and diametrically opposed on all issues. Different perspectives on development not only exist between white and Chinese communities but within these communities as well. For the most part, white and Chinese residents had divergent views regarding economic growth. But, there were several issues where white and Chinese residents formed alliances in attempts to halt development. But their reasons for battling development, varied at times. For example, when white and Chinese residents formed alliances against condo development, white residents used maintaining “green space” and the region’s agricultural history was the primarily reason Cupertino should halt high-density residences and the building of monster homes often constructed and occupied by Asian and Chinese residents. For many white residents, their ability to restrict residential development tied directly to their attachment of a visual economy of whiteness that symbolized historical forms of institutionalized power and the exclusion of people of color. Asian and Chinese residents were less concerned with green space and more concerned with sustaining their property values, which the proximity of high-density housing could possibly affect. Some white residents, however, welcomed development and saw multiculturalism as beneficial to their children’s education, suggesting that diversity would help their children interact in an increasingly global economy. Several white residents I casually chatted with at local service organizations appreciated Silicon Valley’s range of immigrant cultures and how this turned their children into “citizens of the world.” With regards to transpacific development, there was a wide range of responses from Chinese parents spanning from complete apathy to downright obsession. Some parents informed me that the only news

they paid attention to everyday was financial news, which they strategically made time to catch up on in the evenings and afternoons while waiting for their children's extra-curricular activities to let out.

For these reasons, I try to treat white and Chinese residents experiences with nuance. This project aims to show how different residents of Silicon Valley, specifically white and Chinese, interpret and navigate the seemingly all-encompassing neoliberal economic policies of Silicon Valley in their everyday lives. I show how the dominant neoliberal economic policies constitute how individuals and communities identify themselves and their place within the Pacific Rim region they live in. But I also show how their desires and anxieties of the past, present, and future are bound by the boom and bust of Silicon Valley economic structures. While peoples' everyday decisions may not be contained by transpacific economic development, this project shows that transpacific economic development is a reality that Silicon Valley residents contend with on an everyday basis within a range of social, economic, and political institutions. As a result, the conflicts and alliances between white and Chinese over different issues regarding development show the contradictions that late twentieth and twenty first century neoliberal economic development creates within the dominant visual and material economies of meanings.<sup>15</sup>

I conducted archival research at the San Jose State Library, examining over 30 years of San Jose Mercury Newspaper articles on local perceptions of the high-tech development and the cultural changes to the area. I similarly examined over 30 years of coverage from the local newspaper, The Cupertino Courier, which was both available

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<sup>15</sup> I address this issue briefly in chapter 4 when discussing the conflict over residential vernacular architecture.

online and in print form at the Cupertino Historical Society and the Cupertino Public Library. The Metro Times, a Santa Clara County lifestyles weekly, and the San Jose/Silicon Valley Business Journal, were useful references as both prioritized economic development in their coverage of regional affairs. I reviewed the transformation to Cupertino commercial and residential building ordinances as well as reviewing meeting minutes and recaps from the last 20 years, which are available on the City of Cupertino website. I collected textbooks and yearbooks from the Silicon Valley Chinese Schools. Further, I have also examined several policy initiatives regarding economic growth, created between the partnership between regional government, higher education, and private economic research institutes.

In Chapter 1, I examine these institutional partnerships and policy initiatives regarding the regional investment in Chineseness and economic relations with Greater China. I focus my attention on one particular report titled “The Ties That Bind: The San Francisco Bay Area’s Economic Links to Greater China” (2006), which creates a continuous narrative of Chinese immigrant entrepreneurship, work ethic, and high-tech that aligns with neoliberal discourses of flexibility and labor disciplining. Chapter 2 argues that Cupertino’s economic development plans centered on New Urbanist mixed-use developments aim to normalize neoliberal governmentality through the practices of consumer culture. In analyzing two separate development plans to create new tax revenue streams, I show the contradictory ways that economic development enables and limits Chinese immigrants who reside in Silicon Valley and Cupertino. The next chapter also focuses on architectural design with regards to debates over what residential vernacular architecture should portray community life. Local white portrayals of monster

homes as places consumed with work, I argue, are a reflection of how neoliberalism in Silicon Valley has transformed race and gender expectations by integrating the private sphere as the public sphere in order to naturalize the home as a place of surveillance, self-enterprise, and economic efficiency. Lastly, Chapter 5 examines how Chinese immigrants psychically map themselves in the future of Silicon Valley. Different Chinese immigrants shared with me their attachment to Silicon Valley by particular globally recognized high-tech corporations. These immigrants, however, narrate the circulation of Chinese capital across the visual and material culture of the region as indicative of Silicon Valley's recent success. I examine Chinese immigrant speech acts in their everyday practice of Chinese transnationalism, wherein they reference and appropriate mythic Silicon Valley places and institutions to reinvent Silicon Valley's future as a Pacific Rim hub. I contend that Chinese immigrants appropriate dominant "scripts" of Silicon Valley mythologies in order to center themselves as the ideal subject of Silicon Valley's present and future. These narrative performances of Chinese transnationalism visualize and constitute a future of Chinese Silicon Valley dependent upon neoliberal ideology.

An analysis of the daily life of Chinese immigrants allows us to see the importance and impact of Silicon Valley, Chineseness, and Greater China to the making of cities. Through a study of built environments, we begin to see how space matter not only to the history of Silicon Valley's development, but also how it matters to the circulation of Chinese people, capital, and ideas within the structures of global capitalism in the late twentieth and early twenty first century. Various areas across the country have begun to seek out foreign direct investment from China in order to revitalized decaying

cities. Given the conditions of this contemporary moment, research on Silicon Valley offers much insight to the fate and future of American cities. The making of cities reveals new areas of social inquiry about cities, who will populate them in the future, and who will be excluded from such discussions.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Boom to Bust: Transpacific Business and the Visual and Spatial Culture of Chinese Hegemony**

Throughout the 1990s, regional and national media narrated the effects of Silicon Valley's rapidly declining defense industry and its surging fields of consumer-oriented technologies as the end of the white race and the paradisiacal Asian polyglot that lay in its wake. Regional press, such as the San Jose Mercury, announced Silicon Valley's white men as outsiders in a growingly Asian-dominated high-tech industry with such article titles as "No More Mr. White Guy" and "War Surplus Job-Market Misfits" (Thurm 1996; Rodriguez 1991). With an end to the Cold War, declining military contracts meant layoffs at many defense divisions of tech firms and, most often than not, these skills for rocket-making did not translate into the Valley's current trends of information technology systems. Articles such as these portrayed the loss of the Valley's white identity through the disappearance of military defense. In explaining the white exodus, exemplified by the disappearance of white neighbors or white co-workers, these articles suggest that what was left, though not true at all, was a technological environment now populated and directed by Asians.

The generational changes to Silicon Valley's industries and ways of life, however, were like two trains passing in the night and were hardly explained in local and regional media. Asian immigrants, particularly Chinese from Greater China, became media darlings and were explanation for Silicon Valley's booming economy and standards of

living. Since the late eighties, regional and national media along with local residents describe the San Francisco Bay Area, but more specifically Silicon Valley, as a home away from home for its Asian residents. In a 12 March 2011 article in *The Bay Citizen*, contributor Aaron Glantz treads well-worn celebratory paths that regional and national press have laid out for decades already, which is the dominant Chinese cultural and economic geography that is expressive of the region's exceptional lifestyle of racial tolerance and equality.<sup>1</sup> To make his point, Glantz, like many other cultural critics of Silicon Valley, observes the advanced degree carrying Chinese engineers eating and mingling at a popular town center occupied by Chinese eateries. But Jin Hu Jiang, one of Glantz interviewees, reminds readers why he is attracted to the region: "This is the best place to find high-tech work in the States" (Glantz 2011).

This chapter examines the historic factors that have shaped the relationship between corporate spaces and Silicon Valley's racial hegemonies. As journalist accounts of Silicon Valley's contemporary history seemed to announce, Asians are the present and the future. The region's Asian visual culture symbolizing Silicon Valley's purported meritocracy and ideal path to success in high-tech – literally in its buildings of Asian-owned high-tech firms or Asian shopping centers – did not just occur by happenstance. As scholars of Silicon Valley emphasize, various actors and institutions strategized over urban planning of post-war and late twentieth century built environments to communicate the ideal race and class subjects to build, contribute, and extend Silicon Valley's

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<sup>1</sup> For more recent thoughts on the South Asian and Chinese financial success and why they as immigrants are seen in Silicon and nationally as necessary to the United States, see such: Vivek Wadhwa. "A Fix for Discrimination: Follow the Indian Trails." *Techcrunch.com*, Feb. 21 2010, Accessed Feb. 21 2010, <http://techcrunch.com/2010/02/21/a-fix-for-discrimination-follow-the-indian-trails/>. Matt Richtel. "Tech Recruiting Clashes With Immigration Rules." *NYTimes.com* April 11, 2009, Accessed April 11, 2009, [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/12/business/12immig.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/12/business/12immig.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all). Mike Swift. Blacks, Latinos, and women lose ground at Silicon Valley tech companies. *Mercurynews.com*. Feb 13. 2010, Accessed Feb 13, 2010. [http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci\\_14383730?nclick\\_check=1](http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci_14383730?nclick_check=1)



economic development from U.S. military research to what it is now as a multi-billion dollar global industry, largely predicated on U.S.-Greater China ties. Even the minute details of interior and exterior design of work spaces have been shown by scholars to be important to shaping the behavior of work cultures, particularly when coordinating and collaborating amongst various high-tech hubs across the globe (Martin and Baxi 2007). This chapter historicizes how race and visual cultures of work have been intertwined in the local and regional meaning making of Silicon Valley as an exceptional place to live.

Local celebratory ideas that Silicon Valley is and was never racist, however, have a larger trajectory that is sustained by the material and discursive absence of particular race and class subjects, namely African Americans, Latinos, and natives. Through genocide, legal and extra-legal segregation, and local re-iterated cultural narratives of Santa Clara County, white hegemony proliferated to all aspects of life. The dominant spatial imaginary of the late twentieth and twenty first century Silicon Valley, however, has been meritocratic spaces of Asian economic activity filled with Chinese and Indian-raced bodies visibly normalized through these everyday narratives of spatialized cultural consumption and high-tech work. I examine late twentieth century, twenty-first century corporate and regional government produced narratives of Silicon Valley that rely upon the spatial imagination of a regional, yet transnational Chineseness. I focus on how these narratives encourage trans-Pacific business with Greater China by reinventing and articulating the terms of Chineseness through contemporary Silicon Valley neoliberal economic policy. But I focus on the reoccurring theme of space in the lives of Chinese in Silicon Valley. The relationship between Chinese places of business and social activity

as one and the same frames the presence of Chinese in Silicon Valley as representing Silicon Valley's past, present, and future.

This chapter traces the relationship between racial hegemonies and labor within the context of urban planning. First, I examine how agricultural economies of Spanish and American empires in the eighteenth and nineteenth century of what its now known as Santa Clara County gave way to particular visual cultures of whiteness. These paradisiacal portrayals of white settlers and white ethnics profiting from the rich topsoil and deep ground water for agricultural abundance are how the region has been nicknamed "Valley of Heart's Delight." Next, I examine how whiteness as a race and class ideology became embedded within suburban-planning centered on the burgeoning high-technology industries funded in large part by the Federal government for military defense during the Cold War. The next section of this chapter focuses on the historical roots of Asian, migration primarily Chinese engineers and scientists, to Silicon Valley. This particular section shows the larger historical trajectory of Chinese presence in Silicon Valley that dates back to U.S. Cold War diplomacy involving foreign aid to Taiwan and the subsequent educational exchanges that, in part, fostered increased Chinese migration to the region. By tracing these suburban developments around boosting economic activity in Silicon Valley, I show how race has been significant to the federal, regional, and local government investments in its celebratory portrayals of its economy, Asian workforce, and work cultures. Lastly, I examine contemporary policy papers published by the Bay Area Economic Forum to show how Chinese hegemony involves spatial and visual cues, which follows a larger history of space and visual cultures in the meaning making of Silicon Valley.

### **Agricultural History and “The Valley of Heart’s Delight”**

As the “official” origins narratives go in Cupertino, California, European heritage marks the beginning of local history. Oddly, two different figures and waves of migration, as historians have delineated as competing empires of Spain (later Mexico) and the United States, escalating into violence and other legal issues, are neatly folded together by local Cupertino historians and residents to explain the region’s portrayal of itself as multicultural and, yet, firmly unadulterated white American. In particular, the local explanations of Stevens Creek, a small waterway that runs through several cities along the peninsula and cutting through the Monta Vista neighborhood of Cupertino, as the original site and sight of Cupertino settlement instantiates race and place together within the context of agricultural economic development. That is, Stevens Creek exists as the site where Juan Bautista de Anza, a Spanish explorer set out in 1775 on an expedition granted by the viceroy of New Spain to colonize Northern California, came in contact with Natives en route to the Port of San Francisco (I was reminded on numerous occasions by locals that de Anza did not kill any natives on his expedition). Stevens Creek and Stevens Creek Boulevard, however, get its name from Elisha Stephens, a hunter, trapper, and explorer of French and English ancestry who in 1859 settled in the area by planting a vineyard and blackberry patches nearby where de Anza made contact with natives (*Cupertino Chronicle* 1975). The preservation of Stevens Creek today as a park trail, green space that some white residents continue desperately fighting to preserve, reflect how notions of agriculture as nature sustain visual economies of race, place, and power.

The white hegemony produced through the visual culture of agriculture that Cupertino residents choose to remember obscures the complex racial hierarchies that

existed prior to white American settlement. The Ohlone had inhabited the area six thousand years prior to Spanish exploration and like many other natives in the area in what was called Alta California, hunted various types of animals and harvested different local plants. Spanish colonialism, however, ushered in a new set of racial identities and hierarchies. When it came to natives, colonists used cultural parameters of catholic religiosity as a civilizing regime for emerging agricultural industries. This became judgment of to what extent Ohlone could claim Spanishness. Due to the geographic distance from Mexico in addition to the relative lack of foreign settlement, children of Spanish settlers and natives often became full members of colonial society. The region's growth was from within as opposed to from immigration, wherein its settler population developed largely from mestizo or mulattos who shared Spanish, native, and African ancestry. Natives, however, were still considered by the local population as inferior and uncivilized (Pitti 2003). With Mexican independence in 1821 and the secularization of Missions and other social arenas, a new sense of Mexican nationalism that sought to incorporate the native as a full citizen irked the residents of Alta California. The region and its people developed its own cultures around racial difference given its relative seclusion from the rest of the Mexican world. The emerging Californio identity gained its meanings culturally as Spanish given its geographic-distance from Mexico.

Before and after the Mexican-American war (1848), white American settlers in California had begun to use legal and extra-legal means of instituting a new American society constituted by white supremacy. A new political economy of agriculture, the "family farm," became a new civilizing practice aimed at erasing Californio, Mexican, and native history from the cultural and economic geography (Pitti 2003, 32-35). In

controlling the legal process, white Americans used the law to dispossess Californios of their own land. Moreover, white Americans hegemonically controlled the visual cultural terms of belonging through their economic activities. The new migrants brought with them Jeffersonian ideas of (white) humanity articulated through republican citizenship. Santa Clara County boosters updated Jeffersonian concepts of the family farm headed by the father and supported by the mother and children. This discursively bound race, family and nation within the context of individual (family) enterprise and upward mobility (Tsu 2006). Within California, white American enterprise was relationally constituted against what they thought to be the lazy and non-enterprising lifestyle of Californios. In order to replace Mexican ranchos and communal grazing lands with republican notions of private property, farmers erected fences across tens of thousands of acres for the mass cultivation of wheat, barley, and other grains (Pitti 2003, 36). White Americans plowed roads, created irrigation systems, uprooted trees and other native shrubbery, justifying the environmental destruction by emphasizing the agricultural abundance of the land as proof that Californios (who eventually had become lumped with Mexicans and natives as ‘uncivilized’ within white American society) were not productive peoples (Pitti 2003, 39, Tsu 2006). This became the hegemonic visual cultures across the Valley.

The financial success of the expanding orchards across the region, specializing in apricots, prunes, pears and cherries, concretized the individualistic ideology of the family farm. The visual culture of orchards, symbolized by the individual family, communicated and affirmed to other white farmers and other residents the narrative of how the future of the region should be economically developed and what racial identities

could direct its growth. The orchards stretching across the valley, constituted by the continuous specter of Mexican non-productivity, made the sight and activity of male manual labor the expected gendered conduct of the region. Gone and forgotten, too, were the sparsely populated pueblos, the ranchos, and Mission life. Poem and songs situated Californios and Mexicans in a distant past, putting American agricultural industriousness within the present. Locals anglicized the linguistic pronunciations of Spanish-named places to further distort histories of genocide, forced removal, and political marginalization. Ironically, the Jeffersonian aesthetic of Santa Clara County blended both romanticized notions of agrarian life with modern cities of technological advancements, including railroads, streetcars, and other amenities. Cities, settlement, and development spatialized and visualized Manifest Destiny as an undeniable event, which white Americans were meant to inherit based off their productivity. The visual context of family farming and private property would become the basis for the marginalization of Asian immigrant and Asian American farm labor within Santa Clara County (Tsu 2006).

This relationship between “nature” and white supremacy sustained itself into the electronics age post-World War II. In the post-World War II period, boosters for high-tech development would reinvent the pastoral within the built environment to recruit a different laboring class to the region.

### **Suburbanization of Silicon Valley**

The relationship between the built environment and the development of the high-tech economy has contributed to the racial hegemony of what is now known as Silicon Valley. Contemporary celebratory interpretations of Silicon Valley work cultures of collaboration and innovation, a seeming Petri dish of contacts among various peoples and cultures that

miraculously create cutting edge technologies, abstracts how race and class have mattered to the federal, regional, and local government investments in high-tech research. While electronics research existed in the area before the post-World War II suburbanization of what, at the time, was predominately farmland, the strategic urban planning of industrial and residential spaces sought to sustain the hegemonic whiteness of the region. Although industrial parks and residential subdivisions were built forms built upon farmland, ushering in a new era of economic abundance, the careful attention to preserving the pastoral within high-tech architectural aesthetics reaffirmed whiteness through the visual culture of high-tech suburbanization.

In the period directly following World War II, the suburbanization of science was quickly underway and underwritten by the federal government. With the growing relationship between higher education, scientific research, and military defense within the context of the Cold War and actual wars, such as the Korean War and the Vietnam War, physics and engineering were academic fields that were steadily growing and outpacing most other doctorate programs across the country. Within these contexts and the millions of dollars dedicated by the federal government for military defense research at national laboratories and high-tech firms across the country, physicists and engineers reached celebrity status within the U.S. popular imaginary (Kaiser 2004). The G.I. Bill, providing war veterans access to higher education like never before, and the U.S. Army erecting tens of thousands of prefabricated houses around nearby laboratories and firms demonstrated the elevated status of science and scientists as the preferable suburban occupation and resident. This is a point that cannot be overstated.

The racialization of science and suburbs went hand in hand, tightly contained with the suburban lifestyles of consumerism and familial leisure that quickly came to define post-war national identity. According to David Kaiser, only one in ten physics students were foreign born, which was due to the fact that only United States citizens were allowed to work in Atomic Energy Commission funded laboratories in the post-World War II period (2004). Students were mostly drawn to careers in science and engineering given the middle-class lifestyle they hoped it would provide based off their expectations of what kind of annual salaries they thought these careers would offer (Kaiser 2004). Job recruitment advertisements printed in national periodicals and newspapers contributed to these expectations with images of a plentiful life of leisure: playing golf, watching television, playing with children, and driving luxury automobiles. These particular images discursively bound whiteness, class, labor, and place together in defining the idealized subject of suburban life.

While firms lured scientists and engineers to work for them through advertising that promised suburban lifestyles of expendable income and leisure time, the post-war national and regional development of high-tech was also a matter of post-industrial city planning (O'Mara 2005). Higher educational institutions, high-tech firms, land developers, and local, regional, and federal government strategized together on how best to foster research and development (R&D) through city planning of suburbs. These suburbs, places of social engineering where whiteness structured national economic realignments and federal subsidies, transformed the relationship between how people lived, worked, and expressed their racialized national identities. The careful blending of educational institutions, high-tech firms, and subdivisions of single-family detached



homes tightly contained the social worlds and daily rounds of its idealized demographics of white scientific workers and their families (O'Mara 2005). In the national public imagination, suburbs are commonly associated with sprawl and the decentralization of public life (or lack thereof). But the suburban forms of scientific research, which come together in what historian Margaret Pugh O'Mara defines as "cities of knowledge," reveal that the relationship between race, class, and the built environment created public life around high-tech research (O'Mara 2005, 1).

More specifically, architectural style was central to the urban-planning strategies as it communicated who could ideally become a part of these new emerging, consciously planned communities. In post-war society, race and location proved to be an important concept in high-tech development and city planning. With the on-going threat of the Cold War and global nuclear warfare, the dispersal and decentralization of military defense institutions and high-tech firms outside of center cities quickly transformed residential patterns of baby boomers in the United States. Boosters and state and local officials of these emerging suburban cities utilized low-taxes and other financial incentives to pull high-tech industries and federal funding for these knowledge industries away from center cities. From the federal research policies allocating multi-million dollar contracts for military defense to the public-private partnerships at the state, regional, and local level, which provided subsidies for firms in order to make their jurisdictions more business-friendly, "cities of knowledge" reflect the national "social welfare" aimed at empowering white people and improving their standards of living through city-planning (Leslie and American Council of Learned Societies. 1993; Saxenian 1994; O'Mara 2005; Lowen and NetLibrary Inc. 1997).

Whiteness was central to the particular manifestation of these “cities of knowledge.” The aesthetics of the “city of knowledge” communicated the cultural framework that supported these national, regional, and local policies of white privilege and wealth accumulation associated with high-tech labor. Since the late nineteenth century, Santa Clara County existed as a summer retreat for wealthy San Francisco capitalists who sought refuge from the ills that seem to define center cities at the time. Places such as the Monta Vista neighborhood in Cupertino with its bungalows and cottages set against the rural landscape of orchards and nurseries visualized a race and class difference from the urban density and the conflicts of race and labor commonly associated with it. The industrialization of places like San Francisco with its immigrant and working class laborers were part of a larger cultural imaginary of center cities as dangerous, dirty, and diseased places harmful to white residents and their businesses. Revitalizing declining cities through technology failed for a variety of factors such as lack of open space. But the racial demographics of places such as Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Berkeley, California (read as black), even with nationally-ranked research universities as anchors to development plans, could not create the right and white “climate” to encourage investment (O’Mara 2005, 8, 130). In the post-war era, racial conflicts associated with civil rights movements and labor union uprisings of center cities made suburbs ideal places for new race and class-targeted economic developments.

While white suburban residents of Silicon Valley welcomed tax-revenue from new businesses, maintaining the look of race and class exclusive suburban life was central to sustaining and improving property taxes (Self 2003). In the context of the Silicon Valley, the paradisiacal portrayal of itself as a non-racist place emerges from the

lack of people of sizeable communities of color that could threaten economically white supremacy, but also the push factors of de-skilling and racial segregation that made relocating to the area challenging (Tsu 2006, (Ruffin II 2007). Maintaining architectural continuity of the built forms of cities of knowledge – industrial parks, educational institutions, and residential subdivisions – was crucial to integrating high-tech seamlessly with existing and emergent suburban cities and the aesthetics of pastoral retreat from center cities. The pastoral setting of American universities purportedly offered students and faculty a place set apart from the engines of industrial capitalism (O’Mara 2005, 60). The geographic distance translated into a psychic distance with the intention of providing students and faculty the space – literally and figuratively – for unadulterated intellectual pursuits for the sake of intellectual pursuits and nothing else. The varied actors invested in high-tech development drew from this legacy of the pastoral associated with education in designing the exclusive architectures of sciences and engineering, suggesting that the pastoral “look” and “feel” would improve innovation. Industrial research parks were designed to be the anti-factory: they tended to be low-rise modernist buildings, which required ample green space surrounding it to further instantiate research as part of the suburban form and lifestyle. The design of industrial parks showcased the future of American as places of technological development, while hiding the industriousness commonly associated with working-class places of manufacturing within center cities (O’Mara 2005, 64-65(Findlay 1992).

Stanford University’s Industrial Park set the precedent for creating the idyllic race and class-based scientific community precisely for its attention to the pastoral. From its inception, the aesthetics of its campus reflected historic anti-urban movements in

California. John Muir's writings of environmental conservation and the necessity of California landscapes as therapeutic to the contextual perception of the social ills of industrial cities shaped how Leland Stanford interpreted the local bucolic settings into the campus architecture. Leland Stanford's university was heavily planned as he deliberately drew from the mission architecture of the histories of the American West, particularly the romanticized colonial era (O'Mara 2005, 101-102). The low-slung buildings offered views of the mountain range along the peninsula directly to the west and also to the east.

Similarly, the designs of the mid-century industrial park, the Stanford shopping center, and the high-end single-family residences were meant to blend in with these existing priorities for the pastoral. To placate neighbors, strict building codes prevented building density from filling in green space. The building designs might not have been architecturally noteworthy. But the most important feature of these buildings was that they were unobtrusive to the existing residential area. The planning among Stanford administrators, local government, land developers, and architects made scientific research a race and class-based community, which the shopping center reflected the class-identity of its residents (O'Mara 2005, 117). Architects and merchant builders used modernist residential architecture to bring outdoor living within the home through design details, drawing from the racialized visual culture of the pastoral to create a desire for what was commonly known at the time as "California living." Together, urban-planning as a form of social engineering contained white identity through the aesthetics of the suburban forms of science and engineering. Further, connected white identity with labor and wealth accumulation through property values associated with aesthetics of the suburban forms of science and engineering.

In Santa Clara County (and later as Silicon Valley), the visual economy of the pastoral was part and parcel to the relationship between white hegemony and the region's rapidly expanding high-tech industries. Changes to U.S. political economy would transform the racial priorities of Silicon Valley's economic development as it shifted military defense research to consumer-oriented products. The following section discusses the push and pull factors that brought Chinese immigrants to the Silicon Valley.

### **The Exceptional Chinese of Silicon Valley**

A commonly circulated joke that "Silicon Valley is built on ICs" – not integrated circuits but Indian and Chinese engineers – reflects the relationship between race and economic development that has come to give meaning to Silicon Valley place. This particular saying assumes that Asian Americans' experiences in the region began with Silicon Valley, often forgetting the contributions Asian Americans made to agricultural industries and their experiences that critique the alleged myths of Santa Clara County's anti-racism.<sup>2</sup> But this joke doesn't just emerge from the fact that Indian and Chinese engineers make up the largest ethnic groups of all Asians in high-tech fields, but also the increasing number of Indian and Chinese entrepreneurs that are executives and owners of high-tech firms in the area. During the 1980s and well into the 1990s, Indian and Chinese workers complained of the "glass ceiling" where they were compensated

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<sup>2</sup> In Cupertino, locals retelling of Cupertino's agricultural past ignores the history of Chinese and Japanese nurseries in the area. It was not until the late nineteen nineties when then-city council member Michael Chang, also a professor of Asian American Studies at Cupertino's De Anza Community College, wrote a book with the Cupertino Historical Society about Chinese and Japanese nurseries and experiences of discrimination did the historical society begin integrating artifacts of Asian Americans into its exhibits. For more on Anti-Asian exclusion in Santa Clara County, see Cecilia Tsu. "Grown in the 'Garden of the World': Race, Gender, and Agriculture in California's Santa Clara Valley, 1880-1940." (Ph.D diss., Stanford University, 2006). Jean Pfaelzer. *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans*. (New York: Random House, 2007). Glenna Matthews. *Silicon Valley, Women, and the California Dream: Gender, Class, and Opportunity in the Twentieth Century*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

similarly to their managers but were consistently passed on for promotions to middle and upper-management. Other experiences of discrimination related to the “glass ceiling” effect included venture capitalists refusal to provide seed money if an Asian person was the president of an Asian-owned company (Saxenian 1999). Ironically, the “glass ceiling” that Asian engineers and entrepreneurs faced created the conditions for Asians to become leaders of Silicon Valley’s growth into the twenty-first century. Chinese people would further develop the region’s transpacific business with Greater China and change the identity of Silicon Valley towards its contemporary narrative of a cosmopolitan hub of Asian cultures.

In response to racial discrimination in the work place, Indians and Chinese formed their own ethnic-based professional networks locally and transnationally, pulling resources such as knowledge and capital together to help fund start-up companies. Many of these networks were based off social needs for community based on shared language, culture, and educational, and, of course, professional backgrounds. AnnaLee Saxenian emphasizes the on-going discursive relationship between Asian ethnicity and economic development:

These organizations combine elements of traditional immigrant culture with distinctly high-technology practices: they simultaneously create ethnic identities within the region and facilitate the professional networking and information exchange that aid success in the highly mobile Silicon Valley economy (Saxenian 1999)

These ethnic networks have contributed to the steady financial growth of Silicon Valley’s multi-billion dollar high-tech industry. By 1998, Asians made up a quarter of senior executives of Silicon Valley tech businesses. Immigrant-run companies collectively accounted for more than \$16.8 billion in sales and 58,282 jobs in 1998 alone. Between

1980-1998, 17% of all high-tech firms were run by Chinese (Saxenian 1999). As shown by these numbers alone, these ethnic networks contribute to job and entrepreneurial opportunities in California and in other Chinese countries. These social and professional networks have been such a huge part of this growth that the local media dubbed one Chinese ethnic organization, Chinese Software Professional Association (CSPA), “The Silicon Valley Entrepreneur’s Secret Weapon” (Saxenian 1999). Once denied capital investment based on the legacy of white “old boys networks” of Silicon Valley, Asian immigrants, ironically, find themselves the target of new venture capital firms, dedicated primarily to funding projects between Silicon Valley and Asia (Saxenian 1999).

The larger numbers of Chinese people in Silicon Valley high-tech industries wasn’t just by happenstance, but rather, like post-War Silicon Valley, part of federal policy aimed at recruiting particular kinds of labor to fulfill shortages in science and engineering. Furthermore, U.S. Cold War diplomacy also explains the Taiwanese population in science and engineering settling in such places as Silicon Valley, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, where electronics research hubs were established resulting from military defense spending. With the Chinese Nationalists (KMT) falling to the Communists (CCP) and ultimately retreating to the island of Taiwan, the United States began to strategize how to affirm their political and economic hegemony in Asia under the guise of the “democracy.” John W. Garver argues that the United States chose not to directly influence political reform for fear that it would alienate the Nationalist government, possibly encouraging defection towards the communists. Instead, the U.S., Garver argues, chose to introduce democracy through economic aid that would promote foreign private investment, initially through land reform and then through textiles

manufacturing and agricultural export economies (Garver 1997). Chintay Shih, Kung Wang, and Yi-Ling Wei note that high-tech development came in four stages, which the 1960s ushered in an era of industrial manufacturing of electronics for foreign companies such as General Instruments, Texas Instruments, RCA, Sanyo Electric, and more (Shih 2006).

The nurturing of high tech research in Taiwan, however, extended beyond manufacturing. During the 1960s and 1970s, educational and professional exchange programs between Taiwan and the United States in the context of engineering knowledge sharing created channels for science and technology talents to move between the United States and Taiwan (Shih 2006; Ong, Bonacich, and Cheng 1994). Although the United States had little input on Taiwan's educational systems, these existing channels helped foster the development of engineering programs in Taiwan universities (Ong, Bonacich, and Cheng 1994). Many Taiwanese people, having trained at United States universities, returned to become faculty members, teaching and nurturing an emerging labor force that had learned of "America" through electronics manufacturing in Taiwan and of the economic opportunities in Silicon Valley. The lack of jobs in Taiwan for graduating engineers pushed them to places such as Silicon Valley to find work. When asking Chinese parents how they had heard about Silicon Valley growing up in Taiwan, several mentioned the recruiters and scientists from major high-tech firms who taught them about new developing technologies. One particular parent mentioned as a child passing by an electronics manufacturing plant in his backyard on his way to work when he lived in the rural outskirts of Taipei. U.S. labor shortages in skilled labor, such as science and engineering, led to revisions in immigration laws in 1990 that dramatically increased the



preference category of occupational immigrants from 54,000 to 120,000. It is through the entanglement of high-tech industries and educational opportunities that Silicon Valley emerges as the representation of “America” for Chinese immigrants.

But corporate discourses on Asian American economic success, epitomized by the cultural visibility of Chinese shopping centers and the riches of high-tech workers, obscure the drastic inequalities within the varied kinds of labor that make up the high-tech industry. While corporations and local media parade Chinese workers as symbols of the Valley’s transcendence of racism, where job flexibility (and insecurity) is locally promoted as entrepreneurial spirit and unlimited opportunities, this image of success is unattainable by many women and immigrants of color who toil as temporary skilled and unskilled workers. These temporary workers make up a sizeable portion of Silicon Valley’s high-tech labor and reflect the often un-spoken side of the regional economy’s labor disciplining. As observers of Silicon Valley note, consumer products matter more than the people that work on them. In their study of the environmental hazards and inequalities embedded within the local manufacturing of high-tech products, Lisa Sun-Hee Park and David Naguib Pellow suggest that labor is “hyper-regulated” rather “deregulated,” as technological environments such as “clean rooms” and the contingent protocol of training workers to labor in these environments are meant to protect the computer chips than the lives of people who make them. The regional discourse about access and inequality tends to revolve around the notion of the “digital divide,” which focuses upon the differences in access and learning of new computer technologies. That is, the digital divide discourse affirms dominant mythic narratives of opportunity that if everyone regardless of race, class, and gender learned how to use a computer, then

everyone would be able to partake in the wealth that Silicon Valley has to offer. Aihwa Ong notes that skilled South Asian engineers and computer scientists on H1-B temporary work visas are subjected to labor contracting companies, also known as body shops, that control where they work and when they get paid. These body shops often use these temporary workers' desires to obtain citizenship as leverage to exploit them by extracting more from their paycheck, controlling where they work, and how much work they can actually find (Ong 2006, 163-165). As a result, companies tend to hire through body shops as they provide a more cost efficient labor pool that they are not obligated to provide benefits to. In turn, that affects the ability of people of similar skill in the United States to find jobs. These kinds of labor disciplining reflect the neoliberal "exception," which finds ways of including particular Chinese subjects at the expense of those here temporarily whose basic rights are suspended.

But as Margaret Pugh O'Mara suggests, the deliberate design of high-tech built environments as college campuses was meant to obscure the manufacturing that was being done within many of these suburban spaces. Because of the visual cultures of race and class associated with factories of center cities and the billowing smoke from its chimneys, which did not fit in the white and wealthy suburban and bucolic settings outside of San Francisco and Oakland, high-tech campuses disguised manufacturing as just like any other low-slung mid-modernist building, the popular architectural design at the time. This strategic way that particular subjects are made visible and invisible within local discussions about labor and architecture reveal how the exceptional neoliberal economic developments are enabled on an everyday basis. In the following section, I examine a policy report and interrogate how retellings of historical narratives instantiate

the relationship between Chinese immigrants and Silicon Valley within the context of transpacific economic development. The policy emphasizes that Chinese immigrants have also been enterprising peoples that have contributed to the building of Silicon Valley since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

**“Ties That Bind”**

In November 2006, the Bay Area Economic Forum released a publication titled “Ties That Bind: The San Francisco Bay Area’s Economic Links to Greater China,” a report addressing how best the region’s businesses, local government, and educational institutions could continue to build on existing transpacific economic relations. The particular report was timely given how multiple factors including increasing competition in the global marketplace, stricter U.S. immigration policies post-9/11, and economic restructuring in Greater China made business with the United States less financially attractive for Chinese businesses. For example, Chinese countries such as Taiwan lowered the threshold to developing cross-strait economic development with China by providing state-subsidies for business and exemptions from the military service for students who decided to stay at home to attend universities (Ties That Bind: San Francisco Bay Area's Economic Links to Greater China 2006). “Ties That Bind” offered a review of various existing Chinese transnational institutions – educational, professional, cultural, and community-based – that enabled Silicon Valley to be the prime and ideal location and leader in facilitating business with Greater China to the rest of the United States.

Regional media has documented the economic relations and contributions of Chinese immigrants within Silicon Valley, particularly documenting how transpacific

Chinese businessmen and women shuttling between Greater China and Silicon Valley facilitate multi-billion dollars worth of business annually. What I am choosing to focus on in this report, however, is how the Bay Area Economic Forum historicizes contemporary regional business with China as a continuation of over 150 years of Chinese economic presence in the San Francisco Bay Area. Specifically, it is the re-narration of Chinese economic presence articulated through an essential and timeless Chinese culture, which I believe deserves attention. In this report, the Bay Area Economic Forum aims to normalize Chinese people and culture as historically and unequivocally responsible for the making of California's robust economy centered on entrepreneurial spirit. By culture, the report names family and hierarchical social structures, work-ethic, and educational achievement as intrinsically "Chinese" in nature and naturally why Silicon Valley's economy has been so successful. But it is the blending of the economic and cultural spaces of Chinese communities within this narration that specifically produces Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs as the normative subject of the San Francisco Bay Area in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Culture has grown to become part and parcel to regional and national discussions of understanding not only the context for how to work with Chinese businesses, but also how to recruit Chinese businesses within a competitive global market. Lenny Mendonca, Chairman of the Bay Area Economic Forum, emphasizes that the "Bay Area economy. . . also benefits from. . . a diversity of cultures, which heighten its role as a global intellectual and commercial center" (Mendonca 2008). The emphasis on culture, however, tends to distinctly refer to "Chinese" with reference to the region's economic abundance. The Bay Area Council (BAC) and the Association for Bay Area

Governments (ABAG), the two advocacy groups teaming up as the Bay Area Economic Forum, working together on economic climate in order to address “quality of life” issues that are important to both entities. The ABAG is a non-profit group that is made up of locally elected officials from the 101 cities and towns across the 9 counties, which they define as the “San Francisco Bay Area.” Established in 1961, ABAG addresses issues regarding regional economy, but also housing, transportation, education, and environmental concerns that come with continued economic growth. ABAG has been an important institution to study given the regional housing mandates that they encourage local jurisdictions to abide by. Oddly, they have no actual power to enforce the increase in housing – below market value and not – to meet the needs of new jobs. The presence of ABAG reflects the synergistic, but often conflicted relationship between resident, local, and regional government. The BAC, however, is made up entirely of businesses including Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Pacific Gas and Electric, and Kaiser Industries. Originating in 1955, the BAC was an offshoot of the Metropolitan Defense Council, which was led by local businessmen and politicians. With the regional economy booming during World War II, the BAC wanted to sustain this growth, an outcome of private-public partnerships. The BAC is another reflection of how wartime industries around high technology have shape the planning around the suburbanization of Silicon Valley. The goal of the BAC is to forecast economic trends and to set long-term agendas for the region, which one of their initiatives, the only one that is centered on a relationship with a country and group of people, is “China.” The BAC’s “China Policy” aims to continue developing “bilateral trade and investment promotion between. . . . two regions.” In 2010, the BAC established their physical office in the “Knowledge and

Innovation Community” in the Yangpu District of Shanghai, China with the hopes of “building a lasting conduit for sharing capital, ideas, innovation and resources” between the regions.

While the Bay Area Economic Forum produced several different reports regarding Chinese investment throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> decade, Ties That Bind was the only that explained Chinese as always and already exemplary of what Chairman Mendonca described as the necessary relationship between “diversity of cultures” and “global intellectual and commercial center” that is Silicon Valley. The report, over 170 pages in length, is organized into five chapters, with the first two historical (“A Rich History of Work and Reward” and “New Networks Emerge”) and the next three describing existing and emerging business opportunities. Right off the bat, the name of the first chapter sets the tone for the report, which “rich” appears to be a double entendre for the depth of Chinese labor history in the area and, also, the wealth, financially, that Chinese communities have contributed. Moreover, the BAC reduces Chinese experiences in the Bay Area to “work” and the “rewards.” The rewards are clearly delineated in the “Executive Summary,” preceding the chapters, which offer various monetary statistics of how much money Chinese students, scientists, and businessmen and women offer to the regional economy (i.e \$127.5 million in tuition and living expenses).

The main point of the historical chapters is to show the entrepreneurial aspects of Chinese culture that has historically been endemic to the formation of Chinese immigrant communities in the San Francisco Bay Area. This report suggests that in spite of hardships including racial discrimination and anti-Asian violence (resulting in death), Chinese people persevered and labored along to create their own economic institutions

around a shared ethnic identity. Further, this report portrays Chinese cultures of work ethic as giving Chinese the innate ability to overcome all economic obstacles, de-emphasizing anti-Chinese racism to any ordinary roadblock to overcome when starting a business. This chapter of the report moves chronologically beginning with the push and pull factors that led to Chinese migration to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, swiftly portraying Chinese laborers of the past as the ideal worker of the present:

Many Chinese immigrants traveled to the United States under labor contracts with merchants in China or with American middlemen who solicited them and arranged their passage. . . . But contracts often proved unenforceable and laborers ended up mining or prospecting on their own in the Sierra foothills. Chinese workers distinguished themselves as hard workers and shrewd entrepreneurs (2006, 13).

While this passage shows the forms of racial discrimination that Chinese laborers faced, it recuperates the narrative by spinning it positively to show Chinese people continued to be “hard workers” that were “shrewd” enough to be enterprising in spite of these conditions. The chapter adds that while anti-Chinese racism was an “unfortunate reality,” Chinese people were still able to diversify their revenue streams. That is, Chinese people were able to “dominate the shrimp industry” by opening up their exports to markets in their homelands (2006, 15). Their communities, which Chinese American Studies have demonstrated to be forms of race-based economic exclusion, are rewritten in this narrative as intrinsically Chinese characteristics of work ethic and individuality. What is problematic about these representations are how Chinese experiences of survival become interpreted through the normative contemporary lens of neoliberal systems of governmentality. The establishment of restaurants, laundry services, theaters, and places of social and economic life are no longer about legalized racial segregation and policing. Instead, the places reflect the entrepreneurial spirit of Silicon Valley life. In this case,

entrepreneurialism refers to notions of self-management and the reliance upon oneself to provide for ones own needs. For the reader, sentences describing the physical formation of Chinese communities cues up ideas of independence and success built upon self-reliance outside of government assistance: “Even enduring the 61 years that the Exclusion Act was in effect in the U.S. . . . Chinese entrepreneurs prospered in farming, manufacturing, retail business, banking, hotels and property” (2006, 21).

Chinese culture, again, surfaces in the report as naturally a part of the cultural landscape and built environment of metropolitan financial areas, but solely contained by financial institutions such as banking. In a section of the first chapter titled, “Making – and Breaking – the Banks,” Chinese laborers are explained as the main reason for why Wells Fargo became a successful banking institution. It wasn’t just that Chinese laborers were loyal customers, but also that Chinese laborers predicted that the corner of an intersection that Wells Fargo was built on in San Francisco had more acceptable properties of Feng Shui. Prior to that, another bank had asked Chinese laborers to build a bank on opposite corner. The Chinese laborers refused given that the granite used allegedly was not meant for that location, Feng Shui-wise. As a result, Chinese laborers refused to conduct their banking there because it was “unlucky.” As the report adds, Wells Fargo thrived off Chinese loyalty and opened their headquarters with “Chinese ceremonies to ward off evil spirits ”(2006, 19). The particular incident frames Chinese culture and American business as a likely pairing. Moreover, it emphasizes Chinese culture literally embedded within the built environment of cities such as San Francisco, constructed within this report as the most important port and financial area to conduct



business to China. Again, Chinese people can only be understood by their financial presence communicated through the cultural and physical geography.

Further, essentialized perceptions of Chinese family values and social structure explain the particularity of Chinese business practices between these coordinated spaces of economic development. When explaining professional associations, the glass ceiling is de-emphasized (mentioned only once) in order to stress the values of Chinese cultures towards knowledge and capital circulation within regional and trans-Pacific collaboration:

The Bay Area benefits from a unique structure of family, provincial, academic and professional networks within and among the various overseas Chinese communities. These mutually supportive links have grown out of successive waves of immigration, but reflect commonly held values about the importance of education; family and social hierarchy; professional advancement, and entrepreneurial initiative (2006, 21).

This portion of the report describes the cultural structures that guide collaborative Chinese business practices. But like every other impression of Chinese culture in this report, all forms of cultural life become folded into business. Chinese family and education cannot be understood outside of “professional advancement” and “entrepreneurial initiative.” In Silicon Valley, everyday decisions become translated into economic calculations. The dominance of knowledge industries in Silicon Valley economies ensures that educated Chinese students, scientists, engineers, businessmen and women, entrepreneurs, and venture capitalists represent the normative subject of Silicon Valley. The report functions to further normalize the prioritization of business with Greater China by hegemonically enforcing Chinese culture through spatial and visual cues across Silicon Valley cultural, economic, and physical landscapes.

The final chapter, “Building Bridges, Leveraging Assets,” provides several suggestions of how the normalization of Chinese culture across these various landscapes will create the perfect cultural conditions to lure more international Chinese investment to Silicon Valley. This final portion describes how the Bay Area can leverage their existing assets, claiming itself to have been historically accepting and nurturing of Chinese cultures since the first Chinese arrived on the West Coast. But it is important to note the particular hegemonic way that the BAC encourages the consumption of Chinese culture throughout the visual culture of the region. Besides encouraging Chinese language education throughout K-12 education and junior colleges, the BAC believes local jurisdictions should “Promote the Bay Area as a destination for Chinese students and leisure travelers” because “[a]s personal income in China grows and more Chinese travel abroad, the Bay Area should also be aggressively promoted as a culturally welcoming, language-friendly destination for Chinese tourists” with the “facilities developed to support them” (2006, 141). The spatial and visual reinvention of Silicon Valley into what seems to be a Chinese culturally dominant region aims to make these coordinated spaces of economic development similar to Chinese homelands to facilitate the ease of business transactions. The last asset, “Support cultural activities that strengthen Bay Area-China linkages,” further emphasizes the necessity of affirming Chinese culture spatially with “the proposed development of a classical Chinese garden in San Francisco” because it can “raise the Bay Area’s profile, strengthen its identity with China, and attract U.S., Chinese and other visitors” (2006, 141). The Asian Art Museum, as explained by the BAC within this report, is one of these necessary institutions that demonstrate to Americans the value of Chinese people, culture, and transpacific business (2006, 45).

In the “Ties That Bind,” the BAC re-narrates the San Francisco Bay Area as a place that has had a long, thriving history of Chinese transpacific relations and economic development. In obscuring violent histories of anti-Chinese racism, “Ties That Bind” emphasizes the transnational Chinese communities and the Bay Area as always, already welcoming of not just Chinese cultures and commodities, but Chinese people, too. But what seems particularly significant to emphasize is the visual cues of Chineseness that are written into this history of particular kinds of places and activities that helped define Chinese life and the life of the San Francisco Bay Area. By naming Chinese cultural places, such as tea gardens or museums instructive of Chinese cultural traditions, the BAC hope to secure a future of the San Francisco Bay Area enabling of economic relations with Greater China.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have shown how contemporary state and corporate narratives frame Chinese engineers, scientists, and entrepreneurs as the ideal subjects to populate Silicon Valley and the Greater San Francisco Bay Area. This ideal subject, however, is tightly contained by the places of labor. In these narrations, whether it is engineering or laundry services, BAC explains places of Chinese economic activities as the always and already existing cultural geography of the region. For example, limited economic opportunities as a result of de jure and de facto segregation, according to the BAC, is what encouraged Chinese communities to be entrepreneurial, pulling resources together to establish ethnic economies. The point of these narrations were not to suggest Chinese resistance, but, instead, to reinvent a history of Chinese entrepreneurship as naturally a part of the San Francisco Bay Area. These narrations are instructive of what constitutes the ideal subject

and the market forces that structures the places that discipline everyday behavior. With the prioritization of trans-Pacific economic development, the BAC wants to manipulate the cultures of its built environment to make the region more hospitable towards educated and human-capital rich Chinese people.

The BAC's policy initiative at re-organizing the political, economic, and cultural geography of the San Francisco Bay Area follows a larger history of Silicon Valley's urban planning centered on high-tech development. Racial preference of Chinese people diverges slightly from the earlier race and class exclusions carefully planned within the designs of the Silicon Valley's built environments and communities. Boosters, developers, educational institutions, and local governments tried to align city planning with whiteness, its meanings contained literally by high-tech campus walls and its subjectivity performed daily by the people who moved through its buildings and accompanying racially exclusive sub-divisions. In the following chapters, I examine the various places of Silicon Valley, which have been part of the visual and material culture of racial hegemonies. With shifting economic trends prioritizing Chinese immigrants, I examine more closely how battles over public spaces reflect larger shifting racial hegemonic formations.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **Shopping at the Crossroads**

When Business Journal Silicon Valley/San Jose broke news on April 4, 2003 that San Jose, California-based developers Emily Chen, John Nguyen, and Alan Wong purchased the failing VALLCO shopping mall in Cupertino, California and reported that they planned to turn it into an “Asian Marketplace,” white Cupertino residents demanded a portion of the upcoming city council meeting on April 15 be dedicated to voicing their concerns to the new owners of what they saw as the racial divisiveness of another Chinese shopping center.<sup>1</sup> The owners, specializing in retail development of overseas Asian goods throughout Silicon Valley, were not present at the meeting. But in spite of what Dennis Brown, attorney for the trio of developers, said about the owners valuing Cupertino citizen input on future development, multiple residents referenced the Business Journal article as proof that the developers planned to market their development towards Asians only. In spite of the overwhelming popularity of Pan-Asian shopping centers of stores predominately selling Chinese goods throughout this period, these residents claimed that the rumored VALLCO plan was “counter-productive and not in the best interest of the city.” By that, some residents, bothered by the sights and smells of Chinese culture, and city council reminded the owners (via Dennis Brown) that VALLCO is “close to the heart of the community and it is also a community asset.”

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<sup>1</sup> VALLCO refers to the principal developers of the shopping mall and adjacent business and industrial park. The names include the Varian Associates and the “original” Cupertino families: Leonard, Lester, Craft, and Orlando

Together, they warned about destroying the non-revenue generating ice-rink because it was a “community asset” in addition to encouraging VALLCO to be more community oriented by adding childcare services and a mainstream grocery store.

This particular episode over the pending purchase of VALLCO Fashion Park and the local white resident and city council demand for community input reveals how race, immigration, community, and consumer culture converge in the context of economic development in Cupertino. The new Asian ownership of VALLCO occurred at time when Chinese strip malls, such as the neighboring Cupertino Village less than a quarter mile down the road, were lauded in local media for their economic success serving a growing Asian immigrant population in the San Francisco Bay Area. Cupertino, like many other areas across the Bay Area, witnessed a large spike in Asian residents during the 1990s. For Asian developers, transforming VALLCO into a lucrative Asian shopping center seem to make perfect business sense for a shopping mall that had been losing brand-name retailers and tax-revenue for the city for almost a decade.

But local attempts at blocking the rumored Chinese mall by demanding that the developers serve the community needs framed economic development as a moral judgment of what kinds of local values the built environment of consumerism should reflect and encourage. While these development plans were consistently portrayed as racial tensions among white residents and Chinese immigrants over different cultural particularities (of shopping), both sides used consumer culture – what could be sold and purchased based off VALLCO’s development and design – to frame what it means to be a part of the community. Moreover, this episode reveals how governing has become a

relationship between residents and developers, with the local government emphasizing private investment as what sustains the community.

This chapter examines how consumer culture, at times articulated through rights discourses of Asian cultural and economic inclusion, has become a form of governing in Silicon Valley. As market logics exist as moral evaluations about what should be the local cultural lifestyle, who best represents this lifestyle, and how to nurture these lifestyles among residents through urban-planning projects, I argue that that these on-going questions about community and economic development demonstrate how neoliberalism operates as a system of governmentality in Silicon Valley. While private-public partnerships, labor discipline, and deregulation of high-tech industries reflect Silicon Valley's neoliberalism as an economic policy, the on-going debates over preserving Cupertino culture show that systems of governmentality are at work in extending these market logics to all aspects of social life, specifically when it comes to identity. Governmentality refers to the everyday procedures and strategies aimed at governing individuals through the language of freedom. Rather than the governing of populations occurring through state coercion, the language of freedom is articulated through the notion of timeless moral values of personal responsibility and individual choice. As we see in the case of Cupertino's mall development, governmentality "relieves the discrepancy between economic and moral behavior by configuring morality entirely as a matter of rational deliberation about costs, benefits, and consequences" (Brown 2003).

The city council, residents, and developers identifying of built structures, such as malls, as places for community action reflects the relationship between architecture and

governing in what Nikolas Rose defines as “government through community” (Rose 1999). For Rose, communitarians see themselves and their affinities towards each other as a “third space,” which exists as a “moral field of binding persons into durable relations” outside of the corrupted civic life created by the State and capitalism (Rose 1999). But these communitarian identities, Rose argues, become mobilized as segmented populations, which political parties and new markets can exploit and govern through communitarians perception of having “shared values.” For these purposes, this “third space” takes shape in physical form, which techniques of subjectification are “visualized, mapped, surveyed, and mobilized” (Rose 1999) Space is important for understanding how particular subjects are managed and nurtured within this framework of governmentality.

These “architectures of community,” specifically these urban-planning projects in Cupertino, guide how privileged subjects emerge in Cupertino. This relationship reveals the particular neoliberal discourses and practices of Silicon Valley that maintain these exceptional narratives of itself through the everyday social life. This case of VALLCO Fashion Park as well as other sputtering retail tax-revenue generating projects shows that individuals and groups of varying interests in Cupertino seek to manage themselves by creating particular subjects that will boost sales-tax revenue and save their city services. In this chapter, I examine these local debates and escalating conflicts over the direction of economic development and civic life. In these conflicts, I focus on the varied discourses and subjects of neoliberalism in Silicon Valley, which moral arguments about lifestyle and diversity become conditions for generating tax revenue. By varied, I am describing, on the one hand, the regional investment in the consumerism of Chinese culture as



systems of governmentality, which people locally and publicly resist in Cupertino. On the other hand, wealthy white and Chinese residents created an unlikely alliance over the racial danger they assume mixed-use development would bring to their community. I trace how these two different threads are interwoven in the contradictory making of the ideal subject of Silicon Valley through the interrelated, on going, and never-starting VALLCO Redevelopment Plans and “The Heart of the City” shopping district. Both are related to one another in the failed attempts at creating a centralized shopping district of mixed-used development. Also, both events show the contradictory ways by which Chinese immigrants appropriate neoliberal discourses to emerge as community members. In the first section of the chapter, I trace how local residents and the city have responded to the decline of VALLCO and the anxiety around its recent Asian ownership. I situate this discussion of creating demand for Asian/Chinese consumer culture within discourses of U.S. multiculturalism. The second section of this chapter analyzes “The Heart of the City” design plans to develop a downtown shopping district along the main commercial and retail artery of Stevens Creek Boulevard, a six-lane street. I show how these mixed used projects, inspired by New Urbanism’s ideas of recreating ‘community’ through sociability, exist as architectures of governing that aim to contain the practices of civic life to consumer

### **VALLCO Fashion Park**

With Asian (predominately Chinese) investors and developers taking ownership of VALLCO Fashion Park in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century (and amassing loans into the hundreds of millions), their expected, but failed, plans at developing a shopping center of Asian (predominately Chinese) retailers reflects the market-driven decisions of economic

development in Cupertino. As wealthy Asian families with dual-incomes easily clearing \$130,000 per household have transformed the race and class profile of Cupertino and the surrounding affluent suburbs, developing VALLCO Fashion Park into an Asian shopping center made perfect business sense for these new investors and developers. In spite of local resistance to Asian ownership and local fears that these investors don't represent the shopping needs of the (white) "community," investors used a variety of tactics to assure residents that their economic investment is, indeed, in the interest of locals. Although these investors have failed miserably at delivering their promises, the battles between residents and Asian investors and developers of VALLCO Fashion Park show how the encouragement of class-based culture as entertainment in the context of shopping has become a discourse of civic life in Silicon Valley, which in other jurisdictions within the county has become the norm.<sup>2</sup> This was less as an attempt to revitalize an unofficial historic institution of Cupertino, but rather a regional reflection of how globalization discourse and corporate development has shaped the conditions of citizenship in Silicon Valley. Recognizing how white residents have tried to preserve any building in town that predates the 1980s high-tech construction as a historical place of "community," Asian developer attempt to appeal to "community" by emphasizing how the transnational Asian consumer cultures resembles the "authentic" white Cupertinoian upper-middle class demographics.

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<sup>2</sup> Arlene Davila describes the difference between 'culture as ethnicity' and 'culture as entertainment' as a difference in politics. When describing tourism development of 'ethnic neighborhoods' in Harlem, New York, Davila argues that culture as ethnicity reflects the local prioritizing and promoting of community values and collective memory, which are at odds with dominant neoliberal urban-planning that reframe culture "as a venue of entertainment and consumption located in identifiable structures and places ready to generate profit, employment, and visitors" (105). I draw from Davila's distinction of these two terms to describe the particular class-based notion of culture that Chinese developers try to use in attempt to gain citywide acceptance of their development plans. (Dávila 2004)

As I mentioned in chapter 1, regional government encourages opportunities for cultural exchange between Chinese and bay area residents – cultural festivals, language study, and shopping centers of Chinese retailers – to facilitate economic development between the San Francisco Bay Area and “Greater China.” Multicultural economic exchanges in Cupertino, however, have always been difficult to encourage as residents have used public newspapers and pressured city council to stop the presence of Chinese businesses that they deem to be un-American for the failure to use English signage (Marino 1998a; Mehta 1995; Che 2003a; Lee 1999; Collins 1996b, 1996a; "Letters" 2002). The city held several public forums, inviting mediators, to help discuss the visual culture of Chinese businesses spreading across major commercial and retail centers in the city (Enders 1998b; Berton 1998). In fact, long before VALLCO Fashion Park was purchased by its first Asian owners, Asian restaurants, stores, and retail centers were slowly becoming more and more exemplary of what Bay Area media sources were describing as reflective of the regions’ racial diversity (Rockstroh 1987; Villagran 1987; Moreillon 1987; Villagran 1989; Suryaraman 1990; Gugino 1990; Schwanhauser 1991b; Kato 1993; Eng 1993; Perkins 1996; Tran 1998; Ha 1999; Rockstroh 2002; Reang 2003; Perkins 2006). But for the most part, the articles featured a similar narrative arc in defining Asian identities in Silicon Valley by their economic vitality mapped onto visible public space. Similarly to high-tech industries, Asian land developers and entrepreneurs have been lauded by local press and local jurisdictions for revitalizing local economies through their niche ethnic markets that have been lucrative given the exponential growth in Asians to the region throughout the nineteen eighties and nineties (Sarmishta 2003). In cities such as Mountain View, some Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs see themselves as

responsible for reviving downtown, which consists of five blocks along Castro Street and roughly two blocks wide on all perpendicular streets that cross it: “If there were no Chinese restaurants, this town would be dead... The Chinese restaurants really helped revitalize, but people don’t understand that” (Anderson 1990). And this has become the typical trend throughout the nineties well into the present, such as Cupertino Square, where an Asian land or retail developer invests in a declining shopping center with a low vacancy rate, invigorating it with local or overseas capital to open an offshoot of a popular restaurant in Taiwan, Hong Kong, or China.

Between the 1987 and 1992, the number of Asian-owned businesses increased anywhere between 50-100%. The San Jose Mercury News review of city business licenses found that in the first nine months of 1992, 1,508 new Asian-owned firms were launched in San Jose alone (Johnson 1992). In the article “Asian Businesses are Snowballing in South Bay,” San Jose Mercury contributor Steve Johnson connects the growth of Asian-owned businesses with the emergence of local yet nationally and globally recognized Asian-owned high-tech businesses and the subsequent growth in Santa Clara County Asian demographics, a 161% increase between 1980 and 1992 (1992). However, it is the visual presence and success of these Asian strip malls than the high-tech businesses themselves, which seem to reflect the region’s diversity. The allure and intrigue of Silicon Valley’s diversity includes “tea houses” serving “Pearl milk tea,” which Asian youth described locally as “the Starbucks of Asian culture” and are reportedly more popular among Asian youth than “mainstream” coffee shops (Pacio 2002). Part of the fascination with Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay Area in general was how culturally integrated and purportedly accepting the place was given the

larger clusters of ethnic-specific and/or pan-ethnic shopping centers. During the nineties, there was a local understanding that the cultural mixing and mingling was a stark contrast to the rest of the country and that Silicon Valley invented a new culture that was both transnational, but also a hybrid blending of east and west, north and south (Johnson 1991; Rodriguez 1991; McLaughlin 1994; Stocking 1999; Rockstroh 2002). The emergence of Asian retailers and this experience of consuming Asian culture suggest that Silicon Valley defies historical conventions of immigrant narratives, where new immigrants in Silicon Valley are not “assimilating” but making “America” into mini-version of their homeland. In a 1992 San Jose Mercury article titled “Asian Markets take to competitors with One-Stop shopping,” food editor Sam Gugino describes Asian supermarkets in Cupertino to be representative of the “global village” (1992). Instead of describing the global village as simply information technologies facilitating cross-border communication at faster speeds, it is imported goods that can now be found in Silicon Valley that allow communities to stay in-touch with their “cultures.” More so, the Silicon Valley also represents a cultural mix amongst different racial and ethnic groups:

The Tropicana, whose patrons are predominantly Latinos, is a hint of what the Silicon Valley of tomorrow may look like – a place where national borders are blurred. A Chinese couple who own a clothing store there speak fluent Spanish. An Asian noodle house will be part of the merchant mix once the center gets its face lift later this year. And a local Korean-American church picks the center to preach to a mostly Latino audience (Gugino 1992).

Local residents and cultural critics interpreted the diversity of Silicon Valley to revolve around the representations of ethnic cultures safely within the arena of consumer cultures, particularly around food. But more importantly, the exceptional stories of diversity often used spatial and temporal markers to describe the sensory experience of Silicon Valley as something that is seen, smelled, and physically understood at a historic moment in time.

And moreover, the concept of “assimilation” was not part of the local grammar, as it could not describe this purported unimpeded sustaining of “culture” seen, smelled, and tasted within pan-ethnic strip malls.

But things were not so easy in Cupertino, which historically has defined itself and gotten its identity against the development of San Jose. As mentioned in Chapter 1 Cupertino’s push for incorporation occurred in the early 1950s when the city of San Jose sought to center its economy on high-tech industries, strategically annexing as much surrounding land as possible for future development.<sup>3</sup> These particular race and class boundaries seemed to apply to Chinese economic development in Cupertino. Cupertino already had another part of the VALLCO development, VALLCO Village, an open-air town center, transformed into its present day Cupertino Village shopping center of predominately Chinese retailers and restaurants. Local residents lamented the loss of VALLCO Village as evidence of Cupertino’s authentic white, European history, collective memory, and public spaces when the annual Oktoberfest fundraiser, hosted by the Rotary Club, was no longer held there and eventually died out as a result of declining attendance. This history is worth noting because of the larger trajectory of anti-Chinese sentiment towards Chinese businesses in the city but also the slow process of integrating multicultural consumer culture as a practice of proper citizenship in the city.

In 1996, the failing VALLCO Village was bought out by Sand Hill Property Company, headed up by the husband and wife team Peter and Susanna Pau. Cupertino

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<sup>3</sup> As I mention in the introduction, white residents of Cupertino characterize their city as white, wealthy, and anti-development vis-à-vis their historic and geographic distance from San Jose and their proximity to the Peninsula, the western portion of the Bay Area that historically has been where wealthy white capitalists of San Francisco would vacation in the summer time. Many local white residents of Cupertino often desire to be like the cities along the peninsula, seemingly classic-Americana small-towns with quaint downtowns versus the sprawling racial polyglot, which happens to portrayals of San Jose in the post-War era.

Village was the first Asian-themed renovation effort they had ever done. Moved by the growing Asian population in Silicon Valley, Peter and Sandy “saw a demand” but clearly distinguished the new Asian American as culturally distinct from “[t]he first generation [consumers] that shop in Chinatown in San Francisco” (Marino 1998a). Peter and Sandy’s evaluation of second and third-generation Asian Americans utilized particular code words, such as “highly educated and Westernized,” to ensure that their project would blend seamlessly into the suburban cultural geography, consciously distinguishing Cupertino Village’s Asian patrons civility against the historical and racialized space and imagination of urban places such as San Francisco and Oakland Chinatown (Marino 1998a).<sup>4</sup> Peter and Sandy painted a picture of the future of Silicon Valley, where residents harmoniously blend Eastern and Western cultures in a culturally hybrid shopping center, formerly geared towards white clientele and hopefully still.

Unfortunately, the culturally hybrid mix of “Eastern” and “Western” stores that Peter and Sandy promised never happened. Strangely, white residents began accusing Chinese people of lacking community. But white residents drew their racialized boundaries of the community around economic development. The large chain store to anchor the Cupertino Village ended up being Ranch 99, a locally based Taiwanese immigrant owned supermarket chain that sells predominately Chinese goods but with a mix of other Asian ethnic food stuffs and some things commonly found at an “American”

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<sup>4</sup> Chinatown as a place and symbol in the national popular imagination has often served to distinguish what is “American” (read=white) based off the racialized space of Chinese settlements. As Kay Anderson and Nayan Shah have shown in their research on Vancouver and San Francisco’s Chinatowns, respectively, the racialization of Chinese living quarters and commercial areas as deviant from white living and work conditions in various health, urban planning, immigration discourses continuously framed Chinese “places” as enabling deviant behavior. Therefore, I see the conscious choice by Sand Hill Property Company to carefully make these distinctions as part of their strategy of penetrating, non-threateningly, suburban economic development. See, Nayan Shah. *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). Kay Anderson. *Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991).

chain store as well. White residents vociferously demanded that Asian business owners provide “English” language signs and the local conversation about “English-only” became framed by white residents as Asian non-interest in being a part of the community. Other ways that Asians have been accused, in the context of business, as unwilling to “assimilate” are through white resident’s accusation of Asian business etiquette as lacking a sense of civility. White residents have complained about poor customer service directed towards them by Chinese retailers and restaurants – ignoring white patrons or not honoring verbal contracts when purchasing things.

When it comes to business, community refers to particular kinds of social performances centered on economic exchanges. But the sense of loss or lack of community is continuously framed by white residents by the lack of “American” retailers and “American” products, which allow them to engage in what they perceive to be “American” social, not economic, exchanges. This particular rhetoric of the shopping center as the place of white civic life, however, has its roots dating back to post-world war II suburbanization. Historian M. Jeffrey Hardwick writes that Victor Gruen, Jewish exile-cum-inventor of shopping mall design in the United States, was intent on designing shopping centers as the epicenter of civic life in post-World War II suburbs, where he felt civic life did not exist. As suburban development stretched out far and away from even the fringes of city centers, Gruen desired to create the density of cities through the built environment. In an attempt at critiquing the “social isolation” of suburbs, which Gruen felt the growing car culture was productive of, Gruen sought to “recreate public culture full of entertainment events, density, and crowds. Consumerism, in Gruen’s vision, would become a way to express social connections and to reconstitute a social community



through consumerism” (Hardwick and Gruen 2004). Gruen, according to Hardwick, recognized that the bottom line was to generate profits. And despite his supposed attempts at social justice agendas of creating urban form in suburbs, Gruen was at times self-obsessed with creating whatever his imagination came up with no matter how financially unsound his plans were.<sup>5</sup>

Liz Cohen, however, argues that these notions of community at the shopping mall were developed through racially exclusive urban planning tactics. Whether it was market segmentation, the routes of bus-lines never traversing certain race and class city and neighborhood boundaries, or the State prohibiting consumers to picket or protest political issues on private property, the postwar suburb and the on-going privatization of public space made shopping an act of what Cohen describes as “consumer citizenship” (Cohen 1996). In the context of de facto and de jure segregation, the consumer citizen was inflected by race and class distinctions, mostly attributed to urban place. Therefore, “developers and store owners set out to make the shopping center a more perfect downtown” by “exclud(ing) from this public space unwanted urban groups such as vagrants, prostitutes, racial minorities, and poor people” (1996:1059).

Post-war suburban planning centered on white economic security created the relationship between consumerism and suburban civic life. Whiteness structured suburban planning through taxation structures that favored white residents by lowering residential property taxes and relying upon industrial, commercial, and retail for tax revenue. As Robert Self has shown in his analysis of suburban development of Alameda County (the eastern side of the San Francisco Bay), pull factors such as the lowering of

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<sup>5</sup> For more on post-war design of shopping malls and national identity, but within the context of the Cold War, see David Smiley. “Pedestrian Modern: Shopping, Modern Architecture and the American Metropolis, 1935-1955.” (PhD Diss. Princeton University, 2006)

property taxes (for white homeowners and businesses) in addition to government subsidized loans for potential white homeowners were equally important to the gradual migration away from center cities (Self 2003). Self conceptualizes post-war liberalism in the San Francisco Bay Area as a multivaried definition that was race and class inflected.<sup>6</sup> One particular definition of post-war liberalism that Self identifies in white suburbanization is the notion of white economic security, which the State would guarantee (14). With expanding post-war suburbs to the south of cities like Oakland, CA, white residents sought lower property taxes, which local jurisdictions enforced by placing the burden of public services on industrial, commercial, and retail tax-revenue.

Self's narration of post-war liberalism as productive of white economic security echoes throughout arguments created by disgruntled white residents of Cupertino of their loss of community. Their attachment to shopping centers as geographically distinguished places of social interactions – within the realm of consumerism – reflects how whiteness and citizenship is seen and produced through the daily acts of shopping in suburbs. But it's not just the practice of white economic exchange, but also the visual economy of race and classed meanings attached to what shopping should look like. Cohen and Self both suggest that the architectures of post-war shopping emphasized visually the white and middle to middle-upper class clientele that cities, urban-planners, and developers sought to create. It is through the contained and regulated conduct of shopping that the relationship between consumerism, sale-tax, and white citizenship takes shape.

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<sup>6</sup>I focus on Robert Self's identifying of post-war liberalism as an ideology of white, regardless of class, economic security that was to be supported by the government. Self notes that the suburbanization of Alameda County created a sentiment that racism was justified because accruing wealth through property value was a universal goal regardless of race. So discriminating African Americans from property ownership through covenants or other kinds of denial was justifiable by white residents and real estate agents.

The on-going attempts by Chinese investors and developers to revitalize VALLCO, however, show how the shift towards the Chinese-centric economic development in Silicon Valley has re-organized racial hegemonies. Ironically, the various Asian developers of VALLCO never created the Asian lifestyle centers that they suggested or were rumored to have been saying in local press. VALLCO Fashion Park still remains the emptied and aesthetically dated fortress that flanks both sides of De Anza Boulevard, one of the largest streets in and out of Cupertino. The mall is reportedly at two-thirds capacity, but walking through it would say otherwise. And at almost any time of the day and week, you could get front row parking to any of the parking lots. But it is the story of VALLCO Fashion Park's fifteen plus years of failed redevelopment that is particularly important to understanding how multiculturalism and consumerism is part and parcel to the race and class conduct of community.

VALLCO doesn't refer to any one person, but is an acronym based off the last names of several of the city's wealthy landowners who pooled their land together in the early 1960s in favor of finding the most lucrative way to develop their land. The principle developers were Varian Associates – an electronics company based in Palo Alto, CA – and the Leonard, Lester, Craft, and Orlando families.”<sup>7</sup> Opening in 1973, the mall has been remembered by locals and recounted in news as being the largest if not the premier mall until the mid-1980s when other shopping malls were built or redeveloped.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This information is listed in the subsection “history” on the city of Cupertino's official website. <http://cupertino.org/index.aspx?page=622>.

<sup>8</sup> Nearby malls such as Stanford Shopping Center in Palo Alto and Valley Fair in San Jose (the largest mall in the bay area) were both renovated in the late nineteen eighties and early nineteen nineties to adapt to changes in shopping patterns. Santana Row, literally across the street from Valley Fair, exemplifies this shift towards ‘mixed-use’ with high-end retail and restaurants, bars and lounges, open courtyards and gardens, and upscale condominiums above. Together, these three shopping centers all within 5-10 miles from Cupertino have drained not only shoppers but also possible retailers and tenants since they already have stores in other nearby locations or would rather open in an area with existing foot traffic. These three

But since it's gradual demise in the mid-1980s extending into the nineties, the city has diagnosed the problem as a result of on-going social transformations to society, changing aesthetic design to shopping in addition to the mall redevelopment in neighboring cities. In the mid-nineteen nineties when larger chain stores began leaving VALLCO – either refusing to renew their leases or for lack of foot traffic – residents' complaints of their lack of shopping options showed the specific race and class-based notion of community that their consumer habits had created. In 1997, the closing of Emporium and its replacement, a Macy's Clearance Center, was an immediate cause for alarm. The "garage-sale" quality items, as reported by some local residents, were considering "degrading" not only to VALLCO, but also to Cupertino (Marino 1997c). With household incomes topping \$100,000 and median housing prices rising above \$500,000 in the mid-nineties, residents felt entitled to an upscale shopping center that reflected their class status. The city and the State's investigation of Macy's deliberate choice to open a "clearance store," rumored to prevent other department stores from opening, showed how much protecting class status mattered to the city's reputation. VALLCO's failed bid at bringing in a Nordstrom Department Store, much to the dismay of some of its residents, further emphasized the particular kinds of upscale and racialized shopping environments that would dictate how residents created exclusionary boundaries around their community. In order to ameliorate the situation, the city council sought to determine VALLCO to be an example of "economic blight," which would mean that Santa Clara County would create a Redevelopment Agency to oversee the future of VALLCO mall. This also means that a portion of county sales tax would be funneled

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malls are frequently cited as reason for VALLCO's gradual decline since the early to mid nineties. See Kraatz, Cody. "Cupertino, Sunnyvale adapt mall areas to changing shopping patterns." *Cupertino Sun*. January 28 2009. Accessed March 15, 2009. <http://www.knowledgeplex.org/news/2966221.html>

towards the efforts of this redevelopment agency (Marino 1997a). Dennis Whittaker, a "community activist" and co-founder of Concerned Citizens of Cupertino – a local organization that has been dubbed racist by city council for their politics against the development of below market value condos, is quoted, "We want a shopping mall for everybody. People don't come to Cupertino to shop in Taiwan. We don't mind an Asian influence, but if there weren't rules, a lot of our restaurants wouldn't even have English signs." He further adds, "We are tired of sending our sales tax to San Jose and Santa Clara...it would be nice to have an upper-level department store like Nordstrom as well as an Asian marketplace" (Simonson 2008 ).

Whittaker's appeal to the city to develop VALLCO with a Nordstrom chain in mind comes as a response to VALLCO's revolving door of Asian ownership throughout 21<sup>st</sup> century. Further, comments such as Whittaker's emphasize the historical shifts to local and global economies which consumer culture and tax revenue reflect the racial hegemonies within Silicon Valley suburbs. Local discourse of community emphasize the inclusion, if not idealization of a particular kind of Chinese developer of Silicon Valley with mysterious overseas networks to Chinese diplomats and other elite business people. In a 2003 San Jose Mercury feature on one of the recent co-majority owners of VALLCO Fashion Park, contributor Josh Susong describes Alan Wong as a man of extravagance, but an extravagance that is seemingly normal given how it is a part of his daily economic operations around the San Francisco Bay area. When asked by his 900 seat Chinese restaurant specializing in "fish, crab, and other seafood" across the street from his successful Asian shopping center development Grand Century in San Jose, CA, Wong replied, "I like to cook. Anything simple" (Susong 2003). The vast size of the restaurant

and the high-end proteins are, simply, “simple” for Wong. Aside from his extravagant tastes, Wong, as described by Susong, seems to represent the normal Asian businessman that has the proper overseas capital and “western” cultural chops to succeed in the Valley:

Wong, 52, would rather talk about lunch than about himself. He deflects questions about the store he owns in the heart of San Francisco's Chinatown and his string of shops and restaurants across the Bay Area. He won't talk about the jewelry business he learned in Hong Kong, or about becoming an American citizen . . . . When a fly buzzing against a windowpane distracts him at lunch, he rises swiftly to crush it. When he calls for more water, three staff members leap into action. When his ever-present cell phone jangles, it may be someone from the Chinese consulate calling to make dinner arrangements (2003).

Susong seems to mitigate Wong’s Asian difference, highlighted by his ties to Chinese diplomats and his other secretive and strange behaviors at their lunch, with his awareness that he lives in a “diverse” region, which includes white people. In explaining Wong’s bicultural awareness exemplified by his hiring of a white general manager for VALLCO, Susong quotes Wong, “If I only wanted one thing, I would hire a Chinese manager” (2003). But Wong’s success at Asian development suggests that diverse consumer tastes are, or should be, the norm if Wong’s Grand Century shopping center, Dynasty restaurant, and other developments dotting the Bay Area physical and cultural landscape are any indication. Even though VALLCO was not slated to strictly be an Asian mall, the changing visual culture of consumerism shows how Asian diversity was becoming a necessary tactic for all people when considering the survival for a place like VALLCO and for cities like Cupertino with declining, undiversified tax-bases.

Similar things were said about the new majority owner Phil Liao of “international turnover specialist” Orbit Resources Inc. and his recruitment of Chinese brokerage firm GD Commercial Real Estate. After purchasing the majority stakes from Alan Wong, Emily Chen, and silent majority co-owner John Nguyen in 2007, Phil Liao claimed

VALLCO to be a “gold mine” (Simonson 2007). The claim to Orbit Resource Inc. and GD Commercial Real Estate’s possible future success was explained in local press by the international reach of their development projects, with both firms having worked in developing projects between Silicon Valley and Chinese countries such as China, Taiwan, and Singapore. John Luk, executive managing director of GD Commercial Real Estate, was interested in creating an “international entertainment and lifestyle center” much like the Aberdeen centre in British Columbia due to its ability to bill itself as a “multicultural retail experience...that caters to sophisticated...affluent...Asian and western shoppers” (Simonson 2008 ). Luk also described that he could “tap into some of the Chinese tenants that really want to expand into United States” but lamented, “there is no bridge for them to come over.” But Luk explains the desire to create a culturally hybrid shopping experience of white and Chinese retailers is because he believes that Chinese people are “part of the fabric of the city” because the city “is a dense, high-income submarket of the San Francisco Peninsula with diverse ethnic demographics and a strong Asian community” (Simonson, 2008). Luk’s comments encourage diversity by emphasizing Chinese people as integral members of the community for their spending power, which he simultaneously uses the language of white upper-middle class that residents like Whittaker of the CCC uttered previously to describe the city’s economic profile.

Luk and Wong’s appeal to community through Chinese transnationalism and rights discourses of inclusion with respect to free-market logics echoes Inderpal Grewal’s notion of “transnational connectivities.” In examining popular representations of south Asian diasporic identities, Grewal conceptualizes “transnational connectivities” to be the

existence of particular global networks with which subjects, technologies, and ethical practices circulate and emerge (Grewal 2005). Grewal demonstrates that only specific race, class, and gendered subjects constituted by neoliberal discourses become privileged in these portrayals of late twentieth century south Asian diasporas. VALLCO owners, similarly, utilized identity politics in the context of transnational development to assert themselves as Chinese, American, and members of the community. These three subjects positions emerge through the language of rights, which simultaneously exist as practices of governmentality. In the context of U.S. desires for securing global political and economic hegemony and India's interests of utilizing its diaspora to integrate more within the global economy, corporations and the State appropriate rights discourses as a neoliberal governmentality for the sake of opening up new markets or expanding existing ones.

Local residents describe VALLCO's development as abstracted from its financial priorities to prevent Asian developers from creating a "Chinatown." Whittaker and others' appear to cling to post-war liberal notions about community as consumer culture, which their possessiveness over where their tax dollars are going are centered on consolidating and protecting the circulation of white wealth. But these arguments for whiteness are shrouded in the language of family-centric entertainments, ironically in some cases a Nordstrom department store. Based on their ideas about tax-structures, Chinese business people, however, cannot be a part of the community. On-going rhetoric by Chinese business people and even consultants brought in to diagnose the city's economic depression has been to persuade these white dissidents that the economic profile of Asians is not only possibly beneficial for business but simultaneously great to



be associated with. In a Cupertino Courier article from 2004 regarding the struggles between those that want Cupertino to be a “retail mecca” and those that fear that retail would “destroy” the city’s “rural charm”, contributor I-Chun Che reports that city council held a study session where they invited “retail specialists” Mike Bruner and Randol Mackley of Retail Real Estate Group to offer some suggestions on how to strategize economic development. Mackley proposed that the city should embrace its class and Asian demographics and maximize this spending potential of this profile that on average per household earns \$130K:

Cupertino is not a tourist destination, not a historical, scenic or amusement attraction. Cupertino is a high-income community, a core location for the high-tech industry and an example of the American melting pot with a significant Asian community (Che 2004a).

While Mackley seems to critique the ideological claims by white residents of the need to historically preserve places of commerce like VALLCO as white (to the extent of detrimentally hurting their chances at generating revenue), the comment also reveals how market-forces – the race and class profile of high-tech workers – should guide how Cupertino retail development should proceed. Mackley’s reference to the “American melting pot with a significant Asian community” encourages concerned residents of Cupertino to embrace multiculturalism within the realm of culture as entertainment. In this case, the kinds of Chinese cultures and identities permissible within Cupertino are that which enable neoliberal economic development to proliferate. That is, embracing multiculturalism as an everyday practice, according to Mackley’s suggestion, is in part a form of financial survival for a city that has been strapped for tax revenue for quite some time and the ways that Chinese immigration visibility occurs with relationship to multicultural consumerism.

The city's need for varied tax-revenue streams is a result of their overreliance on the taxation of high-tech industry giants Apple Computers, Hewlett-Packard, and the now defunct Tandem Computers. As I will explain more in the following section, the city's lack of alternative revenue streams, particularly when it comes to retail or even resident-occupancy tax from hotels, has forced residents to concede to various development projects. Ultimately, the city receives no sales tax from these corporations because there is not retail store in the city and taxes from online purchases go straight to the jurisdictions where consumers live. As a result, these pressures have reinforced the discursive relationship between community and consumer culture. Because of this reality of neighboring retail development and the growing regional consumerism of Asian/Chinese things, diversity operates as a market-driven calculation in Cupertino when it comes to the city's economic solvency. As a result, Asians/Chinese developers project themselves as the present and future of community. But these developers aim to transnationalize the terms of community beyond the physical boundaries of the city and the nation. By emphasizing the successful retailers abroad in Chinese countries that would like to open up shop here, developers interpret the future of Cupertino community through increased economic relations with Asia. Multicultural consumerism becomes a mode of governing and Chinese developers exist as the "bridge."<sup>9</sup>

But to what extent has multiculturalism caught on as a neoliberal tactic in Cupertino? To what extent have the Chinese developers succeeded in providing the upscale and diverse world that Cupertino residents aim to govern themselves and the exclusionary terms of their community? I went to VALLCO Fashion Park myself to

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<sup>9</sup> For more on Pacific Rim discourses and ideas of the Asian diaspora as "bridges" between the United States and Pacific Rim economies, see Arif Dirlik. *What is in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993).

witness firsthand these failed developments at transforming VALLCO into an east-meets-west lifestyle center. A friend who frequented the mall to watch first-run movies at the relatively recently opened AMC Movie Theater (2007) told me about the multicultural celebrations that the mall was holding at the food court every Saturday for the next month. Chinese New Year was coming up and a local Chinese-run martial arts studio was performing for two consecutive Saturdays. I wanted to see how the mall owners tried to portray the mall and the city and whether Jon Luk's image of a "sophisticated" and "affluent" shopping center ever came true.

This was the first of several trips made to VALLCO Fashion Park for research and I was stunned by what had become of it since 2003, the last time I had stepped foot inside this mall when a close friend worked as a manager at Macy's. It was as local news had reported: the whole bottom floor of storefronts had been boarded up. Oddly, part of the bottom floor had been cut off completely and it gave off the illusion that the floor had never existed to begin with. The main floor looked almost the same as the bottom floor when it came to the amount of empty storefronts. Besides the major department stores that anchored VALLCO, the only other chains were Victoria Secret and then Burger King and Popeye's Chicken in the food court. The rest of the stores were independently owned retailers that sold antiques and collectibles. On one end of the mall was a Chinese-owned furniture store that sold random interior decorations like life-sized stuffed/taxidermied lions and steel armor of a medieval soldier, each priced at \$500 and above. There were several small billboards placed every 10 yards, which advertised their on-going multicultural celebration in addition to the forthcoming multicultural food court starring

the Hof Braus Express – a fast food version of the German chain restaurant that the mall owners once proclaimed to be the major destination for the revamped mall.<sup>10</sup>

The mall was relatively devoid of shoppers (and retailers). The most hustle and bustle was in the food court where the Chinese martial arts group was already performing. The food court, like the rest of the mall, was half empty. By empty, I mean that there was plenty of ethnic food – Mexican, South Asian, Thai, and Chinese -- with huge signs against white-painted wood covering the storefront alerting customers of the forthcoming dining options. The options that were open included the Burger King, Popeye's Fried Chicken, Hof Brau Express, and a no-name Japanese Teriyaki Bowl joint. The food court was packed with Chinese families who had come to witness their children's choreographed martial arts performances. Chinese high school students, dressed in their costumes, milled around the stage with sodas in hand, purchased from one of the vendors at the food court. Many families sat at tables, watching the performances, with trays of fast food wrappers and cups. When I went to Burger King to get a cup of coffee, several parents lined up with their children, many of them participants in the display of Chinese culture. The on-going bustle of commerce seemed to come directly from the Chinese families whose children were part of this martial arts studio. I asked the cashier at Burger King whether it was always this busy and the young man responded that it was because of the cultural festivals that they had an upswing in business.

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<sup>10</sup> The Hof Braus Express is actually a reflection of the city's desire for German culture, which in the nineties had become symbolic of Cupertino's purported authentic white history and culture. VALLCO Village once held the annual Oktoberfest, a fundraiser organized by the Chamber of Commerce. But with the low attendance beginning in the nineties and the popularity of Chinese cultural festivals due to the growing Chinese demographics, German culture – particularly Oktoberfest, for some white residents, has become indicative of who racially deserves to claim Cupertino's history. I talk more about this in Chapter 5.

I took an open seat and the far left side of the stage and happened to make eye contact with an older Chinese man who was also watching the performance. I asked if he had children performing and he said he did. I asked him how they were invited to perform at the mall and he mentioned that this martial arts studio has been invited to introduce Chinese cultural performance to wider audiences at many different cultural festivals in Cupertino and in the greater Silicon Valley. I responded generically, "Oh that's great." He quickly responded, "Do you really think so?" I asked, "You don't think so?" The man ignored me for a minute then asked if I was a reporter. After telling him "no," he ignored me some more then walked away. Perhaps he was suspicious why I was asking him questions, but he didn't seem to care much that his child was participating in the mall performance of Chinese cultures. Or maybe he had since this plenty of times already since he mentioned that the martial arts studio was a staple in Silicon Valley's Chinese festival scene.

I sat and watched the performances a little while longer as Chinese youth between the ages of 5-18 performed Wu Shu, but set to pop songs such as Celine Dion's "My Heart Will Go On." That particular performance was done by an 18 year old who had won an award at a regional Wu Shu competition. I took a seat towards the back but still within sight of the stage to observe the crowd that had begun to develop in the food court during this lunchtime performance. A few White families sat interspersed among the predominantly Chinese crowd. Many watched the performances as they ate their food and immediately left soon after. I noticed that one table consisting of a mom and her two children was actually there for the performance since their table, surprisingly, didn't have

any food or trash on it. Though, the family did have several large bags full of items purchased from their trip to VALLCO.

I walked to the information desk to get some information about how the idea for the cultural festival began in the first place. The elderly woman who worked at the information desk told me that it was the marketing director's idea. She told me to tell me how excited she was to watch the Chinese performances later during her break and that she was excited about the increased traffic that these cultural celebrations had generated. A short line had developed behind me and I let her help some of the other patrons.

The comments by the woman at the information desk show how multiculturalism dovetails with economic development in the context of community. The celebration of multiculturalism as an achievement of community tolerance and cultural understanding must be understood within the context of increasing mall foot traffic, particularly within the food court, which was noticed by the woman at the information desk. My own observations of the food court also show similarly as many of the participants in the Chinese New Year celebration were also patrons. In Cupertino, the consumption of racial difference, tightly contained to dance and martial arts and nothing more, facilitates the survival of the city's social services. With shrinking local budgets, multiculturalism – particularly the identification and consumption of Chinese culture – has taken precedence as a market-driven calculation that is understood locally as the only way to save the city. The success of private corporations and the assumption that the residents are wealthy and willing enough to support the city through consumerism reflects how neoliberalism has taken form in Cupertino.

Chinese immigrant inclusion within Silicon Valley, articulated through neoliberal governmentality, exacerbates the already polarized living and working conditions between the rich and the poor. In the late 1990s, residents and cultural critics began publicly voicing their concerns of what seemed to be the relentless state investment in high-tech development and what environmental preservation policies could be put into place to prevent the infill of all green space. Environmental racism, however, seemed to be less of a concern. Though the documentary “Secrets of Silicon Valley” (2001), directed by Alan Snitow and Deborah Kaufman, raised awareness of the health hazards of the Valley’s industries that afflicted the poor immigrant women of color. Further, the film exposed the problematic trickle-down notion of economic mobility of unimpeded high-tech expansion that CEOs and Presidents of major corporations espoused. The film’s portrayal of the exploitable wage-laborers with little to no job security echoed what critics of Silicon Valley began to document, specifically the rise of highly educated tech-workers showing up at homeless shelters for residence in the wake of the dot.com bust. In Cupertino, community as an economic rationality aims to protect its own wealth and its architectures of such mundane buildings as shopping malls operates as boundaries for exclusion and inclusion, which resembles much of what has been experienced elsewhere in the Valley.

Moreover, Chinese developers and entrepreneurs that tether their economic aspirations through rights discourses of visibility participate in the neoliberal economic policies that have created these huge class divides in Silicon Valley. This is particularly problematic as these articulations of community through the idea of an upper-middle class shopping experience of Chinese cultures do not challenge white residents’ nativism.

As Arlene Davila points out in the revitalization plans of Harlem, NY, which the city is aimed to recreate the neighborhood as a heritage tourist destination, culture merely exists as entertainment. The intended consequences of these plans are to displace collective memories and Latino communities in favor of a service-oriented economy that reduces culture and identities to consumable commodities of food, dance, and music framed entirely for tourism. Davila's criticisms of the culture as entertainment resonate in these on-going problems between white and Chinese communities. In the past, Cupertino community forums to discuss racial tensions between white and Chinese residents never critique the historical productions of whiteness across the terrain of culture. As mentioned in the introduction, cultural narratives of agriculture and place helped instantiate the visual culture of whiteness as the authoritative history of the region. These sessions end up being moments where white residents have complete authority to publicly let off some steam for what they see as the unfit cultures of Chinese people that don't align with the official historical white cultures that "founded" the city. For this, the terrain of culture is an important site of critiquing white hegemony. Clearly these Chinese developers are not concerned with questions of racism and nativism, but with the bottom line of generating profits. But their approach to community through a rights discourse of visibility, articulated through Chinese class and cultural proximity to whites, means historic and contemporary forms of whiteness remains unchallenged.

In turn, the ability to be culturally aware has become indicative of value that needs to be nurtured for the livelihood of Cupertino. In the following section, I examine the relationship between civic and private partnerships in the proposed development of New Urbanism projects. I analyze the relationship between New Urbanism and neoliberal



discourses within the context of mixed-use development. I focus particularly on how these New Urbanism projects encourage neoliberal policies, such as the on-going privatization of public spaces and civic life. Also, I look at the particular kinds of Silicon Valley race and class-specific subjects that not only support mixed-used projects, but also allow for this neoliberal development to proliferate.

### **The Heart of the City Plan and Neoliberal Alliances**

Multiculturalism and consumerism as expressions of Cupertino civic life reveal how neoliberal policies and discourses of privatization have made their imprint on the meanings of community. Lifestyle choices, such as the rights discourse of multiculturalism that Chinese residents and Chinese developers have wielded in attempts to gain access into the city's economic development, function as forms of governing that align with the priorities of local government and private developers. While residents exert their right as residents to guide development in attempts at forcing government to meet their shopping needs, these notions of individual choice and collective action follow how market logics become determinative of how life choices should be rationalized. While residents, white and Asian, urge city council to create more tax-revenue generating shopping centers, their collective action is not solely about sustaining city services, but also about protecting their individual property values. In this section, I examine residents' contestation of the New Urbanist design schemes of The Heart of the City economic corridor. In particular, I focus on the activism of two local organizations that succeeded in reducing the density of mixed-used developments planned in "The Heart of the City" designs. This activism shows residents battling back against the corporate takeover of Cupertino public space, which they charged the city as siding with developers

rather than its own citizens. I, instead, show that residents' cultural defense of their upper-middle class-based nuclear family values was just another example of neoliberal development and governmentality. Residents were not against development as much as they did not want development to harm their "quality of life," which, at times, was explained financially through the possible effects of overcrowded schools, traffic, and safety. This section examines together the similarities between the governmentality of seemingly disparate ideas of Cupertino present of detached single-family housing and its possible future of mixed-used development. I also show the conditional behavior of nuclear family values that Chinese immigrants become accepted as part of the 'community.'

#### *History of the Heart of the City Plan*

The initial stages of the Heart of the City planning first emerged towards the end of the nineteen eighties as residents began questioning the identity of the city as the city rapidly cleared away remnants of its agriculture history to make way for high-technology industries. During the 1980s, the city of Cupertino witnessed the gradual disappearance of "historical" landmarks – mainly older structures that represented the businesses that once supported the city. The tearing down of the vacant Cali Mills building that sat at the intersection of De Anza and Steven Creek Boulevard commonly known as The Crossroads (also the official downtown of early Cupertino when Cupertino was just a service station between actual cities), marked what residents thought to be the end of an agricultural era as the visual culture of the city's agricultural past was officially being de-prioritized, if not forgotten completely by the demands of Silicon Valley high-tech expansion (Tran 1988, 1994). In the late 1980s, the "Big Three" companies, Apple,

Hewlett-Packard, and Tandem Computers, had requested city permits to expand their operations by the hundreds of thousands of square-feet each. By the end of the eighties, companies such as these around Silicon Valley went from leasing office space to owning real-estate in not only the city they established their headquarters, but in various others jurisdictions (Downey 1987; Barnum 1988b; Schwanhausser 1989b, 1989a; Mercury News Staff 1989; Oppenheimer-Pitthan 1991; Kraul 1985a; Downey 1986; Barnum 1987; Barnum 1988a; Bauer 1990a; Schwanhausser 1990; Mercury News and Wire 1990; Bauer 1991b, 1991a; Schwanhausser 1991a). The boom in high-tech corporate development, exemplified by the sheer physical size of new office spaces, was interpreted by the city as creating multiple streams of tax-revenue, spurring development of luxury hotels for high-tech business workers in hopes of creating residence-occupancy tax (Kraul 1985b, 1985c; Brignolo 1985a, 1985b, 1986a, 1986b, 1987; Wykes 1987; Brown 1989b, 1989a; Bauer 1990b). But the city – residents and city council included – was divided on the social and environmental affects that this development would have on the city. Through the 1990s and early 2000s, the city negotiated with Apple, Hewlett-Packard, and Tandem over development, cooperating with them so long as they helped alleviate housing and traffic with the increased jobs they created and cars coming in and out of the city. The need for Cupertino to concede to development was in part due to the on-going threat that the big three would relocate to different areas that would welcome their unimpeded growth if Cupertino’s slow-growth residents wouldn’t.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In several formal and informal conversations, long-time residents and elected officials described the love-hate relationship between them and these globally recognized companies. Pressed for their tax dollars, city council has had to give in, particularly, to Apple’s demands for more office space. As it stands now, Apple owns close to 30% of the land in Cupertino, some of it undeveloped. These tensions between the city and it’s investment in corporations exploded in a the Cupertino Historical Society’s most recent exhibit on the local Lehigh Cement Plant, which residents protested as a huge advertisement than an actual history of residents’ lives.

The sudden explosion of Asian, predominately Chinese, residents in Cupertino and the gradual closing of long-time retail stores was also part of this on-going sentiment among white residents that Cupertino was no longer a community as it struggled to piece together a coherent narrative of the past with remnants of it that they felt still existed or were worthy of remembering, specifically in terms of the built environment. Trying to make sense of the city's present and its future, however, was something that residents didn't seem to want to deal with. For these reasons, The Heart of the City planning document has been important to study as it guides the construction of the city's present and future residential, retail, commercial, and industrial landscapes. In addition, these kinds of landscapes symbolize what Cupertino's collective identity should be based on and the kinds of behavior that this public space will facilitate.

In responding to this growing sentiment for community, the city council decided to develop The Heart of the City economic development plan that would help establish a downtown retail center along a portion of Stevens Creek Boulevard based on urban density than suburban sprawl. Although residents did not specify that a downtown shopping district would help meet their demands for community, preferring instead parks and other green space for increased social interactions, the city, instead, developed high-density mixed-used development – retail and commercial on bottom floors and residential above – to create a centralized area for social exchanges articulated by economic exchanges. With the seeming corporatization of time and public spaces coming from high-tech expansion, residents pined for something outside of capitalism as they mourned the loss of long-time corporate chains and small-business. These early ideas for a centralized downtown, however, were rejected by residents and several members of city

council since it seemed financially challenging to completely reshape the main traffic artery in town, a 7 lane street with equally wide 7 lane streets cutting across it at major intersections of commerce in town. Resident's mostly feared traffic congestion, but also complained about on-going residential development either upward or extending into the hills, which would block their views of green space or wipeout green space all together. Maintaining or creating more green space was ultimately what residents initially wanted because it evoked for them what 'small-town,' suburban and 'rural' (often used interchangeably) living was all about and what drew them to the area in the first place. City council granted their wish in 1993 with a new proposal that would adorn Stevens Creek Boulevard with native trees and shrubbery to make it look more "park-like" (Cronk 1993). Instead of emphasizing a continuous core downtown, the new development plan would unify shopping centers with "[T]rails and pedestrian facilities" allowing "people to move easily through each area" (Cronk 1993). By each area, the city and residents identified both community and shopping centers.

But eventually, when retail tax revenue began to dry up at VALLCO Fashion Park and elsewhere around town throughout the nineties, city council and concerned residents began to prioritize tax revenue from retail, light commercial, and light industrial as a necessity to the livelihood of valuable city service. In attempts to balance the mandates of regional government to create more housing with the city's need for retail sustainability and residents desire for a community, the city continued to encourage and proposed New Urbanist mixed-used projects as a solution to all three issues.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Regional government has pressured cities around the bay area to create more housing in an attempt to help workers live in the cities that they work. Regional government has enforced a mandate, which cities should ensure a certain ratio of jobs to residence. Many Cupertino residents have rejected creating new

Residents have continuously debated the terms of The Heart of the City plan that Cupertino city council put forth with and without resident input. The 2005 version of the Heart of the City Specific Plan (the most revised version to date) provides, at its core, design aesthetics of the main Stevens Creek Boulevard corridor and the neighboring residential areas included that extend directly off of it. In order to create a coherent sense of Cupertino's identity, architecturally, the strip of Steven's Creek Boulevard, approximately 250 acres, are the focus of these design guidelines. According to the plan, Stevens Creek Boulevard is "the image of Cupertino...most on display," which is also "the central element of Cupertino's public realm" (2008, 6). Besides design guidelines that emphasize "visibility" and "compatibility" along Stevens Creek Boulevard, the design plan also stresses issues of pedestrian access, building logistics of setbacks and heights, and "economic development activities." But the goal of the "Policy Framework" section, which is to "create a positive and memorable image of Stevens Creek Boulevard," identifies five areas along Stevens Creek, "two major areas and three subareas," that should "provide a variety of land use opportunities of mixed use development, enhanced activity nodes, and safe and efficient circulation and access for all modes of transportation between activity centers that help focus and support activity in the centers" (Cupertino Heart of the City Specific Plan 2008). While "activity centers" can be an ambiguous idea that include leisure, aesthetics and development go hand-in-hand and consumerism has become the main goal of guiding these design blueprints. The "circulation" of people between "activity centers" demonstrates how economic development has become a city priority, particularly framing the community by

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housing projects, particularly condos, because of the limited open land space but also because of their fears of the deterioration of quality of life that they expect with a younger non-nuclear family population.

the kinds of consumer habits that architectural design can facilitate and enforce. For example, “Central Stevens Creek Boulevard” should only allow “residential mixed use...if the residential units provide an incentive to develop the retail use, financially beneficial to Cupertino...” (2008, 6). While residents’ vociferous rejection of residential is partially why mixed-used development including residential has been minimized in these plans, the plans reflect how civic life – social interactions – is connected by economic activities. My critique of consumerism in Cupertino is not that corporations are creating plans that ultimately only financially benefit themselves, but rather that the city of Cupertino and some residents have come to rely on the private corporations to not only fund government projects, but to constitute the relationship between governing and consumerism. With these plans centered on promoting tax revenue, which has become a crucial practice of citizenship in Cupertino, the city of Cupertino transformed public spaces into privatized spaces. These privatized spaces and the everyday practices of shopping guide residents should act and do on a daily basis. For the city, ensuring that residents purchase things locally is of utmost importance and producing governing relations between business and residents is how community and citizenship are being defined.

But the notion of community, which the city promoted with the mixed-used development projects combining residential, retail, and commercial within the density of a high-rise, multi-story building, echoes New Urbanist discourses and design schemes that have been critiqued by urban-planners, geographers, and other cultural critics as racist, classist, and pro-business. Critics of New Urbanism have complained that their discourses and methods of planning rely on creating aesthetically “meaningful

communities” by merely making “pretty” designs as opposed to challenging existing structures of power that denied particular neighborhoods and communities the resources to sustain themselves (Grant 2006). New Urbanism discourses and practitioners emerged from the growing discontent among suburbanites that the endless sprawl and the contingent decentralization of civic life – shopping, recreation, and commerce – has reduced the possibilities for meaningful moments of contact among other residents (Katz, Scully, and Bressi 1994; Leinberger and ebrary Inc. 2008). The dominant car culture that shapes suburban experience, which suburban residents complain of now of with increased traffic, has destroyed any kind of civic life, often centered around the mythology of walkable small-town atmospheres. Under the guise of such seemingly universal desires for “shared values,” “neighborliness” and “cooperation,” these “politics of propinquity,” according to New Urbanist critics such as Dean MacCannell, are “driven by economics” and by race and class solidarity (MacCannell 1999). Critics of New Urbanism and its discourses hope to expose the exclusionary tenets of their ideological frameworks for building communities. The kinds of social engineering that occurs through New Urbanist projects has been the nurturing and creation of particular kinds of subjects that also desire profits, which is what drives these kinds of projects to begin with. The focus of these mixed-use developments has been the expected chain reaction of economic growth of not just residents’ property value, but for the city through retail and property taxation that can come with the increases in residential housing. These kinds of projects not only reflects an economy of class status and boundary-making enabled through consumption of commodities and architecture, but also creates the kinds of subjects that are invested in achieving these kinds of goals for themselves through individual self-government. In



critiquing the New Urbanist tenets of community and the priorities of generating wealth than actual politics, David Harvey notes:

The problem is then to enlist in the struggle to advance a more socially just, politically emancipatory, and ecologically sane mix of spatio-temporal production processes rather than to acquiesce to those imposed by uncontrolled capital accumulation, backed by class privilege and gross inequalities of political-economic power (Harvey 1997).

This architecture of community intends to create exclusionary places that aim to contain and exclude particular kinds of identities, particularly those that cannot reproduce the cyclical process of profits that these spaces are intended to generate for residents, storeowners, and developers. New Urbanism also assumes that the built environment can naturally create safe lifestyles. But more importantly, as New Urbanist supporter Peter Katz's narration of the social benefits of urban living shows, these re-creations of urban density and the moral lessons learned from them must be abstracted from the racial and class segregationist politics of urban place that has shaped public perception and the actual material experiences of these places.<sup>13</sup> New Urbanist designs, as Dean MacCannell notes, rely upon the same suburban ideals of race and class solidarity: "On the one hand there was the assumption that people living next to one another ought to be deeply like one another, and on the other hand there was an agreement not to test the assumption of propinquitous moral homogeneity." But, this moral homogeneity is "a solidarity of consumer and corporate interests" (MacCannell 1999).<sup>14</sup>

Cupertino's The Heart of the City plans follow New Urbanist themes of nostalgia by creating design guidelines for aesthetic consistency to recreate the small-town feel that

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<sup>13</sup> Historical studies of suburbanization have shown that the reality of urban spaces as racial and class polyglot during prior, during, and after the civil rights were push factors for whites fleeing social and political unrest. That is, whites purposely chose not to flee urban living, such as tenement living, for its association with poor immigrants or black and Latino communities.

<sup>14</sup> For more, see (Kenney 2003)

residents yearned, particularly in their retelling of The Crossroads of the past.<sup>15</sup> “The Mixed-Use Parkway” section of the plan, the city’s critique of Steven Creek Boulevard “corridor’s hodge-podge appearance” that “contributes little to the overall character of the community and is at odds with the orderly sub-urban characters of its neighborhoods and business parks” re-iterates New Urbanist emphasis of aesthetic standardization in, naturally, creating community. These clear rules about design aesthetics of Stevens Creek Boulevard to create a homogenous-looking district that instructs residents and out-of-towners that consumerism is how people can become part of the Cupertino community. While parts of the Stevens Creek retail development project came to fruition, the on-going expansion of the built environment of high-tech development and the jobs created by high-tech sectors are what and who city council believes will shop in these zones. The city’s on-going support of VALLCO owners’ demands for expansion in hopes of drawing nearby high-tech workers as consumers demonstrates that high-tech workers remain the ideal subject of Cupertino. Although residents halted various development projects, the city council’s willingness to allow the free-market dictate development shows how this neoliberal economic rationality has defined community in exclusionary and inclusionary ways.

In the following subsection, I look at one particular New Urbanist project that never developed (much like many of the projects in Cupertino). In this particular project, local residents, Asian and White, battled city council and the developers of VALLCO

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<sup>15</sup> Large portions of “official” histories published by The Cupertino Historical Society revolve around early businesses owned by European Immigrants. The Crossroads has come to exist as “community” for residents because it was the only place that residents would congregate when they needed to go to the general store or post-office. In a somewhat heated conversation between myself and a part-time archivist at the Cupertino Historical Society about their limited portrayal of community to its agricultural history, she defended social interactions between shopkeepers and local residents, particularly the willingness of shopkeepers to allow patrons to purchase on credit during financially difficult times, as exemplary of what community is in Cupertino and why that is important as, she believed, it no longer existed.

over the mixed-used project they proposed to help fund their redevelopment of the mall. But I don't read residents' resistance to the project necessarily as a critique of development or as the inclusion of Asians into the community as much as I see it as re-instantiating the relationship between consumer cultures as a rationale for community. The activism by the unlikely alliance of white and Chinese residents against development under the banner of family values demonstrates the limited and particular cultural conditions by which Chinese people were included in the larger notion of community.

### *Condotino*

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Cupertino residents nicknamed the city "Condotino" for the number of condo development projects that city council approved of and were sprouting up around the city. At almost every major development was a proposed mixed-use project, which condominiums were seen as absolutely necessary for providing a built-in clientele. The saga of condo developments in Cupertino began as early as the mid-nineteen eighties when regional government began instituting long-term mandates for housing with projected job growth. In Cupertino, however, two "grassroots" organizations consisting of white and Asian residents called "Cupertino Against Rezoning" (CARE) and another called the Concerned Citizens of Cupertino (CCC), attempted (and succeeded in some cases) to demolish any of these residential development plans included in these mixed-used projects, or at the very least to lessen the density. This section examines the organizing efforts of the CARE, particularly their successful activism to halt the rescind the permit city council granted VALLCO owners who requested to build 137 condos to generate revenue to fund their on-going mall

revitalization efforts. Residents feared what effect the increased volume of residents would have on already overextended city services, particularly their schools, and, more importantly, the re-zoning of sorely needed commercial and industrial land into residential. While there appears to be an apparent conflict over development, this section shows that residents' investments in community were individual enterprises about sustaining their own financial accumulation. Cast in terms of suburban cultural values of family, residents' expressed community through their self-interests of their property values and their children's educational opportunities.

Condotino became a reality when the tax-revenue that the city desperately needed from retail, commercial and industrial failed to materialize. Because of taxation regulations of Proposition 13, which restricts property tax to 1% of a property's worth when it is bought or sold, Cupertino's ability to generate revenue from single-family homes in a stable community is extremely limited. Condos, however, are seen by the city as an improvement as the turnover is much higher and, therefore, that 1% tax would generate much more tax-revenue in a property-rich city like Cupertino (Ersoy 2006). While generating any tax-revenue is of utmost importance, especially given the economic downturn of the dot.com bust at the turn of the twenty-first century with reported 20% lower tax revenue in Cupertino alone (Ersoy 2006), residents continued to protect the community profile by bundling their grass-roots organizing efforts around issues including protecting the quality of their schools, safety, family entertainment, and their "rural" and "suburban" atmosphere of single-family homes and automobile culture. With the CARE and the CCC, white and Asian residents formed a united front against condos, forcing the city to facilitate the development of retail, commercial, and industrial

businesses. Both organizations had similar efforts. But CARE, based off their website, is more focused on creating economic development and stopping residential housing development, whereas the CCC were more focused, specifically, on maintaining what they thought to be the visual culture of suburban living, which meant discouraging projects involving density and detached single-family homes. What appears to distinguish the CCC from CARE, particularly, is that the CCC chooses to battle mixed-used development projects planned at the major economic development areas along Stevens Creek Boulevard. The CCC pushed for three separate measures in 2004 that would change the height, density, and setbacks within the city's existing general plan, which would then affect "The Heart of the City" plan. The CCC failed to pass these three referendums, which received much scrutiny by local residents and contributors to The San Jose Mercury (Mercury News 2005; Cronk 2005b, 2005a).

Residents of Cupertino have continuously balked at mixed-use projects that involve creating high-density housing because of how it would exacerbate existing problems in Cupertino, such as overcrowded schools and traffic. One of the biggest dramatized mixed-used developments in recent past were the 137 additional condos that VALLCO's owners wanted to create directly across the street from the shopping mall. After taking over the mall in late 2003, VALLCO owners were granted permission by city council to build 204 condos atop 60,000 square feet of planned retail space in the "Rose Bowl" area of VALLCO Fashion Park, an empty parking lot in the north end of the mall. But soon after, the VALLCO owners claimed, in 2006, that they needed an additional 137 condo on a 5-acre parcel of land, which would generate money for them to complete the renovations they had promised residents. While city officials and residents

universally agreed that redeveloping VALLCO was crucial in generating the elusive sales tax the city needed, city officials were willing to concede to the developers demands that the 204 additional condos would not only generate foot traffic into the mall and the retail planned space below it, but also generate revenue to renovate the mall's dated and uninviting fortress-like exterior and interior (Che 2004b).<sup>16</sup> But the biggest problem for residents was that the 5 acre space these condos were to be built upon was, at the time, zoned for retail and commercial. The city had granted the VALLCO owners the permits for construction, but a citywide vote was needed to pass a measure that would allow for the rezoning from retail/commercial to residential. Residents had been growing increasingly suspicious of the owners' intentions given that they wanted to build more housing instead of delivering on the promises of big box stores and other national retailers.

Although residents, the city, and VALLCO owners were far apart in what they wanted out of the redevelopment plans, the varying arguments for and against the 137 condos were still informed by neoliberal economic policies and the cultural conditions that would allow for these policies to proliferate through local urban-planning. City council's conceding to VALLCO owners' decisions for more residential development, with the alleged intention of redeveloping VALLCO, shows how market logics and private business were and are responsible for government in Cupertino. City council rationalized their cooperation with VALLCO owners as having the community's best interests in mind, which is creating the tax revenue the city desperately needed. But when registered voters overwhelmingly voted NO against the rezoning measure,

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<sup>16</sup> In 2009, the "Rose Bowl" development finally began. But it stopped when the owners filed for bankruptcy.

officially ending the 137 condo plan, city officials reframed the debates as the success of ‘democracy’ in the hands of residents as opposed to addressing city council’s own complicity with free-market logics. City council’s only act of governing throughout this debate was encouraging residents to allow VALLCO owners to direct how the civic life would be, which in this case meant reaffirming the local class dimensions of wealthy new residents who are willing to pay the high price of homeownership and expected increase in property value that comes with the Cupertino public school systems.

Residents were against the development for the threat it would bring to the city’s identity and its current cultural values. Residents regurgitated all the myths about affordable and high-density housing, ironically, from a brochure that the city put on its website, a report titled “Myths and Facts About Affordable & High Density Housing,” created by the collaborative efforts between California Planning Roundtable and the California Department of Housing and Community Development to mitigate racist fears associated with the physical form of these kinds of developments (Myths and Facts About Affordable Housing & High Density Housing 2002). But residents’ complaints about high-density and rental properties reveal the relationship between moral value and economic value driven by existing neoliberal cultural conditions. Residents’ complaints over condos reflected the same complaints they lobbed at city council in the eighties with proposed condo development to supplement the increase in jobs. With condos and rental properties, some residents thought these kinds of dwellings would attract young professionals who would keep late hours either working or, worse yet for Cupertino residents, partying, which would contrast against the quiet family-oriented entertainments that defined Cupertino. Others suggested that renters and condo owners were transient

populations that didn't fit with the stable, rooted 'community' of family life. Some residents also drew from historical racial and class stereotypes of urban-density, claiming that renters would bring increased crime to the area. Ironically, residents also accused residents for merely wanting the Cupertino address for the state and nationally ranked school systems, even though many long-time residents themselves (many having lived in Cupertino since the 1960s) claimed they moved to Cupertino because they had heard of their great schools.

When the city of Cupertino retaliated to residents' collective fears of what condo or below market value developments would bring by accusing them of racism, members of CARE responded by suggesting that they were a diverse organization made up of all racial and ethnic groups that made up the city's demographics. But the terms of community, articulated by CARE members, were constrained by race and class-based notions of family symbolized by the detached single-family home. In fact, the woman that spearheaded CARE was Patty Chi, a Chinese woman who repeatedly attended city council meetings and other public forums to voice her displeasure with the lack of retail once promised by VALLCO or the overcrowding of schools, which the local school system had suggested would be able to accommodate any additional growth. Family as an agreed upon community value gains its meanings and power against the stereotypical judgments of urban density residences such as condos and apartments. When Chi and others battled condo development, they were also alluding to the economic value of their single-family detached homes. Moreover, white residents seemed willing to include Chinese residents because they were not like the developers, whose goals of transnational business threatened the post-war liberal suburban tax structures that contained whiteness



to post-war suburban property value. It was under these conditions which Chinese residents participating in were acknowledged as part of the community since they supported built environments that reinforced this racial hegemony.

The preemptive move by Cupertino residents to defend their lifestyle against ‘outsiders,’ however, was about protecting their own financial accumulation. Although using the language of ‘community’ to suggest a united front of families with shared values, residents’ collective fears showed that they were more concerned with self-preservation and what these affects would have on their property values and their children’s future life chances. Residents often framed these common myths of the negative effects of new condo or rental-dwelling populations in personal financial terms. Members of CARE frequently wrote into the Cupertino Courier to complain about how high-density development, such as how “redistricting” of the school system would result with overcrowded schools. Or they worried about privacy issues with taller mixed-use structures looking over into their yards. And, of course, residents continued to remind city council of the unsavory characters that lacked the same economic profile as them. Combined, all these real-estate issues have been known to affect property values, informed by historical racist and classist policies centered on whiteness and urban-planning (Lipsitz 1998). As one resident warned the city of the effects of residential overdevelopment on Cupertino’s claim to fame: “Increased tax revenues? They won't alleviate additional strain on the system. Neither will donations from developers. Santana Row here in Cupertino? Our comparative advantage is education. Why would we jeopardize that?”(Littman-Ashkenazi 2006)

Comparing Santana Row, a mixed-use development of residences and high-end retailers and restaurants targeting young to middle-aged Silicon Valley professionals in the city of Santa Clara, to Cupertino's public school education suggests how property value is accrued based on location. City council's desire for a Santana Row-like shopping district in Cupertino assumes that their existing community fits the same economic profile as the people that frequent that particular development. If location to entertainment is what drives housing prices of Santa Row's luxury condominiums upwards of close to \$2 million dollars, then this resident is suggesting that schools operate in the same way for Cupertino. The assumption that crowded schools would hurt Cupertino residents' current "competitive advantage" shows that lifestyle choices are deeply motivated by self-care of their wealth and their children's educational "competitive advantage." Their moral obligation to themselves is shaped by these deliberations over personal costs and benefits to their family's survival and the effects that has on their children's education in high school and beyond.

These fictions of 'community' couldn't have been more evident than by the race and class boundaries that home-owning residents had for renters in the area. In one particular meeting where the planning commission met with residents what changes they would like included or take out of 2001 revision of the General Plan, The Cupertino Courier contributor Kevin Fayle reports that there was "[a] room full of angry residents" that "berated representatives of the city's planning commission" (Fayle 2001). One of the central concerns was over the additional housing that the city was encouraged by regional government to create, which Fayle reports of residents desiring to return to the "small-town feel." But "small-town feel" ultimately meant and means, for these

Cupertino residents, restricting the amount of people that do not have the financial means to live among them. Fayle further reports that residents were sympathetic to the struggles of teachers and other public servants, but refused to budge on the density to accommodate them (2001).

In a similar story, developers Prometheus Real-Estate Group began transforming the few rentals at The Crossroads multi-story mixed use development, The Verona Apartments, into condominium properties for sale because demand for housing was so high (Che 2004c). The Prometheus Real-Estate Group had promised the city that a portion of their development would be dedicated to below market value rentals, which would be managed by Below Market Rate Program created by the City of Cupertino. Prometheus Real-Estate Group Senior Vice President Jon Moss emphasized that what they were doing was purely legal and market-driven. The Garrett family, a white couple with their young daughter living off a single \$35,000 income of engineering technician work, were forced to leave within 6 months of renting their apartment at \$1,000, 50% of the market value. They had received their housing through the city's Below Market Rate Program (BMRP), but could not get any information about their pending eviction from the agency or the city itself. BMRP, however, stated that the converted rental properties would be sold at below market value and that they would assist in relocating them to other properties in the area. The city, however, could not relocate people at the time because of the limited availability of rentals in the first place (Che 2004).

Just like that, the city's commitment to below market housing and diversifying its community demographics vanished. The city's inability to help renters like the Garrett family demonstrate who – corporations and the wealthy – the city truly values and those

being high-tech workers and/or entrepreneurs that have particular skill sets, capital, and comparable salaries. A engineering technician, making \$35,000, sit at the lower rung of the high tech ladder as starting salaries for software engineers on average in Silicon Valley start at \$80,000 (Miller 2011). By pay scale alone, neoliberal ideology frames our understanding of the software engineer as having more value based on the value of his/her human capital of knowledge. The engineering technician, however, is easily replaceable. Within the context of neoliberalism, individual's access to resources, in this case below market housing, are at the whim of corporations, who clearly are not invested in building better communities than profiting off market values. The city's siding with the Prometheus Real Estate Group shows how private corporations have come to define the terms of citizenship. By explaining their rationale as solely on a seemingly abstracted notion of "market forces," this forces residents to conform to this same rationality. Ironically, resident perpetuate the neoliberal conditions that they were critical of when the city automatically granted VALLCO's owners the 137 condos.

Moreover, the activism by CARE, lauded by the city as democracy in action and by CARE as representing cross-racial unit, demonstrates the pitfall of rights discourses through neoliberalism. Within the context of condotino, white resident value its Chinese residents, such as Patti Chi, because of the way Chinese people are protecting the exchange value of not only their own homes, but the exchange value of white people's homes, too. Under the guise of defending Cupertino's cultural characteristics of family values, white and Chinese residents' fears of condos are how the effects of growth will have on factors determinative of their property values: safety, schools, traffic, and, mainly, racial and class demographic variation. It is within these strict frameworks of

increasing white property exchange value that white residents have willingly formed an alliance with the Chinese, possibly the most despised residents of Cupertino in the last two decades.

### **Conclusion**

In these two related development plans centered on creating a downtown-shopping district to unify the community, consumer culture and architecture operate as examples of neoliberal governmentality. With declining sales tax revenues revenue available to fund city service, the city intended to find strategic ways to encourage consumerism, which defined the conduct of citizenship. Collectively, residents, city, and the consultants framed economic rationale of creating sales tax revenue as a reason for inclusion and exclusion from the Cupertino community. By inclusion and exclusion, debates, as it related to economic development, often centered on whether Chinese people – residents, businesses, and developers – could ever be part of the community. And these debates reveal that so long as Chinese people maintain white economic security would white residents approve of them as community members. Case in point, as consultants and Chinese developers tried to create a lucrative, high-class, yet Asian-themed shopping center, white residents balked, with one white resident saying that without a high-end mainstream department store at VALLCO he would have nowhere to shop in town and to contribute to the sales tax revenue. Similarly with regards to condo development, when Chinese residents supported protecting suburban family values, also known as white property exchange value, did white residents form an alliance with them. These two episodes show how culture and economic rationality dovetail in producing different types of racial power. In both cases, white residents used community as an attempt at

protecting their own wealth. In the case of Condotino, Chinese inclusion with community was based on their ability to economically rationalize family values as set of costs and benefits.

The development plans show how neoliberalism has been a pervasive ideology across Silicon Valley. In the case of Cupertino, neoliberalism has connected seemingly unrelated phenomenon of urban planning, architectural design and the suburban family values. And while culture was one of many pretenses for development in Cupertino, it required the space of mixed-used development to visualize and materialize these neoliberal economic policies, which the bottom line was generating sales tax. But these two situations show how rights discourse as a neoliberal discourse provides very limited subjectivities. These subjectivities participate in exacerbating existing social and economic inequalities structured into the high-tech economy. These are the same inequalities that white residents of Cupertino complained of but were unwilling to concede as it benefitted their own accumulation of wealth. And while white prejudice of Chinese immigrants have unfairly targeted and blamed them for the loss of white-owned businesses, Chinese immigrants quest for recognition through neoliberalism merely instantiates the racial exclusions based off race and class that white residents aimed to implement against them.

## CHAPTER 4

### **“Monster in the Neighborhood”: Race, Domesticity, and Ranch Homes in Cupertino, California**

In this chapter, I examine the historical preservationist movement of the post-war tract ranch-style house<sup>1</sup> by white residents in the city of Cupertino, California, also known as “The Heart of Silicon Valley.” I trace the gradual unofficial “historic” status of the ranch house that follows the building of custom-built “monster homes”<sup>2</sup> by Chinese immigrants of high-tech backgrounds beginning in the mid-nineteen nineties continuing into the present. In particular, I focus on the relationship between the reoccurring themes of racialized and gendered leisure and domesticity often used by white residents in defense of a purportedly “authentic” history and culture gradually obliterated by the culture of high-tech industries created and dominated by Chinese immigrants. I argue that the

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<sup>1</sup> The tract ranch house originated in California and was different from previous “traditional American” homes in that architects sought a forward thinking design that promoted “informal outdoor living,” indicative of a historical “Californio Hacienda” southern California rural home of the late nineteenth, early twentieth century. Emerging in the aftermath of World War II, the modernist aesthetics and “modern” amenities of the ranch house such as new electric appliances and built-in cabinetry and shelving served to symbolize a modern feel. “Modern living” meant affordable yet sturdily built housing with the simultaneous aim of easing the challenges of domestic duties based around the concept of open interior spaces. Promoting simplicity, functionality, and informality through design and ease of domestic responsibilities, “Western-ness...became something of a free-floating signifier of an idealized way of life,” argues historian John Mack Faragher. While the ranch house has its architectural roots in Californio ranching history, it’s post-war manifestation as a pre-fab or tract home wasn’t paying homage to a Mexican past but rather became a national desire and inspiration for an all-white future of progress. In the longer portion of this chapter, I historicize the ranch house within both national and regional discourses of postwar liberalism.

<sup>2</sup> The monster home represents a residential housing style that emerges in the nineteen nineties. It deviates from the genealogy of American homes because of its size and aesthetics. Though they may have similar details, like gables or bay windows, of ‘traditional American’ homes, certain dimensions or conventions such as Corinthian pillars flanking a 20 foot tall front door, wrought iron fencing in the front, pastel paint, stucco, and unarticulated walls distinguish it from other ‘traditional’ styles. The monster home is also known for its pastiche of different architectural details from different traditional homes, which its lack of a coherent style also makes it seem non-“American.” In California, the monster home also goes by the “faux-Mediterranean,” precisely for its attempt at echoing Spanish-style, Mediterranean, or Italian villas.

reiterated invented narratives of homogenized middle-class “white” past portrayed by the tract ranch house, in fact, reflects white middle-class anxieties over the saturation of neoliberal economic policies in Silicon Valley, portrayed by the “monster home.”<sup>3</sup> That is, central to this neoliberalism of free-market rationality, deregulation, and privatization are the Chinese immigrants of high-tech economic productivity, innovation, and entrepreneurship whose ethnic cultural lifestyles have a discursive function in constituting Silicon Valley’s purported “diversity.” This chapter emphasizes how these white anxieties reveal the gendering and class-based racial hegemonies of Silicon Valley that incorporates and privileges Chinese people.

In Cupertino, the preservationist movement with regards to ranch houses began in the early beginning of the nineteen nineties when newer residents began adding second floor additions to ranch houses in neighborhoods that were among the first subdivisions in the city. Originally, local debates regarding second floor additions centered on issues of privacy and lighting as anti-development residents complained that neighbors would constantly be privy to their private lives from their second story rooms or that the neighboring additions would block the sunlight from shining into their backyards. Gradually, however, as more Chinese immigrants moved into Cupertino and began remodeling, if not tearing down completely, ranch houses to construct their “dream home” during a time when the R-1 ordinance<sup>4</sup> had not yet been updated to take into

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<sup>3</sup> In newspapers and conversations among residents, residents framed the ranch house versus monster home as white locals against Asian immigrants. In some city council meetings, however, Chinese and white residents and contractors both described the need for ordinances that allowed for construction of more space (not necessarily “monster homes”). In fact, of all the homes of Chinese residents I visited, none of Chinese residents lived in what is locally known as a “monster home.” The point of this chapter is to examine the discourses that guide how these homes signify particular ideas about race, capital, and nation.

<sup>4</sup> The R-1 is a residential building ordinance that provides rules on the dimensions for construction as it relates to lot size and floor-area-ratio. Furthermore, this ordinance also encourages articulation strategies, such as brackets, shutters, building materials, and landscaping to offset the visual effect of a “monster



account preserving neighborhood character, the ranch house quickly became synonymous with local history and whiteness in public discourse around issues of “community” in the midst of increased Chinese immigration and Silicon Valley economic growth. Asian and white neighbors took their battles over the aesthetic quality and functionality of residential architecture to city council meetings, newspaper editorials, and, literally, the streets. White residents used these forums to defend their ranch homes, utilizing moral arguments of how these homes represent the historical life of leisure prior to Silicon Valley.

I examine these narratives through a discourse analysis of memoirs and ethnographic fieldwork of white narratives of “leisure” to show how the sight of residential architecture normalizes racialized and gendered power relations. But it is also the citation of leisure, domesticity, and rural discourses that dovetail in these narrations of “history.” The visual phenomenon of the Silicon Valley home as indicative of Silicon Valley lifestyles operates as what Marxist theorist Guy Debord would describe as the “commodity as spectacle.”

The spectacle is another facet of money, which is the abstract general equivalent of all commodities. But whereas money in its familiar form has dominated society as the representations of universal equivalence, that is, of the exchangeability of diverse goods whose uses are not otherwise compatible, the spectacle in its full development is money’s modern aspect; in the spectacle the totality of the commodity world is visible in one piece, as the general equivalent of whatever society as a whole can do. The spectacle of money for contemplation only, for here the totality of use has already been bartered for the totality of abstract representation. The spectacle is not just the servant of pseudo-use – it is already, in itself, the pseudo-use of life (Debord 1977).

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home” size. The city and residents have redeveloped the R-1 over the years and in its most recent manifestation, encourages residents to create different “traditional American designs”, such as the Victorian, Craftsmen, Tudor, cape cod, etc.

Debord's concept of the "commodity as spectacle" refers to various discourses of capitalism centered on economic exchange that lend themselves to notions of "equality" between people mediated by the circulation of money and objects. As commodities, the value of objects is determined by seemingly abstracted denominations such as money. Money, as a standardization of how goods can be purchased and exchanged, alludes to the notion of "universal equivalence." For Debord, the "spectacle" of commodities presents a fantasy world of an imagined equivalence ("pseudo-use of life") reproduced through consumerism.

Dianne Harris, scholar of landscape architecture, offers what I see as a race, gender, and class critique of Debord's theorization of commodities in her analysis of advertisements of post-war housing. Harris' concept of "habit of perception" suggests a discursive rendering of commodities that guide how we see and relate to homes. Referring to the reiteration of scenes of domesticity that normalize our perception of space as well as the particular power relations within that space, "habits of perception" reflect the racist material and discursive structures that impact the photographic and artistic conventions of advertisements that targeted white buyers, exclusively (Harris 2007). Through the absence of African Americans, the sight of the suburban single family detached home represents social and class equivalence among whites. As scholars of cultural geography stressed with regards to the politics of vision, we must be attentive to how seeing and perception are significant to knowledge production (Rose 1993). Together, this combination of critical race studies and cultural geography guide my interpretation of the spectacular relationship Cupertino residents have with their homes

and the assumptions these homes yield of the ideal Silicon Valley resident and community as the area transformed from a white to Chinese hegemony.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter is organized into three parts, which begins with my historical framing of the problem of ranch house conversion and monster home construction. Next, I follow with my close reading of a memoir printed in the New York Times written by a Silicon Valley born-and-raised journalist, who recounts a trip back to his family's ranch house, now occupied by Chinese high-tech workers, during the time of the dot.com bust of early 2000.<sup>6</sup> I follow this by discussing some interview and ethnographic materials collected from conversations with two local residents and their anxiety of Asian individuality against the populist leisure of white people. Together, these two vignettes

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<sup>5</sup> Katharyne Mitchell's analysis of monster home conflicts in Vancouver, Canada guides my analysis of Cupertino monster homes as symbols of transnational financial mobility. Mitchell shows that the bungalow and Tudor style home visually represent the relationship between race, market values, and spatial practices of domesticity intrinsic to British Colonialism and white Canadian hegemony. With the teardown of bungalows and Tudors, white Canadian women's complaints over the loss of Canadian domesticity, argues Mitchell, really speak to the perceived loss of British colonial and white Canadian hegemony instantiated by landscapes. The monster home portrays an inversion of British colonial society, wherein previous power relationships between white homeowners and Chinese servants typified race and gender hierarchies within the context of domesticity. I, too, see the monster home as the free-circulation of capital and people across borders enabled by neoliberal economic practices. Domesticity is part of my analysis. But I situated contemporary themes of leisure and domesticity within historical portrayals of California Living. For more on monster homes in Vancouver, Canada, see Katharyne Mitchell. *Crossing The Neoliberal Line: Pacific Rim Migrations And The Metropolis* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004)

<sup>6</sup> The dot.com bust refers to the novelty and proliferation of internet-based companies roughly beginning in the mid nineteen nineties and ending in the beginning of the millennium. The reason why the dot.com trend was so documented in media near the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was the exponential increase in venture capitalist investment (in the multimillions), increased jobs and salaries, free-spending, over-development that transformed not only the physical landscape of the region but the race and class composition. The dot.com explosion banked on the notion that commerce and industry would be completely online based with the gradual wiring of high-speed Internet. The problem with the boom and bust in Silicon Valley was that many dot.com companies merely tried to cash in on the trend without a clear business plan or product to sell. Venture capitalist firms operated similarly dumping millions of dollars into various proposals, hoping to bank on the next big thing. But the typical lifespan of a dot.com company consisted of a promising company offering "initial public offerings" (IPO) of its stock, which lured many investors, thus raising the worth of the company. Overspending on lavish worker fringe benefits in addition or overdevelopment in terms of expanding the company size – without generating enough revenue – quickly transformed these darling companies from overnight millionaires to overnight bankruptcy. As many companies folded within a short period of time, the sudden lavish lifestyles that people enjoyed left them unemployed and, at time, subsequently, in debt or homeless.

describe the cultural discourses of the everyday that matter to the implementation of neoliberalism within Silicon Valley life and labor.

### **Tract Ranch Houses as Cupertino's Rural History**

In Cupertino, the preservationist movement with regards to ranch houses began as early as the beginning of the nineteen nineties when newer residents began adding second floor additions to ranch houses in neighborhoods that were among the first subdivisions in the city. Originally, local debates regarding second floor additions centered on issues of privacy and lighting as anti-development residents complained that neighbors would constantly be privy to their private lives from their second story rooms. Either that or the neighboring additions would block the sunlight from shining into their backyards gardens and other landscaping (Drudis 1998; Marino 1998b; Enders 1998a). Gradually, however, as more Chinese immigrants moved into Cupertino and began remodeling, if not tearing down completely, ranch houses to construct their “dream home,” the ranch house quickly became synonymous with local “rural” history in public discourse around issues of “community.”

The bulk of the homes in Cupertino are subdivisions of ranch houses. With the boom in post-World War II high-tech economic development resulting from the military defense contracts, much of Cupertino's housing stock filled in existing incorporated areas of Cupertino between the 1950s to the 1970s. In specific neighborhoods such as Monta Vista, Fairgrove, Garden Gate, and Linwood, some residents of said neighborhoods deemed their ranch houses as historic given how they were the original subdivisions in the city that arrived around the time directly before and after incorporation, one of a few temporal markers of Cupertino's history (Zhang 2003; Che 2003d; Che 2003b). In what

has traditionally been known as a bedroom community given its historic rapid building of detached single-family tract housing, the gradual disappearance of elaborately detailed custom built Victorian and Arts and Crafts homes in addition to commercial and retail buildings all either loss to fires or neglected beyond repair have made the ranch house a visual icon of Cupertino's historical hegemonic whiteness.



Figure 4-1: An older tract ranch home (Cupertino, CA).  
Photo by the author.

Cupertino perceptions of the racial and national difference of the monster home often came not only from the sheer size and scale of it that dwarfed the ranch house, but also the mish-mash of American residential vernacular conventions. Commonly painted pink or orange pastel against its stucco-siding, the monster home was two to three times the size of ranch house, typically anywhere from 800 to 1700 square feet depending on the year it was built. That is, the word “monster” most likely derives not just from the size but the Frankenstein-like usage of columns, bay windows, window shutters, bracketing and gabling that draws from “traditional” and regional American residential vernacular architecture such as the colonial, the Victorian, Arts and Crafts, and the ranch

house. While these features are distinctly “American,” Cupertino residents seem to think that these homes lack a national coherency, as they have also been nicknamed locally and regionally such as “faux-Mediterranean,” “pink palaces,” “pink elephants,” and “McMansions.” Chinese immigrants also seemed to prefer bordering their property with a black iron-wrought fence. This fortress-like appearance was magnified by how the monster home was built out to all edges of the property, leaving little to no yard space.

For white ranch house owners, the visual appearance of the monster home explained the cultural conduct of Chinese people that purportedly had no respect for white American cultural values. By cultural values, white neighbors often framed the Chinese residents who buy or build these homes as not invested in the community, but only in the exchange value of their homes. By community, residents described heterosexual gender norms centered on families socializing together. John, a Chinese land developer specializing in luxury single-family homes throughout Alameda County and Santa Clara County, shared with me that the logic of building homes that maximized the lot size was so Chinese buyers could get the most money out the price of the land. That is, because the land in Silicon Valley was so expensive, it made financial sense to build a larger monster home instead of a small bungalow or ranch house because you it added more value and allowed buyers to recoup their investment and much more (John 2010). For these reasons, these monster homes are often, though not always, equipped with dens, game rooms, home theaters, multi-car garages, at least 5 bedrooms, and, sometimes, twice as many bathrooms as there are bedrooms. But the common local perception that Chinese immigrants introduced a foreign culture of extravagance and consumption was far from the truth. In an interview with two of Cupertino’s planning

commissioners who oversee the development of local building ordinances and review residential and commercial building construction, Leslie Gross and Gary Chao both confirmed that showing off was sometimes the case. But they both added that Chinese immigrant homebuyers wanted larger homes, sometimes with two master bedrooms, so



Figure 4-2: A monster home (Cupertino, CA). Photo by the author.

they could live with their in-laws and additional extended family members (Chao 2010). Moreover, Gross and Chao added that Chinese immigrants, having grown up in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China, most likely lived in small and cramped apartments growing up given that land was scarce in their home countries and, therefore, much more expensive than Silicon Valley and other parts of the United States.

Cupertino residents pressured the planning commission and city council to pass amendments to the R-1 ordinance – the residential building ordinance that institutionalized the strict guidelines of building height, setbacks, and floor to area ratio (FAR) – in hopes of putting an end to monster home construction. Local frustration with “monster homes” was as much about aesthetics as it was about the obsessive aspiration of

wealth accumulation that these homes purportedly produced in the residents that live in it. Since the early 1990s, residents pushed for new building guidelines that would provide visual relief to the building density of these monster homes and help restore the visual cues of the “rural” that they felt their neighborhood once possessed: the ranch house surrounded by well manicured lawns and landscaping that offered some sense of a not-so-distant Cupertino and Santa Clara County past of agriculture and family-time. Creating wider setbacks, the distance from the house to the property line, ensured that residents had to have landscaping. White residents protected their “privacy” by forcing strict building heights so their Chinese neighbors couldn’t spy on them. And lastly, the FAR, the ratio of the square footage of second story addition to the total square footage of the first floor, would not exceed 35%, which meant that the visual density would be reduced from street level.

But with these stringent building codes, came the ugly “wedding cake” house, a small second story box upon a larger first floor box, which began popping up all over town. By the mid-2000s, residents, white and Chinese, collectively, complained to the planning commission and city council about the city’s ugly “wedding cake” homes, how these homes are damaging the reputation of a world-class city, and the inability for resident’s to build their “dream home.” The planning commission, after years of listening to residents’ complaints, made a compromise with the recent amendments to the R-1 ordinance. The new R-1 ordinance allowed residents to exceed the FAR, but only if they constructed their home with “traditional” American residential vernacular in mind, such as the Tudor, the bungalow, or the colonial. More predominately white cities such as Saratoga and Los Gatos to the west of Cupertino feature strict R-1 ordinances that aim



to preserve the historical residential vernacular “diversity” with their mix of traditionally American homes of arts and crafts, Victorians, bungalows, and more.<sup>7</sup> If residents wanted to build a brand new two-story house or create a larger second story addition beyond the existing FAR, the planning commission had to, first, approve their design standards. If it didn’t, the planning commission would make suggestions on how to add articulation – materials, paint, brackets, etc. – to make a more aesthetically pleasing house and neighborhood (Chao 2010). The contemporary manifestation of the R-1 ordinance reflects Chao, Gross, and the rest of the Planning Commission’s attempts at placating the demands and desires of its white and Chinese residents. But if just wanted your wedding cake-like monster home, you could as long as you restricted yourself to the new FAR listed in the amended R-1.

For years, the residents pressured the Planning Commission to deter the building of monster homes and, now, wedding cakes. The Planning Commission appeared to appease white residents by encouraging traditionally “American forms” if residents wanted to expand their existing square footage. Under the guise of residential vernacular diversity and neighborhood and city beautification, however, the city’s new R-1 ordinance seems to encourage a return to a racialized “American” space. By “American,” the city’s encouragement of varied residential vernacular forms was meant to promote more community character. But even after much deliberation over how to improve on the diversity of neighborhood character, the Planning Commission’s notion

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<sup>7</sup> I downloaded a copy of the R-1 ordinance that was being reviewed by the city, Planning Commission, and residents. In this copy included examples of R-1 ordinances in Saratoga and Los Gatos, which direct text and photos of homes, such as Arts and Crafts or Victorians (rare if not non-existent in Cupertino), from their R-1 ordinances was lifted and used in Cupertino’s most recent draft of its R-1 ordinance. Chao disagreed with me during the interview when I asked whether these beautification plans were meant to transform Cupertino into a city like Saratoga. He replied that it was actually the other way around. In the final draft of the revised Cupertino R-1 ordinance, only homes within Cupertino’s housing stock, farm house-style or two-story ranches, were used.

of beautification seemed merely to respond to the white constituency that discourages the construction of ethnicized residential geographies. The encouragement of “American” residential vernacular architecture appeared to be the planning commissions attempts at assuaging white residents’ desire to restore the visual economy of Americanness in the residential spaces of suburbs.

The particular re-iterated theme of the “rural” that white Cupertino residents desired and vociferously defended reflected how post-World War II suburban expansion wove together gendered ideas about whiteness and nation. The tract ranch house originated in California and was different from previous “traditional American” homes in that architects sought a forward thinking design that promoted “informal outdoor living,” indicative of a historical “Californio Hacienda” southern California rural and ranching home of the late nineteenth, early twentieth century. The modernist aesthetics and "modern" amenities of the ranch house such as the low pitched roof, open floor plan, large windows, new electric appliances, and built-in cabinetry and shelving served to symbolize the modern “America” of on-going progress in the post-War period. "Modern living" meant affordable yet sturdily built housing with the simultaneous aim of easing the challenges of domestic duties based around the concept of open interior spaces. The post-war “miracle house” was a romanticized notion of the “dream house” associated with homeownership at the turn of the twentieth-century, but articulated through technological advancements (Mennel 2005). Promoting simplicity, functionality, and informality through design and ease of domestic responsibilities, “Western-ness...became something of a free-floating signifier of an idealized way of life,” argues historian John Mack Faragher (Faragher 2001). But these notions of progress,

technologically savvy women using new consumer goods to ease their domestic responsibilities, re-instantiated heterosexual gender conduct that the ranch house layout was meant to facilitate. While the ranch house has its architectural roots in California ranching history, its post-war manifestation as a pre-fabricated or tract home wasn't paying homage to a Mexican past but rather became a national desire and inspiration for an all-white future of progress.

Within the context of emerging civil rights and labor movements of center cities during the 1950s, the ranch house and what it symbolized visually became a temporal retreat for its white residents from the civil and racial unrest of the present. The ranch-style house, according to Barbara L. Allen, was part of a larger post-war cultural framework aimed at restoring national myths of white dominance over the frontiers of the American West. The ranch house, itself, was meant to symbolize the nation's "Western" past. But the surrounding "nature" of the ranch house – landscaping – and the larger picture windows and sliding glass doors allowing residents to see "nature" was part of the visual culture of post-war whiteness. As an escape to from complexities of center cities and their mind-numbing corporate lives, the experience for the white owners of the ranch house and their visual sight of it served as an "escape mechanisms from the frustrations from daily life" (Allen 1996). The nostalgia for the colonist past, experienced through the visual and material cultures of the ranch house, creates what Allen claims as the "complicitous relationship between cultural and environmental hegemony in the United States" (1996, 163).

While not all manifestations of ranch house development in the San Francisco Bay Area evoked these meanings, many Cupertinoans seemed to echo these dominant

cultural themes of racial exclusion in their attachments to ranch house living and the leisurely way of life it was meant to produce.<sup>8</sup> In 2003, the Cupertino Courier, the local newspaper, ran a three-part series on racial conflicts in the older subdivisions in Cupertino, which the white residents in each instance were quoted as defending the “rural” atmosphere. In the article titled “Revisiting the Monta Vista Neighborhood,” contributor Jennifer Zhang talks to long-time resident Jim Giudotti who, in response to the Asian migration and monster home construction of his part of town, reminisces nostalgically of his childhood leisure and labor that was centered around his engagement with nature: “For the first four years, we were the only kids here. We played in the creek, hiked the mountains and worked at my uncle’s horse ranch down the street. We had the run of the area” (Zhang 2003). Giudotti references families, leisure, and nature to reiterate the notion that whiteness constitutes this environmental hegemony. In “Living a good life can be enough,” Lee Kucera, op-ed contributor to the Cupertino Courier, writes of the destructive lifestyles of labor that “monster homes” breed, particularly its effects on families:

“My own observation is that there can be a lot of pain behind the six-figure income jobs in Silicon Valley, and unhappiness in many of the million-dollar homes. We're so busy working that we've lost sight of the obvious: What good is professional success to a person who's on his third divorce? What's the point of a monster home if the people living in it are lost and alienated from one another?” (Kucera 2000)

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Eichler, a merchant builder, seemed to differ from his contemporaries Cliff May and William Levitt. Unlike Levitt and May, both builders of post-war ranch-style homes, Eichler wanted the progressive nature of his modernist “Eichler Home” neighborhoods to extend beyond the amenities to include social justice agendas of racial integration. For more on Eichler, see [www.eichlernet.com](http://www.eichlernet.com). Also for more accounts of residential segregation in Santa Clara County, including stories of Joseph Eichler standing by his policy of racial integration in spite of pressure from angry white residents, see Herbert G. Ruffin II. “Uninvited Neighbors: Black Life and the Racial Quest for Freedom in the Santa Clara Valley, 1777-1968.” (PhD. Claremont University, 2007).

Like Guidotti, Kucera assumes that “monster homes” create a culture of financial obligation, responsibility, and expectation. Both of them seem to suggest that the high-tech industry not only creates institutions like the “monster home,” but the monster home also reproduces the high-tech industry. While Guidotti and Kucera, among others, are correct in critiquing the cultures of high-tech industries, their framing of the problem as a loss of white heterosexual family life and leisure seems more of a longing of a lost white hegemony than a real critique of the exacerbated class divisions and environmental racism that high-tech industries create.

The relationship between the “rural” and ranch houses in Cupertino requires situating it within the concatenation of discourses including homeownership, family, and domesticity. In Cupertino, the preservation of ranch houses only became an issue with Chinese immigration and a new racial hegemony produced through the local residential vernacular architecture of “monster homes” and high-tech campuses. In the next section, I explore in more depth the relationship between the ranch house preservation, family leisure, and white anxieties over neoliberal economic policies in Silicon Valley.

### **Tract Ranch House as the Spatialization of Postwar Liberalism**

In the wake of the Internet dot.com bust of early 2000, the New York Times printed an article by journalist Jeff Goodell, a contributing editor to Rolling Stone at the time, titled “Venture Capitalist in My Bedroom.” In the article, Goodell discusses what he sees as the problematic demographic and subsequent cultural shifts to the area he grew up in, now commonly known as “Silicon Valley.” Focusing on the site of his parents tract ranch house along the border of Cupertino and Sunnyvale (cities within the region known as Silicon Valley), Goodell captures what he sees as the destructive forces Silicon

Valley's "Darwinian quality of success and failure" (von Busack 2000) in how Chinese "real estate speculators" transformed his former home from a place of familial love and support to a cold "flophouse" of disgruntled Chinese immigrants of high-tech industry (von Busack 2000; Goodell 2000). The opening to his article describes his former home as the "shabbiest" on the street with its "dingy" paint job, sagging fence, and fortress-like reclusiveness.

Of all the houses on Meadowlark Lane, this one is the shabbiest: it is a dingy mustard color with brown shutters; there is a Toyota Camry parked on what used to be the lawn; the backyard fence is sagging; the window shades are drawn. As I walk up the driveway, I am greeted by a cheap gold "No Soliciting" sign on the front door, as well as a smaller sign, handwritten in Mandarin, that I cannot read but that, I imagine, says, 'You are not welcome here' (Goodell 2000).

At the time, Goodell covered the Silicon Valley, commuting from his upstate New York residence. He explains his reasoning for this as being unable to have the "space or peace of mind" had he chose to live in the place of his work since he thinks people assume that he is just bitter about the area by the way he writes about it. Prior to "Venture Capitalist in My Bedroom," Goodell wrote an article that was printed a year prior, "Down and Out in Silicon Valley," which chronicled the lives of the people living in homeless shelters, marginalized by the attention to new moneyed dot.com millionaires. The article was syndicated by various news sources and was recognized by the editors of BusinessWeek as one of the best business stories of the year.<sup>9</sup> The contradictions and extremes of Silicon Valley's rich and poor, Goodell notes in "Down and Out," highlights who and how one exemplifies humanity in Silicon Valley and who lives at the edge of it: "It's clear that the Silicon Valley is developing into a two-tier society: those who have caught the

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<sup>9</sup> "Down and Out in Silicon Valley" has since been reprinted in the 2001 edition of the annual volume called *Best Business Stories of the Year 2001*.

technological wave and those who are being left behind. This is not simply a phenomenon of class or race or age or the distribution of wealth – although those are all important. It’s really about the nature of unfettered capitalism when it’s operating at warp speed” (Goodell 1999).

Unlike many celebratory stories of Silicon Valley’s nouveau riche, Goodell deliberately chose to portray a sobering view of what life was like “on the ground.” And Goodell’s articles came at the right time as he transformed ethical questions about the sustainability of the dot.com industry – reckless spending, overdevelopment, and subsequent bankruptcy – into moral ones of how people should be living. In “Down and Out,” Goodell nostalgically remembers the seventies growing up in a tract-neighborhood among his neighbors when high-tech meant government funded high-tech defense industries. But his neighbors also included service workers, which in Goodell’s memory of his neighborhood meant, “no one was appreciably richer” (1999).<sup>10</sup> In this section, I examine the racialized and gendered visual and spatial discourses of post-war liberalism, which frames Goodell’s understanding of the social and economic homogeneity of homeownership in Silicon Valley. I explore Goodell’s invented nostalgic perceptions of “universal equivalence,” situated within historic exclusionary performances of race, gender, and labor in the context of homeownership and domesticity.

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<sup>10</sup> Contrary to Goodell’s belief that everyone was “equal” in their financial situations prior to the shift away from defense industries funded high tech towards privatized consumer production high tech industries, racial covenants and other discriminatory practices by white residents, developers, and real estate agents and brokers prevented African Americans from purchasing homes in various Santa Clara county cities. If it wasn’t denying African Americans loans, then white neighbors used intimidation. De-skilling of African American professionals was also a regular practice at many white-collar jobs, such as high tech and teaching. For more details, see Ruffin, Herbert. *Uninvited neighbors: Black life and the racial quest for freedom in the Santa Clara Valley, 1777-1968*. Diss. Claremont Graduate University, 2007. Claremont. Also, to examine how Silicon Valley’s white hegemony developed through the discursive and material exclusion, and genocide, of indigenous and Mexican peoples, see Pitti, Stephen J. *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Northern California, Race, and Mexican Americans*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

The particularity of “Venture Capitalist in My Bedroom” was how Goodell introduced to a national audience the phenomenon of monster homes and the notion that Asian high tech migration was obliterating local history. Up until then, reporting on “monster homes” in Silicon Valley could only be found in local press, such as the eight newspapers of the Silicon Valley Community Newspapers group – local papers from various communities and cities of Silicon Valley – or *Metro*, a weekly, free, regional



Figure 4-3: Recently torn down ranch home in preparation for a monster home (Cupertino, CA). Photo by the author.

magazine. While monster homes remain an issue debated in municipal meetings in Cupertino to this day, the height of the monster home reporting occurred between the mid-1990s to 2003. As newspapers reported, neighborhoods across Silicon Valley experienced similar tensions between older, retired couples living in original subdivisions of smaller homes (anywhere from 800-1200 square feet) and young dot.com families moving in, tearing down these homes, and building new homes two to three times the



original size. Regularly documented in the newspapers were angry neighbors forcing city hearings about a residential development project that encroached on the property rights of residents, typically over second story additions that threatened residents' privacy. Cities across Santa Clara County were forced to revise their residential building ordinances to mediate complaints by older residents and at the same time lure wealthy residents into their jurisdictions. While monster homes were continually discussed in city meetings and newspapers, it was only in Cupertino that white residents portrayed "monster homes" as a reflection of an essentialized Chinese culture centered on displaying class-status. Unlike other cities in Santa Clara county, Cupertino's Asian "majority" made them an easy culprit whereas in other areas like the predominately white Willow Glen neighborhood of San Jose or the city of Los Gatos, the excuse for larger homes were either reflections of a new, non-racialized, high-tech wealth or the timeless American mantra of "bigger is better" (Hukill 1999; Kearns and Enders 1999; Enders and Kearns 1999).<sup>11</sup>

But "Venture Capitalist in My Bedroom" diverged slightly from the rest of Goodell's writing. This time around his portrayal of Silicon Valley culture made Chinese culture and high-tech culture synonymous in his telling of Silicon Valley's rollercoaster ride of success and failures, and his conclusion that "love" – heterosexual families – is more important than money. In "Venture Capitalist in My Bedroom," however, the only characters in Silicon Valley that Goodell sees and gives voice to are Chinese immigrants. Goodell writes of his return to the house he grew up in and is startled by the changes the current Chinese landlord and its occupants transformed it into: A 'flophouse' for six

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<sup>11</sup> "Monster home" have grown to become a national issue, particularly in the last 5 years. As subdivision developments extend into exurbs, older residents of developing rural areas have also complained about the size of the homes starkly contrasted against the smaller surrounding homes. Unlike California, however, the homes are understood as "neo-traditional American," as opposed to "faux-Mediterranean," utilizing building materials and other conventions that aim to 'blend in' with regional housing styles.

seemingly miserable adult Chinese high-tech workers from Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong. What Goodell finds most problematic about these Chinese immigrants is that they no longer value the home as a place for nuclear familial bonding but merely as another investment in a chain of investments. Goodell frames this problematic as a bookend to local history: “One of the self-perpetuating virtues of a fast-changing culture like the valley is that there are fewer and fewer people around who remember what was lost. The past is not only uninteresting; it has been obliterated. The price of progress is memory” (“Venture Capitalist”). The culprits for this are clearly emphasized in the final sentence of Goodell’s story where Frank Lin, a mid-twenties venture capitalist, describes his current living situation in Goodell’s former home: “This place is just such a dump. There’s not much you can do but tear it down” (2000).

More specifically, the “wreckage of the American Dream circa 1963” which Goodell finds in his home in the late nineties are how the Chinese immigrants don’t conform to “American” heterosexual units of nuclear families, judging by the way they use his family’s post-war home (2000). Everything that Goodell sees in the interior and exterior of his childhood home disturbs him as it has become devoid of the familiar “familial” activities resulting from the demands of Silicon Valley capitalism directed by Chinese immigrants. That is, unlike his mom, the Chinese high-tech workers don’t cook or “gather” in the kitchen “every night at 6:30 for our family meal of beef stroganoff or tuna casserole” (Goodell 1999). The empty cupboards, “save for the large bottle of soy sauce and a few containers of SlimFast” remind him of a “communal kitchen in a freshmen dorm” (Goodell 1999). And unlike his father, the Chinese landlord and occupants are not creating more family gathering spaces like the fireplace in the family

room and the converted garage – emblems of his father’s “deep feeling for his family and the world he lived in” – but instead destroying them to create additional rooms to rent (Goodell 1999). Goodell equates the destruction of the familial interior of the home by what he seems to perceive as a Chinese asexuality culturally and spatially unfit for what the region once was. Goodell notes that the ranch house design-wise was “nothing special” (1999). But, the crisis of his own family, which we can assume as Goodell’s argument about the crises of local history culminates with his retelling of the dysfunction that befell his parents in the late 1970s when his father’s landscaping business “was on the wrong side of the economics bell curve” (1999). In one fell swoop, Goodell equates his father’s inability to find work and his mother’s desire for a divorce and to start a new life and family with another man after beginning work at the fledgling Apple Computers.

Goodell’s critique of Silicon Valley life may appear to be a critique of capitalism in his lamentations over his home and the evacuation of family bonding. But what I would like to focus on in Goodell’s narration of what was good and is currently bad of Silicon Valley, as told through the effects of high-tech on his family, is how Goodell articulates normative spaces of capital by race and gender. Goodell reminds the reader that the destructiveness of high-tech industry lies in the juxtaposition of his father and mother’s earning power. But the visual presence of how the home should look, indicative of what is “normal” to Goodell, became threatened by the disappearance of his mother’s accountability to her family once she found work. In privileging his father’s labor as the visual representation of the home, Goodell appears to reference post-war nationalism centered on gendered consumerism. As scholars of Cold War, suburbanization, and architectural histories have shown, these notions of social equivalence based on the

nuclear family forgets how the federal government underwrote the racist and sexist practices of postwar domesticity. In attempting to mediate gender and class upheaval, the federally subsidized postwar home “was one that obliterated class distinctions and accentuated gender distinctions” (May 1999). Gendered consumerism as a Cold War discourse of nationalism was meant to “believe in the potential for individualism and upward mobility” (May 1999, 145). These visions or spectacles of the ideal postwar home filled with consumer goods represented the postwar liberalism that portrayed white Americans’ class mobility as achievable through notions of equality in access articulated through individualist effort. These spectacles also naturalized racial exclusion from homeownership, treating minorities and immigrants as culturally unfit for consumerism (Harris 2007). His father’s circulating capital in the, not his mother’s, in the context of homeownership is representative of “sameness” in Silicon Valley, determining Goodell’s “habit of perception” when interpreting the meanings of this home.

But it is not just Goodell’s mother’s spatialized gender outside of the home, which leads Goodell to interpret what led to his father’s and Silicon Valley’s demise. It is also the spatialization of Chinese capital as it circulates as property (and strip malls, which he accounts for in his narrative) that disrupts Goodell’s “habit of perception”:

My brother and sister and I sold the house a few months later to a Taiwanese engineer and his pregnant wife for \$289,000. (My parents paid \$19,950 for it in 1963). As far as I knew, they were the first nonwhite family to move onto Meadowlark Lane. I was happy to *pass* the house onto them, thinking that they were about to start a family of their own and that they would find as much hope and happiness in it as we had. Whatever they found, it didn’t last long. In 1993, they *sold* it to a Hong Kong businessman named Zhengfei Ren, who used it primarily as a flophouse for himself and his employees when they visited the area. Last June, Ren *sold* the house to its current owner, a software engineer and real estate speculator named Nelson Chao, for \$450,000.

Chao who immigrated to the bay area from Taiwan 26 years ago, bought the house for one reason. “I think it is an excellent investment, even better than the stock market,” he says. And like any good investor he set out to maximize his *profits*, cramming in as many tenants as he could get away with. The house was no longer a family income but a repository of hopes and dreams; it was now a wooden structure whose sole purpose was to keep rain off its occupants heads and to generate *cash flow*” (emphasis mine)(Goodell 2000).

I emphasize particular words in these two paragraphs because they highlight the mobility and movement of Chinese capital that defines how Silicon Valley place has been understood. Goodell’s framing of his home as the inability for white and Chinese capital to co-exist echoes the historical spatialization of race and capital in urban-planning and the making of California. As historical studies of San Francisco have shown, Chinatown was not only a place, but also a discourse of racial and national difference. The physical and legal containment of Chinatown economies, as art historian Anthony Lee proposes, reflects the desire by white investors, elites, and merchants in developing San Francisco as a white, west coast financial center (Lee 2001). Further, the redevelopment of Chinatown after the 1906 earthquake as a tourist site with stereotypical architectural conventions of pagodas atop buildings reflects the spatial rendering of racialized capital set a part from the rest of the city (Gonzales, “Rebuilding Chinatown,” NPR.org). The value of Chinese people was measured economically, yet visually and spatially, the places of white and Chinese capital needed to be segregated in the making of “white American” San Francisco.

The unrecognizable ranch house that could possibly be torn down and replaced by a monster home reflects this reorganization of racial hegemonies that in part depends on the incorporation of Chinese immigrants of high-tech. The lives of Chinese high-tech workers that populate Goodell’s story are completely fixated upon their investments in

stocks and property. The meanings of the ranch house, constituted by the entanglement of racialized discourses of leisure and domesticity, reflect the post-war liberalism that Goodell's family appeared to be the beneficiaries of. Notions of a white classlessness based on his father's physical labor situated within postwar rhetorics of self-reliance and "equal" opportunity, guide how Goodell prefers to see the Valley. The visual politics of whiteness embedded within the discursive framing of ranch houses assumes a "universal equivalence" that never quite existed across a variety of intersecting identity categories. Perhaps it is these post-war discourses of whiteness that shape Goodell's nostalgia of place.

My critique of Goodell's rendering of his family's tract ranch house is not to privilege Chinese immigrants of high-tech and their particular work ethic. But I highlight Goodell's narrations because they follow similarly to local residents' anxieties over the changing regional and national economic policies that encourage flexible capital and flexible accumulation. In the following section, I look more closely at local residents' reactions to the ranch home destruction and monster home construction, particularly as it relates to notions of leisure and ruralness. In the next section, I juxtapose white leisure and ruralness against the "individuality" of Asian immigrants to show how white residents defense of the ranch house speaks to the emergence and dominations of neoliberalism within Silicon Valley.

### **Racialized Leisure as Unspoken Truth of Silicon Valley Neoliberalism**

One of the reoccurring themes that continually came up in reference to the changing culture of Cupertino symbolized by the monster home was the assumption that Chinese people were "too individual." By "individual" residents complained that their new

neighbors did not have any sense of “community,” which repeatedly in local press meant friendly exchanges among neighbors in the front yard either landscaping or taking a stroll to the mailbox. For some white residents, the ranch house symbolized how daily habits should be lived, as if these structures innately allowed for a stronger sense of “community.” These same white residents often complained that the monster home was clearly representative of a Chinese culture of “individuality” spreading across the valley that was to the detrimental to the way life used to be, where neighbors purportedly spent a lot of time socializing in and around each other’s ranch homes.

But these white residents repeatedly articulated the social destruction of “individuality” through cultural discourses of neoliberalism. The “individuality” of Chinese neighbors of high tech was often portrayed as insular Chinese families that focused all their attention on their children’s education and long-term success at the expense of a healthier lifestyle of sports or leisure. Because Chinese people desired to get a Cupertino address so they could send their children to the nationally ranked schools, accusations by white residents complaining that multiple Chinese families living in one residence, some white residents mockingly called the monster home a “dorm.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, white residents complained about the totalizing lifestyle of high tech and Chinese culture where Chinese parents managed their children solely in the interest of preparing them for class mobility. In this section, I conduct a discursive analysis of the relationship

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<sup>12</sup> In various interviews with both white and Chinese residents, they mention how Chinese newspapers such as the globally distributed World Journal regularly features articles about ideal cities to relocate to in the United States for their schools. Residents note that the World Journal of Taipei has a section that regularly recognizes and promotes nationally ranked Monta Vista High School as the ideal place to send their children. The increased Chinese and Asian presence at Monta Vista High School, in particular, has sparked much angst among White residents who complain that 1) Chinese students are too competitive 2) Chinese scholastic achievement unfairly portray the white students as ‘dumb’ 3) Chinese tribalism on campus and 4) white as the minority, often excluded from social circles. Since the mid-1990s, Chinese residents have been portrayed as obsessed with education. In one city council meeting, a woman against the changes to the R-1 ordinance that would have allowed bigger second stories described “monster homes” as “dorms.”

between “individuality” and the high-tech capitalism of the region within the context of my ethnographic fieldwork among white Cupertino residents and their homeownership. As mentioned earlier, I frame the notion of “individuality” with neoliberal discourses of efficiency as market-drive rationalities to argue that the monster home visualizes and spatializes Chinese racial hegemony in Silicon Valley. That is, the monster home symbolizes what Aihwa Ong has termed “latitudinal citizenship,” which refers to the ways that globalization and the priorities of market rights constitute spaces and the contingent ethnic and racial hierarchies (Ong 2006). The “leisure” versus “individuality” dyad reflects these ideological shifts rupturing the whiteness embedded within the visual and material culture of Cupertino.

The local anxiety over the aesthetics of homes in Cupertino is perhaps, in part, tied to the fact that homeownership of detached single-family homes is central to the identity of a Cupertino resident. When talking to different white residents, many whom I interviewed for different reasons, a large number of them instinctively referenced their homes and the domestic life of their homes when asked about the changing culture of Cupertino. The presence of “monster homes” clearly affected their sense of their own identities as racialized homeowners of “modest” or “quaint” ranch houses.

But Cupertino residents have defined their single-family homeownership, however, through racial and class connotations to how Cupertino residents would prefer to keep their city. As of 2008, detached single-family homes made up 61% of the housing stock and attached single-family homes 11%. Multi-family dwellings (5+ units) and smaller multi-family housing (2-4) units stayed steady at roughly 20% and 8%, respectively (City of Cupertino Housing Element Updates 2007-2014 2010). These



numbers are about the same ratio with the rest of Santa Clara County. Nearly 60% of households in Cupertino as of 2008 earned a median income of at least \$100,000 and higher. The rest of Santa Clara County was not far behind, hovering close to 50% (2010, 14).

The race and class profile of its residents played out in local debates over the push by regional government to balance the job to housing ratio. With regional government encouraging Cupertino to build more below market housing and general housing to ease the job to housing ratio difference, the city and developers proposed several plans for high-rise condominiums that have been shot down by activist groups promoting slow-growth.<sup>13</sup> Residents for slow-growth, Chinese residents included, argued that the schools could not accommodate more students. Another popular argument against the building of condos was that the perception of that kind of density meant a more transient and younger population moving in, which would disrupt safety of its family-centered community that Cupertino wants to maintain.

Detached single-family housing discourses and suburbanization discourses have long since dovetailed in constituting white hegemony. As historical studies of suburbanization have shown, crowded tenement housing of center cities has commonly been associated with low-income and racially undesirable populations, including racial minorities and, until World War II, white-ethnic immigrants. In the case of post-war housing, Dianne Harris argues that mid-century notions of privacy, particularly “owning

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<sup>13</sup> Various high-density housing projects, particularly condominiums, have never come to fruition because residents have continued to vote against the building of low-income or below-market-value residences. One particular example stands out: one condominium project on the grounds of the VALLCO mall was proposed various times, which the revenue generated from the sales could fund the renovation and updating of the mall, which has gone through multiple failed ownerships since 1996 to the present. The impetus for this, also, was that the condominiums would provide a built-in clientele that could easily walk to the mall. Over 7 years later, the project still has not passed.

a single-family detached house with its own private, fenced garden symbolized not just security from outsiders who might threaten home and family but also the security of confirmed membership in the white, middle-class, American majority” (Harris 2006). In analyzing do-it-yourself post-war design aesthetics of mid-century home improvement magazines, Dianne Harris notes that privacy and homeownership articulated through consumersism was a means for white immigrants to shed their ethnic difference and obscure their blue-collar class-status (2006, 129).

The same could be said of some current white residents’ interpretations of their own homeownership, which has become a contemporary practice of race and class identity. The desire of white residents today to maintain their detached ranch home, the visible sight of it, portrays the vestiges a post-war liberalism manifested today as individualism, but under the guise of collectivism. In analyzing the nostalgia of self-sufficiency, Stephanie Coontz writes that these notions of white individualism as the achievement of the “American Dream” of homeownership, was largely underwritten by the federal government (Coontz 1992). Whiteness as a practice entrenched in homeownership matters as an expression of middle-class status threatened by the visible presence of “monster homes” and neoliberal economic policies, which Chinese immigrants of high tech are central to its reproduction.

When I asked Jane, a volunteer with the Cupertino Historical Society, if she could describe what and when she thought the “shift” in the local culture of Cupertino happened, Jane quickly talked about the lack of parents volunteering to chaperone her daughters’ school field trips in the late-seventies, early eighties. I met Jane through a docent at the Cupertino Historical Society when I originally was interested in asking her

and other members their thoughts of what was most important to know about Cupertino history. In 1972, Jane, the wife of a computer engineer, settled in Cupertino with her husband and two daughters because her husband received a job opportunity in an emerging consumer-oriented high tech field. She mentioned social gatherings at their house among her husband's co-workers and the energy they all had for innovation, such as calculators. She mentioned the Asian-owned "monster homes" popping up around the city and quickly moved to talking about Asian domesticity and its effects on local culture:

They concentrate on reading, writing, and arithmetic, the academics first, everything else comes second big time, they have a huge Asian population at that school (Monta Vista High School) and that's what the Asian population wants. They value that. It's good to value that, but in balance with everything else. I'm not saying you should be footloose and fancy free and not give a hoot and go out and play ball, you should be doing homework every night. But there's a balance. But my best friend was a teacher, first grade, mostly first grade. She was fending off parents, who would come in and say, "I want my kid to have homework. Where's the homework, my kids need homework." And she'll go "Oh they'll learn, they'll learn. They'll learn this and that." And she could not persuade these Asian parents that the kid did not have to have homework. Sometimes I just give them some minor thing to do to just send them on their way. But it does change the flavor of the way education happens. It makes it much more academic, less a life lesson (Jane 2009).

For Jane, the monster home automatically conjured up ideas of Asian families and what Jane finds to be a problematic approach to child rearing, particularly as it pertains to balancing study habits with leisure. The discursive equivalence of cultural changes, monster homes, and domesticity blend together in the reorganization of the everyday in Silicon Valley. Although Asian families have long tried to dispel stereotypes of Asian children as devoid of extra-curricular activities, Jane's comment about Asian academic achievement through self-management articulated by economic success portrayed through the symbol of the monster home shows how neoliberalism infiltrates and

connects public and private lives in the management of the productive self in the interests of sustaining Silicon Valley’s robust high tech economy.

I garnered a similar response from a Cupertino resident one afternoon when I went to the Garden Gate neighborhood to get a sense of the visual politics that has been at the center of so many of Cupertino’s racial tensions. I went to take some photos of the



Figure 4-4: A monster home (Cupertino, CA). Photo by the author.

area that was once a subdivision of flat-roofed ranches constructed in 1951. Now, however, nearly identical “monster homes” sat next to each other all in a row. I stood at the curb taking a picture of a ranch house, which had no landscaping at all in the front yard. As I reviewed the photos that I had taken on my camera, a young white male with a shaved head dressed in grey sweats approached me from behind: “What do you think you’re doing?”

I introduced myself as a researcher studying the development of Silicon Valley and the cultural changes to the area. He introduced himself as Adam and proceeded to tell me his opinions about how things had changed without me even asking:

Let me guess, you're here to write about all these monster homes, huh? This place has really changed. It is nuts. I lived in this home all my life and I swear, things have changed. A house at the end of the street just went for three million! This little house right over there (points around the corner) went for 1.3 million. That one right there (points ambiguously at a house down the street again), 2.6 million. My grandfather bought this land and built this home for 9 thousand dollars and look at what it is now. This used to be considered the poor part of town. Who can actually live here now? (Adam 2010).

Adam complained about everything and anything that had happened in the city, but he returned on several occasion during our conversation to his inability to find work as a white man in what he described as a “diverse” “immigrant” majority. He mentioned on several occasions in the first few minutes of chatting how bad things had gotten that four Chinese families were living in the monster home across the street: “How can any one family afford a home like that? That’s why they have four families in there. I’ve never talked to them once. They don’t speak English.”

In talking about the tech craze and the millionaires that work in Cupertino, he mentioned that he followed in the footsteps of his father who had a trade and earned \$80,000 per year. He lamented that that was an honest living that you couldn’t find anymore. Adam then added how he tried to go to school to develop skills to do tech work, but that just didn’t work out for him. We stood on his front steps chatting for a while, he had offered me some coffee and he began to tell me how he was glad that he had the day off to recover after a weekend of playing video games. Peppered throughout the conversation was talk of what the place used to be like growing up, the orchards that stretched in all directions during the nineteen eighties now completely occupied by Apple

or built over for residential development. Adam wasn't regularly working but spoke about his friends, Mexican and Asian, that managed to secure high paying work through the sacrifice of leisure. I expected Adam to be happy for his friends who are now financially successful after "coming from nothing." But he followed by complaining that his friends of color never once tried to get him a job where they worked. He went on to describe instances where him and his friends, white men, were discriminated against by immigrants, who always end up hooking up other immigrants like them for jobs.

After chatting for a while about a range of things regarding life in the valley, he asked me to give him a ring sometime, maybe go hang out at the local Starbucks, light a joint, and just "shoot the shit" as he described it. He left me with a few more disjointed comments about the state of life in Cupertino:

There are not many folks like you will kick back and hang out anymore. You know, the Asians, the Chinese and Indians mostly, just drive into their garages and you never see them anymore. They're so...individual...I just want that small-town feel, you know? Where people know each other. You know, there's a local dive bar where there's that weird guy who says weird things, but nobody's afraid of him. Things nowadays are just so crazy. You hear about people [Chinese immigrants in engineering or programming] shooting up their companies after getting fired. Companies now, too, have no integrity. Things are just crazy, just crazy. Maybe people should just relax more, hang out, chill, and smoke some weed or something . . . .

Adam exhibited a strong sense of his race and class identity, which he seemed to develop through and against his difference from the "individual" cultures of Chinese and Indian immigrants of high tech. For Adam, leisure structured into his everyday life mediated his feelings of white male displacement, specifically around his labor, which Asians were seen as the culprits. But as much as Adam disavowed the intensity of Silicon Valley life and labor, he seemed to desire the achievement of "middle-class" status as he followed in the footsteps of his father by learning a "trade." But what I want to focus on, in

particular, is how the displacement of white homeownership, in the context of leisure, discursively weaved together the themes of Chinese and Indian “individuality,” transpacific high tech labor, and “monster homes.” The monster home defined by the “individuality” of Chinese and Indian neighbors who enter their homes through their garages, “never see(n)...anymore,” reflects the spatial logics of neoliberal governing strategies. The crisis of Adam’s whiteness appears to be situated at the changing spatial arrangements of government, which the private, like the public, have become connected discursively in the production of the ideal Silicon Valley subject. Chinese and Indian “individuality” – a symbol of Silicon Valley work-ethic against Adam’s racially white leisure – reflect what James Hay describes as the “neoliberal domestic sphere” of the nineteen eighties. This shifting discourse of domesticity of the nineteen eighties focused upon the theme of efficiency through the usage of improved technologies in household goods, such as computers and other appliances (Hay 2003). Although the postwar home and its new gadgetry of appliances were meant to improve the domestic lives of women, the activities of the home were still framed as spatially distinct from the public life of male work. That is, the postwar home as a symbol of leisure contained its own spatial arrangement in the aid of managing bodies through rest and relaxation to maintain productive subjects of capitalism. In the context of resident’s complaints of the monster home and Asian “individuality,” the spatial and cultural re-arrangement of the home as a site of work (even for children) represents the rupture to a post-war whiteness visualized by the homeownership of ranch homes. As Dianne Harris describes in her research on ranch home advertisements, practices of leisure constituted middle-class suburban whiteness.

Michelle, a volunteer at the Cupertino Historical Society and long-time resident of Cupertino, shared with me the “outward facing culture” of her neighborhood of ranch homes. Michelle is an interesting figure to examine given the contradictory feelings she has towards the changing culture of Silicon Valley arriving in the 1980s that simultaneously created intense amounts of job opportunities and wealth, but destroyed the leisurely culture that she grew up with in her neighborhood of post-war ranch homes. A stay-at-home mom for most her life, Michelle, recently, began doing clerical work part-time at a Korean-run venture capitalist firm specializing in development in China. She spoke fondly of being in the midst of the processes at the center of Silicon Valley entrepreneurship. Though she found her work “boring,” Michelle expressed that these



Figure 4-5: A monster home erected next to an ranch house (Cupertino, CA). Photo by author.

types of global investments were not possible 20 to 30 years ago. And while she valued the kind of middle to middle-upper class lifestyle that the global economy of high-tech



has provided for her, her husband (an engineer) and her family (she lets me know she doesn't have to work), she worried about the cultural changes brought on by Asian immigrants and their study habits. Interestingly, Michelle contrasts the new culture against the leisure of the ranch home she grew up:

So some people might say, the way the demographics have changed might be a negative. I might see it as a positive. But what I see as a negative is the shift. I'm just comparing my experience. Because I live in the same court now with my kids growing up in that court that I grew up in. So when I was a kid there, I talked about how we all hang out in the court and play together and hangout in each other's houses. That's what we did. We were very outward facing into the street and gathered together on the holidays. Like the 4th of July. Gosh, like having stage shows, we'd go into someone's backyard. All the neighbors came (Jane 2009).

Again, the place of the ranch home and the activities of leisure constituted how post-War white families interpreted their subjectivities in Silicon Valley. Michelle, her family transplants from the east coast when her father got a job at Lockheed, laments of the loss of childhood leisure, as the intensity of individual development of human capital has become a requirement in an era when college admissions have become increasingly competitive. For her daughters, extracurricular activities such as work, sports, and service organizations are forms of cultural capital that they use to leverage their college admissions against the grade-obsessive Asians that solely focus on academic achievement. But Jane and Michelle's acceptance of economic growth, yet longing for "outward facing communities," reflect the contradiction of neoliberal development in Silicon Valley. Michelle welcomes cultural difference, alluding to the property value that her family gains from having Asian neighbors of the same class status and educational background. But her "negative" impressions of change defined by the loss of neighborhood socialization and ranch home leisure, perhaps, demonstrates the

spatialization of whiteness structured into the aesthetics and conduct of post-World War II suburban spaces. The feelings that Michelle, Jane, Adam and others have towards their ranch homes as historical reflect the legacy of these racialized geographies.

Discourses and practices of homeownership operate as forms of governing, particularly the making of ideal subjects. White residents' narration of the differences between the tract ranch house and the "monster home," particularly around domesticity, reflects the neoliberal reorganization of conduct that follows aligns with market-driven rationalities. These portrayals of Chinese cultural "individuality" framed by the totalizing effect of Silicon Valley around personal achievement reveals how the globalization of commerce, such as high tech industries, transforms spaces of governing.

### **Conclusion**

As Chinese immigrants of high tech backgrounds immigrate to Silicon Valley for job opportunities, they often try to settle in Cupertino for its nationally ranked schools. As a result of this transpacific flow of Chinese workers, many with advanced degrees, Cupertino's race and class profile transformed, resulting in higher median income per household and median home prices than the rest of Santa Clara County. I grew up in the city of Fremont, CA, roughly 25 miles to the northeast, which depending on who you talk to is considered to be much like Cupertino for the same reasons. But, many Chinese immigrants that I casually spoke with and interviewed reminded me of Cupertino's superiority compared to other cities in terms of property values, educational standards, and, alleged, lack of racism. The monster home represents the normalized conduct of Silicon Valley centered on calculated moves by Chinese immigrants, which privileged flexible accumulation.

But the sight of “monster homes” contradicts how older white residents have understood what it means to be a resident of Cupertino. What I wanted to show in this chapter was that these local white anxieties about their inability to see themselves reflected in the residential architecture requires an analysis of the economic rendering of these spaces by these white residents in their narrations of their homes and neighborhoods. What is at stake in these public debates over residential architecture spilling into newspapers, city council meetings, and city-sponsored public forums are how history and knowledge is produced and reproduced. In particular, the ranch house represented a postwar liberalism that fostered cultural beliefs that white people of varying class backgrounds could achieve middle class status. As white residents attempt to save their ranch houses by using themes of “leisure” and “domesticity” as behaviors of Cupertino history, it becomes clear that these operate as confessions to the particular white racial hegemony that they were once empowered by.

The monster home encroaching on the property lines of white residents and towering over their ranch houses visualizes and spatializes for white residents neoliberal economic policies articulated by notions of ethnic diversity. Some white residents shared with me that they considered it a blessing that their children had this many cultures around them to learn from. Sometimes, these residents used economic determinations of the global market to describe this notion of blessing and the significance of diversity in the futures of their children’s careers. Silicon Valley’s diversity cannot be abstracted from the realities of its high tech industries. As Aihwa Ong argues, “[e]thnic Chinese command of the transnationalized electronics industry has placed them at the top of the ethnic hierarchy in California as ideal border-crossing and enterprising citizens vital to

American business” (2006, 7). With increasing spaces connected by market-driven forces, these spaces require particular forms of governing and managing of people into idealized subjects. But it is not just the everyday conduct that matters, but also the visual citation of places of capital within these narratives of Cupertino.

**CHAPTER 5**  
**The Future History of Chinese Silicon Valley: The Mapping of Culture, Labor, Place**

Brian: How did you decide to enroll your children in Chinese school?

Susie: Oh, you gotta learn Chinese. I always tell my kids. They're what, 20% of the world population is Chinese.

Brian: (laugh) Oh that's it?

Susie: Maybe 25%? I always tell them, we're not the minority. We're the majority, ok? And you look Chinese, you don't speak Chinese. Shame on you. You speak Chinese right?

Brian: (in Mandarin) A little bit.

Susie: (in Mandarin) A little bit? Can you really? You have to learn Chinese right now. If you can't speak Chinese now, you'll be in trouble in the future.

Brian: (in Mandarin) Why?

Susie: (In Mandarin) Why? Think about it, China is so powerful. All things in the world... turn around, turn around (points at the electronics in her home as well as a few random computer parts and cards laying freely on the couch, kitchen table, and coffee table), all made in China. (In English) You gotta recognize this is the future, that's where the growth is, ok? There's no recession right now in China, they already recovered (Susie 2010).

This short interaction between Susie, a middle-aged Chinese immigrant mother of two, and I about how Chinese language education matters to her life reflects how her career of high-tech business in Silicon Valley, which depends upon the business her and her husband conduct between Silicon Valley and Greater China, has had a totalizing effect on her life. The interior of Susie's ranch house looked like a Best Buy electronics store

given the electronic clutter – printers, computer cards, and boxes -- that seemed to drape the wall and cover every piece of furniture. Like most of the other Chinese homes I've visited, her home also has Chinese trinkets and figurines made of glass and jade. Susie's home, however, looked as if her and her husband purposely decorated their home with computer parts. But Susie's prediction of a future where Chinese immigrants rule global capitalism shows how Silicon Valley is a place of transpacific economic development requiring the social reproduction of Chinese culture (language).

This narrative arc which Susie finds social legibility and value as a U.S. citizen occurs through the possibility of a future where Chinese people have authority over the direction of global capitalism between the places of Greater China and Silicon Valley. Susie's personal narrative of how she went from national outsider to insider is filled with everyday activities that blur the distinctions between Chinese culture (language study) and the high-tech economy (high-tech production). The natural presence of Chinese people and culture in Silicon Valley, which Susie sees in the form of Chinese language schools and the consumption of technology, reveals the interweaving of spaces and relations – family, co-workers, home and workplace – that give rise to the perception of Silicon Valley as a unique place where Chinese immigrants and culture seamlessly blend into local culture.

In this chapter, I examine the narratives that Chinese immigrants living in Cupertino, California create and tell themselves and others with the aim of claiming social citizenship and reaffirming the notion of Silicon Valley as an exceptional place of racial equality. I focus on how Chinese immigrants describe the future promises of social citizenship by how they talk about the normalization of Chinese culture in everyday life.

But what stands out in these narrations of everyday life is how Chinese immigrants deliberately cite Silicon Valley spaces to locate their identities. I argue that it is through these reiterated narratives that Chinese immigrants map themselves onto a future history of Silicon Valley. These narratives show the significance of Silicon Valley among a host of transpacific economic hubs that shape how they interpret their value as citizens. This chapter relies upon ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews to examine the intricacies of global capitalism, the seemingly unrelated phenomenon of the everyday, which Chinese immigrants experience, interpret, and navigate their practice of social citizenship.

By the everyday, I focus on the performative enunciations within these narratives of Silicon Valley that Chinese immigrants talk about.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, I examine the particular sensual activities such as learning Chinese language and practicing Chinese traditional dances and ceremonies that Chinese immigrants participate in and talk about that create meanings and constitute how Silicon Valley discursively exists and materially emerges. I read how these personal narratives, guided by the intersecting discourses and places of economic development and community, spatially operate to normalize Chinese hegemony in Silicon Valley.

I analyze these questions in the context of how Chinese immigrants talk about the (now defunct) annual Silicon Valley Moon Festival (SVMF) hosted in Cupertino's central park, Memorial Park, in addition to the weekly local Chinese language and culture education schools. I focus on these two particular events because of how Chinese

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<sup>1</sup> I draw from JL Austin's "speech act theory" that frames "performatives" as language that performs the act by which it refers to. Performatives are not "true" or "false" statements that describe the state of affairs. Instead, performatives are contracts that establish meanings and relations within an existing discursive framework that is socially agreed upon. Jonathan Culler. *Convention and Meaning: Derrida and Austin*. *New Literary History* 13 (1981): 15-30, Accessed June 21, 2007, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/468640>

immigrants and white residents identify them as representative of how Chinese immigrants interpret their cultural activities as participating in civic life. I focus on the aspects of Chinese culture that Chinese immigrants habitually practice and consume in their everyday life and the discursive conditions by which they justify those symbols of Chinese culture as legitimating their “value” as community members. But also, these two events are where two distinct and competing narratives of Silicon Valley life become reiterated. These narratives about what “normal” Cupertino civic life should be like reveal the shifting racial hegemonies constituted by the demands of the global economy. In other words, these various narrations of permissible Chinese culture circulating in Cupertino reflect what Richard Schechner would describe as “restoration of behavior” and what Michel De Certeau calls “travel stories.” Both concepts generally refer to the authorization of an economy of meanings by the actions and movements of people that ‘cite’ particular physical places or existing spatial narratives (Certeau 1984; Schechner 1985).

In describing the relationship between anthropology and theater, Schechner’s concept of restored behavior refers to how social identities are enacted by socially agreed upon behaviors, daily processes that operate like “strips.” Schechner suggests that the notion of playing roles in theater is a useful metaphor for how performance in everyday life can expose the social systems that exist and constitute us. Schechner’s emphasis, however, is on deconstruction/reconstruction of actualities: “the process of framing and rehearsing; the making and manipulating of strips of behavior” (1985, 33). Restorative behavior is not identifying an authentic strip but, rather, to show that how we view and make history is “distorted by myth and tradition” (1985, 33). In the context of Silicon



Valley, the identities of Chinese people as ideal “community” members reveal the competing “strips of behavior” that narrate race, culture, and market forces in Silicon Valley everyday life. I read Schechner’s concept of restored behavior with De Certeau’s travel stories to follow what De Certeau suggests, which is that “narrative structures have the status of spatial syntaxes” (De Certeau 1984, 117). The recombination of strips, which I see Chinese residents doing in their narrations of Silicon Valley Chinese social citizenship, necessarily involves describing activities that create and are deliberately informed by Silicon Valley space. For De Certeau, space is continually remade and recontextualized by an “ensemble of movement” that “orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities” (1984, 117). In other words, space is performative as travel stories exist as “a system of signs” enacted by people, which enable the meanings and relations of a geographic place to exist. The ways that Chinese residents talk about themselves and their attachments to Cupertino and Silicon Valley revolve around particular set of behaviors shaped by the particularities of the Silicon Valley high tech industry.

Existing ethnographic studies of Silicon Valley emphasize the totalizing effect that high-tech culture has on all areas of social life, but rarely do they touch upon the transpacific priorities of the industry. J.A. English-Lueck uses the term “technological saturation” to describe how high-speed telecommunication – laptops, cell phones, email, fax machines, and more – have become absolutely necessary for workers in Silicon Valley to adapt flexibly to market forces. English-Lueck, however, finds that these technologies are absolutely crucial to connecting the worlds of “paid” high-tech labor and “non-paid” work of domesticity of their spouses, which “technological saturation” allows

workers and their families to coordinate their lives around demanding high-tech schedules (English-Lueck 2002). In examining youth cultures of Silicon Valley, Elsa Davidson shows how high-school education in Silicon Valley is constituted by neoliberal governmentality, which regional economic rationality guides how educational institutions nurture a learning culture where students become entrepreneurs of themselves. With the overwhelming high-tech industry as a discursive and material presence in the classroom for success, schools and instructors instill a notion of individuality and work ethic in students for the sake of helping them to develop human capital. Davidson describes these trajectories framed by the labor discipline of Silicon Valley to be “strategies of aspiration management” (Davidson 2006). Similarly, Shalini Shankar’s analysis of South Asian American youth identity formations shows how visibility of Silicon Valley wealth and success within South Asian communities shapes the relationship between consumption patterns and expressions of class identity in varied social contexts (Shankar 2008).

My research contributes to these studies by adding that the transpacific discourses of Chineseness matter to the spatial imaginary of Silicon Valley’s future. Narratives of Silicon Valley rely upon iconic places, such as Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard’s garage or globally recognized companies such as the Google campus, to instantiate not only the regional mythology of meritocracy, but also to instantiate labor discipline. In this chapter, I show how Chinese residents mobilize Chineseness as a set of everyday cultural practices aligned with market forces as a way to reinvent the future history of Silicon Valley.

The rest of the chapter is broken up into two parts. In the following section, I examine politics of Chinese culture at Cupertino Mandarin School, one of several

Chinese language schools in the city. Through my ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews, I look at how Chinese immigrant parents make sense of the importance of Chinese cultural practice, such as language study, through the particular labor cultures of Silicon Valley economic development. More specifically, I investigate how Chinese immigrant parents aim to rewrite the future histories of Silicon Valley by their habitual rehearsing of particular kinds of behaviors and mythologies of familiar Silicon Valley places, but imbuing them with Chinese culture. In the next section, I argue that the SVMF shows how Chinese immigrants hope to position themselves within the future of Silicon Valley by purposely evacuating their identities of economic accumulation. Through my in-depth interviews with two directors that oversaw the development and coordination of the SVMF as a charitable event over its nine-year span, I show that even in spite of Chinese immigrants strategies at visualizing Chinese culture as community-oriented, on-going resistance by white Cupertino residents to these spatialized portrayals of Chinese immigrants and culture show how Chinese immigrants still navigate the challenging terrains of global capitalism even as they are discursively rendered as the ideal subject of Silicon Valley economic development.

### **Chinese Schools and the Future of Silicon Valley**

Chinese language schools are important institutions in Silicon Valley and the broader San Francisco Bay Area as they serve as hubs where local Chinese communities come together as THE Chinese community, providing not only a social outlet, but also, potentially, a political base for which Chinese immigrants can organize around issues pertinent to them if necessary. Year-to-year, Chinese schools are places where the meanings of Chinese culture in the lives of Chinese families are discussed, agreed upon,

and taught to Chinese youth and their families. Teaching Chinese language through the use of the familiar or the everyday in the lives of Chinese American youth is an important concept in Chinese language pedagogy as parents and teachers are concerned whether students can make sense of it in their lives. But the everyday does not exist as an abstract concept, but is a collective agreement over the particular behaviors and conduct that should represent what Chinese culture is and is not in their community. As Chinese schools are made up of parent volunteers, many of them CEOs of high-tech corporations, mythologies about Silicon Valley's racial meritocracy and also exceptional labor culture of innovation infiltrate into these lessons of the everyday. Narrations of everyday culture in weekly lesson plans aim to seamlessly normalize an idea of a Chinese dominated high-tech world of Silicon Valley as the future history that these Chinese youth will eventually populate.

Chinese language schools have existed in Cupertino for over 30 years and since the early nineteen nineties have expanded to over 5 different campuses (run by different people) due to demand and the growing Chinese population in the region. Most of the schools are run by Chinese people from Taiwan, the predominant Chinese group to settle in the area during the high-tech growth of the nineteen eighties and nineteen nineties. In talking to Richard, a former principal of Cupertino Mandarin School, he was proud to tell me that many CEOs of well-known start-up companies brought their children to his Chinese schools. Richard, originally, used this tidbit as a sample of who makes up the general profile of his Chinese School's participants, volunteers, and staff. He described the CEOs as ordinary, unassuming people: "There is one thing I learn is that for any random person, you learn to respect people. You never know how good he is when you

walk on the street. He looks so ordinary. Those CEOs don't dress like high society people. They dress the same way as I do (wearing a Cupertino Mandarin School sweater-vest, a polo shirt, and khaki pants). You see no difference. Incredible! It's extremely, low-key, humble, polite. And what can you say, first-class people" (Richard 2010). In describing CMS, CEOs and the financial success that comes with them is very much part of the ordinary lifestyle that makes up what Richard sees as part of the Chinese community. Chinese schools represent a site which Chinese residents in Cupertino decide what symbols (such as dress) of Chinese culture matter in their lives and how these practices of Chinese culture will help prepare their children and their futures. The casual dress code of Silicon Valley has long been a part of the mystique of Silicon Valley's culture of success and innovation (Saxenian 1994). The ordinary nature of CEOs dress is part of the Silicon Valley meritocracy narrative of Silicon Valley where anybody can succeed and how one dresses performs these discourses of Silicon Valley neoliberalism. Dress as a distinction of space reveals the new strips of behavior that entangle high-tech workplaces, everyday conduct, and Chinese people and culture.

For the most part, most parents and administrators I spoke with agreed that Chinese language schools served as a social function for recent transplants to the area. Many Chinese parents corroborated with each other that Chinese schools were great places to meet other Chinese people like themselves who were of the similar occupational, educational, and, subsequently, class backgrounds. Most if not all parents agreed that one of the priorities for encouraging their children to study Mandarin was so that their children could speak with their grandparents. But for some parents and Chinese school administrators, China's rapid economic development and their significance to the

United States as a trading partner made them feel that Chinese people, their families, and their culture were now extremely valuable to the United States. Several parents I interviewed mentioned that economists reporting that China will be the economic superpower of the world by 2030. The reasons influenced why these Chinese parents pushed language education not only in their lives, but also in the local school systems. In a personal interview with Dan – a computer engineer by day and a board member of CMS in his spare time – shared with me how, locally, the increasing global business Greater China has Cupertino and West Valley school districts trying to figure out how to implement and offer more Chinese language-study in schools (Dan 2010). This possible future narrative of the United States economy as dependent upon China has also changed how education and learning should exist in the lives of residents living in Cupertino, non-Chinese included.

Implementing Chinese language education, however, draws together conflicting notions of what visibility means for different members of the Chinese community. Greater China's role in the global economy has a strong presence in how Chinese parents interpret the usage and demand of Chinese in the lives of their communities and their children's futures. A historical analysis of Chinese community participation in the Cupertino school system shows how the Chinese community's demand for Chinese language functions as political responses to the exclusionary practices of white Cupertino residents at the level of educational policy and curriculum. Since the mid-1990s, the fate of Cupertino educational culture has been a topic of debate among its residents. With high-achieving Asian American students, predominately of Chinese heritage, many local white parents and some students publically complained in school board meetings, local

press, and other community forums that Asian students were self-segregating to the social exclusion of the white students. An on-going debate in the late 1990s and the early 2000s about language immersion programs fueled these existing white attitudes that Chinese students failed to “assimilate” and refused to socialize with white residents (Benson and Michelle 1998; Marino 1997b; Ku and Marino 1998). Further complaints included alleged Asian cultures of educational achievement as creating unfair academic expectations for white youth. White parents critiqued the intensity by which Asian students study, accusing Asian parents for creating an environment that does not value well-rounded (white) students who may not excel in the same way as their Asian counterparts, academically (Hwang 2005). When some white parents argued that their children were “well-rounded” because of their interests in extra-curricular activities, these conflicting notions of human capital shows what kinds of education is valued in Silicon Valley. As Chinese parents succeed in Silicon Valley industries, this perhaps reflects how the regional economy privileges Chinese student interest in science and engineering versus other topics of study or activities.

Later, White parents used these portrayals of Asian study habits as racial difference to accuse Asian parents for failing to participate in “community” affairs. Questions about Asian study habits became another way for White residents to instantiate the relationship of whiteness with Cupertino through the racial othering of the growing Asian community. White parents began complaining that Asian parents never participated in local academic affairs such as the school board or the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Hung-Wei, a member of the school board, recalled the tension in the 1990s as a difference in white and Chinese cultures. Chinese culture, according to Hung-

Wei, never questioned the authority of teachers. But after more community-oriented Chinese parents convinced other Chinese parents that parent-teacher relationships were quite normal in the United States, the numbers of Chinese moms, Hung-Wei mentions, have steadily increased to the point that an Asian American parents association now exists. The attendance of Chinese dads, Hung-Wei adds, are still low given their long work hours in high-tech industries (Hung-Wei 2009). I read white residents pressuring of Asian parents to attend school board and PTA meetings, however, as an attempt by white residents to regulate what they saw to be the obsessive study habits of Asian families. As mentioned in the chapter on monster homes, white parents complained that Asian families spent too much time either at work or at home. With both places seen as instrumental to the Silicon Valley high-tech economy, white parents thought getting Asian parents away from these places could halt the changing expectations of academic achievement that unfairly pegged their children as “dumb.”<sup>2</sup>

The responses by Asian parents to these pressures by their white counterparts to be more community-oriented, however, revealed the ideological divisions among the Chinese community. In the introduction, I explain that the Chinese community is made up of people and families from different nations, including Hong Kong, China, and

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<sup>2</sup> Suein Hwang upset Cupertino residents, white and Chinese, over her depiction of the racial conflicts within the public school system. Residents, quoted in Hwang’s article, felt their thoughts were taken out of context, further instantiating existing stereotypes that Asian students are automatons that obsess over studying. Hwang portrays White residents are racists incapable of tolerating the cultures of immigrants that they would rather move away from Cupertino than learn to live with their Asian neighbors. Residents responded to Hwang’s piece in the Cupertino Courier. Ms. Gatley, a member of Monta Vista High School’s parent-teacher association, is one of the main subjects of Hwang’s article who is quoted by Hwang as dissuading white residents from moving to Cupertino and saying that she wouldn’t not have moved to Cupertino if she knew so many Asians were going to move in. Ms. Gatley responded by suggesting that her quotes were not targeting Asians but merely describing a general transformation of local youth culture centered on obsessive study habits as opposed to a more well rounded lifestyle of sports and other leisurely activities. Gatley’s comments, however, are inherently racialized as several interviewees (as I discuss in chapter 4) mentioned that they noticed a “shift” in study habits that came with Asian immigration to the area. For more information on Gatley’s response, see: "Wall Street Journal article: Gatley and Rowley." 2005. *Cupertino Courier, The (CA)*.



Taiwan. In spite of the homogenizing notion of Greater China as a discourse of belonging in Silicon Valley, these different migrations histories and backgrounds, at times, matter to their expressions of Chineseness. Most Chinese parents were apathetic to these complaints, often citing their children's individual success as to why the local schools were nationally ranked and not the other way around. But with pressures mounting from various institutional spaces accusing Chinese people purposely choosing not to be community oriented, different Chinese parents decided to engage with the "community" differently. Some parents were like recently elected city council member Barry Chang, who recognized how Asian culture was deliberately excluded from ideas of Cupertino's "community." Hung-Wei, an elected member of the school board, describes herself ideologically different from Barry Chang, whose more "aggressive" approach was not necessarily her style for community building. Hung-Wei remembers that Chang mobilized different Chinese parents, including her, to strategize on how to play a larger role in their children's education. According to Hung-Wei, Chang wanted to transform their children's educational curriculum that centered Chinese immigrant experiences in the United States within local history, social studies, and language curriculum. Some parents like Chang wanted schools to engage with Chinese history in the United States as a way to transform Cupertino's public culture to be more inclusive of different community members. Hung-Wei diverged from Chang's approaches. Chang, according to Hung-Wei, did not necessarily know how to collaborate with white parents. Chang's outbursts in various public forums, Hung-Wei said, did not necessarily help the community come together. Although she deeply respected Chang's goals, Hung-Wei explained that she wasn't necessarily interested in Chang's platforms at the time,

choosing instead to do what she did best: fundraising for school programs that addressed the needs of all children (Hung-Wei 2009).

Raymond, a former parent volunteer at a local Chinese language school who helped spearhead early attempts in the 1990s at implementing Chinese language education in Cupertino public schools, affirmed some of Chang's ideas. Chow pressured the local school system to teach Chinese languages because of the transformation to the global economy. But he was also intent on pressuring local public schools to teach Chinese language and history to highlight both Chinese contributions to "America" and the experiences of racism they experienced. Although an immigrant from Taiwan with no historical connection to early Chinese immigrants to California in the late 19th century, early 20th century, Raymond linked the prejudice his Chinese friend's daughter faced at school living in a majority white city of Pleasanton with experiences of anti-Chinese racism of early Chinese immigrants. His friend's daughter's white classmates regularly picked on her for being Chinese, said Raymond, which made it difficult for her to succeed at school (Raymond 2009).

For Raymond and some other Chinese parents, making Chinese history a part of local curriculum was important for transforming local perceptions of Chinese people and communities. Like the ideological divisions, Chinese parents approaches to visibility when it came to curriculum also differed. Some parents like Chow utilized the language and practices of neoliberalism as an everyday response to histories of discrimination and local prejudice views of Chinese non-inclusion within Silicon Valley. It is this focus of Greater China's economic importance and their effect on the future of Silicon Valley that shapes how Chinese people see themselves and how non-Chinese members of Cupertino

see Chinese immigrants and Chinese culture as part of the civic life. With the high school Advanced Placement (AP) Mandarin language test becoming available in 2006, Richard felt that the test became the perfect benchmark for how Chinese language and culture should be taught to their children. The AP Chinese test, Richard noted, became the unifying force that brought different parents with disparate ideas of what Chinese culture was important to learn and how best to teach it.<sup>3</sup> With the AP Chinese test standardizing how Chinese should be learned in public school and Chinese language school education, “practicality” became the slogan by which Richard transformed how CMS taught Chinese language and culture.<sup>4</sup> But Richard and several of his colleagues (some administrators from different Chinese schools in Cupertino) emphasized how the U.S. State Department prioritized Chinese language (Mandarin) as important to the national economy and the national security of the United States in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the CIA, FBI, NSA, and Foreign Service all seeking Mandarin-speaking applicants for various job positions in national defense. Richard adds that the potential threat of a hostile takeover of the United States by China prefigures the prioritization of learning Chinese language. Along with the shifts in global business, various institutions of the state – education and national defense – guide how different administrators of Chinese schools strategize of how best to teach Chinese language and culture week-to-week in the

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<sup>3</sup> Shu-Mei Shih describes how since the Chinese civil war, competing notions of “Chineseness” between Taiwan and China’s governments have led to tensions between the two states. As the two states jostle over Taiwan’s unification or independence from China, representations of “authentic” Chinese culture are often at stake or construed as political statements about Taiwan independence. Shih documents how political or cultural discourses of Taiwan independence have led to China’s militaristic threats of attack. Shih further documents that as Taiwan’s economy gradually became dependent on China’s growth, the “ambiguity” experienced by the Chinese in Taiwan over these relations has led to varied representations of “Chineseness” that both references a desire and repulsion of “China.” Shin-Ming describes how these events guide how some Chinese parents are so adamant about changing what representations of Chinese culture and language their children are exposed to. See Shumei Shi. *Visuality And Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across The Pacific, Asia Pacific Modern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Passing the AP Chinese test provides 250 hours of college class, equivalent to two years of language at the college-level.

classrooms. The representations of Chinese culture circulating in Silicon Valley are more than just abstract cultural practices; they come to represent various desires for different people that come together at the confluence of national and regional economic, political and social priorities. Chinese parents bind federal and local state power to Chinese language schools and attempt to institutionalize them within the operations of state governance as it pertains to the national and regional political economy. For Chinese parents, Chinese schools can guide youth towards education in hopes of accumulating human capital to leverage towards their citizenship in Silicon Valley, a place that economically values Chinese transnational subjects. These weekly Friday evening gatherings of Chinese parents and their children naturalizes in their lives the role and meanings of Chinese language and culture as it pertains to their sense of belonging in Silicon Valley and how they make Chinese Silicon Valley.

A particular example of how Chineseness is written into the city's collective memory through spatial narratives of high-tech practice is the Measure B presentation presented by the superintendent of the Cupertino school district to CMS. I had been observing CMS classes and events for several months at this point, having interviewed several volunteers and administrators about how they saw Chinese language as important to their lives and their children's futures. The former president of CMS, James, had invited me to attend this presentation as he thought it would be a good event to see what the Chinese community looked like.

Measure B was the renewal of the parcel tax that asked all Cupertino homeowners under the age 65 to pay \$98 per year to subsidize high school education. With budget cuts to education at the state-level, the \$98 from each homeowner is more crucial than

ever as it would help off-set Fremont Union High School District's \$10 million dollar shortfall by half for the upcoming school year. I sat in the third row of the Lynbrook High School library and noticed when I turned around to see that the 200 seats were almost filled with Chinese parents. Current CMS president Steven quickly introduced the superintendant, giving her a very warm welcome by describing her as a very important and significant politician in the community – even if she isn't a politician. I don't think the superintendant quite understood how he was explaining her presence at their Chinese school that evening as she opened by saying "I'm sorry but I cannot give my presentation in Mandarin." This elicited laughter from the audience.

The superintendant opened by thanking the Chinese school for inviting her to speak on an important topic. She followed that up by telling the parents and staff present at the presentation how she recognized Chinese schools as an integral part of the Chinese and "mainstream" (read=white) community. She then told the audience how she respected the diversity of their community, as evidenced by the various Chinese schools presently in the area.

She quickly began her PowerPoint presentation to describe how education was a "great investment," quickly moving to the theme of their students as "citizens of the world." The first slide described graduation rates and the percentage of students that would go on to four-year universities, relative to neighboring cities. The next few slides showed their student's global approach to the world as they highlighted the Cupertino High School's class of 2010's fundraising project titled, "Kenya Dream?," which refers to their class's goal of raising enough money to repair and update one school in Kenya

with a learning center outfitted with new computer technology.<sup>5</sup> The superintendent described the origins of this project from then-high school freshman Justin Li, a Chinese American student, who one day felt inspired to give to others after realizing he was blessed with so many educational opportunities within his local school system. Dell Computers, the corporate sponsor, would donate a \$100,000 to go towards a “super-prom,” the prize for the winning class’s humanitarian efforts at helping people across the world (Wilson and Sandra Gonzales 2010). Cupertino High School’s class of 2010 decided to donate all their annual fundraising money, money that goes towards offsetting the costs of junior and senior prom dances, towards helping Nthimbiri Secondary School.

Several pictures from the superintendent’s PowerPoint presentation showed the now-high school senior, Lin, taking photos with Kenyan high school students, holding up an oversized check in addition to photos of before and after shots of the school in Kenya post-donations. Since 2008, the class of 2010 has raised over \$25,000 dollars with the Cupertino Rotary Club matching with \$25,000. The images showed Kenyan youth hanging around outside their schools in uniforms, sitting on chopped logs of wood, seemingly loitering instead of learning. The superintendent commented that this “before” image showed the struggles of the Kenyan educational system in comparison to the tech-ready library we all sat in. The “after” shots, however, showed completely different images as it showed students indoors and attentively working on their new Dell Computers.

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<sup>5</sup> “Kenya Dream?” is a play on words, which also could be “Can ya dream?” In the presentation, the superintendent shows a promotional video that the students made. The promotional video doesn’t describe what the money would be used for specifically. But on the official website, Kenya Dream includes more than just the technological improvements – the only thing the superintendent had described – such as sewage systems, additional classroom space, and a lunchroom. The superintendent did not describe these additional services, focusing primarily on the fundraising efforts of students and the challenge/competition created by Dell Computers.

The next slide showed two high school students, Chinese and Indian classmates, as the two winners of Intel's talent search, both coming from Lynbrook High School. This was a first of its kind. The superintendant described the winning projects as based on innovating new technologies through internship opportunities with globally recognized companies, which only students living in Silicon Valley could have so much direct access at a young age. The superintendant only mentioned the project of the winning Chinese student, whose project had to do with facial recognition technologies. She then moved to another slide, which showed more award-winning Chinese and Indians students for collaborative projects with NASA.

Following the discussion about student achievement, the superintendant began to describe what the parcel tax actually is, what the money would be used for, and how Cupertino's parcel tax compared to neighboring affluent cities of Silicon Valley and the Peninsula region with similar education, class, and employment profiles. The superintendant emphasizes how their school district has braced itself for this budget shortfall, predicting it would manifest a few years prior. In order to ensure that their students maintained top-notch tools for learning, the Fremont Union High School District froze compensation for administrators, which included an end to raises as well as cutting back staff and, of course, hiring freezes. The superintendant adds, "We have great relations with our unions ... and they understand that all this is for the future of our children." I glance across the crowd and Chinese heads nod in agreement.

The superintendant made note that she was unable to endorse a position given her job as the superintendant. But, she then introduced members of the school board, Homer Tong, a Chinese resident in his 60s, and Bill Wilson, a white man in his 40s, who could

and would. Homer Tong briefly mentioned how this was an important tax that needed to be passed to ensure that the legacy of Cupertino schools stay strong. Bill Wilson, also spoke very briefly, merely saying that this investment in education “creates the workers to keep this place prosperous.”

Following the presentation was a question and answer session directed towards Tong and Wilson, which several Chinese parents raised their hands to ask questions about how the city planned on spending the money:

“Will this be spent on teacher pay raises?”

“You said this money would not be spent on teachers. Why is money used for teachers and classroom support staff?”

“If you used the facilities bond money on solar panels to save energy, did you get it done in time to get the rebates? I read that there were rebates if you installed them by a specific time....”<sup>6</sup>

The Measure B presentation brought together different cultural and economic discourses that shape how Silicon Valley as a place is understood. Also, this particular narration of contemporary Cupertino educational success showed how Chinese immigrants were the proper citizens of Cupertino and the Silicon Valley as they contribute, at a young age no less, to globally recognized companies and are socially and culturally conditioned by these companies. Whereas the presentation was as much about exercising Chinese immigrants’ voting rights as concerned citizens of Santa Clara County, the priority of passing Measure B was presented by the superintendant and school board members as a question of sustaining a cosmopolitan lifestyle and cultures of material achievement centered on technology, which Chinese people are portrayed as central to its successful social and economic reproduction. This Silicon Valley narrative of youth achievement in

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<sup>6</sup> Participant Observation. Silicon Valley Chinese School. 20 March 2010.



philanthropy, education, and technology discursively bind who will make up the present and the future of Silicon Valley, which school board member Bill Wilson refers to as “the workers to keep this place prosperous.” Moreover, within this narration, Chinese immigrants remap Cupertino and Silicon Valley space in a coherent narrative pieced together by multiple places, which Chineseness is central to these connections. Also, this narrative reinvents Silicon Valley as an international region, which the PowerPoint presentation shows South Asian and Chinese American youth performing these regional strips of behavior, articulated through the high-tech industry giant of Dell Computers, in their everyday activities.<sup>7</sup> The idea of Cupertino’s “citizens of the world” makes sense through the language of technology as pictures of Kenyan students learning with computers like students in Silicon Valley, with global high-tech industry’s imprint on this African school. But it is not just Dell Computers but other globally recognized high-tech institutions including Intel and NASA.

Embedded within the superintendent’s presentation of the crises of Cupertino’s high schools, however, is the existing narrative or myth-making of the region’s exceptional lifestyle: maintaining great property values and sustaining their city’s competitiveness as an exclusive upper-middle class city relative to neighboring cities like Palo Alto, Los Altos, Saratoga, and Los Gatos (known to be the homes of high-tech executives that live in the secluded hillsides that border the western portion of the bay area also known as the “Peninsula”). The presentation places Chinese immigrants and their children neatly within Silicon Valley imaginary. Their everyday individual achievement visibly normalized across the cultural geography reproduces ideas of the

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<sup>7</sup> Dell Computers is headquartered in Round Rock, Texas, but does not have any facilities in California. But my point in bringing up Dell Computers, however, is to show how technology is still part of the narration and backdrop of youth achievement in Silicon Valley.

region's technological innovation and economic success. The Chinese community, through this presentation presented by the superintendent, also represents the Valley's purported diversity as an advanced degree holding, upper-middle-class Chinese (and broadly Asian) immigrant and their families. The questions by Chinese parents about how the tax money will be used along with the need by the superintendent to emphasize to parents that the money will not be used for compensation for teachers suggests who and what should be prioritized when it comes to maintaining educational excellence and a robust economy in Silicon Valley.

This presentation demonstrates how Chinese immigrants write themselves and are written by others into this popular narrative of Silicon Valley's exceptional quality of life. The white superintendent's citation of Chinese language and cultural education schools as significant institutions of Cupertino's "diversity" operates as a performative utterance that naturalizes like any other Silicon Valley institutions, such as high-tech companies. But the Chinese school language instructors themselves discursively enable these connections between race, culture, and modes of production in Silicon Valley within their re-narrations of the everyday in Silicon Valley past, present, and the future. While observing an 8<sup>th</sup> grade Chinese language class at CMS, the teacher, Mrs. Lee, the instructor, was teaching a vocabulary lesson from the textbook, which used the history of California's Gold Rush as an example of Chinese experiences in California. But the lesson was framed as a transnational Chinese immigrant experience, particularly around the labor of railroad construction and gold mining. Mrs. Lee would ask the class if they were familiar with these stories of railroad construction or gold mining, which everyone nodded in agreement. The students learned words like "sifting" (referencing how people

found gold), “steel,” or “immigrant,” which she added at the end, “you are all immigrants.” The next sentence that Mrs. Lee read from the textbook seemed to capture the main point of the lesson:

(In Mandarin) Chinese immigrants came to Gold Mountain to search for a better life. All the money they would make, they would send it back to China, to support their families. (Looking up from the text) Do you see how this is just like you and your families? Your parents also came to this area for work and job opportunities. Does your family keep in touch with their relatives, too? Do a lot of you go back to Taiwan?

The portrayal of Chinese immigrant life as defined by labor and transpacific circulation of people and money by both the textbook and Mrs. Lee suggest how Chinese culture, in part, emerges in the lives of Chinese youth here in the Silicon Valley. The early Chinese migration to the San Francisco Bay Area and California, portrayed as abstracted of institutionalized racism, was reduced to flexible employment. Mrs. Lee’s interpretation of this continuous history of the everyday in the lives of Chinese immigrants portrays the region as a place that has always prioritized the labor of Chinese people. In the same breath, the portrayals of the region’s cosmopolitan status and its economic transnationalism similarly become a continuous history. I wondered if the choice of not describing racism in the lives of early Chinese laborers within the textbook was a deliberate choice by Mrs. Lee, possibly shattering the colorblind meritocracy that Silicon Valley Chinese residents I interviewed imagined it to be. I was shocked by Mrs. Lee’s narration of Chinese American history, the recombination of historical Silicon Valley place sutured together by notions of a strong, persevering work ethic of flexible employment bound by transnational Chinese familial responsibility. In this lesson, Chinese people became naturally included within the Bay Area’s cultural and economic geography as workers and representative of the region’s purported diversity.

Glancing across the class, I wondered if Mrs. Lee's lesson got through to the students. At various moments throughout the class, students moved in and out of attention. From punching each other in the arm to giggling and having private conversations, the students looked like they had their minds set on other things that Friday night. But, Mrs. Lee's description of place, specifically through labor and a particular notion of conduct (hard work), creates a historical narrative of Silicon Valley Chinese immigrant presence as completely shaped by economic opportunities. Mrs. Lee creates a continuous, unchanging narrative of Chinese labor in the region, a "travel story," connecting the places of Silicon Valley and Chinese countries through coordinated economic development. More specifically, the narrative of the region comprised of movements of Chinese people and culture transnationally across the Pacific follows the paths of global capitalism and empire, which literary critic Caroline Yang argues as "the persistent erasure of racialized labor in the dominant historiography and literature and the 'disappearing act' of empire in multiculturalism" (Yang 2010). This narrative portrays this global movement as part and parcel to the meaning making of Silicon Valley and the incorporation of Chinese immigrants and their families into the nation-state forgets how they were made into participants of U.S. political and economic hegemonic expansion. In the space of the Chinese school, history lessons revolve around describing, explaining, and naturalizing concepts of the everyday to teach language and culture. Lessons like this one regarding Chinese immigration and labor seem to operate as modes of surveillance that aim to regulate how youth should approach labor, education, and their futures as circumscribed by the places and business of Silicon Valley. The lesson describes the spatially specific notions of surveillance and discipline

of Silicon Valley in their lives, shaped by the particular discourses of economic development between Silicon Valley and Greater China.

The classroom environment of children goofing off, however, suggested to me that fractures existing in how dominant regional ideas about Chinese culture and global economies were implemented at the local level. Several parents told me that they recognized their children would make their own career decisions. As of now, several parents noted, their children were not interested in working in Greater China. But, so long as they were their children, these parents wanted to prepare their children with the proper human capital to be competitive when Greater China begins controlling the direction of the global economy. The attention span of Chinese students in other classrooms I visited was similar to Mrs. Lee's classroom. The children goofing off, playing on their telephones and passing notes, was reason why parent volunteers were needed to help instructors monitor classroom behavior. But even then, parents and instructors were sympathetic to the students and just hoped that some of the Chinese language, culture, and history lessons stuck. But these fractures across generations, however, do not lessen in any way how neoliberalism was part of decision making at CMS.

The concept of the everyday has been of pedagogical significance as to why CMS and other Cupertino Chinese language schools have decided to change their curriculum from the free textbooks from Taiwan to the textbooks written by Chinese language instructors in the United States. Almost all administrators complained that the everyday culture of textbooks from Taiwan contained themes that students in the United States could not relate to. Aside from the units of measure that did not exist in the United

States, such as the New Taiwan dollar or bottles of milk as opposed to gallons, administrators were also concerned that the ancient Chinese legends that they as children learned was out of touch with how Chinese youth should understand the morals of Chinese legends in their own lives. Instead of transnational community formations based on national identity, Chineseness is spatialized by the neoliberal conditions creating these coordinated places of economic development and “brain circulation” between Silicon Valley and Greater China.<sup>8</sup>

But beyond the everyday habits listed in their textbooks of eating and shopping that reference junk food commonly seen in grocery stores and retail seen at most malls in the United States, Confucian “value-systems” as an ideology of work are what some parents find to be necessary aspects of Chinese culture which should be taught at Chinese schools and preserved and adapted to their children’s lives in the United States. For several parents, Confucian teachings provided what they saw as instilling the proper conduct towards being a successful Silicon Valley worker, using their own success and behavior as exemplary of how necessary it is in their children’s lives and Silicon Valley’s on-going success. In discussing how they wanted their children to act in the future, they commonly reference their work attitude of ‘humbleness’ as part and parcel to the successful culture of collaboration that has led to many groundbreaking innovations.

In their imagination of the future, the Silicon Valley present – the work place itself and the ideal conduct of business – is how Chinese immigrant parents resignify existing mythologies of Silicon Valley, but with Chinese people central to its social

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<sup>8</sup> AnnaLee Saxenian refutes the notion of “brain drain” in contemporary high-tech industries, which refers to educated graduates studying or working abroad, given that education or job opportunities are available in their homelands. “Brain circulation,” Saxenian argues, better describes in the trans-Pacific circulation of people and ideas as Chinese and Indians have returned home to develop high-tech industries, but collaborate with their colleagues at high-tech firms in Silicon Valley.

reproduction. In describing what it means to be “humble,” Richard mentions it is an important Chinese cultural trait, which could be seen in the cultural attitudes of people in the Silicon Valley. Richard described the very ordinary lifestyle and characteristics of CEOs in Silicon Valley that he attributed to the upbringing of what he saw as Confucian values:

I think fundamentally this is the area that provides elite environment for children...those CEOs, they care about education. They send kids to Chinese schools. So it's providing a unique opportunity for the kids to grow here. It's incredible. Many years ago I was chatting with someone, my colleague in my previous company that grew up in the New England area. He said he attended high school, a private high school. And he said in his vacation time, he usually stay in Scottsdale. Play golf. That's the lifestyle. And I said, I kind of ask, what is the main objective? And the main benefit of sending kids to attend that prestigious private school. He said, 'You know, everybody you meet in those days are potential CEOs because their parents have so much money.' They will give them the money to become CEOs. So you feel tremendous opportunity to make the connection. And we have a bunch of CEOs here, they all come from nobodies. They are much...you can say they are a class higher than those CEOs, those future CEOs they met. So it's a real opportunity for the kids growing up here, lots of their friends, their childhood friends maybe their lifelong business partners, you never know. So this is the huge incredible value for people to live here. Not only themselves, but also their kids.

I quoted Richard at-length here because it exemplifies what I see as Chinese people both aligning and re-interpreting the expected conduct and expectations for success when living in the Silicon Valley. Within the existing economies of meaning around Silicon Valley's exceptionalism versus the East Coast, Richard creates his notion of “humble” against the privilege and opportunities of his friend that comes from wealth passed on from family members generation to generation. Richard maps Confucian value of “humbleness” as related to the specific culture of Silicon Valley success. Education and Silicon Valley places of work are two institutions of importance to Chinese parents and their children's lives, bound together by global economic development.

Moreover, Shing-Ming's narration of the Chinese cultural practices of the work place rely on Silicon Valley's "garage myth" to explain how Chinese people naturally fit into, yet reinvent Silicon Valley space. For Chinese parents like Richard who are concerned about U.S.-China economic development and what that means as far as their children's career and national recognition, the practice of Chinese culture in Silicon Valley as a meritocracy narrative maintains the myth of colorblind achievement that defines the region. In Silicon Valley historical lore of its regional high-tech giants, such as Apple, Hewlett-Packard, and Google, to some degree, the "garage" figures largely as representative of a culture of collaboration, where competition can still occur among friends. Or even the idea that competition can help friendships. Richard reiterates this narrative in describing how "childhood friends may be their lifelong business partners," which traces the well-worn narrative paths of rags-to-riches.<sup>9</sup>

Lessons focused on the everyday function as regular disciplinary techniques that are informed by instructors and parents place-specific ideologies centered on trans-Pacific economic development. The stories of "humbleness" imagine Chinese culture within the varied meanings of Silicon Valley's exceptionalism. The retelling of these similar stories of Chinese presence in the area – labor and culture – mutually help create the physical and cultural boundaries of Silicon Valley, enabling of the Chinese hegemony. Chinese schools are another local institution in Cupertino that discipline students with the totalizing logic of Silicon Valley labor. Yet, with the achievement of Chinese immigrants and their children, Chinese people become one dominant and

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<sup>9</sup> A commercial created by candidate for a local government position used the idea of innovation and the garage motif to show how he was part of the "innovative" Silicon Valley tradition which he hoped to represent. Companies like Apple and Hewlett-Packard use these ideas of nobody-to-somebody as explanations of their historical roots. This has taken off as part of the narrative of Silicon Valley. The commercial showed the candidate campaigning out of his garage.



prevailing narrative of maintaining Silicon Valley's exceptionalism as guided by its global economic structures which Chinese people have been instrumental to its proliferation.

### **Silicon Valley Moon Festival and The Disciplinary Force of Barbecue**

An annual event for almost a decade, the Silicon Valley Moon Festival (SVMF) became a widely attended local event with the aim of integrating Chinese immigrants into the community. Held at Memorial Park, Cupertino's central park located along one of the major thoroughfares that cuts through downtown, the event aim was to bring Chinese culture "to the mainstream" by holding it in a common communal location in the city. In this section, I focus on the strategic usage of Memorial Park, a place of community public services (senior citizens center and youth programming) and other free community events, by Chinese immigrants and their attempts to re-narrate the city's current and future history to include Chinese immigrants through their annual performance of Chinese culture within this public space. But unlike the Chinese immigrants at Chinese language schools, the SVMF organizers purposely spatialized and symbolized their social citizenship within Memorial Park in order to evacuate themselves of any personal financial interest. Upset by the lack of English signs in the inaugural year of the SVMF, white residents (and some Chinese residents) complained publicly in the local newspaper, the Cupertino Courier, that this was a racially exclusive event. Further, they continued to complain that the event was just Chinese vendors trying to make money in spite of the free Chinese cultural performances. In local press, SVMF organizers claimed that they created this festival in response to the national perception that Chinese leaders in the Bay Area attempted to buy influence through soft money donations to the Clinton

administration.<sup>10</sup> Lucia Wu, a festival organizer, said they wanted “to show that the Chinese people are eager to give back to the community” (Che 2002, 2003c). But this section shows the on-going resistance by some white residents in sharing the festival organizers’ travel stories of a Chinese and White harmonious future symbolized by their mutual coexistence on Cupertino community space.



Figure 5-1: One of the City of Cupertino emblems, the gazebo sits at the center of Cupertino’s Memorial Park. Photo by the author.

Maggie, a Chinese immigrant from Hong Kong who was one of the organizers, said that the aim of the festival was to introduce and describe Chinese culture in a way that promoted cultural tolerance and sharing between mainstream and Chinese residents in Cupertino. The Cupertino Courier quoted organizers and volunteers as describing the festival as the Chinese equivalent to Thanksgiving in the United States, an annual gathering of family and friends. Every year, Moon Festival organizers sought different

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<sup>10</sup> In Maggie’s home hung a photo of her and Bill Clinton shaking hands. When I asked how that happened, she muttered, “That’s nothing.” When she showed me her archives of SVMF materials she kept over the years, she broke in tears telling me that she never felt accepted in the different societies – British and American – she lived in as an adult. She described instances where she was culturally excluded from both, mentioning the SVMF as a clear example of how she is made into an outsider in spite of her attempts at becoming an insider.

traditional Chinese cultural performances, inviting performance troupes from Los Angeles, Taiwan, and China. At its height between 2001-2004, the two-day festival, SVMF reportedly drew upwards of up to 100,000 people. People from across the greater



Figure 5-2: The Silicon Valley Moon Festival no longer exists, but Chinese cultural festivals such as the World Journal's "Mother's Day Festival" are still held at Memorial Park. The gazebo sits in the background. Photo by the author.

San Francisco Bay Area, from as far south as Monterrey Bay<sup>11</sup> to as far north as Sacramento,<sup>12</sup> would drive in to experience Chinese culture. One group of Chinese people from Monterrey Bay, according to Mei-Li, one of the organizers from 2005-2008, mentioned that they chartered a bus for 60 people to drive up to Cupertino because being "isolated" from larger Chinese communities they missed all the culture that they used to experience "at home" (Mei-Li 2010).<sup>13</sup> Pictured in the Cupertino Courier, elected city

<sup>11</sup> Approximately 70 miles south of Cupertino

<sup>12</sup> Approximately 140 miles north-east of Cupertino

<sup>13</sup> I conducted my interview with Mei-Li at the Quinlan community center. We sat in a corner of the community center next to the main hall where the Rotary International Club, one of the "old boys clubs" as

officials were pictured in local press dressed in traditional Chinese clothes or participating in tea and wedding ceremonies. Through the mutual experience of practicing and learning about Chinese culture, the event organizers hoped to give back to the city of Cupertino by fostering greater understanding between Chinese and White people and cultures. To show their faith in the City of Cupertino as members of their community, the Moon Festival donated a percentage of their earnings to local service organizations and city building projects (Scott 1999).

As mentioned earlier, the organizers' choice to hold the event at Memorial Park was strategic in renarrating the city and resignifying Chinese cultural practices as "community-oriented," in light of on-going feelings by local white residents that Chinese immigrants only cared about money. Memorial Park is located right in the middle of the strip of Stevens Creek Boulevard that cuts through the "downtown" portion of Cupertino, sitting across and next to a mix of residential, commercial, educational, and governmental buildings. It could be considered the epicenter of the city not just for its location next to the commercial and retail buildings around it, but for the city-hosted community-based events and the various community recreation centers located on the park itself that are open and free to the public. Several annual festivals are held in Memorial Park, such as Shakespeare in the Park, the Cherry Blossom Festival, the Diwali Festival of the Lights, and the annual summer movie and concert series (all free). The Quinlan Community Center on the east side of the park houses the city's park and recreation office as well as several large meeting halls where recreation courses such as yoga and children's arts and

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told to me by Chinese people and white women in Cupertino, holds its weekly meetings. In the middle of my interview, 2 men emerged from the hall as the meeting was letting out and one of the men who I had never met before yelled out "I wonder what those two people are talking about." When I didn't respond, the gentleman came closer, peered over, and joked to his colleagues, "Obviously some very important business." His comments were disrupting to the interview. Him and his friends walked off laughing.

crafts take place. Guaranteed at any time of the morning and afternoon, you will find Chinese and south Asian parents milling around the Quinlan Center with their children, either sitting along a couch watching their children do homework or waiting for their child's recreation class to begin or let out. The Cupertino Historical Society has an office at the Quinlan Community Center and the Rotary International Club of Cupertino holds its weekly meetings in one of the conference halls. Other notable park facilities include the Senior Center and the Veterans Memorial of Cupertino Residents, with bronze statues of soldiers crouched back to back with their guns pointed, a scene symbolizing combat and the country.

The various local institutions at the park along with the annual events and activities provide on-going snapshots of the city's identity. Seemingly multicultural and inclusive, the park, as city property, and its events portray how the usage of the space continually creates new representations of the city's past, present, and future. And while the city's present and future are continuously being contested and remade, the past to be remembered at "Memorial Park" remains constant with a Gazebo in the middle of the park as one of the two emblems that the City of Cupertino uses, which can be seen on Rotary Club pins, newsletters, newspapers, city website, etc. The gazebo has a significant place in Cupertino historical narratives as the roof contains lattice-wood working, "gingerbread," taken straight from the home of Enoch Parrish, considered to be one of several important "original families" who helped establish Cupertino's local economy and social life at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The park contains various symbols of Cupertino's history and possible future. The SVMF, however, is the one



event that the visual and cues of Chinese ethnicity seems to disrupt the existing hegemonic economies of meanings.

In spite of the event’s growing popularity and the visual evidence of white and Chinese harmony through cultural sharing, the organizers of SVMF had a challenging



Figure 5-3: During the “Mother’s Day Festival,” the World Journal Newspaper held college application seminars at the Cupertino Senior Center. Photo by the author.

relationship with the city of Cupertino. Whether it was sabotage or attempted hostile takeover by public elected officials or formal complaints made by residents to city council for sound, traffic, or odor issues, the SVMF ran into several road blocks from different residents when it came to putting on the event. White residents and white

publicly elected officials of Cupertino have been wary over the usage of public space by festival organizers. The temporary clustering of Chinese culture and people in Cupertino's Memorial Park proved to be, at times, an unacceptable representation of who could be part of the community and what the community should look like based on the Chinese activities held at the central meeting place in Cupertino. Some white residents tried to contain the SVMF's size, smell, and sounds through various complaints about traffic, odorous foods, and sounds escalating above city ordinance levels. Mei-Li mentioned how city officials came out during the weekend of the Moon Festival to ensure that the sound did not exceeded 70 decibels, the maximum allotted levels during the daytime. After checking the levels hourly, the collective sound of people and performers never came close to clearing the maximum decibels level. Mei-Li mentions that one particular year, 10 local residents (8 "Caucasians" and 2 South Asians) approached the city council to complain that that "the food was too smelly for them" and that there were too many cars coming in, which increased traffic in the neighborhoods. Mei-Li and others worked asked the police if they could block off streets for the festival, which the police responded "no" since these were public roads. "There was nothing I could do," Mei-Li concludes (2010). Mei-Li further elaborates on the contradiction between the Moon Festival being a public community festival, needing to contain the seeming overflow of Chinese culture and people that day, and their fundraising tactics:

Another thing that they did was they said there was far too many people coming, which makes it too noisy. But what happened was I cannot advertise say "Look we have a Moon Festival, you are not allowed to come, you are not welcome." If I wanted to be successful, I have to encourage more people to come. So, I do not know how to please people by discouraging people to come (Mei-Li 2010).

In addition, rumors circulated that these same public officials and civic service nonprofits balked at their support of the festival, intending to derail the festival altogether.<sup>14</sup> Maggie described the “old boys club” mentality throughout the Rotary Club and City Council. Maggie said that then mayor at the time of the festival’s inaugural year, Richard Lowenthal, was particularly prejudiced against her. I asked how she thought he was prejudice and what she thought he had anything to be prejudice about. Maggie added that she felt Lowenthal thought she was just some “Chinese nobody” and that he was suspicious of what she was trying to do in his city. She said this enmity was enhanced by the low attendance at the annual events that the city, itself, puts on such as the Rotary Club’s now-defunct Oktoberfest. She describes how the first year of the Moon Festival, everyone – residents (Chinese and White), city council, and the local press – was overtly critical of how exclusive the festival was to non-Chinese since no signs were in English. Lowenthal and his Rotary Club colleagues, Maggie recalls, arrived and laughed at the SVMF low attendance the first year, leaving immediately. She then mentioned a time when Lowenthal and the Rotary Club tried to sabotage the SMVF by planning their annual fundraising barbeque on the same day and at the same place (Quinlan community center) as the SVMF even though she had booked the space months in advance and having it placed on the Cupertino city calendar of events equally ahead of time. Lowenthal asked Maggie to purchase 100 tickets since she could not attend. She bought two tickets, which she made her two children attend in her absence. “You know, Chinese

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<sup>14</sup> The Rotary Club International chapter of Cupertino, like the Cupertino Chamber of Commerce, operates as an arm of the local government. As one of my interviewees described it, the Rotary Club is where all the ‘movers and shakers’ of the city are at. By that, my interviewee meant that anyone interested in public office should join the Rotary Club first to know the right people for networking purposes. This includes school board members, city council, parks commissions, etc. Because of this, the Rotary Club becomes synonymous with the “City of Cupertino.” Even though it is not managed by the city of Cupertino, Rotary Club is still an influential local service organization, which represents, officially and unofficially, the city at various events as a cosponsor.



people just don't eat a lot of meat," was another one of Maggie's reasons for why she refused, or rather, could not purchase 100 tickets for people in the Chinese community. But, she adds that once Lowenthal realized how hard she worked and how popular SVMF had become, he became a staunch supporter later along with other city council members because their visible presence at SVMF was great publicity for re-election campaigns:

Everyone has an agenda. Everyone comes in because they want something. Because we're so successful, all these politicians want to put down that they were a part of the Moon Festival. You know, oh they're so 'multicultural'. They do this for the city. That's fine with me. They just need to do their jobs when they volunteer (Maggie 2009).

Maggie and Mei-Li's run-ins with city council members reflect the particular stakes of Cupertino public spaces in the affirmation of who represents Cupertino's community. Diversity matters for some locally elected officials when it is convenient for their personal gain. Not all white residents were against the festival. But Maggie and Mei-Li recalled their several run-ins with local white residents and elected officials whom resented the Moon Festival, often describing the sensual experiences of Chinese culture in the city of Cupertino as incongruent with the types of activities that should be taking place on Cupertino public space. What types of foods should be cooked and eaten – barbeque versus "smelly" Chinese food – and attempts at managing traffic and outsiders entering the city reveal the local resistance to the rewriting of Cupertino's present and future with these spatialized strips of Chinese behavior. Even as Maggie and Mei-Li cited Memorial Park as opposed to the local high-tech industry in their performance of social citizenship, locals balked at the possible juxtaposition of "American" and Chinese culture within the regional cultural geography.

The particular policing of how Chinese people utilize Memorial Park reveals how space (and how it is imagined) has historically mattered in the spatial production of whiteness in the making of Cupertino, and, by extension, Silicon Valley. Some residents' pleas to city council about the SVMF's sights, sounds, and smells in addition to local public officials' attempts at sabotage suggest how Memorial Park became a place of disciplining Chinese immigrants through everyday behaviors such as cooking and eating. As a place of remembering through the re-iteration of annual festivals that aim to represent and benefit the community, the Rotary Clubs' barbeque fundraiser was in cultural opposition to Maggie's Moon Festival. As white residents felt that Chinese food was inappropriate for the park and the nearby neighborhoods, barbecue appeared to be Lowenthal's secret weapon against the Moon Festival. The forceful way by which Lowenthal demanded that Maggie purchase one hundred tickets to his Rotary Club fundraiser suggests how restorative behavior operates in Cupertino as competing narrations of the city's cultural history and cultural geography are at stake. No matter the recombination of strips of behavior by Chinese residents to rid themselves of their seemingly non-community oriented conduct, white residents used public space in Cupertino to further manage Chinese residents' behaviors to maintain the equivalence of whiteness with Silicon Valley.

The economic capital in the form of fundraising that Chinese immigrants have successfully accrued and mobilized in organizing the SVMF simultaneously represents for white residents' the erasure of American cultural festivals, particularly the once popular Oktoberfest hosted by the Rotary Club. When asking some Chinese public servants about the disappearance of Oktoberfest, they jokingly responded that "Chinese

people just don't drink!" Jokes asides, these public servants felt that part of the local white perception regarding the loss of Oktoberfest is attributed to their idea that Chinese immigrants – residents and business people – forced the Rotary Club to retire and revamp the festival in its current state as a health and safety fair, also known as "Fall Fest." With reference to Lowenthal and the members of the "old boys club," unofficially known as Rotary, Maggie adds that she thinks their fears are related to the loss of white economic power:

Maggie: "They were scared. You know, they think we're a threat."

Brian: "Who's a threat?"

Maggie: "Chinese people. Like they're going to come in and take over everything. Their stores...everything."

The complaints against the Moon Festival capture the anxieties over the visual economies of meanings embedded within places that enable hegemonic formations to persist.

Another example would be the complaints over the lack of English signage, which many residents equate with Chinese immigrants deliberately refusing to assimilate. Mei-Li recalls that in 2005, an older woman in her late forties complained to city council that she walked through the festival and felt that it was uninviting because of the lack of English signs. Mei-Li rebutted:

Some of the things that people complained... they feel so intimidated because it's all Chinese. There wasn't a single Chinese sign. But (pause) I object to that because up until the last year, I actually did 50 more signs to have in Chinese and English. *And when those people who complained when they came in, they did not want to accept, so they couldn't SEE* (her emphasis). And they said they came from the Quinlan center all the way to the stage by the center, they couldn't find anyone to help her. The thing was, I did have the right information that's right here (points out the door). I cannot see how they could miss. Then to me is they have their predetermined or pre-set mind they are against us. So we have to do

even more. So if she had come to me or any of us, we would have given her a tour. If she had come to us rather than going to the city council saying we're too noisy.

What struck me in Mei-Li's interpretation of the event was her emphasis of this one woman's deliberate inability to visualize Chinese and English languages within Memorial Park. The woman's perception of what Memorial Park should look like, temporarily cluttered with Chinese culture, blocked her from seeing the English signage. Even as people like Maggie and Mei-Li tried to accommodate local residents, this particular example suggests that any symbols of Chinese culture cannot disrupt the spatial practices of whiteness that has been such a part of Cupertino's history.

Maggie and Mei-Li both recognize how inter-racial conflicts between white and Chinese residents, particularly the white stereotypes of Chinese business cultures and the subsequent misunderstandings of Chinese people, have meant that Chinese people cannot be accepted as part of the "community" by white residents. To combat these stereotypes and these perceptions of Chinese people as consumed by money, Maggie and Mei-Li both emphasized the voluntary nature of the festival and their labor for how they believe Chinese people can become respected as members of the community. More specifically, the relationship between volunteering and Chinese community acceptance is sutured together by what seems to be the deliberate evacuation of Chinese people and culture with any connection to market forces. As the various members of the city have criticized Chinese residents and business owners for being consumed by money, Maggie and Mei-Li organized this festival at Memorial Park with the aim of encouraging Chinese people to be more community-oriented.

## **Conclusion**

The SVMF shows how competing travel stories with different strips of behavior' between Chinese and white residents created differing normative subjects and power relations within Silicon Valley place. Recognizing that white residents found them economically threatening, festival organizers used Memorial Park as the host site to show local white residents that this was a deliberate move to incorporate themselves as part of the community by evacuating themselves of any discourses of economic development. In the case of Cupertino Mandarin School, Chinese parents cited familiar places of Silicon Valley, such as the work place or the humble place of the neighborhood, the restorative behavior of Chinese language practice affirmed Silicon Valley mythologies of meritocracy, yet rewrites Silicon Valley's future history with Chinese immigrants and culture as central to its reproduction. Together, these two major events in Cupertino show how Chinese immigrants make sense of their social citizenship by the particular coordinated spaces of global capital and the contingent ideologies. Moreover, these narrations show the exceptional space that Silicon Valley holds for Chinese and white residents as economic discourses of place greatly shape their notions of identity and their claims to power.

## CHAPTER 6

### Epilogue

Raymond is a middle-aged Taiwanese naturalized U.S. citizen who created his own start-up company selling biomedical equipment to hospitals around the world. He invited me over to his home to chat. Raymond and his family live in a two-story ranch house in one of the older subdivisions in the city, made up entirely of single story and two-story ranch houses. I had just begun interviewing parent volunteers at a local Chinese language school in Cupertino, California and a few parents highly recommended Raymond since he helped spearhead early effort by the local Chinese community in the 1990s to implement Mandarin language instruction in Cupertino's public schools.<sup>1</sup> When I asked him about how and why he got involved with Chinese language schools, Raymond's account of the importance of Chinese language education turned into a larger narrative of Silicon Valley's exceptional standard of living, which allowed for the economic achievement and activities of Chinese immigrants on a regional and global scale. That is, Raymond re-iterated commonly held beliefs that Silicon Valley is cultural frontier of democratized cool where nerds and geeks were the local celebrities.

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<sup>1</sup> Different Chinese language schools teach different Chinese dialects. More often than not, different Chinese language schools cater to the different streams of Chinese immigration from different regions of "Greater China." For the most part, all Chinese language schools teach the "national language" of Mandarin, also known among many Cupertino parents as the official business language of the future along with English. With the exception of one Chinese language school that teaches the dialect of Cantonese, servicing Chinese people predominately from Hong Kong, Chinese people either from China or Taiwan created Chinese language school that teach Mandarin.

Like many other Chinese immigrants I interviewed, Raymond argued that the technological industry valued innovation over racial preference. Therefore, to his mind, Silicon Valley transcended the racisms that the rest of the country has been mired in. Raymond claimed that Silicon Valley was truly “The American Dream,” and he cited as proof the acceptance of Chinese culture across the economic and cultural geography the success of the companies YouTube and Yahoo! in addition to Chinese language schools. For Raymond, these places symbolic of Chinese cultural presence also communicate the appropriate kinds of everyday behavior need to survive and participate in Silicon Valley and its transpacific industries. For Raymond and many others, attention to Chinese culture, such as language study of the Chinese language, constitutes an investment in human capital, which would be useful as the possibility increases of a future global economy dominated by Greater China (Raymond 2009). With Chinese language speaking and writing abilities, Chinese youth would be prepared for increased U.S.-China economic partnerships in what has been called “The China Century.”<sup>2</sup> Places of transpacific commerce, such as high-tech firms and Chinese language schools, enable the everyday conduct of Chinese culture. At the same time, the only Chinese identities publicly valorized are the ones that possess the proper human capital productive to Silicon Valley global business. Regional and global economic rationalities determine the meanings and demand for Chinese language and cultural instruction in the lives of residents in Silicon Valley. Different Chinese immigrants I interviewed work for

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<sup>2</sup> Several parents I spoke to closely followed news dedicated to economic trends and policies with regards to “Greater China.” Many media outlets – newspapers and magazines – discussing China’s booming economy as “The China Century” often frame this 21<sup>st</sup> century phenomenon as a hostile takeover of the world. Although they did not use the term “The China Century,” explicitly, in any interviews, most of these Chinese parents concerned with the economic ramifications of Chinese language study described China’s economic growth as to why China and not the United States will be the premier super power of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

companies with offices in Silicon Valley and Greater China, such as Shanghai, China and Hsinchu, Taiwan. The on-going coordination between these places for business purposes structures the meanings of foreign language study and other forms of Chinese cultural practices in Silicon Valley. These everyday cultural practices reflect how these coordinate spaces constitute neoliberal governmentality within Silicon Valley life and labor.

Transnational Chinese people and culture facilitate the coordination between these high-tech hubs, but it is not universally accepted at the local level. Most notably, a sizeable amount of post-World War II white transplants employed by companies funded by military defense budgets were able to secure their “American Dream” in Silicon Valley. They resisted the presence of Chinese people and culture in their neighborhoods, schools, and shopping centers.<sup>3</sup> In Cupertino, California, many white residents and business people managed the city’s celebration of multiculturalism. One particular example was the establishment of the Asian American Council, created by Cupertino’s Chamber of Commerce in 1998. When Chinese retailers began opening their doors for business, white residents complained about the lack of English on storefronts, menus, and foodstuff labels. In addition, white residents and business people complained of what they thought to be the inappropriate cultural behaviors of Chinese people in the context of economic exchanges. Whether it was the service of the wait staff or the attempts at bargaining by consumers, local white residents and business owners felt that these

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<sup>3</sup> As I discussed in Chapter 3, the Cold War military defense research around high-tech industries was overwhelmingly white. Urban planners, boosters, and administrators at Stanford University strategically planned around recruiting educated white people in large part through the aesthetics of the suburban built environment.



Chinese economic spaces were exemplary of a tactless foreign Chinese culture at odds with how “American” business should be conducted.

In response to the growing unease among white residents and business owners, the predominately white Cupertino Chamber of Commerce created an advisory board, the Asian American Council (AAC), made up almost exclusively of Chinese small business owners in Cupertino. The AAC was originally designed to educate Asian business owners of the city ordinances that governed language signage and the appropriate “culture” of business. Rather than operate as a collaborative space to support retail in the city, create fundraising opportunities, and conduct community outreach, the AAC existed merely under the stewardship of the Cupertino Chamber of Commerce. As the AAC numbers grew, the Cupertino Chamber of Commerce incised their micromanaging practices over the AAC with threats to disband them or absorb them into the larger Cupertino Chamber of Commerce. Don, a member of the AAC, shared with me that the Cupertino Chamber of Commerce had, at one point, felt threatened by the AAC’s growing popularity, resources, and ability to successfully fundraise in Asian Americans communities. Even though he knew that AAC could exist independent of the Chamber of Commerce, Don was committed to increasing revenue streams for the whole business community and building community across racial lines (Don 2009). When I asked another former member of the Asian American Council whether the collaborative efforts between both entities resolved any of the racial tensions, Francis replied, “They don’t do anything. Nothing” (Maggie 2010). In a few conversations I had with both members of the Cupertino Chamber of Commerce and the AAC, any cooperative effort between the two entities were described as more symbolic than substantive. When members of the

community described the few deliberate interactions between both entities, they often described how both entities could do more together for the community and in helping newer Chinese businesses.

In this project, I juxtapose stories about the celebration of Chinese culture and the hostility towards Chinese economic success to show the relationship between racial hegemony and economic development in Silicon Valley's built environments. These two clashing narratives of Cupertino's present and future reveal the conflicting responses, desires, and anxieties over the institutionalization and social reproduction of transpacific development within everyday life. At first glance, Raymond's story of Silicon Valley's acceptance of Chinese culture across the regional cultural and economic geography reflects what some Asian American Studies scholarship describes as the political mobilization against anti-Asian racism (Toyota 2010). In this particular vein, Asian Americans Studies considers civic participation, voting, membership on a the local school board to operate as both resistance to stereotypes of Asians as civically apathetic and as meaningful expressions of national belonging. While Raymond's narrative follows this line of reasoning, I ask, instead, why only people like Raymond are framed as the idealized subjects of Silicon Valley and what the terms of inclusion are for these particular subjects. Similarly, I wonder about the stakes and consequences of Chineseness as it circulates transpacifically from Silicon Valley to Greater China and back. Silicon Valley's multiculturalism, affirmed and portrayed by the economic success of Chinese people like Raymond, masks the neoliberal policies and practices of the region.

Chinese immigrants with high-tech backgrounds claim their national belonging through these practices of neoliberalism in Silicon Valley. Yet, these practices are spatialized with the intention of facilitating the circulation of Chinese labor, capital, and knowledge between Silicon Valley and Greater China. As Chinese culture circulates regionally in the form of shopping centers, monster homes, Chinese language study and cultural festivals, these spaces become extensions of the state. These spaces operate as forms of governance, where regional government encouraged the consumption of Chinese culture for the sake of socially reproducing neoliberal economic policies. They also operate as ideological state apparatuses with the aim of interpellating Chinese and non-Chinese into the ideal subjects of Silicon Valley's global economy. The place of Chinese immigrants in Silicon Valley is not just metaphoric, but physically manifested and celebrated in these now iconic spaces of economic activity.

In Silicon Valley, regional government appropriates rights discourses of cultural recognition to instantiate its neoliberal economic policies. The complex relationship between Chinese immigrant communities and neoliberal economic policies must take into account the ways in which Chinese immigrants have both embraced and rejected such policies. Twenty-first century portrayals of racial harmony between white and Chinese immigrants seem to be modern day reinventions of the historical exclusionary laws and cultural narratives that were central to the founding of Silicon Valley and Santa Clara County. Denise, a Chinese immigrant mother of two who volunteers at a local Chinese language school, shared with me why she preferred living in Cupertino rather than North San Jose, the place of her family's first home. In Cupertino, Denise said she felt safe and comfortable because there were more people like her who shared the same class values of

educational achievement and upward mobility. Parents and children of Cupertino valued education, exemplified by its nationally ranked public school education. She found this to be a stark contrast to her Mexican neighbors in North San Jose, who she said were very loud and often spent their time outside working on their cars. Denise privileged Cupertino's alleged class-based work ethic against the leisure of the working to lower-middle class neighborhood of North San Jose (Denise 2010). This kind of thinking affirms dominant ideas of neoliberal governmentality in Silicon Valley where the on-going development of human capital through education and knowledge determines your ability to access privileged spaces and resources. Those that cannot socially reproduce the wealth associated with the Silicon Valley global economy are excluded from cities like Cupertino and the educational benefits of its school systems. Denise's comments corroborated with some other Chinese immigrants I interviewed. As Chinese immigrants made claims to Silicon Valley as equal members as whites, these discourses of belonging operate as forms of exclusionary boundary making in Silicon Valley.

In a study conducted by the San Jose Mercury, the number of black, Latino, and women workers in top tech companies in the Valley dropped significantly between 2005-2008. Observers of technology from higher education and marginalized identity-based networking organizations claimed that the Valley's deep ties to Asia and Asian tech workers along with other pre-existing business structures of the Valley did not allow for corporations to develop the "home-grown" talent of African Americans, Latinos, and women. Between 2006-2008, African Americans and Latinos consisted of 1.5% and 4.7% of the workforce, respectively, engaging in computer and mathematical occupations. Their Asian and white counterparts consisted of 53.9% and 37.6% of the

work forces in these fields, respectively (Swift 2010). The uneven demographics show that racial inclusion matters so long it does not impede business as usual. Since Chinese immigrants arrive with cultural and economic capital that will benefit the already existing structure of transpacific economic development, they, not African Americans and Latinos, are allowed to participate in Silicon Valley industries.

These architectures of community reflect the contradictions at the heart of an emerging Chinese hegemony. White residents complain over the overcrowding of streets, freeways, and schools while simultaneously benefitting from increased property values that Chinese diversity has brought to their exclusive communities. While some younger white families ally themselves with the older generation in their displeasure with Asian culture, some white families I spoke with recognize the need to respect diversity. A few white parents specifically mentioned how diversity was a must in light of the presence of transpacific business in Silicon Valley. On some occasions, white residents have challenged development with a critical lens. While sifting through a box of archives at the Cupertino Historical Society, a volunteer explained to me that residents protested the current exhibit highlighting the local Lehigh Cement Plant. Rather than celebrate what the exhibit highlights as the cement plant's contributions to American empire, residents chose instead to address the harmful neurotoxins the cement plant continues to spew into the air on a daily basis.<sup>4</sup> The same volunteer mentioned that residents have questioned this corporatization of local memory that extends to financial donations made by companies such as Apple Computers and Dell Computers to the Cupertino Historical Society.

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<sup>4</sup> For more on the Lehigh Cement Plant's violations, see (Zito 2010)

White residents' lamentations over quality of life issues related to economic development must be historically situated in the geographies of whiteness in Silicon Valley's postwar era. Although Cupertino's white residents have battled development under the banner of preservation and green space, their political position ignores the need to rethink land usage, creating sustainable environmental solutions, or environmentally safe working conditions in Silicon Valley for working class people. Instead, what mattered most to white residents I spoke with was preservation of the rural as a return to a romanticized yeoman era. Interestingly, preservation for preservation's sake came most distinctly from those residents of Cupertino who were retired engineers and military defense workers that were not part of this yeoman era. These particular anxieties over density reflect the historical legacies of racially exclusionary post-war suburban planning, which John Findlay defines as "Magic Lands."

Chinese immigrants of high-tech backgrounds may have transformed existing status hierarchies, but some continue to reproduce, if not exacerbate, the same kinds of race, gender, and class inequalities with regards to environmental injustice, residential segregation, and educational resources. The white residents against development have unfairly criticized Chinese immigrants for lacking "community" and have often blamed them for any kind of changes to the white built environment that they are used to seeing themselves reflected in. Case in point, Don shared with me an instance where white residents blamed a regional Japanese grocery store for forcing a Longs Drugs Store out of their lease. In actuality, the lease had merely expired and Longs Drugs' chose not to renew the lease due to the fact that the company had recently opened another location less than 5 miles away (Don 2009). White resident's articulated their investment in the

visual and material economies of whiteness by claiming a national chain like Longs Drugs as indicative of Cupertino's local and American culture. It is within this context of claims over space, authenticity, and nationalism that Chinese immigrants engage in varying ways of achieving a sense of belonging. For many Chinese immigrants I talked to, their sense of belonging often resulted in attempts to become economic citizens and participate in local communities through the achievements of upper-middle class status.

While residents claim that the tensions between white and Chinese residents have died down since the 1990s, my research shows these debates over the built environment have changed but are still very much a part of the political, economic and social relations of Cupertino. As I have argued in this project, debates over the built environment are debates over the future and less about solving conflicts between white and Chinese residents or historicizing racial hegemony. Instead, these debates are more about protecting access to educational, economic, and political resources for those that can afford it.

San Jose's tentacle-like growth post World War II redeveloped farmland to usher in a new economic regime in Santa Clara County. The same could be said of Silicon Valley's expansion across the United States and the globe in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. Shenglin Chang notes that the importation of Silicon Valley industries and status hierarchies to Hsinchu, the Silicon Valley of Taiwan, has created exclusive middle-class communities for transnational tech workers. Chang warns, however, that the environmental degradation, forced displacement of indigenous communities, and income disparities between tech works and non-tech workers have created conflicts between locals and the transnational high-tech workers and their families (Chang 2006). Within

the United States, foreign direct investment from China is a widely sought solution to regional depressed economies. As the federal government has created immigration programs to facilitate the circulation of Chinese capital, knowledge, and labor into places across the United States, the questions and consequences regarding multiculturalism and Chinese economic development in Silicon Valley seems particularly important to discussions of urban planning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The aesthetic form and functions of these glorified spaces of global economic activity have much to tell us about the costs of neoliberalism not only as an economic doctrine, but also as a problematic rights discourse within the global economy.



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