

IMMIGRANT PARTICIPATORY ARTS

AN INSIGHT INTO COMMUNITY-BUILDING
IN SILICON VALLEY



By Pia Moriarty, Ph.D.

Inquiries into Culture Series
Published by
Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley

I M M I G R A N T
P A R T I C I P A T O R Y
A R T S

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IN SILICON VALLEY

By Pia Moriarty, Ph.D.

Edited by Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley
Published by Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley
San José, California

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1153 Lincoln Avenue, Suite I, San José, California 95125-3009
Telephone: 408.283.7000, Facsimile: 408.283.2127
Web site: www.ci-sv.org
Published 2004 by Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley
Printed in the United States of America

This publication made possible through the generous support of
The Rockefeller Foundation, The Nathan Cummings Foundation, The Fund for Folk Culture,
and The David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

All photos are by Dr. Pia Moriarty, unless otherwise indicated.

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P R E F A C E

The arts and culture exist within an ecology consisting of many interrelated elements, including people, facilities, aesthetic traditions, market mechanisms, media, educational processes and social institutions. In the half-century since World War II, some sectors within this broad ecology have been the subjects of extensive research and policy formulation. Foremost has been the attention directed to the well-being of professional nonprofit cultural institutions, which have attracted relatively intensive investments of research, policy development and charitable funding. To significantly lesser extents, professional artists and arts-in-education also have received investments.

One domain that has been almost entirely overlooked, however, is the participatory arts: forms of artistic expression in which everyday people actively engage in the process of making art, as distinct from observing the art of professional performing, visual, literary or media artists. Amateur choruses, poetry writing circles, hip-hop groups, and associations of “Sunday painters” are all examples of participatory art. According to a 1999 public survey conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts, the participatory arts generate high levels of involvement in every geographic and demographic segment of the nation. For many millions, involvement in the arts is of intrinsic value, often on a par with religion insofar as their capacity to inspire. In other instances, the arts are seen as a practical tool for communicating cultural traditions, maintaining family cohesion, promoting physical health or making social or economic connections.

Yet our knowledge of the dynamics of the participatory sector of cultural ecology is quite thin. One obvious question is whether people are engaging more or less in participatory pursuits? In particular, are contemporary people becoming increasingly passive “consumers” of culture due to the massive supply of commercially produced art and media? In addition, little is known about how and where people acquire the skills necessary to actively engage in the creation of art; the extent to which “amateur” artists graduate into the ranks of “professional” artists; and how amateur arts participation correlates with the consumption of goods and services created by professional artists and institutions.

Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley was established to carry out key mandates set forth in a major regional cultural plan formulated in 1997. One of the plan’s mandates was to activate neighborhood and community-level cultural activities in the challenging suburban landscape of Silicon Valley: a setting in which the great majority of the population consists of newcomers from all quadrants of the U.S. and the world. In approaching this task, there are few program models to follow and a dearth of data to support any course of action. Working from the belief that no initiative should be undertaken until there was a reasonable understanding of

the workings of the regional cultural ecosystem, our first step in 2002 was to assemble a study of the supply and demand dynamics of the arts in Silicon Valley. The core feature of this study, entitled *The Creative Community Index*, was an intercept survey of more than 300 Silicon Valley adult residents conducted in Spanish, English and Vietnamese. This study found that a remarkably high percentage of the survey respondents, 51%, responded “yes” to the question, “Do you consider yourself to be an artist in any way?”

The next step in our quest for understanding of the complex domain of participatory arts, which resulted in this present report, was to commission veteran cultural anthropologist Dr. Pia Moriarty to observe, document and assess the rich domain of participatory performing arts groups operating within the immigrant populations that constitute the majority of Silicon Valley’s population. Dr. Moriarty conducted her work over the course of a half-year, and uncovered a dynamic that had not been expected. The dominant reason for the existence of amateur arts groups in immigrant communities derives from a strong desire of parents to maintain the structure, values and traditions of their families.

In the forthcoming year, Cultural Initiatives will be conducting a follow-on study to examine the dynamics of participatory arts groups that are not tied to the special family circumstances of immigrant communities.

Cultural Initiatives is deeply indebted to Joan Shigekawa of The Rockefeller Foundation and to Claudine Brown of The Nathan Cummings Foundation for the early inspiration and support necessary to launch this research. Ms. Shigekawa noted parallels between Cultural Initiatives’ proposed research and a similar study already underway by Dr. Alaka Wali in Chicago, thereby helping significantly in the development of a conceptual framework for Dr. Moriarty’s investigations in Silicon Valley. In addition, the moral and financial support of The David and Lucile Packard Foundation has been indispensable in all of Cultural Initiatives’ programming and research, and personal thanks should be extended to the Foundation’s veteran arts program officer, Nancy Glaze. Thanks are also due to Betsy Peterson at The Fund for Folk Culture. The Fund’s California Traditional Arts Advancement Program, funded by The James Irvine Foundation and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, also contributed to this project.



John Kreidler
Executive Director

OVERVIEW

Whose community is being built in this picture? This dragon comes from Vietnam. And yet, like much of the amateur arts being created in immigrant and refugee communities in Silicon Valley, this festival welcomes all viewers to celebrate and to participate. Through sharing their particular tradition, these dancers contribute to the larger process of building the civic community in Silicon Valley.



Members of the parish Eucharistic Youth Society dance the dragon, leading the lantern procession for Vietnamese Mid-Autumn Festival at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, San José.

These young men are bringing their dragon to life in San José, California. Some of them were born here and some were born in Vietnam, but they all want to be fully-fledged members of the civic community in Santa Clara County that is now their home. And they want to be part of a democracy that does not require them to erase their cultural identity and traditions. How could they dance without them? As they dance the dragon, they are enacting a new model of citizenship that is identifiably cultural as well as intercultural, and not assimilated to any single, supposedly "neutral" civic standard.

In Santa Clara County, 61% of the population are foreign born immigrants and their children. In the State of California, no racial/ethnic group has held a statistical majority since 1999. What does civic engagement look like when the civic body is, in the majority, newcomers? How do participatory arts help communities to reach across traditional ethnic and language boundaries?

This report is the result of a six-month reconnaissance of the ways in which Silicon Valley immigrants are building community through participatory arts practices. It finds that immigrant participatory arts offer a new community arts paradigm for our mobile world, a vibrant source of social energy, and a ready means of proceeding in the larger task of community-building amidst diversity.

This study identifies key dynamics of immigrants building community through participatory arts in California's Silicon Valley, specifically Santa Clara County and parts of Alameda County. Silicon Valley is a loosely-defined rather than governmental term for the southern part of Northern California's San Francisco Bay Area. Joint Venture's *2004 Index of Silicon Valley* defines Silicon Valley as the 1,500 square mile area—with a population totaling 2.39 million—that encompasses Santa Clara County and parts of San Mateo, Alameda and Santa Cruz Counties.¹ It was named "Silicon" for the high concentration of semiconductor and computer related industry in the area, and "Valley" for the Santa Clara Valley.

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Santa Clara County, at the heart of Silicon Valley, is home to people from 177 of the 194 nations in the world.² As such, it offers a prime opportunity for studying the socioeconomic effects of globalization on the fabric of civic life in the United States. Within the Silicon Valley region, publicly-accessible community participatory arts provide a means to focus on the assets and initiatives of immigrant communities whose members live on the front lines of the challenges of globalization.

The starting point of this study was to establish contacts within Santa Clara County's largest immigrant and refugee population groups: people arriving from Mexico, Vietnam, China, India, Iran, and the Philippines. The social challenges of post-9/11 community-building in the United States expanded this focus to include local multi-ethnic Islamic communities and the inter-ethnic arts collaborations led by San José's Japanese-American elders.

For purposes of this research project, the general term “immigrants” will be used to refer to a wide range of resettling peoples:

- foreign born adults now living in the United States (“first generation”),
- foreign born children raised and socialized in the United States (“the 1.5 generation”),
- family members and first descendants of foreign born (“second generation”), and
- refugees and asylees in these categories.³

Since participatory arts are group efforts and most immigrant families in Santa Clara County are of mixed legal status (i.e., the immigration status of family members vary), documented or undocumented distinctions do not enter into this definition.⁴

The general term “community” will similarly be characterized by various social markers including ethnic heritage, preferred language, country of origin, age cohort, religious practice, and artistic practice.

Research Method

The research method for this study is designed to allow a broad-based overview of participatory arts practices in the diverse immigrant and refugee communities of Santa Clara County. This study employed a qualitative, anthropological approach that sought to generate hypotheses and categories of analysis directly from the arts practitioners themselves, and to relate them to the current national dialogue.

Its sample snowballed from initial contacts amongst artists, grassroots performing groups, cultural arts schools, community and religious leaders, and social service providers. Research was conducted over a six-month period (September 2002 through February 2003) by one researcher with fluency in English and Spanish. She was voluntarily aided through translations from bilingual participants from various immigrant communities. **Given these limitations, this study’s findings must be seen as indicative rather than exhaustive. These findings are meant to identify cultural patterns, as well as lay groundwork for additional studies of trends in art-making.**

This research was further narrowed to focus on publicly-accessible community celebrations and festivals. The original plan was to initially contact practicing artists, and using a chain-referral process, to then move outward to their various bases in ethnic immigrant communities. Pilot testing proved this approach unworkable. Amateur artists participating in the county-wide Open Studios network

uniformly rejected notions that their art-making came out of, or fed into, ongoing community frameworks. Indeed, this question was received as almost hostile, interpreted as another instance of stereotyping free individual artists who are working to break out of received categories for their artwork. Clearly, the better way to access community-based participatory arts was to begin directly with the places and moments of public participation. This methodological decision resulted in a greater emphasis on performance arts.

After six months of participant observation at immigrant community gatherings in Silicon Valley, this report analyzes data from over 100 performances, rehearsals, conversations and planning meetings, amateur museum exhibits, street festivals, ethnic-based arts/language schools, and arts-mediated religious events. Data include field notes, collections of self-descriptive materials from immigrant groups, unstructured interviews and contacts for further formal investigations, and documentation of events by means of digital photography.

Three months into the data gathering, repeated observations of the intergenerational character of immigrant participatory arts resulted in a working hypothesis: that concern for the education of children was driving volunteer efforts. **The theoretical framework for this study, which introduces immigrant arts practices into the national dialogue about community-building through bonding and bridging social capital, did not emerge until the final analysis and writing phases had begun.** The working draft of this report (June 2003) was circulated amongst a number of the immigrant leaders who are featured in it. Their reflections and additions have guided the final paper. Conversations surrounding the first working draft initiated a second phase of reflection that incorporated aspects of “participatory research,” or community investigation in which as many stakeholders as possible control the design and applications of the research.⁵ Already, portions of this report are being utilized by immigrant community artists and Silicon Valley civic planners for inter-group networking, grant proposals, and program analysis.

Toward a New Paradigm

The adult immigrants and refugees responsible for community participatory arts programs in Silicon Valley are experts at bridging across multiple worlds. They stretch their lives between performing duties that honor their traditional cultures and facing the conflicting challenges of raising families in today's California. Their parents and ancestors link them enduringly to the old country, and their children link them inescapably to the new. Reports one long-time immigration attorney:

Immigrants become conflicted as soon as they have children here. This is a turning point, because parents know that their children are not going to return with them to

Participatory community arts are one of the strongest channels that immigrants have for self-assertion as authoritative adults, teachers of their children, and allies to their new friends and neighbors.

the home country. They're born here, and their lives are going to be here... It's very complex.⁶

This complexity shapes the lives of 34% of the population in Santa Clara County who are foreign-born, and redefines Norman Rockwell-era visions of American civic society. Of necessity, immigrants are multicultural and often multilingual people, and their civic life reflects this. Immigrant public arts participation is driven by an intensified need to resettle and to find a stable place where they and their families can live. Immigrants offer much more than their participation in the workforce. But immigrant artists

can only make their contributions to United States' society as adults who have already been enculturated in other lands and languages. When their efforts are misperceived or not received by their neighbors in their new home, potentially important contributions to the civic whole are forfeited.

Participatory community arts are one of the strongest channels that immigrants have for self-assertion as authoritative adults, teachers of their children, and allies to their new friends and neighbors. This study documents a pattern of artistic adaptation that affirms the living heritages of immigrant and refugee communities, and at the same time solidifies their new connections to mainstream civic life in Silicon Valley.

The pattern is both/and, not either/or. When examining the community arts here, "ethnic" does not mean ethnocentric. It means an assertion of culture that can, and usually has to, reach beyond itself to address larger issues shared by mainstreamers and by other immigrant ethnic groups. Artistic production in this context is bonded, or affirming of the original in-group culture. At the same time, participatory ethnic arts serve as a powerful vehicle for bridging—connecting with other cultural groups and civic allies.

The participatory arts scene in Silicon Valley's immigrant communities adds an important new dimension of ethnic **bonded-bridging** to the ongoing national dialogue about civic community-building. The immigrant participatory arts practices described in this study suggest that community arts organizers and funders incorporate this new bonded-bridging paradigm into their policy making. The cultural creativity documented here argues in favor of more broadly-based funding priorities than professionalization, organizational development, or audience development. Results indicate the rich and civic possibilities of community cultural development through participatory arts.

RESEARCH FOCUS AND SETTING

Participatory arts cannot happen alone; they are necessarily community-based and often intergenerational. These voluntary group efforts grow out of specific shared traditions and are usually rooted in a heritage of ethnicity or religion. Their impetus is the expression, expansion, and overlapping of received traditions into present time and circumstance. While participatory arts encompass many instances of individual creativity, their cultural force comes from explicit group dynamics that foster and reinvent traditional art forms as new shared expressions of culture.



Fan dancer entertains and provides a model for future dancers at the Centennial Celebration of Korean Immigration to the United States, Korean American Community Services, San José.

Participatory arts are more about production than consumption; as such, they require many “hands-on.” They blur the lines between audience, and present or future performers. Participatory arts come alive as community assets because the communities that use them as a mechanism for gathering are both organic and growing. As art forms, these gatherings draw upon their own particular verbal and symbolic languages of art-making, and they regularly incorporate elements borrowed from other groups. Like all living art forms, participatory arts are responsive to changing historical circumstances such as the current phenomenon of globalization.

Community-building through participatory arts is particularly enjoyable, authentic, welcoming, and durable. By definition, participatory arts are “popular,” or “of the people.” Sharing in art-making can cut across powerful social cleavages—race, class, gender, language, religion, and national origin.⁷ Traditions are elaborated and passed along to future generations. Performance of their art is both a gift, and a duty to be enacted for the betterment of the communities’ future.

For many cultures, participatory arts carry a linked, dual purpose, and it is both artistic and spiritual. Explains one Chicano theatre director, “They remind everybody of our place in the world.”⁸ For immigrants, distinctive artistic expression claims a place for cultural communities, and becomes a force to affirm their dignity as new members of their new society.

Participatory arts are essentially welcoming to new learners, although they may require prolonged apprenticeship for mastery of a specific art form. **This genre operates by open entry/open exit, rather than elite gate-keeping.** Participatory arts are more about culture transmission than about developing individual expertise. However, they also provide an environment in which individual artists can draw upon community experiences, and find affirmation for their skills. When a community claims an individual artist’s work as its own, and then follows that lead in practicing the given art form, the arts become participatory.

Immigrants and refugees are a permanent and defining part of the United States socio-economy. As newcomers, they are also in the distinct historical position of needing to reaffirm and reinvent their heritage art forms in a new and different country. Their cultural dislocation entails recent experiences of loss, and this makes for an intensification of their participatory art forms. Community gatherings are more frequently planned, better attended, and recognized as important because they help to reestablish social networks.

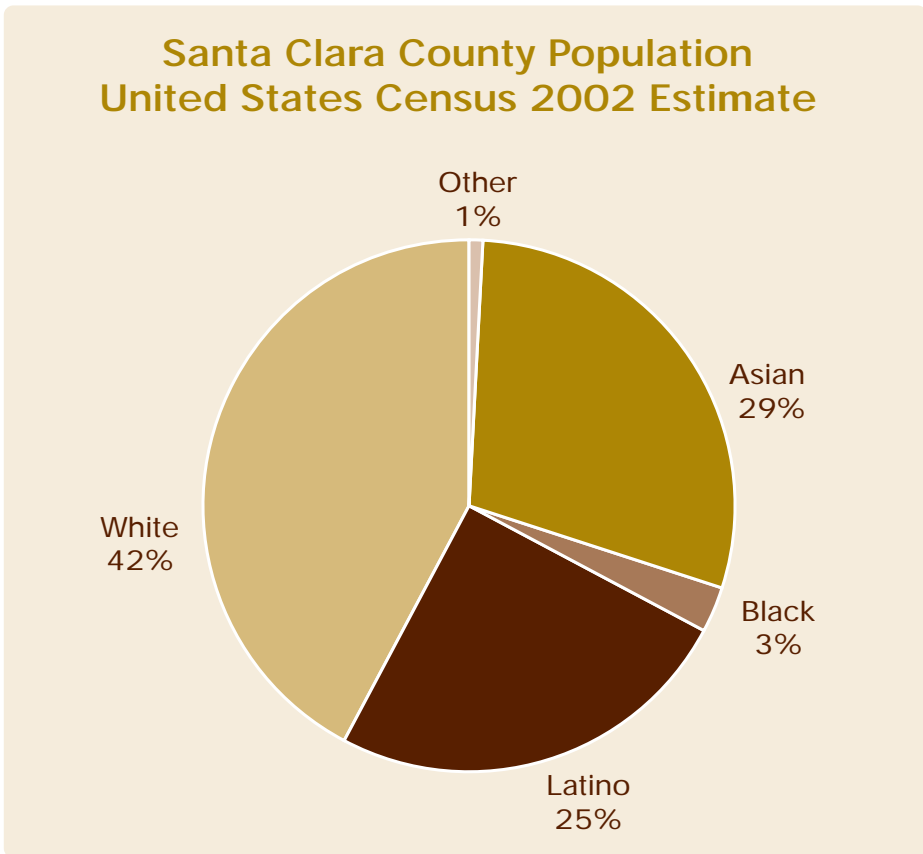
Artistic and cultural expressions take on the role of trying to address the complex reasons why people need to immigrate, at the same time as they begin to exert the group’s self-determination. No matter whether their dislocations were a career choice or one forced by tragedies of poverty and war, immigrants and refugees share a common challenge. They must reclaim and continue to shape their cultural traditions if they are to attain full membership in American society as whole and healthy persons. At the same time, their new circumstances force immigrants to find ways to connect to mainstream civic and cultural institutions. Art-making is one of their strongest tools for achieving this outcome.



Art student, Soyeon Woo, poses in front of her pastel collage on display at the Centennial Celebration of Korean Immigration to the United States. She has done her drawing over the “employment wanted” classifieds in a local Korean language newspaper.

Silicon Valley, indeed all of California, receives immigrant communities into a social matrix that differs markedly from patterns taken for granted in the United States as a whole. The stable neighborhood “ethnic enclave” model so prevalent in foundational East Coast sociology has not applied here since the population shifts following World War II. It would distort research findings to attempt a distillation of “community” to single essential ethnic categories, because today’s California is all about hybridization. The pattern here is mixed: overlapping communities and permeable borders. People live their lives in the borderlands between the cultures of the United States and Mexico, for example, or within intermarriages that mix different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

- Compared with the United States population as a whole, people in California were twice as likely to identify themselves as persons of two or more mixed races in Census 2000.
- In the United States, 18% of households speak a language other than, or in addition to, English. In California, this figure is almost 40%, and in Silicon Valley, nearly 50%.



- White persons of non-Latino origin constitute the majority in the United States as a whole, while in California they were 46.7% of the population in 2000. Clearly, 21st Century Californians are building an intercultural society.

Something different is happening in California, because the majority of the population is based in ethnic-identified communities that are multi-layered as well as highly mobile.

The “capital” of Silicon Valley is San José, a city whose 1970 population was over 80% non-Latino whites. Today, this group accounts for less than 30% of the city’s residents. San José, the Spanish colonial outpost and first capital of the State of California, is now home to more people of Vietnamese origin than any other city outside of Vietnam, and more people of South Asian origin than any other city outside of India. Neighboring Cupertino has gone from a 6.7% Asian population in 1970 to 46% in 2000.

Santa Clara County in Silicon Valley, the setting for this pilot study, exemplifies the current effects of current globalization: enhanced racial/ethnic diversity and high percentages of immigrant workers.

- **Over 1/3 of the Santa Clara County population is foreign born (almost 600,000 persons).**
- **Immigrant families constitute 61% of the county population when their U.S.-born children are included.**
- **Approximately 200,000 of these people are approved new arrivals since 1990.**

These 200,000 “green card” holders do not include large numbers of temporary workers on H1-B visas, tourists, students, immigrants from other states, and an estimated 100,000 undocumented immigrants who currently make Santa Clara County their home.⁹

EXPANDING THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE

Bonding and Bridging Social Capital

Bowling Alone, a landmark study by Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam, examines the collapse and revival of community in the United States. In this book published in 2000, Putnam issues an across-the-board challenge:

Let us find ways to ensure that by 2010 significantly more Americans will participate in (not merely consume or “appreciate”) cultural activities from group dance to songfests to community theatre to rap festivals. Let us discover new ways to use the arts as a vehicle for convening diverse groups of fellow citizens.¹⁰

These community-building arts—that bring people together as art-making participants, rather than just spectators—are the subject of this report. Participatory arts are multi-layered: beginning artists overlap with more experienced performers, children overlap with elders, and volunteers overlap with budding professionals. Participatory arts are recognized by many names (community arts, popular arts, informal arts, amateur arts, unincorporated arts), but the definition is consistent: that these arts are more about creating than consuming, and that they make room for many ways of actively engaging in artistic practices.

Community engagement in the creation of art is a powerful means to foster the community connectedness that is called “social capital,” defined as social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.¹¹ Social capital has tangible, consequential value, just as physical capital (such as schools and hospitals) and human capital (such as active citizens and public servants) have value.

Putnam calls for creative fostering of “bridging” social capital: an expansion of ever more inclusive social networks of reciprocal trust and mutual civic support. He contrasts bridging social capital with “bonding” social capital: the more exclusive, in-group form of community building that reinforces distinctive identities and relatively homogeneous groups.

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With the caveat that bonding and bridging are not “either-or” categories, Putnam observes that their energies move in different directions (inward/outward) from whatever social center serves as the starting place. Because Putnam’s categories are not mutually exclusive, it is possible for a group to bond across some dimensions and bridge across others. Bridging social capital proves to be better for connecting with external assets (such as a new job) while bonding social capital works better for providing protective and educational structures within a group (for example, to support child rearing). Both bonding and bridging social capital serve as means as well as indicators of the civic community connectedness that Putnam advocates in *Bowling Alone*.

But Putnam’s analysis is not actually as balanced as the last paragraph quoted would imply.¹² His treatment of bonding social capital is apprehensive, bonding social capital with potentially negative isolation and exclusivity, where as he associates bridging social capital with positive civic outcomes.

It is important to ask how the positive consequences of social capital—mutual support, cooperation, trust, institutional effectiveness—can be maximized and the negative manifestations—sectarianism, ethnocentrism, corruption—minimized. Toward this end, scholars have begun to distinguish many different forms of social capital.... Of all the dimensions along which forms of social capital vary, perhaps the most important is the distinction between *bridging* (or inclusive) and *bonding* (or exclusive). Some forms of social capital are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. Examples of bonding social capital include ethnic fraternal organizations, church-based women’s reading groups, and fashionable country clubs. Other networks are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages. Examples of bridging social capital include the civil rights movement, many youth service groups, and ecumenical religious organizations.¹³

The problem is that “ethnic” and “ethnocentric” are not distinguished categories in *Bowling Alone*. Furthermore, mobility and immigration are identified as factors that mitigate against civic engagement.

From our frontier and immigrant past we have learned to plunge into new community institutions when we move. Nevertheless, for people as for plants, frequent repotting disrupts root systems. It takes time for a mobile individual to put down new roots. As a result, residential stability is strongly associated with civic engagement. Recent arrivals in any community are less likely to vote, less likely to have supportive networks of friends and neighbors, less likely to belong to civic organizations. People who expect to move in the next five years are 20-25 percent less likely to attend church, attend club meetings, volunteer, or work on community projects than those who expect to stay put.¹⁴

Such logic might counsel policy makers looking to promote wider civic engagement in the near term to steer away from immigrant and refugee community projects.

This report indicates a pattern of art-making that calls this “common sense” logic into question. Here, 34% of the population are foreign born, and most of these people still hold the deepest hopes of being able to return to their countries of origin. Nevertheless, civic engagement through participatory arts in Silicon Valley is extensive, open, and dazzling in its richness. Participatory arts in immigrant and refugee communities are already functioning as the hoped-for vehicles that convene diverse groups of fellow citizens.

Bonded-bridging: a New Paradigm Emerges

In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam acknowledges that the relationship of patterns of immigration to contemporary differences in levels of social capital is an issue that extends beyond his treatment, and deserves further study. He sees the possibility that an interaction can have both bonding and bridging components, but he does not anticipate that sizeable immigrant groups might be practicing a model of hybrid interaction that predictably overlaps bonding and bridging without conflict. This report builds on Putnam’s work to begin to address this practice and, proposes a new “bonded-bridging” paradigm for building immigrant social capital.

From the point of view of immigrant and refugee experiences, it is conflict, not stability, that calls forth civic engagement.¹⁵ People who have been displaced must put more, not less, energy into claiming a place for themselves and their children. People who can no longer take the cultural context of their homeland for granted must work hard to recreate it for their children in the new place. The cultural conflicts faced by immigrant families in Santa Clara County make their art-making a particularly focused lens through which to observe the workings of a different kind of social capital—one that blurs bonding/bridging distinctions.

A small group of Vietnamese American students, for example, practiced bonded-bridging through a series of original theatre skits. They had won their public high school talent show competition, and performed an original “American Idol” skit for a city-wide audience at San José State University in April 2003. They invited an African American friend to play the hero as a hip and successful fellow student in a Vietnamese poetry class. When he begins to get too much attention from the Vietnamese girls, an exaggerated, slow-motion gang fight breaks out on stage. The stylized cartoon violence of their fighting makes the mixed audience laugh, turning the skit into a self-critical parody of male ego and competitiveness.

Civic engagement results from such immigrant community arts practices because both bonding and bridging social capital are being created at the same time. The young Vietnamese American students in the fight skit found a way to comment on racial/ethnic rivalries—a serious school-wide and civic bridging issue.

They have accomplished this through the medium of theatre, in a bonded, yet open, Vietnamese language and style that everyone in the audience could understand.

Almost all of the immigrant participatory arts activities observed during this phase of the research displayed a similar pattern of overlap of building both bonding and bridging social capital. This finding was unanticipated, since the research focused specifically on what Putnam would call “ethnic enclaves,” where culture-based arts practices could be expected to have a clear bonding orientation. Post-fieldwork analysis showed that this was not the case in Silicon Valley. **Approximately 85% of the participatory arts activities observed for this study showed mixed bonding and bridging. Indeed, bridging was most often accomplished by means of bonding.**

Bonding in Immigrant Participatory Arts

How does this contradiction work? How does immigrant “bonded-bridging” manifest itself as a distinctive phenomenon, and what are the dynamics by which it is accomplished? It is not enough to acknowledge that some dimensions of participatory arts events create bonding social capital while others activate bridging energies. The participatory arts practices documented in this report expand and deepen understandings of cultural bonding itself, as lived out in California’s Silicon Valley.

Note that the bonding and bridging terminology that Putnam has popularized can be intuitively contradictory to immigrants. Because they are already members of bonded ethnic communities, immigrants are more likely to use language such as “being ourselves.” When immigrants hear “bonding,” their first inclination is to understand it to mean the act of connecting to others with whom one is not already connected—which is what Putnam calls “bridging.” An immigrant from the former Yugoslavia illustrates both this confusion and the power of bonded-bridging through the arts:

What I’ve seen is that when Vietnamese go to the Mexican Heritage Plaza and see Vietnamese painters on exhibition, they can bond right there. Every immigrant can bond right there and see so much pain and everything that you yourself went through, on those canvases. And that’s what’s wonderful with art. You kind of go from there as a different person. You think, this is my brother—otherwise, he or she couldn’t be painting this.¹⁶

By definition, immigrant and refugee arts proceed from a bonded ethnic base where cultural practitioners are the planners, teachers, and performers. In all of the cases cited in this report, bonded cultural practitioners are in charge. The participatory arts they are practicing are specifically culture-based, and out of an identified tradition.

Ownership of the bonded cultural heritage is precisely what enables these artists to build upon it, and have the authority to use it to accomplish the bridging that Putnam envisions. Paradoxically, bonded ownership of participatory arts is what allows the sharing to function as bridging social capital in mixed groups, as well as become a source of self-respect for newcomers.

When Dinka young men sponsored by Trinity Episcopal Cathedral presented “Azuma: A Sudanese Feast,” they were in charge of the event. They prepared special foods from their native Sudan, and invited parish members to contribute to the potluck. A prayer service was planned, and they carefully wrote out speeches in English to thank and welcome the local parish families. Throughout these bridging activities, they interspersed their own bonded tradition, the Dinka participatory arts of dancing, cattle camp songs, and drumming.

This example illustrates the power of bonding non-verbal art forms that enable refugees to reclaim adult status in bridging contexts. For people who filled respected adult roles in their countries of origin, finding themselves reduced to a beginning level English as a second language is infantilizing. Non-verbal communication through the arts gives them a direct way to reclaim and assert their adult status. Empowerment through participatory arts is all the more important in this particular case, because national media sources commonly made reference to Dinka refugees as “The Lost Boys of Sudan,” and this echoed the racist use of the term “boy” all too closely.

From an immigrant perspective, art-making in their new Silicon Valley home inevitably takes on powerful bridging dimensions driven by the losses inherent in immigrant/refugee dislocation. In the new place, it even becomes necessary to facilitate self-conscious bridging within the ethnic group itself, in an attempt to relate to younger generations who become increasingly foreign to their parents as they acculturate here. New immigrant parents often have real fears of losing their children, who learn English and adopt the new social patterns much more quickly than adults. Thus, activities that would be seen from the outside as simple in-group bonding can actually be instances of bridging across a generation gap that is experienced as acutely problematic.

This was the case at the John XXIII Senior Center celebration of TET, or the Vietnamese Lunar New Year. As the culmination of their program of music and speeches, the elders had invited a group of teenagers from the Vietnamese Student Club at Yerba Buena High School. These young people were not family members, but the seniors requested release time from their public school classes so that they could come sing songs together in Vietnamese: “not to entertain, but to show gratitude to their elders.” The students carried lyric sheets for reference, and the seniors joined in good-naturedly whenever the younger generation had trouble with the words.

In this way, unrelated Vietnamese elders constituted the student group as virtual family members. The emcee praised the teens for singing in Vietnamese because “even though they are born here in the United States, the students still maintain their culture and that is a beautiful thing.” At the end of the program, the seniors showered them with the small red New Year envelopes that contained money offerings to symbolize the cultural gifts of elders to their children. What would have been an instance of normal bonding social capital was in fact a conscious attempt at bridging to reconstitute displaced family groups.

The multigenerational participants at this Vietnamese event are not a homogeneous group. Even the elders are separated by class and political distinctions that roughly correspond to the three large waves of refugees who arrived in 1975, in the early 1980s, and in the mid-1990s.

For people who filled respected adult roles in their countries of origin, finding themselves reduced to a beginning level English as a second language is infantilizing. Non-verbal communication through the arts gives them a direct way to reclaim and assert their adult status.



Elders at John XXIII Senior Center, San José, welcome high school students to their celebration of Vietnamese New Year.

Indeed, immigrant and refugee communities in Silicon Valley are not homogeneous by most measures, except when viewed from the outside. The India Community Center, a 20,000 square-foot facility that opened spring 2003 in Milpitas, is another case of apparent bonding social capital that is actually bridging in its intention and effect. The center is designed as a secular home for the full diversity of Indo-Americans in Silicon Valley. It offers programming in Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali, and Malayalee languages. Classical Bharatnatyam dance classes take place in rooms next to modern Bollywood dance classes. Their brochures recruit children for Gurukul, or a special kind of Sunday School that offers “an integrated approach to Indian culture, values and heritage that teaches kids a core set of basic principles and values through stories, myths, legends, and experiential discovery-based activities.”¹⁷ What looks from the outside like bonding is actually the construction of internal bridges within a large immigrant group that is far from monolithic or homogenous.

With bonded-bridging arts, practitioners invite their audiences to participate in the arts, not just to watch them. Chicana author, Sandra Cisneros, did this repeatedly when she came to Washington United Youth Center in a Mexican immigrant neighborhood of central San José. Los Amigos de la Biblioteca Latinoamericana, a longstanding public library support group, had organized and sponsored the event. The audience was mixed in generations and ethnicities, but Cisneros was clearly speaking to the youth when she explicitly challenged them to be writers themselves, as she finished reading from her new novel, *Caramelo*, and took questions.

“So what is it like, to be an author?” The packed crowd laughed knowingly when Sandra replied that she didn’t get up until noontime. Then they sat back in silence when she added that her normal pattern was to write from noon until 10:00 p.m., and that nothing really good gets onto the paper until about dinner-time. She was teaching the audience what it takes to be writers who are in charge of their own work. She was teaching that they, too, could participate as producers and not just consumers of mainstream literary arts.

These are not the insular, gated, self-preserving enclaves that Putnam has concerns about.¹⁸ They cannot afford to be isolationists, even if they would like to, because they know that their children must become part of the new place if they are to prosper.

Immigrants invite mainstreamers repeatedly to participate in their growing cultural heritages through participatory arts practices using the bonded-bridging model. This is not to say that local immigrant and refugee groups do not *also* engage in using their arts to build bonding social capital. Local examples can be found of the exclusive bonding that Putnam describes, as well.

Examples of exclusive bonding include participatory arts performed in relatively restricted or private spaces, such as the form of karaoke singing popular among Korean immigrants, in which a family or group rents a private party room. Space is restricted in a more de facto manner at identifiable coffeehouses where the crowd is predominately Vietnamese men, although the karaoke microphone is an open one. Altars to the ancestors in Vietnamese homes are obviously a bonded space, and the same goes for Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) remembrances in Mexican homes. These collages of pictures, incense, candles, objects from the loved one's life, and offerings of food and flowers constitute a strong example of bonding social capital.

Immigrant participatory art forms create a bonded space when they are complex, and practiced in the first language only. Even a brief visit to the Formosan Opera Singing class at the St. James Park Community Center leaves an unfamiliar visitor wondering at both the distinctive tonality of the music, as well as the Chinese libretto. It would be difficult for a mainstream English-speaker to sit in on such a group. It would be difficult as well to take part in calligraphy and literary arts classes that operate exclusively in Arabic as taught at the Iraqi Community Center in Sunnyvale, or to take part in the study of Koranic poetry—also in Arabic—at local mosques in Santa Clara and San José. Also, there are immigrant arts groups who operate exclusive websites in monolingual Vietnamese, Chinese, or Arabic, which are obviously aimed at the development of bonding social capital.

These kinds of exclusive bonding examples accounted for less than 15% of the activities observed for this research. Admittedly, this project is qualitative and exploratory: an overview of current immigrant participatory arts activities, not an exhaustive or formally representative sample of a known population. Nevertheless, it is surprising that bonded-bridging initiatives through the arts are so prevalent and accessible in Silicon Valley immigrant communities. **The fact that 85% of the activities observed have included various kinds of bridging is of ethnographic, rather than statistical significance. It highlights bonded-bridging as a substantial and central cultural dynamic in immigrant participatory arts that deserves the attention of policy makers.**

DYNAMICS OF BONDED-BRIDGING

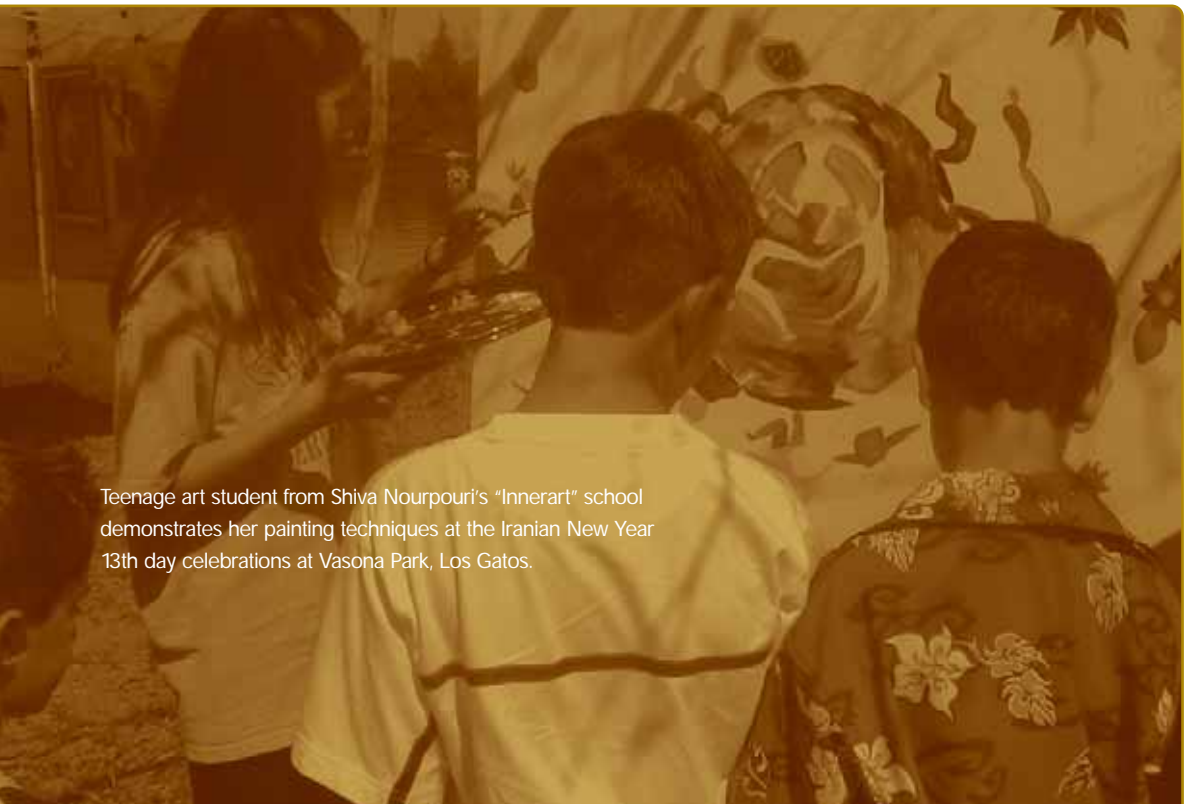
Art for the Sake of the Family

Bonded-bridging is the prevailing paradigm in Silicon Valley's participatory arts because it reflects the existential situation of immigrant and refugee communities. Official government agencies count and admit immigrants as individuals, but the immigrants realize that they must reconstitute themselves as families. Immigrants survive not as individuals, but as members of large and expanding social molecules.

Newcomer parents know that if their children are to prosper in Silicon Valley, they will have to embody their bonded cultural traditions, and in addition, know how to bridge beyond them. The participatory arts projects that immigrant adults organize take enormous amounts of work to produce and sustain. The fruition of these projects represents a substantial commitment of volunteer time by immigrants who may well be working multiple jobs to survive in Silicon Valley.



Mother and son join the lantern procession for Vietnamese Mid-Autumn Festival.



Teenage art student from Shiva Nourpour's "Innerart" school demonstrates her painting techniques at the Iranian New Year 13th day celebrations at Vasona Park, Los Gatos.

Why do immigrants put so much work into cultural events? How do they make the time? What keeps immigrant artists coming back, year after year? Adult immigrants will tell you that they do it for the children, so as not to lose their children as they grow up in a new place that can deeply threaten home country values. This is the foundational, driving dynamic of bonded-bridging in immigrant participatory arts. Immigrant adults put energy into culture-based arts to provide a protected space for children and young people to grow and stay connected to their resettling communities. This is art for the sake of the family, and it is more often about teaching and culture transmission than about individual expressiveness and artistic freedom.

Bonded-bridging: Shared Spaces

When separate bonding and bridging functions are programmed to occur together in the same physical space or time frame, this juxtaposition creates a zone of familiarity that facilitates cultural transitions. When the site is an after-school homework center, it is easy to see the participatory arts as the “spoonful of sugar” that makes the civic engagement medicine—in this case, schoolwork—go down. However, the



Students at the Vietnamese American Center complete their homework before moving to martial arts exercises in the next classroom.

equal status implied by side-by-side programming makes this metaphor cut both ways, to create a space of safety around new or threatening American practices, and at the same time to validate traditional ethnic arts.

The Vietnamese American Center, formerly in the Santee neighborhood of San José, offers quiet table space and help for elementary school students in order to complete their homework assignments individually, and in groups. Students arrive dressed in white martial arts gies, their colored belts indicating their skill level. They bow to the coordinator/teacher as they enter, and when they have completed their homework, they seek his permission to go to the next room where martial arts lessons are in progress. Their reward for finishing the bridging homework is the bonding exercise.

Ethiopian Community Services runs after-school homework centers at a total of six sites in San José and the neighboring City of Campbell. Providing parents with information regarding California school practices is an integral part of the program, which includes assistance with reading, writing, and math, as well as high school science subjects. This bridging tutoring occurs side-by-side with bonding literacy lessons in the Ethiopian language, Amharic.

At Cambodian American Resource Agency (CARA), social services programming includes literacy classes in the Cambodian language, Khmer, and in classical Cambodian dance. In this case, participatory arts are not being used simply to attract or reward participants. The presence of home country writing and dance classes makes CARA recognizable to refugee families as a true community center where they can seek help. Western-style counseling services that would be considered too threatening, become workable when offered in tandem with the bonding social capital produced by traditional arts.

Western-style counseling services that would be considered too threatening become workable when offered in tandem with the bonding social capital produced by traditional arts.

Bonded-bridging: Linked Content

Theatre productions are particularly suited to utilize immigrants' home languages and cultures, and bring their strengths to bear upon contemporary United States' issues. **Overlapping of heritage forms with exploration of local themes has both bonding and bridging effects.** Within the complexity of the theatre, immigrant groups are able to simultaneously reinforce and expand their ethnic traditions, as they relate them to the new situations that they are negotiating in Silicon Valley.



From Naatak: Bay Area Indian Theater and Independent Film website, www.naatak.com.

Naatak, a grassroots Indo-American theatre and film company, has produced 15 original plays in Tamil, Hindi, or Marathi that address social issues faced by high-tech immigrant workers and their families. Rehearsals take place in homes and garages, and performances regularly sell out large public venues like the City

of Palo Alto's Mitchell Park Community Center theatre. Their plays bond the Indo-American community at the same time as they bridge across language divisions between different regional groups of immigrants from India. In summer 2003, Naatak opened its first full length play in English at West Valley Community College in the City of Saratoga, and uses its web site to welcome the public to free play readings on the first Tuesday of every month.

At MACLA/ Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana in San José, Marc David Pinate's original play, *Amor Rabioso* adapted the classical Western literary form of Shakespearean tragedy to play out stories of Eastside San José's Latino youth and their families. Pinate successfully alternated local Spanish/ English code-switching dialogues with moments of Garcia Lorca poetry proclaimed grandly in the style of a Greek chorus. In this case, the bridging was international, a first exposure to classical Spanish verse for most of the mixed Chicano/Anglo audience. But they received it enthusiastically because they could understand the play's and the poetry's themes from their own lives.¹⁹



A young audience member considers the performances at the Vietnamese Folk Arts Institute recital at the Milpitas Community Museum, in front of its exhibit of musical instruments.

CATS (Contemporary Asian Theatre Scene) offers a wide mixture of both professional and participatory arts events. They perform regularly at mainstream venues like downtown San José's Montgomery Theatre, as well as at more community-based venues like MACLA. Their repertoire addresses Asian American themes through original theatre, spoken word, and performance pieces. They sponsor both single culture (like the new Filipino "The Flip Side" film) and pan-Asian collaborations (like "The First Asian American Jazz and Spoken Word Showcase"). Ensembles operate and advertise primarily in English.

Bonding in Bridging Spaces

Events that take place in public spaces build the civic community, regardless of their ethnic identification. Artistic content presented in an accessible public space automatically comes under the umbrella of common ownership. **The shared civic identification of the space contributes powerfully to the meaning of the art-making, casting a welcoming light over even highly ethnic-focused events.** Performance in the public space implies a mainstream reception of the artwork that already begins to integrate it as a living piece of the civic whole.

Milpitas Community Museum: *Vietnamese Folk Arts Institute*

The Vietnamese Folk Arts Institute offers lessons in Vietnamese and European classical music instrumentation under the direction of Mr. Thinh Vu, a recently immigrated scholar from Vietnam. Although classes are held in his home, students give their recitals at the Milpitas Community Museum, a consciously multicultural gallery space set in a suburban shopping mall.



Vendor of original ladies' hats takes a break at the 3rd Annual Celebration of the Traditions and Principles of Kwaanza, Triton Museum, Santa Clara.

Triton Museum: *Kwaanza*

In December 2002, Santa Clara's Triton Museum was the site for an all-day celebration of Kwaanza. African immigrants and African Americans "reconstituted the village" throughout the entire museum, using the participatory arts of dancing and storytelling as central gathering points. Exhibits featured artwork from local elementary school children, as well as many crafts booths, including a "Sunday-go-to-meeting" hat lady.

Kelley Park: *Viet-American Cultural Foundation*

The City of San José's Kelley Park is already home to the Japanese American Friendship Garden, which features Japanese landscape design, including a tea house overlooking extensive koi ponds. The Viet-American Cultural Foundation, formerly known as the Vietnamese Cultural Heritage Foundation, has been working to add their own traditions to the park, negotiating planning permits for a Lotus Tower, a 7,000 square-foot museum, and a 4,500 square-foot community hall. Nine two-ton decorated bronze urns, replicas of the famous originals in Hue, Vietnam, will serve as a main attraction.

De Anza Community College & Vasona Park: *Payvand School*

For ten years, the Iranian Federated Women's Club has sponsored Payvand School, which rents regular classroom and dance rehearsal space at De Anza Community College. Classes include first language literacy (Farsi), Iranian arts, "Mommy and Me Bellydancing," "Party Dancing for College Kids," and ESL for Iranian seniors. Payvand organizers take over Vasona Park in Los Gatos every year to accommodate the crowds for Sizdah Bedar New Year celebrations.

San José Community College: *Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra*

The Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra offers weekend classes in traditional Chinese instruments like erhu, pipa, and ruan at regular classroom and music rehearsal spaces rented from San José City College (SJCC). Their director, Gordon Lee, is a former Chinese National Theatre musician, and also teaches credit courses for the SJCC Music Department.



Members of the Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra prepare to perform on classical Chinese instruments as the culmination of Stanford University's "Eastfest" political science conference.

In most public schools: *Vietnamese Student Associations*

Almost all community colleges and high schools in Silicon Valley have their own chapter of the Vietnamese Student Association (VSA). This group functions like a service club, as a social center for its members, and as a source of self-proclaimed "ambassadors" to represent the Vietnamese American community at various events. VSA members are regular participants in seasonal festivals and parades, and are known for the quality of their singing and dancing at talent shows such as the one held annually in the spring at San José State University.

In selected schools: *ethnic dance classes*

Rosalia Novotny has taught Mexican folklórico classes for the past 20 years at San José's Lincoln High School, a public arts magnet school. The established presence of this activity within the bridging Physical Education classes makes its bonding nature visible beyond a Chicano audience.



Students from the Xochitl Folklorico dance class at Lincoln High School watch dancers from the Hellenic Traditional Arts and Letters Institute perform at the Mid-Autumn Festival at Evergreen Community College.

At mainstream churches: *choral music, instruction and performance*

St. Maria Goretti Catholic Parish is an intercultural bridging space with four separate choirs whose members sing in combinations of English, Spanish, Vietnamese, or Tagalog. The bonding social capital they create is regularly combined into bridging at large, multilingual liturgies for major celebrations like Easter. On Saturdays, the parish school classrooms are filled with students moving between the bonding activities of Vietnamese language study, and the bridging activities of religious education classes.

Alum Rock Covenant Church offers space to Pacific Music Academy (PMA), which is dedicated to maintaining Vietnamese traditional music among Vietnamese Americans in California. PMA also offers ensemble and private classes in voice and European classical instruments such as piano, violin, viola, and flute. Because their teachers are highly qualified (one played Second Violin with the San Jose Symphony before its closure; another is a Ph.D. ethnomusicologist), they attract non-Vietnamese students as well. PMA regularly performs concerts at Le Petit Trianon in San José to raise funds for educational and agricultural projects in Vietnam through the nonprofit organization, Aid to Children Without Parents.

Performance of ethnic heritage art forms in public spaces sends the message that a wider community is in the process of being created out of many ongoing cultural traditions. When bonded art forms find a home in mainstream civic institutions, they build bridges.

Over email and the Internet

Web sites offer a public space that may be used for both in-group and outreach community arts projects. Internet sites are rarely “gated” by passwords, although some have restricted audiences because they were created and operate in languages other than English.

“Calligraphy of Thought” is an extensive web and email network that operates mainly in English, with some Arabic inclusions. It brings together Bay Area Muslim activists, poets, photographers, and spoken

word artists. Women in the network publish a poetry/photography journal and perform at local college events and coffeehouses. They use the Internet to announce and coordinate culture-based arts production, such as a call for submissions of essays for an upcoming book, and a posted schedule of events for a two-day workshop on “Art for Social Justice.”

The “Calligraphy of Thought’s” mission statement is a clear articulation of bonded-bridging:

We aim to create an atmosphere of spiritual consciousness and to give all conscious artists, poets and musicians, especially those who are Muslim, a platform for their work. We believe that this is the key: allowing young Muslim Americans to reconnect with their heritage as well as their cultural environment, and allowing young Americans to meet Muslims and Islam in our common cultural context... Through a “Calligraphy of Thought” performance the audience gets a sense of how Muslims experience love, friendship and frustrations, as well as politics. They see how much more we all have in common and how petty the differences can be.²⁰

Performance of ethnic heritage art forms in public spaces sends the message that a wider community is in the process of being created out of many ongoing cultural traditions. When bonded art forms find a home in mainstream civic institutions, they build bridges.

Bonding in Bridging Times

Time frames also define the dynamics of immigrant participatory arts, creating predictable moments when bonded-bridging can occur. **Even in more tightly bonded groups, there are times when the doors are open and visitors are especially encouraged and welcomed.** These include seasonal religious festivals, New Year celebrations, and fundraising events.



Girls perform classical Indian dances for packed crowds at the Hindu Temple and Community Center, South Bay, in Sunnyvale.

The Hindu Festival of Diwali

The Hindu Temple and Community Center, South Bay, celebrates the autumn Diwali festival with prayers, flowers and offerings, music, and many forms of dancing. Local temple members welcome visitors and honored guests, such as the Mayor of Sunnyvale, who arrive to share in the festivities. Participatory art forms range from professional level classical Indian dance, to student dance recitals, to the distribution of rhythmic cymbals and drums to accompany musicians as they lead the processions.

A fundraising concert in (translated) Korean

MILAL is a non-profit that organizes summer camps for disabled Korean-American children, and their annual fundraiser is a Christian rock music concert at a Mountain View Baptist Church, conducted almost exclusively in Korean. For visitors who speak only English, they provide portable listening devices and abbreviated translations throughout the concert: “Now the pastor is welcoming everyone. Now they are singing a song about world peace. These are slides of the children doing an arts and crafts project at the summer camp.”

The Muslim celebration of Eid ul Fitr

Eid ul Fitr is the Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. Strict Islamic interpretations demanded that the ceremonies for 2002 had to be simultaneously booked at two different venues that could each accommodate over 10,000 attendees. People would not know until Wednesday night whether they should go to the County Fairgrounds on Thursday, or to the Santa Clara Convention Center on Friday. Everybody showed up at the Convention Center on Friday morning, illustrating this community's efficient bonding. They invited local non-Muslim dignitaries to address the group before morning prayers began, and hosted visitors who stayed for the special foods and festivities that followed. Literary works, calligraphy, and poetry were the primary participatory art forms on display.

The Obon Festival in Japantown

Every summer, Japanese Buddhist temples in San José and other local cities celebrate Obon, the festival of remembrance and gratitude to the ancestors. People perform a special line dance, complete with hand gestures, as an honorific prayer form. For some it is solemn, practiced, and performed in traditional Japanese dress. And for some, it is less formal, even playful. Visitors are welcomed to join in the dancing, which in San José takes place at Fifth Street.

Hospitality is the classic form of bonded-bridging, so implicitly understood that it is rarely mentioned as a way of building social capital at arts events. But at large immigrant gatherings such as these, hospitality provides a distinctive framework for bonded-bridging. To access this hospitality, one watches for times when the "doors" to participatory arts are open, and learns how to join appropriately in the celebrations by following the lead of the hosting community. Many arts events are regularly open to the public at the time of the New Year, which may be celebrated near January 1, or at Lunar New Year in February, or at the time of the spring solstice, or even in the autumn.



Filipino M.C. Gary Gunabe hands the microphone to Moon-Hi Ree so she can explain Korean New Year customs to the pan-Asian Lunar New Year office party at Asian Pacific Family Resource Center, San José.



In October 2002, an interfaith candlelight procession for peace gathers at St. Joseph's Catholic Cathedral in downtown San José for shared music, then proceeds to Third Street Islamic Center for hospitality and evening prayers.



Bridging in Bridging Spaces

Immigrant participatory arts sometimes appear in mainstream contexts that are recognized sites of civic bridging between groups. These events remain bonded because they continue to express and develop specific cultural traditions, but they operate in a bridging mode that explicitly aims to address a wider community. Civic bridging means reaching beyond the confines of the exclusive group toward an interchange, dialogue, and the development of common projects with others. Bridging is equally significant when it happens among different immigrant groups as when it happens between immigrant and mainstream groups.

Securing a home for an immigrant arts group in an ongoing shared civic space takes time. Most of the examples in this section are taken from arts projects that have been practiced for at least ten years.

Social service agencies are primary gathering sites for immigrant and refugee communities, as they begin to connect with life support systems in the new place.

In Santa Clara County, several staffs of social service agencies meet together for an extended lunch to celebrate the Lunar New Year with an annual Asian Pacific Islander office party. Welcomes and songs are offered in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean. Office workers don costumes for a traditional Chinese Lion Dance. Entertainment is interspersed with historical and cultural explanations in English, and ends with mixed-group karaoke songs in several languages (Brazilian Portuguese, for example) which are non-native for most of the enthusiastic singers.

Movie theatres offer a public venue for bonded-bridging outreach. After being cancelled in the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Arab Film Festival, Cinemayaat, resumed scheduling a full week of international films in 2003 at a San José art house theatre, as well as in Berkeley and San Francisco. Their stated goal is to “embody a uniquely Arabic filmic voice which is varied, complex, and aesthetically compelling,” and to educate mainstream audiences about the richness of their cultures.²¹

The political forum is the ultimate venue for public expression in a democracy, and immigrant communities in Silicon Valley use their participatory arts to assert themselves in this arena. In times of external threat, whether from war or from economic crisis, the natural overlapping between participatory arts, religion, and politics is intensified. Since 9/11, many United States communities have seen an increased incidence of hate crimes and discrimination against brown-skinned people, and Santa Clara County has not been immune from these attacks. The new political situation is making for new alliances across immigrant groups, often taking the form of interfaith peace marches brought together by shared music.

Parades regularly take over public streets in Silicon Valley for ethnic holidays to celebrate TET, or Vietnamese Lunar New Year. Marching bands, regional costumes, martial arts displays and mini-dance performances alternate with sculptural floats depicting cultural heroes and broadcasting their stories to the crowds. Parades are political displays as well.

Libraries in San José are prime sites for intercultural public resources and exchange. Directly inside the doors of most libraries are extensive collections of videos and books-on-tape, organized by language. In 2003, Silicon Valley joined the “Everybody Reads One Book” movement that is sweeping the nation. A multi-ethnic advisory group proposed three titles, and voters at the libraries and over the Internet chose to read *Breaking Through*, Francisco Jiménez’s memoir of growing up as a farmworker. His story resonated with many local immigrant and refugee histories. During the month of February, Jiménez spoke at a dozen library and literary venues in Spanish and in English, repeatedly encouraging his listeners to express and value their own experiences.

IMMIGRANT PARTICIPATORY ARTS:

AN INSIGHT INTO COMMUNITY-BUILDING IN SILICON VALLEY

I hope that all of you tell your stories, because you each have a book inside you. The purpose of this program is to have each one of you tell your own stories... Because that is what brings us together as a community... If you lose the language, you lose the culture.²²

Jiménez transformed a book sale opportunity into a participatory arts event, welcoming one person after another to stand up and talk about their own story, or their own efforts at writing. English-language web sites for cultural and social service groups are a ready-made space for enhancing bridging social capital. The site for CARA, Cambodian American Resource Agency, is a teaching web site similar to that of many created by the ethnic arts groups mentioned in this report. In addition to providing basic information about social services available to the Cambodian community, CARA's site includes lengthy English explanations of Cambodian Buddhist practices, and their concept of time, games, rites and seasonal ceremonies.²³

Teatro Corazón at Sacred Heart Parish in San José was founded as an arts project to address two pressing social problems: infighting among parish groups from different Latin American countries of origin, and the loss of parish youth to gang violence in the Washington/Gardner neighborhood. For ten years, the Teatro has retold the story of the Virgin of Guadalupe with an inter-generational cast of about 80 volunteer actors, singers, and Aztec dancers. Arturo Gómez (from Teatro Campesino) has expanded Luis Valdez's script to include powerful closing denunciations of internalized racism, and to model the reconciliation of the red bandana gangs with the blue, under the mantle of the Virgin. Five years ago, they began to offer an additional performance in the Mission Church at Santa Clara University, and this community gift has inspired the university to pledge an annual full tuition undergraduate scholarship to a youth leader from the parish.

The inter-generational cast of volunteer actors from Teatro Corazón goes through warm-up exercises in the Mission Garden at Santa Clara University.



Overfelt Botanical Gardens, a public park in Eastside San José, is home to the “Chinese Cultural Garden of Under Heaven One Family,” inspired by Cantonese immigrant Frank Lowe, and graced by the architecturally distinctive Plum Pavilion which was a gift to all people from Dr. Chao Hsiao-May of Taiwan in the early 1970s. For the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, planners invited local high school service clubs to staff tables where they demonstrated traditional crafts like lantern-making, along with contemporary adaptations like face-painting with Chinese characters.



Performance at Mission Church at Santa Clara University.

Especially in the case of immigrant and refugee communities, the social system in which participatory arts are created is not a static situation. Newcomer groups undergo rapid transformations as individuals learn English, as children grow and make new friends, and as adults connect with fellow citizens across common interests. When people are given access to bridging spaces like the parks and colleges mentioned here, their art-making takes on an increased bridging character that reflects the interests of the new people whom the artists are meeting.

Published open invitations to immigrant cultural events like the following are typical in Silicon Valley mainstream newspapers:

Kurdish Cultural Celebration. Learn about Kurdish people through dance, art and food. 4-5:30 p.m. Sunday. For more information, call the Sunnyvale Public Library.²⁴

When immigrant groups create their art, they are proud to share it. Indeed, they glory in the opportunity to be fully themselves through their arts. The bridging that Putnam hopes for is happening, however it is not at the expense of erasing bonded cultural traditions. Almost all of the examples of participatory arts described in this report were publicly advertised and open to visitors. It remains a subject for future inquiry as to why non-immigrants hesitate to take immigrant communities up on their offers of hospitality beyond considerations of personal predilection, or geographical, economic or time constraints. In essence, what could be done to facilitate more reciprocal exchanges?

CIVIC CONSEQUENCES

Bonded-bridging As Civic Activity

Even in the limited sample generated by this research, the vibrancy and expressiveness of the participatory arts, as well as their ability to bring together immigrant and refugee communities is impressive. The prevalence and diversity of these voluntary community activities indicate a rich undercurrent of social capital and artistic creativity that this pilot project only begins to access.

But should bonded-bridging arts programs count as contributions to the civic whole? Is the United States civic norm still solely defined by older, more settled populations of primarily European stock? If immigrant participatory arts are publicly advertised and accessible, there is every reason to recognize and count on them as civic social capital. Indeed, to deny civic status to these community activities would be to fall into the anachronism of “majority-minority” thinking: refusing to acknowledge that statistical minorities and their consequent political bases are shifting.

Intentionality matters, where inter-ethnic arts are concerned. Authentic bridging outreach provides both advantages and challenges across the experiential divides between immigrant groups, and between immigrants and mainstream groups. Bridging demands a conscious interest to learn that is based on a genuine need to collaborate with each other. Awareness of this need is what establishes the difference between successful inter-ethnic activities and “multi-ethnic default” events through which large institutions gather multiple ethnicities, but each one is concerned primarily with itself. The conscious effort to connect with another community is what turns a visitor’s search for novel entertainment or inspiration into shared civic engagement. Reaching beyond tokenism and cultural tourism requires an experiential and mutual base of trust. Richard Hobbs, Director of Citizenship and Immigrant Services for Santa Clara County, summarizes:

Can participatory arts be used for social change? Remember when the Immigrant Leadership Forum came up with their “TEA” motto? “Trust, Education, and Advocacy” at every meeting. Immigrant or ethnic bonding that seeks to bridge—the real key—builds understanding. Especially when bonded-bridging is more personalized (and that’s the participatory part), it builds trust. That trust is the foundation to allow common movement together in a common direction for social change. If one doesn’t have that trust to begin with, if you don’t have mutual understanding of cultures, and common mutuality and respect, then you can’t do the second part, which is *to understand that there are social problems that can be addressed by both, and in fact that cannot be addressed except by both*. That’s why we in the [County of Santa Clara] Office of Human Relations have placed special emphasis on promotion of multicultural understanding, the trust-building part. Without that kind

of trust, it's very difficult to have any particular community meet its needs, because everybody's out for themselves.²⁵

Elisa Marina Alvarado, Artistic Director of Teatro Visión, puts it more simply: "The quality of our performance is totally dependent on our ability to connect."²⁶

The bonded-bridging paradox works for immigrants because as newcomers, they have to be looking for new connections. Any immigrant community must deal with dislocation and the task of reorganizing social support networks in the new place. History makes this imperative inescapable, even for very wealthy or otherwise protected people. The perspective offered by immigrant experiences introduces a new reading of Putnam's work on civic engagement.²⁷

After the success of *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam went on to organize the Saguaro Seminar, which is a convocation of institutional leaders from across the United States who share his concerns about civic community-building through bonding and bridging. After three years of dialogue and debate, the Saguaro Seminar published a follow-up report, "Better Together," about civic engagement in America.²⁸

In "Better Together," immigration to America is characterized in the late 1800s/early 1900s as a force for social change, a central formative factor though a disruptive one.

[Immigration was one of the primary forces that] loosed people from the structures, on the farm or in the old country, that had anchored their lives, and proceeded to thrust them into a state of personal uncertainty and social disorganization... [which led to] crime waves, political corruption, urban decay, a widening income gap, and poorly functioning schools.²⁹

By contrast, present day immigrant populations are not discussed much in "Better Together." Throughout the report, ethnicity is downplayed, perhaps in an effort to articulate a unified American theory of civic connectedness and how it might be enhanced. "Better Together" concluded with a proposal to take stock of America's social capital through a series of nationwide Benchmark Surveys, to be made publicly available for any communities who wished to measure their own social capital inventories. The Saguaro Seminar itself replicated Benchmark Surveys in 40 different communities in 29 states, an enormous study area that together would include one quarter of the U.S. population. One of these sites was Silicon Valley and the portion of the Bay Area Peninsula that extends north to the San Francisco city limits.³⁰

The Silicon Valley/Peninsula survey generated a sample in which 16% were foreign-born immigrants. This is a 50% undercount, compared with Census 2000 figures for this same area. The limitations of the Benchmark interview protocol,

conducted over the phone and only in English, had the unanticipated effect of screening out half of the immigrants and refugees in the study population. Researchers and policy makers working in other areas of the United States that have large newcomer and non-English speaking populations would do well to check that immigrants are accurately included in their corresponding Benchmark Survey samples.³¹

“Better Together” implies that the degree of social diversity that is now normative for Silicon Valley would be highly problematic for the formation of bridging social capital that looks to the common good. Its analysis appreciates diversity, but it also associates it with divisiveness.

When other factors that “Better Together” identifies as mitigating against the formation of social capital are considered, Silicon Valley might appear like a worst case scenario.

- **Transience and mobility**, for which California in general and Silicon Valley in particular are notorious, are associated in this report with decreased involvement in civic institutions.³²

Yet, with the bursting of the high tech bubble in 2001, approximately 10% of San José’s workers are currently unemployed and many are being forced to move to find work.³³ One-third of Santa Clara County’s foreign born population are recent arrivals, since 1990.

- **Reliance on cars and car culture** is clearly associated with lower levels of civic participation. The Saguaro Seminar reports that every ten minutes of commuting time cuts all forms of civic engagement by 10%.³⁴

According to a May 2003 article in the *San Jose Mercury News*, the average Silicon Valley commute is 26 minutes, but most people experience much longer commutes since this average aggregates stay-at-home telecommuters together with freeways full of people who make daily drives from San Francisco (one hour away, at best) and even from the Central Valley (two plus hours, each way).

- **Work-centered lifestyles**, so prevalent in Silicon Valley’s high tech industries,

The practice of cultural citizenship is the essence of bonded-bridging in the post-melting pot world that California has become. The melting down of ethnic heritages is a painful process, achieved only at the loss of much of the creative expression that is accessible through participatory arts. Immigrant artistic energies as they are expressed in a variety of forms of bonded-bridging offer a more optimistic alternative to the melting pot.

mean that professional parents no longer have the spare time to attend community activities like PTA meetings. Service worker parents miss them, too, because they often must work multiple low-wage jobs to make ends meet in Santa Clara County's inflated economy.

- **Suburban residential patterns**, which predominate in the San Francisco Bay Area, dilute the regular, casual interactions of a downtown center of shops and markets. In their place, suburbia offers the anonymous individuality of burgeoning malls, self-service gas stations, and large supermarket chains.

If high levels of these identified factors inevitably jeopardize the creation and accumulation of social capital, then it would seem that Silicon Valley would be lacking vibrant civic engagement. Yet, as this report demonstrates, this is not the case. Furthermore, this is not the case during a historical period which is arguably the worst of all recent times for immigrants and refugees:

- post-September 11 attacks and social repercussions,
- post-increasing national security restrictions,
- post-national priorities turned to wars in Islamic countries,
- not yet post-economic recession, especially in Santa Clara County's tech industries,
- post-California's anti-immigrant initiatives of the 1990s, and at the time of this research,
- facing a possible State initiative that would have outlawed most statistics that identify immigrants as having distinctive needs and vulnerabilities, even in the field of public health.

It is a time when it is difficult to be a citizen, much less a newcomer and a cultural citizen. **Nevertheless, immigrants are caring for their communities, volunteering on shared civic projects, and producing the rich array of participatory arts reported here.**

To be a cultural citizen means to exercise full—not second class—membership in the civic whole and at the same time to retain the culturally bonded self.³⁵ The practice of cultural citizenship is the essence of bonded-bridging in the post-melting pot world that California has become. The melting down of ethnic heritages is a painful process, achieved only at the loss of much of the creative expression that is accessible through participatory arts. Immigrant artistic energies as they are expressed in a variety of forms of bonded-bridging, offer a more optimistic alternative to the melting pot.

In Santa Clara County, the most practiced and mature site of cultural citizenship-building through participatory arts is a small community center called MACLA/Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana. It bridges from bonded

IMMIGRANT PARTICIPATORY ARTS:

AN INSIGHT INTO COMMUNITY-BUILDING IN SILICON VALLEY

Latino cultural traditions into new adaptations, and formulates new questions that reach beyond its original group. MACLA's current literary project is a classic example of bonded-bridging: San José's first ever interscholastic slam poetry league for high school students. Seven high schools, public and private, mainstream and immigrant, are participating in this pilot project. They competed center stage at MACLA's annual Floricanto Festival, which featured a keynote panel, workshops, an art exhibition, and performances by local and visiting artists in the areas of film, theatre, spoken word, and music.

Earlier this year, MACLA's "Ties That Bind" exhibit was the culmination of an ethnographic photography project directed by Dr. Maribel Alvarez. Artists went into the homes of intermarried Latino and Asian families and found both conflict and commonality, which they expressed in kitchen collages and multi-layered family portraits. When the families who were featured in the photographs came to the reception, they took pictures of each other in front of the exhibits, adding yet another layer of meaning, and claiming the show for their own.

The oldest non-Latino immigrant neighborhood in San José is now known as Japantown, although it continues to be an international district with Cuban, Filipino

and Chinese restaurants, and a gospel church around the corner from the main street of Japanese crafts and sushi shops.

Japantown's participatory arts offer a hopeful insight into the ways that cultural citizenship can work over time to benefit the civic whole.

People in Japantown have established a small bonded-bridging "downtown," open to and frequented by visitors from many different ethnic groups. Theirs, including the Japanese

American Citizens League's Daruma Festival in West San José, are the only local street festivals where the majority of vendors are artists producing out of their own cultural traditions.³⁶ Supplies for Japanese folk arts (mingei) are available at a small



Conjunto playwright, Oliver Mayer, and other members of Teatro Visión listen to Jimi Yamaichi explain the history of Japanese American internments during World War II.

department store. An established shop supplies and teaches students of flower arrangement (ikebana) and connects them with the “Arts and Flowers” annual show at the De Saisset Museum at Santa Clara University. The knowing hands of bonsai practitioners are evident in the sculptured trees outside of the Buddhist Temple Beisnin and the Methodist Church, both of which house seasonal festivals that spill into the streets. A multicultural Haiku Society meets over the Internet and at the Japanese American Friendship Garden in Kelley Park. Japantown is quietly thriving with participatory arts.

In comparison with local Mexican and Vietnamese populations, Japanese immigrants form a much smaller group, yet their unique historical legacy in the United States enables them to bridge as authoritative teachers to other groups. Their history goes back to the early days of Santa Clara Valley agriculture, but their community has had to be completely re-established in the wake of World War II deportations and internments.

The Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) regularly receives school groups who want to learn about the internment camps and members of the local community who returned from them. When 9/11 raised the specter of similar camps for persons of Arab descent, the elders in Japantown initiated dialogues with local mosques. When Teatro Visión from the Mexican Heritage Plaza prepared to stage an original play, *Conjunto*, set in the time of internment dislocations and alliances, leaders from the Japanese American Museum taught them local history, introduced the young Latino cast to Japantown, and built them proper strawberry boxes for props. More recently, JAMsj organized an “Exclusion/Incarceration” symposium in October 2003 at the San Jose Museum of Art. Co-sponsoring with the Chinese Historical Society of America and the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, they gathered artists, veterans, and community members to discuss the Chinese American Angel Island detainee and Japanese American internment experiences.³⁷

Adult immigrants put concentrated energy toward reconstituting the home culture to the greatest extent possible. And participatory arts are one of the most authentic, most respected, most accessible, most enjoyable, most welcomed, and most effective vehicles available to them for doing this.

These community-building initiatives demonstrate the civic promise of bonded-bridging, in which it is neither necessary nor desirable to avoid ethnic identifications in order to practice inclusiveness.

IMMIGRANT PARTICIPATORY ARTS

Recognition of bonded-bridging as a valid category of analysis gives future researchers a way to include immigrant and refugee communities in their considerations. The multi-layered social dynamics observed in bonded-bridging through participatory arts projects may also prove useful for thinking about other social interactions by newcomer groups that are unmediated by the arts.

Bonded-bridging is a conceptual tool that expands the national dialogue about social capital formation so that it becomes possible to include many activities of immigrant groups in the favored “bridging” category. As such, it equips policy makers with a consequential, specifically ethnic piece that is missing or underplayed in the studies like *Bowling Alone* and “Better Together” that currently direct national research priorities.



Members of Silicon Valley De-Bug, “The Voice of the Young and Temporary,” sell posters as the crowd gathers at MACLA for the Grand Slam Prelims of the South Bay Teen Poetry Slam League.

In the conclusion of *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam writes:

If we had a golden magic wand that would miraculously create more bridging social capital, we would surely want to use it. But suppose we had only an aluminum magic wand that could create more social capital, but only of a bonding sort... Some kinds of bonding social capital may discourage the formation of bridging social capital and vice versa. That’s what happened in the case of busing [in the civil rights movement]... In short, for our biggest collective problems we need precisely the sort of bridging social capital that is toughest to create.³⁸

Immigrant and refugee communities are particularly well-organized to build bridging social capital through the participatory arts because they need to connect to the mainstream communities where they now live and raise their children. This is what makes their expressive creativity different from the man who wants to bowl alone. He has lost the vision of the collective beauty of bowling as part of a team, but these immigrants have not. Indeed, they feel the need for intact networks of social connectedness all the more acutely because of their recent dislocations and losses. Adult immigrants put concentrated energy toward reconstituting the home culture to the greatest extent possible. And participatory arts are one of the most authentic, most respected, most accessible, most enjoyable, most welcomed, and most effective vehicles available to them for doing this.

Is the man bowling alone because this is the limit of his social world, or is he doing it as practice for the Thursday night league? In both cases, we still call his activities bowling. By contrast, in a participatory arts context, practice is labeled as practice, not as the complete art form. Practicing a karaoke song is practicing singing, but the singing doesn't become karaoke until it is performed in a particular context. Unofficial reports are that 80% of the Vietnamese families in San José have karaoke machines in their homes for social entertaining.³⁹ People do not invest thousands of dollars in home karaoke systems because they want to sing alone; they do it because they want to sing along.

Like new immigrants, the participatory arts themselves have an inherently bridging energy in that they require audiences. Participatory art-making by its very nature reaches out and across social and cultural boundaries. Combine the bridging energies of participatory arts and of immigrant communities, and you have the potential for social alchemy. This alchemy creates a kind of bridging social capital that, at least in newly arrived immigrant and refugees communities, is simultaneously bonding.

By examining the dynamics of bonded-bridging in these particular communities, we may have struck Putnam's gold. There *is* a magic wand, but in Silicon Valley, mainstream communities are not the ones who now hold it. Immigrant arts practitioners do, and they are willing to share, in exchange for mainstream civic spaces for themselves and their children.

It is critical that mainstream policy makers make space in which to welcome these contributions to the civic whole. Participatory arts are not so magical that they automatically open doors. Pragmatic planners might look to Francisco Jiménez's reading of the situation of many immigrant families: "People pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps? I admire it, but I don't believe it. We can pull ourselves up from our own bootstraps only if somebody buys us the boots."⁴⁰

The alchemy of immigrant participatory arts only works when ingredients are combined in a proper proportion and sequence. Policy makers would do well to take into account, work with, and provide infrastructure to support the following cultural patterns and characteristics of immigrant participatory arts production.

They are:

- operant in a bonded-bridging paradigm, so the bonded cultural nature of art forms and groups should not be a deterrent to civic funding aimed at bridging social capital.
- referent to the country of origin for foreign-born artists, so analysis needs to take into account immigration statistics like first- versus second-generation, length of residence in the United States, artist's age at arrival, and home country seasonality of cultural celebrations.
- both intra- and inter-ethnic, so analysis must be careful not to distort California's relatively porous and overlapping cultural boundaries by homogenizing identities (e.g., "the" Mexicans) or collapsing groups into the limitations of Black/White/Other categories.
- inter-generational, so analysis is more accurately done in post-individual units like extended families, worshipping communities, and community-controlled educational institutions. These are large social units that project over time, so a longitudinal perspective is particularly important.
- integrated into social service, political, and religious centers, so understandings of the cultural meanings of art-making need explicitly to include these current and historical contextual factors. Sustained group emphasis is on the meaning of the art form for community life, rather than primarily on individual proficiency in an artistic discipline.
- equipped with their own leadership who are not necessarily artists, so analysis needs to include ongoing community elders, political organizers, teachers, and in-group patrons.
- differentially impacted by discrimination, so analysis needs to take into account the current climate of anti-Muslim hate crimes, English-only initiatives in workplaces and schools, and restrictions based on legal status.
- a means to reclaim lives by claiming new space, so analysis should pay particular attention to issues of immigrant access to established public spaces such as street fairs, shared recreation centers, libraries, and schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

This report has valued, explored, and touched upon the creative artistic energies emerging from Silicon Valley's immigrant and refugee communities. A substantial foundation has been laid—both in terms of research concepts and in

terms of human relationships—to follow up this reconnaissance report with longer-term studies. Examples of issues that warrant further investigation are suggested below.

Pursuit of these questions in the mode of “participatory research,” would offer the advantages of active partnership with immigrant artists, students, and leaders as co-investigators. Study populations could be delineated in ways that would support quantitative, as well as qualitative, research methods.⁴¹ Measures of civic engagement could be derived from comparisons with control groups of immigrants who are not involved in community art-making.

- Expand the concept of bonding as it is actually lived out in immigrant cultural communities. When and under what circumstances does it result in civic engagement?
- Further explore the dynamics of bonded-bridging through participatory arts:
 - through artistic genres that predominate in specific immigrant communities (e.g., poetry in Islamic communities, dance classes in Indo-American communities, singing in Vietnamese communities, theatre in Latino communities).
 - in youth cultures, focusing on how the dynamics play out differently for young people of different immigrant generations (foreign born, 1.5 generation, U.S.-born).
 - in the larger communities—Mexican and Vietnamese in Silicon Valley, identifying successful instances of inter-ethnic cooperation mediated by the arts.
- Study mainstream reception of immigrant participatory arts initiatives. What impedes access for mainstreamers? What facilitates the understanding that there are some issues that can only be addressed by diverse groups, together? When are the windows of opportunity for sharing civic hopes and concerns? When does participation lead to shared membership?
- Why are there not more immigrant participatory arts happening in the public schools? Gather educators to investigate the possibilities of welcoming parent artists as co-teachers and applying the energy from their arts activities to core curriculum and academic standards.
- How can participatory arts work for social change in local government settings? Test and document artistic interventions in the work of Santa Clara County's Office of Human Relations and the Immigrant Action Network, and the Immigrant Leadership Forum that they have organized. How does an ethic of “trust/education/advocacy” affect the work of immigrant and refugee artists? What are the channels and methods of inter-ethnic cooperation in Silicon Valley today? What supports an interdependent arts environment?

APPENDICES

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About the Author



Dana Powell, Ed.D.

Mexican Folklorico dancers perform at the County Citizenship and Immigrant Pride Day.

GLOSSARY

Participatory arts are artistic disciplines and forms that continue to be created and shared by groups of people. Often intergenerational, participatory arts intentionally blur the lines between audience and performers because their energy is to include people as active participants, rather than passive consumers. There is a continuum between the relatively small number of professional-track participatory arts groups and the majority that wish to remain informally organized, community-based, and voluntary.

Immigrants in this report refers to foreign-born adults and children, as well as their immediate family members living with them in the United States. It also includes refugees who have sought asylum here from persecution.

Social capital is the accumulated value of living social networks; sometimes it is described as “community connectedness.” Social capital plays out as shared understandings and norms of behavior that identify which people can be trusted and relied upon, and which people can be expected to reciprocate social obligations. It is the human currency of mutual support and community-building.

Bonding describes a type of in-group social capital that reinforces these relationships of reciprocity within a relatively bounded or homogeneous group. Bonding energies tend to validate a distinctive or exclusive identity.

Bridging describes a type of inter-group social capital that builds relationships of trust and reciprocity across differently identified communities. Bridging energies reach out across social cleavages (e.g., race, class, ethnicity) to expand networks and to foster new kinds of interrelationship.

Bonded-bridging describes the multivalent social capital that this report identifies as operating regularly in immigrant participatory arts groups. Bonded-bridging is a fruitful and promising paradox in which the artistic practice of a bonded cultural heritage simultaneously creates bridging energy for new social networks and contributions to the civic whole.

Cultural tradition and ethnicity refer in this report to dynamic systems of identity across generations, according to which human groups teach and learn their bonded ways of living and making meaning. Cultural proficiency is a powerful form of social capital. The versatility of human cultures—the fact that they can be simultaneously enduring, adaptive, and creative—is what enables bonded-bridging to happen.

POSITIONING FROM A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: Comparison to the Chicago Center for Arts Policy Study

The Chicago Center for Arts Policy published the most comprehensive current ethnography of U.S. informal arts production in June 2002, the result of a two-year collaboration by 15 researchers headed by Alaka Wali, Ph.D. and Elena Marcheschi, J.D. Their findings from the greater Chicago area provided initial orientation for this Silicon Valley study, and now, by contrast, offer points of comparison with the distinctive immigrant-majority population in Santa Clara County.

COMPARISON: Study Populations

	Chicago Center for Arts Policy	Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley
	Metropolitan Chicago, IL Informal arts (individual adult participants)	Santa Clara County, CA Immigrant participatory arts (inter-generational communities)
Chicago Case Study Descriptors:		
Referent location	Chicago neighborhoods; geographically localized	Countries of origin; some small enclaves; mobile commuters
Artistic group/network	"Ethnic and Folk Arts" is one separate case study out of 12	Various ethnic and folk arts, ranging from classical to children's
Size of groups	Varies; most <50 members	Varies; norm is >50 members
Space used for art	Home, studio, school, library, church, park, church basement, recreation center, large cultural institution	Similar, but includes social service agencies and large ethnic religious and community centers
Meeting frequency	Determined by production schedule; club meeting model, or irregular meetings	Similar, but includes communal seasonal scheduling for large events like New Year celebrations

It comes as no surprise that California demographics and patterns of cultural interaction differ significantly from those observed in the metropolitan Chicago area. Post-Civil War settlement patterns in Chicago set up Black/White polarizations and neighborhood segregation patterns that endure, in different forms, to this day. The geographic boundary crossing that is an achievement in Chicago is normative for California commuters. Here, ethnic identities overlap but class status differentials endure. Summarizing the highlights of their Silicon Valley replication of the Benchmark Survey, Koch and Miller report:

We tend to trust each other—including people from other ethnic or life-style backgrounds... Economics is the great divider in our community. Our friendships—although ethnically diverse—are less likely to cut across class lines.⁴¹

FINDINGS: Informal/Participatory Arts

Chicago Center for Arts Policy Metropolitan Chicago, IL	Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley Santa Clara County, CA (initial indications)
Informal Arts Groups and Artists:	
Emphasis is on constant striving to improve proficiency in the art form or discipline	Emphasis is on how the art form comes out of and feeds the community's cultural life
Informal artists defend themselves against being called hobbyists or amateurs	These terms were never heard; adult participants see themselves as full-fledged cultural practitioners, not necessarily artists
Continuum between formal and informal arts strengthens the whole arts sector, but few individual artists move from informal to formal participation	Similar; continuum of the arts strengthens the whole immigrant community
Working in non-arts spaces increases people's comfort level in participating in art-making	Similar; highest comfort level is on home ethnic turf, religious or community center
Informal arts membership is fluid; participating adults come and go	Similar, except for enduring leaders/elders and financial patrons from within the group; programs for children have greatest continuity
Recruitment of new members is a constant, important issue for informal arts groups	Recruitment not the major issue, except for arts/language schools that charge fees
Informal Arts as a Civic Asset:	
Informal arts are a hidden social asset	Immigrant participatory arts are largely public, but most of the wider public does not own them
Informal arts are generally inclusive: no rigid gate-keeping for levels of training, skill, or experience	Similar; operant barriers have more to do with political and cultural factors, not artistic skills
Cost-scaling; different levels of financial participation	Similar; often in-group patrons and teachers support ongoing groups like schools
Informal arts permit transgression of normative social patterns of interaction, including race/class/gender discrimination	Similar, re: interactions with mainstream groups; within-group immigrant interactions more likely to have traditional hierarchical structures and expectations
Use of public spaces for informal arts creates a sense of civic ownership	Comparatively little use/ownership of public spaces like libraries, schools, recreation centers; access can be denied
Informal arts build capacity (skills and inclinations) for civic participation and renewal	Preliminary study too short-term to address this issue, but high levels of civic skills observed in ongoing immigrant rights groups

FINDINGS: Ethnic Diversity

Chicago Center for Arts Policy	Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley Santa Clara County, CA (initial indications)
Individual informal artists are a diverse aggregate; study participants' ethnic demographics follow U.S. national norms; study sample has high levels of formal education	Immigrant participatory arts happen in groups; Santa Clara County ethnic population percentages are among the highest in the nation; formal education levels are very high for some immigrant groups, very low for others
Less than half the cases studied show ethnic and racial diversity in the artist group	Over half the groups operate inter-ethnically to various degrees, although their core members may belong primarily to one ethnic/language group
Geographic boundaries sustain structures of inequality, but informal arts attract and enable people to crossover	Social boundaries around education, employment, legal status, and language usage sustain structures of inequality; participatory arts offer inter-ethnic collaborations but rarely help people cross these mainstream borders

Side-by-side comparison of these studies allows their two different community art-making contexts to offer perspective to each other. These comparisons also raise a cautionary note against making nation-wide policy generalizations based exclusively on either first- or settled-generations of informal artists.

SOURCE ORGANIZATIONS

- African Refugee Women Rebuilders (ARWR)
 African-American Community Service Agency
 Akbayan Pilippino Club
 Albert L. Schultz Jewish Community Center
 Amigos de la Biblioteca Latinoamericana
 Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI)
 Asian Pacific Family Resource Center (APFRC)
 Association for Viet Arts (AVA)
 Aztlán Academy
 Calligraphy of Thought email network
 Cambodian American Resource Agency (CARA)
 Castellano Family Foundation
 Center for Employment Training (CET)
 Chinese Cultural Garden, Overfelt Park
 Chinese Historical Society of America
 Cinemayaat: The Arab Film Festival
 Coalition of Nationalist Vietnamese Organizations of N. Cal.
 Contemporary Asian Theatre Scene (CATS)
 Cupertino Moon Festival
 Downtown San Jose Masjid
 Espresso Garden & Café
 Ethiopian Community Services, Inc. (ECS)
 Federation of Indian Associations, N.Cal.
 Filipino-American Heritage Appreciation Project (FAHAP)
 Firebird Chinese Youth Orchestra
 Five Wounds Portuguese National Church
 Gamelan Sekar Jaya
 Grail Community Resource Center
 Gurdwara Sahib Fremont
 Hellenic Heritage Institute (HHI)
 Hindu Temple & Community Center South Bay
 Ikebana Arts
 India Community Center
 Indo-American Community Service Center
 Innerart
 Institute for Diversity in the Arts
 Iranian Federated Women's Club
 Italian American Heritage Foundation
 Japanese American Museum of San Jose
 Japantown Business Association (JBA)
 JKA Dojo of San Jose
 John XXIII Multiservice Center
 Kaisahan of San Jose Dance Co., Inc.
 Korean American Community Services, Inc.
 KTEH (Channel 54): Return to the Valley
 Kwanzaa Festival, Santa Clara
 League of New American Women (LONAW)
 Los Lupeños de San José
 Lunar New Year Unity Parade
 MACLA/Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana
 Mariachi Festival and Concert
 Mexican Heritage Plaza
 Mid-Autumn Festival Organizing Committee
 Milpitas Community Museum
 Muslim Community Association Islamic Center
 NAATAK Bay Area Indian Theatre and Independent Film
 Nichi Bei Bussan
 Northside Community Center
 Pacific Music Academy
 Payvand School
 Promise of India
 Rainbow Art
 San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin
 San Jose Multicultural Artists Guild
 San Jose Taiko
 Self-Help for the Elderly
 Shilp Mehndi
 Shri Krupa Dance Foundation
 Sikh Community Center
 Silicon Valley De-Bug
 Silicon Valley Reads
 South Bay Islamic Association (SBIA)
 St. James Park Senior Center
 St. Maria Goretti Parish
 St. Patrick Parish
 Teatro Corazón, Sacred Heart Parish
 Teatro Familia Aztlán
 Teatro Visión, Mexican Heritage Plaza
 United Vietnamese Student Associations of Northern California (colleges)
 Viet-American Cultural Foundation
 Vietnamese American Center
 Vietnamese Folk Arts Institute
 Vietnamese Spring Festival and Parade
 Vietnamese Student Associations (high schools)
 Washington United Youth Center
 Wesley United Methodist Church
 West Valley Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)
 White Nile Enterprises, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral
 Xochitl Folklorico, Lincoln High School

ENDNOTES

¹Doug Henton et al., *Joint Venture's 2003 Index of Silicon Valley: Measuring Progress Toward the Goals of Silicon Valley 2010*. Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network, 2004, p. 4. This report is available online at www.jointventure.org.

²Richard Hobbs et al., *Bridging Borders in Silicon Valley: Summit on Immigrant Needs and Contributions*. Santa Clara County's Office of Human Relations, Citizenship and Immigrant Services Program, December 2000. All Santa Clara County/Silicon Valley statistics used in this report are taken from the *Bridging Borders* study, or Census 2000/2002. This research initiated resulted in ongoing monthly meetings of inter-ethnic service providers (Immigrant Action Network), post-citizenship leadership classes for six cohorts of 20, and an Immigrant Leadership Forum of their graduates. See also, Teresa Castellanos et al., *KIN: Knowledge of Immigrant Nationalities in Santa Clara County*, September 12, 2001. The *KIN* report, in addition to other local immigrant information, is available online at www.immigrantinfo.org.

³In this era of globalization, distinctions between voluntary immigrants and involuntary refugees continue to be important to people, even as they begin to blur. Said one long-time local immigration attorney, "Whether you're a political refugee or an economic refugee, you're still a refugee, based upon certain powers that are trying to control your country."

⁴*Bridging Borders*, p. 22.

⁵See Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard, *Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation Creativity & Culture Division, 2001.

⁶Richard Hobbs, Director of Citizenship and Immigrant Services, Office of Human Relations, Santa Clara County, interviewed August 2003.

⁷Alaka Wali, Rebecca Severson, and Mario Longoni, *Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity and Other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places*. Columbia College: Chicago Center for Arts Policy, June 2002.

⁸Elisa Marina Alvarado, Artistic Director of Teatro Visión, interviewed August 2003.

⁹*Bridging Borders*, p. 25, and interview with Richard Hobbs and Milina Jovanovic, August 7, 2003.

¹⁰Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000, p. 411.

¹¹Saguaro Seminar, "Better Together: Civic Engagement in America." Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2000, p. 1.

¹²See Scott L. McLean, David A. Schultz, and Manfred B. Steger, eds., *Social Capital: Critical Perspectives on Community and Bowling Alone*. New York: New York University Press, 2002.

¹³*Bowling Alone*, p. 23. See also pp. 322, 358, 400.

¹⁴*Bowling Alone*, p. 19.

¹⁵*Bowling Alone*, p. 210. Putnam quotes political scientist Eric Oliver about "local conflicts [that] engage and draw the citizenry into the public realm."

¹⁶Milina Jovanovic, sociologist/lawyer with Santa Clara County Office of Human Relations, Immigrant and Citizenship Services, interviewed August 2003.

¹⁷See www.indiacc.org.

¹⁸Putnam's concerns about the destructive potential of bonding social capital are valid, but misplaced if they are applied wholesale to immigrant and ethnic groups. For examples of anti-civic bonding, see www.splcenter.org. Their *Intelligence Report* for Summer 2003 describes neo-Nazi recruitment of ethnic whites through "European cultural festivals" around the country.

¹⁹See www.maclaarte.org.

²⁰See www.muslimpoet.com.

²¹See www.aff.org.

²²Francisco Jiménez at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Public Library, San José. February 2003.

²³See www.caraweb.org.

²⁴Community Calendar announcements, *San Jose Mercury News*, June 26, 2003.

²⁵Richard Hobbs, interviewed August 2003.

²⁶Elisa Marina Alvarado, interviewed August 2003.

²⁷See "Social Capital and the Latino Community: Are Latinos Really Bowling Alone?" The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, Policy Note, February 1999.

²⁸Saguaro Seminar, "Better Together: Civic Engagement in America." Harvard University: John F. Kennedy School of Government, 2000. This report is available online at www.bettertogether.org, and this web site also serves as a clearinghouse for citizens to exchange ideas about successful examples of social capital building.

²⁹"Better Together", p. 24.

³⁰The Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey is available online at www.cfsv.org/communitysurvey. For Silicon Valley/Peninsula results, see James L. Koch et al., "Building Community: Social Connections and Civic Involvement in Silicon Valley." Preliminary Findings Report, February 27, 2001.

³¹See www.factfinder.census.gov, maps and geography menu, for immigrant percentages in any specified area in the United States.

³²"Better Together", p. 9.

³³All social statistics presented here are taken from *San Jose Mercury News* articles, May 2003.

³⁴"Better Together", p. 16.

³⁵See Renato Rosaldo, "Cultural Citizenship, Inequality, and Multiculturalism" in William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor, eds., *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1997.

³⁶Crafts festivals fill downtown streets in San José throughout the year and nearly every weekend in the summer. At these large and popular events, multicultural arts are usually being marketed by non-producing vendors who do not live from the traditions they represent. It comes as a refreshing exception to find a Korean immigrant doing multicolored flat brush calligraphy posters of people's names, or a long-time San José Latina selling notecards with her Mexican-inspired watercolors, or a Senegalese vending covered and embossed leather boxes that he made himself. The street fair norm is professional vendors capitalizing on other people's cultures, and these examples are all too rare. Still, mainstreamers point to street festivals as the most visible form of multicultural popular arts in Silicon Valley.

³⁷See www.jamsj.org.

³⁸*Bowling Alone*, pp. 362-63.

³⁹Andrew Nguyen, president of the St. Maria Goretti Parish Vietnamese choir, interviewed January 2003. Checking this unofficial estimate in subsequent interviews with Vietnamese and Filipino singers yielded nothing but laughter and enthusiastic confirmations.

⁴⁰Francisco Jiménez at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, San José, February 2003.

⁴¹They could also draw upon the statistical analyses in *The Creative Community Index: Measuring Progress Toward a Vibrant Silicon Valley*, published by Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley in 2002.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Beginning any anthropological research project puts special demands on the social capital of the local researcher, because friends and social networks become the starting places for investigations. Many people were kind enough to offer me ideas and contacts for this study, and many more extended their hospitality openly at immigrant community events. I am especially indebted to the staff of the Office of Human Relations, Immigrant and Citizenship Programs—Richard Hobbs, Teresa Castellanos, Milina Jovanovic, and Basil Robledo, and the members of the Immigrant Leadership Forum that they have organized.

My thanks to all, and especially to John Hurst and John Kreidler, for getting me started on this project, and to Brendan Rawson for accompanying and guiding me in the work. Dana Powell and Vanessa Shieh of Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley generously helped by covering occasional arts events, and Laura Jason helped with editing. Alaka Wali, Rebecca Severson, and Mario Longoni offered helpful feedback and guidance based on their own Chicago research. Thanks are also due to my dear husband and first reader, Bob Hurd, and to the people listed below who were willing to teach, talk and think with me along the way.

May this be the beginning of a long and beautiful friendship.

Pia Moriarty
San José, October 2003

Ahn-Hien
Tamara Alvarado
Maribel Alvarez
Imam Tahir Anwar
Raj Bhanot
Bill Bracken
Sara Carlson
Lisa Castellanos
Sandra Cate
Rani Chandran
Peggy Coleman Del Buono
Sr. Catherine Dang, LHC
Rev. Jerry Drino
Sia Dunbar

Daniel Geu
Arturo Gómez
Tony Gómez
Michele Fine
Dolly Florentin
Elisa Marina Gonzalez
Javier Gonzalez
Laleh Hamadani
Mohammed Hassen
Salle Hayden
Roy Hirabayashi
Sam Ho
Jim Hogan
Karita Hummer

Francisco Jiménez
Danny Kang
Michael Kim
Richard Konda
Samir Laymoun
Chan Ngoc Le
Chin Ngoc Le
Gordon Lee
Michael Liao
Lisa Liu
Susan Marsland
Tsukasa Matsueda
Roy Matsuzaki
Craig McGarvey
Birku Melese
Fariba Nejat
Andrew Nguyen
Kelvin Nguyen
Madison Nguyen
Maria Nguyen
The-Vu Nguyen
Shiva Nourpouri
Rosalia Novotny
Christine Padilla
Rev. Jon Pedigo

Marc David Pinate
Lois Powell
Jane Przybysz
Moon-Hi Ree
Elena Robles
Charles Rohrbacher
Dana Saba
Eman Tai
Shabnam Tai
Vinay Tatapudy
Khamphou Thoummany
Vu Hong Thinh
Karen Trader-Leigh
Loc Tran
Luís Valdez
Sujatha Venkataraman
Gil Villagrán
Ma. Guadalupe Vitál
Soyeon Woo
Rosa Wong
Jimi Yamaichi
Joe Yasutake
Lisa Yu
Rufino Zaragoza

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Pia Moriarty is an educator and anthropologist who has worked with immigrant and refugee communities in California since the 1970s, teaching English as a Second Language and adapting Paulo Freire's approach to adult literacy and community organizing. Her degrees are from Stanford University and she has held teaching appointments at Stanford, Santa Clara, and San José State Universities, and at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. Her artistic practice has moved from serigraphy to ceramics, and most recently to writing song lyrics, experimenting with digital photography, and learning to draw.

Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley

1153 Lincoln Avenue, Suite I
San José, California 95125-3009
Telephone: 408.283.7000
Facsimile: 408.283.2127
Web site: www.ci-sv.org

Cover Photo: Marchers in regional Vietnamese costumes wrap the street in immense American and South Vietnamese flags for Lunar New Year parade, Plaza de César Chavez, San José. Mayor Ron Gonzales is pictured in the background.