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ABSTRACTS AND TITLES OF STUDENT WORK

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Ph.D. Dissertations

The Migrants of the Information Age: Foreign-Born Engineers and Scientists and Regional Development in Silicon Valley.

Rafael Guadalupe Alarcón.

This dissertation examines the integration of foreign-born engineers and scientists in the high technology industry of Silicon Valley, located in Northern California. The study focuses on the experiences of Indian and Mexican immigrants. India provides the United States with the largest number of highly educated immigrants and Mexico is the source of the largest number of unskilled workers and of a small but growing number of professionals.

The dissertation centers around two research questions: 1) what role do foreign-born professionals play in high technology firms vis a vis their native-born counterparts? and, 2) are recent immigrant engineers and scientists recruited because of their willingness to accept lower wages? The quantitative and qualitative data used in this study come from the census (1990 Public Use Microdata Samples) and from twenty case studies of Indian and Mexican engineers and scientists.

There are four types of foreign-born engineers and scientists working in Silicon Valley: children of immigrant families, former employees of subsidiaries located outside the United States, former foreign students at U.S. universities, and "high tech braceros" (workers holding temporary non-immigrant visas). The recruitment and hiring of these workers underscore the importance of the operation of social networks.

Immigrant engineers and scientists play a crucial role in the development of the information technology industry of Silicon valley because of their large concentration and contribution of human capital. There is a much larger concentration of foreign-born engineers and scientists in Silicon Valley than in other high technology regions of the United States. Nearly one third of the

engineers, and scientists employed in the high technology industry of Silicon Valley are immigrants. They have much higher levels of education than their native counterparts: the majority has post-graduate degrees and they are twice as likely to have obtained a doctorate degree than the native-born engineers and scientists.

The results of regression analyses suggest that high tech employers reward the high levels of education of recent immigrants but in spite of this, their hourly wages remain low. This is either because employers penalize them for their lack of work experience or they discriminate against them.

The Process of Municipal Government Boundary Formation in the United States, 1950-1990

William Samuel Huang

Municipal boundaries are the outcome of an ongoing social contest between groups with conflicting interests and unequal power. This research studies those boundary change processes in metropolitan areas, where the proliferation of small independent municipalities is credited with producing inefficient parochialism, an inequitable distribution of public services, and undesirable race and class segregation.

Boundary change is examined at three scales. First, for each decade between 1950 and 1990, metropolitan-level models for fringe population growth and new city formation are developed. Second, a model of municipal boundary change in unincorporated residential areas is used to isolate the determinants of annexation and incorporation during the 1980s. Finally, detailed boundary change histories are presented for three case study metropolitan areas: Atlanta, Louisville, and Phoenix. The statistical analysis supplements existing studies by focusing on municipal boundary change during specific time periods in metropolitan and by modeling annexation and incorporation simultaneously. The case studies are used to confirm the results of the statistical analysis and to explore the mechanisms by which municipal boundary change occurs.

The research indicates that boundary change processes may exacerbate residential segregation and unequal tax incidence in metropolitan areas. The findings suggest that fringe residents do not form new cities because they want enhanced urban services — the traditional justification for municipal incorporation. Moreover, the research provides evidence that incorporation decisions are motivated in part by race and income exclusion; that tax avoidance motivates incorporations by fringe residential communities; and

that tax base capture motivates incorporations by fringe residential communities; and that tax base capture motivates annexation of non-residential uses.

Policymakers, however, should be cautious in crafting solutions. The findings indicate that laws must be designed carefully to anticipate the likely responses of fringe area communities. In addition, they suggest that preventing the spatial fragmentation of local government should not be an end in itself: achieving the goal may produce limited equity benefits; and the cost — in some cases, a realignment of central city public service priorities to appeal to fringe residents — may be too high.

Urban Redevelopment and the Emerging Community Sector

Elizabeth Wilson Morris

The work introduces the idea of the “community sector” as a contemporary player in the political economy of American cities. The sector emerged as citizen resistance to market-oriented redevelopment programs institutionalized into locally interdependent nonprofits and voluntary associations specialized in the functional aspects of urban development. In theory, as the sector grows more complex, so does its ability to articulate and implement innovative urban agendas.

The research focuses on San Francisco and Baltimore. It examines the economic, social, and political factors shaping redevelopment in each city since the 1950s, and then turns to four-project specific case studies spanning the 1980s and early 1990s. The case studies document the role of community participation in the planning process for Yerba Buena Center and Mission Bay in San Francisco and for HarborView and Oriole Park at Camden Yard in Baltimore.

Both cities reflect a history of citizen-initiated planning, first by elites in support of redevelopment, then by working-class opponents, and increasingly through networks of specialized community-based organizations. In each case study, leaders of such groups participated in negotiations both at their own initiative and in structured advisory processes set up by public officials.

The theory of sectoral formation helps explain differences in project outcomes across the two cities. San Francisco citizens had much greater influence on project planning and design than their Baltimore counterparts. Nonprofit housing and community economic developers — linked by ongoing networks, consortiums, and coalitions with urban environmentalists groups — have won financial resources to carry out their own projects, as well as

introducing new policies for the city as a whole. They have reshaped plans for high-end housing, tourist, and office enclaves into investment and services for lower-income residents in mixed-income and multi-use neighborhoods.

Participation in Baltimore has occurred mainly through turf-based, multi-issue neighborhood associations with marginal influence on the projects studied. By the 1990s, however, we see technical assistance agencies and functionally oriented development and advocacy groups working with traditional neighborhood groups to initiate plans and projects and win economic linkage agreements from private developers.

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