

## 1 The (Not-So-Strange) Strangers in Their Midst

The established population's participation in relational assimilation begins with the contact they have with newcomers. To read about immigrants in history books, popular media, and in social science is also to read about an established population whose contact with newcomers highlights these newcomers' strangeness. Immigrants and their children are depicted as strangers in a strange land (Higham 1955): people who are "uprooted" (Handlin 1951) from the comfortable soil of their home country and "transplanted" (Bodnar 1985) to the unfamiliar land of the country that receives them. Portrayals of the post-1965 immigrants reinforce this narrative. Studies show first- and second-generation immigrants struggling to navigate between the distinctly immigrant households in which they grow up and a strange and often unwelcoming receiving society outside (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Waters 1999; Zhou and Bankston 1998).

There is more than a kernel of truth to this portrait of the immigrant experience. But there is also good reason to question whether it reflects the full complexity of that experience. From the perspective of the second generation in large metro areas, the immigrant experience may not be all that strange. Studies of the second generation in major immigrant gateways like New York (Kasinitz et al. 2008) and Los Angeles (Lee and Zhou

2015) find that many of the markers that used to highlight the “in-betweenness” of immigrant families are increasingly seen as normal. Multilingual households with spicy aromas emanating from the kitchen, the ability to move back and forth between cultures, and sadly, being unauthorized, are fairly typical experiences across contexts of heavy immigrant settlement like Silicon Valley, where first- and second-generation immigrants combined constitute a majority of the total population.

Established individuals in East Palo Alto, Cupertino, and Berryessa also regarded the immigrant experience as a familiar part of the contexts they navigated. The numerical dominance of the newcomer population made the immigrant experience a central part of these individuals’ concept of regional identity. This regional self-concept arose from significant contact with newcomer individuals that made established respondents firsthand witnesses to—and, in some instances, participants in—the trials, tribulations, promises, and hopes of immigrant life. In general respondents had more frequent and meaningful contact, and thus greater familiarity, with immigrants whose class status was similar to their own. It is not that they had no cross-class contact. But that cross-class contact tended to be more sporadic and fleeting than intra-class contact. Nonetheless, within these confines the net result was an immigrant population and an immigrant experience that was more familiar than strange to everyone living in Silicon Valley, including the most generationally established.

#### THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE AS REGIONAL IDENTITY

Immigration does not just define the demographic landscape in which large numbers of newcomers settle; it also changes the regional self-understanding held by individuals already living in these contexts. The immigrant experience, both past and present, was part and parcel of the larger narrative that respondents told about what it means to live in Silicon Valley. If newcomer individuals feel a degree of comfort knowing that so many of their fellow metro dwellers share in their experience (Kasinitz et al. 2008), so too did established individuals in this study attach a sense of normalcy to living amid so many immigrant newcomers.

To be sure, that sense did not perfectly overlap with the feelings of complete comfort that came with operating on an ethnic home turf. As I report in later chapters, immigration-driven diversity shaped the racial and ethnic identities of respondents in new and often uncomfortable ways. It produced perceptions of dislocation and community fragmentation among the people we interviewed; it inspired ambivalence among respondents; and it forced a rethinking of what it meant to be American. Still, immigration and the diversity that it brings sat at the center of how established individuals defined what it meant to live in Silicon Valley.

The extent to which immigration-driven diversity was enmeshed in interviewees' lives emerged prominently from their responses to the question that opened each interview: "How would you characterize the city in which you live to someone who has never been here before?" Respondents were quick to note their city's class profile, its major economic drivers, and its level of crime (low in Berryessa and Cupertino; high in East Palo Alto). Almost all of their descriptions also featured the immigration-driven ethnic and racial character of their community. In fact, only two of the individuals in the entire interview sample failed to mention some aspect of immigration-driven diversity when asked to describe the city in which they lived. Among Cupertino respondents, the depiction provided by Donna Williams, a white thirty-nine-year-old homemaker, was typical:

Well, it has a small town feel. The population of 65,000 people. It's got a high-tech business base and is known for its excellent public school system as well as K-14 for community college. It's a community that's changed quite a bunch in the past years. It's seen a major cultural shift in the population from the onset of Asian immigrants, both Chinese and East Indian, and we've seen how that's affected neighborhoods and communities and businesses in lots of different ways.

Diane Campbell, a white sixty-four-year-old grammar school teacher from Berryessa, noted in a rather upbeat assessment that the area had always had some diversity, but that immigration had increased that diversity in recent years.

I would describe it as a district of San Jose, which is a large city. And it's on the outskirts of it, which makes it a very favorable location, a good part of San Jose. It's not right in the middle of the downtown. It's towards the hills.

It's a more peaceful, non-trafficky place to be. And it's certainly got a great mix of ethnicities . . . . When I first moved here in 1973 it was not as mixed as it is now. And so, many groups have come in. Basically, there were a lot of Hispanic people here. But there were other ethnicities, too, Asians. And so by the time my children were growing up, I thought it was a really great place for them to grow up because they were not living in just a white, Caucasian area. But even at that time they had friends of different cultures. And so they grew up with that feeling that, hopefully, that different culture mixes is an advantage to be living among. It was a good place to be. As they grew up and the ethnicity became even more diverse with Vietnamese families living here who weren't really here before, and there were a lot of Chinese, and there's a certain amount of Japanese, and now Filipino, and it's a wonderful place to be. And they grew up knowing friends, having friends from all different cultures and never seeing a mix of cultures as being a barrier in any way, for them or for other people.

Among East Palo Alto respondents, “diverse” was a common descriptor of the city. But in contrast to Cupertino (where immigration brought diversity that had not existed previously) and Berryessa (where immigration built upon existing diversity), East Palo Alto interviewees noted a change in the kind of diversity that immigration brought about. They were quick to contextualize their descriptions of the city in terms of its self-conscious identity as the only historically black community in Silicon Valley. The fact that East Palo Alto once had a black majority was more than a demographic fact to respondents who lived there. East Palo Alto was a cultural home base for its black residents and for Silicon Valley's small African American population more generally, replete with black churches, schools, retail stores, barber shops, cultural centers, and public celebrations. East Palo Alto respondents' descriptions of the city—which also referenced its levels of crime and poverty—spoke to how different East Palo Alto was from Cupertino and Berryessa. In spite of these differences, references to immigration-driven change were just as prominent. Karen Jackson, a black fifty-three-year-old day care provider, explained the situation in East Palo Alto in much the same way as other respondents there:

At one time, I was told, it was predominantly black. Most people migrated over here because of the low cost of living. And a lot of those houses, new houses, are being bought by people other than blacks—Latinos and Tongans—because they're cheaper. I just think that people are just going out

to all kind of places. They're just . . . It's just not like the old way, where it used to be you had your two races. It's just a melting pot everywhere you go, now. People are just migrating all over the place.

There was thus a high degree of recognition among interviewees from all three cities that immigration had played a major role in defining the character of their respective cities.

The neighborhoods in which respondents lived were microcosms of their respective cities, and respondents often used their neighborhoods as more tangible instances of the dynamics in their cities and the region. To illustrate the high degree of diversity in their particular neighborhoods, respondents in all three locales often provided a verbal mapping of their own street, pointing in the direction of specific houses and reporting the occupants' ethnic backgrounds. Ben Braur, a retired, seventy-seven-year-old white engineer in Cupertino, had lived in his home for more than three decades. He was thus well positioned to explain the demographics of his neighborhood, both past and present:

But just in our little circle: Caucasian woman married to an Asian kid, who we've watched group up since [he was young]; two Caucasians next door. Next door to them is a family that just came from India. Next door to them is a family that just came from Jordan. Next door to them is like [a] third owner, divorced many times but, she's Korean and has a—I think—seven or eight or more young Asians are there and then go away and then they come back . . . Next door to them is the American Samoan. Next door to them—they're from the Netherlands, but she was born in Beirut. Next door to them is Indiana. And that's just down that side [of the street]. My side is a gal and her mother . . . : Greece; born here but I think mother might have been from Greece. Then a Jewish family and then next door to me has been a rental . . . An Israeli family has been there the last ten years or more. And next door to me is Asian, both sets of parents came from Taiwan. Next door to them is Japanese . . . You see how it goes?

Respondents in East Palo Alto and Berryessa went through a similar exercise during the interview. East Palo Alto respondents generally pointed out who was Mexican, and their length of residence, while Berryessa respondents rattled off descriptions of neighbors with Vietnamese, Chinese, Indian, and Mexican origins. When respondents and their newcomer neighbors had lived in the neighborhood for a long time, respondents knew their

neighbors' specific origins rather than only surface descriptors, like their race. The more detailed nature of these descriptions speak to respondents' familiarity with long-standing neighbors, an important factor in perceptions of social insiders and outsiders (more on this in chapter 4).

These informal demographic renderings of the cities and neighborhoods amount to on-the-ground depictions of a trend unfolding across U.S. metropolitan areas. The rapid increase of Latino and Asian immigrant populations has given rise to "global neighborhoods" where whites, blacks, Latinos, and Asians are all well represented (Logan and Zhang 2011). What is notable about these trends in residential integration is not the degree to which minorities have, over time, moved "up and out" of immigrant enclaves. Rather, it is the extent of integration experienced by both whites and blacks that stands out. According to sociologists John Logan and Charles Zhang's (2011) analysis of 2010 U.S. Census data from the twenty most multiethnic metro regions in the country, the share of blacks living in global neighborhoods grew from one in five in 1980 to nearly two in five in 2010; for whites, the share grew from one in five to more than two in five.<sup>1</sup> While these figures do not indicate residents' generation-since-immigration status, it is safe to assume that whites and blacks living in these global neighborhoods are predominantly established individuals because the overwhelming majority of U.S. blacks and whites were born in the United States to U.S.-born parents. Whites are still the dominant population in most metropolitan regions, even in neighborhoods where there is a large share of nonwhites, while whites are a minority in Silicon Valley and in the three cities that we studied. Silicon Valley thus stands as an amplified version of the global regions and neighborhoods found elsewhere. Still, there can be little doubt that the growing diversity in Silicon Valley, like that in other metropolitan areas, is defined both by immigration and by ethnic and racial difference.

The fact that these trends are more prominent across large metro areas like Silicon Valley was not lost on the people we interviewed. They often drew on time spent in other parts of the country to emphasize the degree to which immigration-driven diversity is part of Silicon Valley's identity. Standing out prominently in their stories of visits to the South, Midwest, or Pacific Northwest was how few immigrants there were in these other places and the lack of diversity that resulted.<sup>2</sup> Attending college, visiting family, or spending the early part of life living outside of the region threw

the degree of diversity in Silicon Valley into vivid relief. Margarita Bartis, a white, forty-four-year-old dental hygienist whose son was dating a second-generation Asian American woman, compared living in Berryessa to the time she spent in Kansas:

And it's funny because my dad lives in Kansas now. So when I go visit my dad everybody's white . . . . On my eye, it's very strange because I'm so used to the diversity here. And to go somewhere where everyone's white, it's very weird. Indians, we have here. We have a mix of people here. And it's very strange on the eye when you go somewhere and everybody's the same. It's very strange . . . . And there's not as many Caucasians anymore. It's no big deal, but just visually, you notice the difference with your eye. . . . I wouldn't move out of the area or go move to Kansas to be around white people. So I guess if I didn't like Asians, it would be bad. (laughs) But my son's girlfriend's Asian, so someday I may have little Asian grandchildren. (laughs)

Similarly, Melanie Davis, a black, unemployed twenty-nine-year-old in East Palo Alto, articulated the region's ethnic and racial *mélange* in relation to her experience visiting family in Jackson, Mississippi, where most of the individuals she encountered were black:

Yeah, I like to see white people and Mexicans and Polynesians. I like to see that. I like to go to McDonald's and see that mixture. In Jackson, everybody is black. Everything is black. I seen a couple white people but that was about it. It's majority black. And I love black and I am black, but to see that many black people take me off guard because I've never been to the South like that; never go into an all-black college. Nothing like that. So to go in the McDonald's, and everybody working is black. Go to the grocery store, everybody there and everywhere you go, to where I, to me, that was just . . . I don't know—culture shock . . . . That was just crazy, mind blowing . . . . I mean here, it's all Hispanic, everywhere that you go. Every worker is Hispanic. But there, it was like, "Where is a Hispanic person? Let me see one!" It was Indian. Instead of the Hispanics it was the Indians, that's what took the place up. My mom was like, "Girl, you don't see them down here!" What?! But that's how it is out there. So I told her I'll visit but I think the Bay Area in California, and it's different to me. I think I'm just more Bay oriented. I never really left. So I've just stuck here. This is my big hole.

While African American respondents were not alone in expressing a preference for racially mixed areas, survey research suggests that they are

more likely than whites to prefer living among people of different backgrounds (Charles 2006). Still, respondents from across the three cities we studied conveyed more than a hint of pride about living a place as diverse as Silicon Valley. In some ways, they portrayed the entire region as a “cosmopolitan canopy,” the term that sociologist Elijah Anderson (2011) used to describe urban spaces where people from a range of racial backgrounds interact with one another with a high degree of civility. That regional character came to light when respondents like Melanie and others in all three study locales noted that less diverse regions of the country seemed “weird,” “strange,” or “boring,” precisely because Silicon Valley’s multiethnic scene had shaped their perception of the norm (see Voyer 2011).

That norm is not necessarily unique to Silicon Valley. In metropolitan areas across the country, the heavy settlement of immigrants means that established individuals and newcomers alike navigate contexts defined by diversity (Hannah 2011; Logan and Zhang 2011; Frey 2014). And like respondents in Silicon Valley that we interviewed, established individuals in other metro regions consider diversity a central feature of their particular region, defining what it means to be an Angeleno (Waldinger and Lichter 1996), a New Yorker (Kasinitz et al. 2008), a Houstonian, or a Nashvillian (Winders 2013). But as that diversity comes to characterize more regions of the United States, it will become harder for anyone to claim diversity as a truly distinguishing feature of their home region, for that diversity will be a defining feature of the United States as a whole.

“[IT] HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF LIFE  
THAT I GREW UP IN”: YOUNG RESPONDENTS  
AND THE UNQUESTIONED NORMALCY  
OF DIVERSITY

For older respondents, the current state of affairs in Silicon Valley represented a notable change from the past—a new normal. But for younger respondents, the influence of immigrants on the region’s demographic and cultural character was an ever-present and thus unremarkable part of life. Respondents from the middle (age 35–54) and oldest (age 55+) cohorts were especially likely to compare the immigration-driven diversity



that surrounded them to their experiences in the past or in other regions of the country. These respondents recalled growing up in much more segregated and homogeneous places, whether in Silicon Valley or in another locale. In contrast, younger respondents (ages 15–34) had spent their entire lives in a context where immigration was creating a majority-minority population (Silicon Valley crossed over that threshold in 2000). Immigration-driven diversity was thus normal for them, so much so that the terms “diversity” and “multiculturalism” did not register for them in the same way they did for the older cohorts. Whether they refer to “a demographic fact, a particular set of philosophical ideas, or a specific orientation by government or institutions toward a diverse population” (Bloemraad 2011), the terms “diversity” and “multiculturalism” connote the deliberate recognition and articulation of ethnic difference. For the young people we interviewed, diversity and multiculturalism were facts of everyday life that required no explicit articulation. Toya Rivas, a twenty-six-year-old, Mexican American rental-car company clerk in Berryessa summed up the sentiments of other young respondents when she said “[Being around immigrants] has always been a part of life that I grew up in, so I just take it for what it is.”

Unlike the older cohort of respondents, young respondents were often slow to offer the ethnic and racial backgrounds of the people in their neighborhoods, workplaces, interpersonal networks, and schools—they did not flag diversity as noteworthy because it had been the norm for as long as they could remember. Because of their age and inexperience, many young respondents existed in a narrower frame of reference, and the degree of diversity found in their communities only became apparent to them when they went away to college or left the area to visit another part of the country. Though attitudes about race among young whites were not altogether different than the attitudes of older whites, their frame of reference may signal the emergence of a new racial order defined by blurred and crossed ethnic and racial boundaries (Hochschild, Weaver, and Burch 2012)

If young people were slow to articulate immigration-driven diversity and even slower to marvel at the diversity that defined their lives, the younger set’s nonchalant acceptance of that diversity was one of the first things that older respondents noticed about them. The differences between the experiences of today’s youth and those of their parents and

grandparents were perhaps most apparent to older respondents in East Palo Alto, who came of age in the midst of an epic struggle for minority civil rights (Skrentny 2002). Though they still lived in an area of minority segregation, their lives and those of their children and grandchildren were no longer defined entirely by complete spatial isolation. Because there is no public high school in East Palo Alto itself, many young people from the city attend high school in adjacent affluent cities such as Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Atherton, Redwood City, and San Carlos.<sup>3</sup> They thus have ample interactions not only with the Latino and Pacific Islander newcomer individuals in East Palo Alto, but also with affluent whites and Asians in their schools. To be sure, poor and minority students tend to be tracked into more remedial classes, away from their more affluent white and Asian schoolmates. Also, rigid ethnic and class social cliques form within schools.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, parents in East Palo Alto marveled at the high degree of contact that their children had with racial others as compared to their own experiences in childhood. Michael Thomas, a black, forty-nine-year-old food-service worker, put it like this:

My kids, they grew up around everybody because, even my older daughter and my youngest . . . OK the oldest [has been around] the Mexicans, Pacific Islanders, blacks. So they know everybody, all nationalities—white people, because they went to [Menlo-Atherton High School]. That kind of stuff. So it was just normal for them to be around all these different nationalities. Same with my youngest daughter. She goes to [Palo Alto High School], so you got white, you got, what, blacks—you do have there, the few. And they have Latinos. They don't have too many Pacific Islanders, at least not to Nixon [Grammar School]. And she has two of her best friends are white kids. She has play dates with them. So it's never been an issue of nationality or whatever. None of that stuff withstanding, the culture and that stuff, they hung with who they hung with. It didn't make a difference. It was never like, "We need to be around them"—that kind of stuff. And I never came from a household like that. Like [in my childhood]: "What you doing with that white boy? What you doing with that white girl?" That kind of stuff.

Parents in Cupertino and Berryessa similarly noted the difference between their own childhoods and those of their children. Daniel Gildish, a white, forty-eight-year-old corporate executive who grew up in Cupertino, ech-

oed Michael's assessment of his children's experiences, though in terms that revealed the far greater social latitude that Daniel and his family experienced as a result of their racial identity. We sat poolside in Daniel's manicured backyard while he offered the following observation:

Of course, now there's also people from all over. People from South America, Mexico City, Israel, everywhere—the Netherlands. There are people from all over the place now that have company schools. We didn't get that. We were very homogenous group of people here, I think, back then. And so I don't think we had the worldview as much. I don't think we understood other cultures. I don't think we had to deal with other cultures in our own daily life. So that's why I say it's completely different. So my kids know what Pakistani people are like. They know what Indians are like. They know what some Chinese people do and Koreans. They have friends whose parents are from Israel. So they know a lot about different people from all over the world. I think they're used to that. It's a normal thing for them. Whereas [in my childhood] it would be pretty abnormal to have somebody from . . . or a significant group of people from outside that had parents or were from outside the country, going to school with them. Back then for us, that was a big deal if maybe somebody came in from somewhere else. Even from out of the state was kind of . . . it wasn't abnormal, but I would say it wasn't usual. I don't think there were that many people that were born here and grew up here, that kind of thing.

Throughout the interviews, the significant contact between newcomer and established youth had an air of inevitability. Children could not avoid it, even when their parents intervened. Some parents, mostly from Cupertino, had placed their children in what they described as more “demographically balanced” schools in which their children were not part of a small minority (I discuss these dynamics more in chapter 3), and found that their children nonetheless ended up forming friendships across ethnic, racial, and immigrant-generational lines. Consider how things played out for Bob Russo's children. Bob, a white, fifty-one-year-old corporate manager, grew up in a virtually all-white part of the country. His wife was an immigrant from Mexico. Fearing that his son would suffer from being one of only a few non-Asian students in their zoned school, he placed his son in a school in another district. Bob explained the decision and the result like this:

I didn't want [our son] to be the only non-Indian/Asian child in the classroom. Because a friend of mine who lives in another part of Cupertino, where it's predominantly India . . . my friend is a Caucasian, his son is Caucasian. And there are three Caucasian kids in the kindergarten and they split them out. So his son was the only Caucasian out of twenty or twenty-five students. And I thought I try not to make that matter, but I think it does matter.

Q: How do you think it matters?

A: Well, I think he would have difficulty making friends because, from what I've seen, the Asian/Indian communities tend to be much more close knit. And I think it's hard for a Caucasian or a non-Indian, non-Asian to breach that community. And we wanted to make sure that he had friends as he was progressing through school.

Q: How has the decision to send him to the school in Los Altos worked in terms of that?

A: (chuckling) Ironically, his two best friends are Chinese and Indian! So good for him!

Richard Alba and Victor Nee (2003) explained that immigrant assimilation often happens as a byproduct of individuals pursuing their economic aspirations. As immigrants and their descendants look for better neighborhoods, better schools, and better jobs, they often find themselves coming into contact with people of other ethnic origins, which leads to other, more social forms of assimilation. As Alba and Nee put it, assimilation "is something that frequently enough happens to people while they are making other plans" (2003: 282). The same can be said of the established population. As the case of Bob Russo illustrates, significant contact with members of other ethnic racial groups and immigrant generations happened among the people I interviewed even when there were attempts to create some distance.

The reflections offered by respondents like Bob Russo also show that respondents were far from colorblind. They recognized ethnic and racial difference, and in fact respondents saw a less beneficial side to this diversity (as later chapters will show). For many, it made their own ethnic and racial identities uncomfortable parts of their social identity. Respondents also saw ethnic and racial difference as a strain on social cohesion. But as the quotes above show, these differences were thoroughly baked into the context that respondents navigated, making diversity not only familiar, but the norm.

NOT SO STRANGE, NOT SO MARGINAL: CONTACT WITH  
NEWCOMER INDIVIDUALS

Respondents' characterizations of the settings they navigated were more than general assessments of East Palo Alto, Cupertino, Berryessa, or Silicon Valley: they indicated the high degree of firsthand contact that interviewees had with immigrants and the second-generation children of immigrants in virtually every aspect of life. This contact was central to their experience of relational assimilation.

Silicon Valley offers abundant opportunity for such contact. Recall that first- and second-generation immigrants together make up roughly 56 percent of Silicon Valley's population. In East Palo Alto, Cupertino, and Berryessa, where newcomers make up almost half of the population, significant contact between the established population and newcomer individuals was nearly inevitable, whether in the neighborhood, at work, at school, or even in the family. These contacts were stratified by race and class, with respondents primarily having contact with newcomer individuals whose class status was similar to their own. But contact was universal: racial and class differences merely indicated *which* newcomer individuals they would have contact with, not whether they would have contact at all. And in its ubiquity and inevitability, this contact with newcomer individuals brought the immigrant experience into the daily lives of established respondents in both casual and more intimate ways. The most consequential contacts took place primarily in three kinds of contexts: the neighborhood, school and work, and romantic partnerships. Respondents also reported more casual contact in their everyday lives and through their participation in organizational and civic life.

*Contact in Global Neighborhoods*

The neighborhood was an especially prominent context for this contact. Sociologists who study immigrant assimilation place great importance on neighborhood composition as an indicator of assimilation. According to the "spatial assimilation" perspective (Massey 1985), assimilation takes place when, over time and across generations, individuals live in neighborhoods with fewer individuals who share their ethnic origin. The theory

rests on the idea that immigrant assimilation involves moving away from urban centers where immigrants historically concentrate and to the city's edge (i.e., the suburbs), where there are not only fewer co-ethnics, but also easier access to the kinds of amenities that make for a nice residential life (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1925). A parallel line of research on racial segregation focuses primarily on the residential concentration of African Americans and is concerned with the implications of residential isolation for intergroup contact. It finds that when individuals live in integrated neighborhoods, they are more likely to come into contact with individuals of other ethnic and racial backgrounds (Iceland 2009).

These perspectives were conceived with an urban/suburban dichotomy in mind, framing urban centers as poor and largely minority-occupied, and suburban areas as containing a region's white as well as upper- and middle-class residents.<sup>5</sup> But the suburbs are no longer bastions of the white middle class. Today's suburbs are defined by heavy immigrant settlement (Alba et al. 1999; Lai 2011). Indeed, a majority of immigrants in metropolitan areas now live in suburbs (Singer, Hardwick, and Brettell 2008) or ethnoburbs (Li 2009) like those now established in Silicon Valley. The diversity that characterized urban areas in the early and middle parts of the twentieth century has migrated to the suburbs in the twenty-first (Logan and Zhang 2011).

Just as these theories of residential integration predicted, the large number of newcomer individuals in the areas that we studied meant that virtually all contexts lent themselves to contact with newcomer individuals. Respondents were quick to note as much. Chapter 4 discusses how respondents described the quality of interactions among neighbors. Suffice it to say here that respondents in all three locales believed that their neighborhoods and cities were less cohesive because of the large immigrant presence, but they were far from isolated from their newcomer neighbors. Respondents noted that they were most likely to interact with neighbors who spoke English fluently and who had lived in the neighborhood for long periods of time. While the quality of contact varied, virtually all respondents reported having some interaction with foreign-born neighbors and their children. The interactions ranged from mere cordial salutations to deep friendships. And because respondents lived in class-segregated communities, their contact with immigrants tended to be with

immigrants who shared the same class status as themselves. In East Palo Alto, respondents reported significant contact with Latinos but also some with Pacific Islanders. Describing the nature of contact at the more intimate end of this spectrum was LaVaughn Agathe, a black, thirty-five-year-old grocery store clerk in East Palo Alto. LaVaughn was particularly gregarious, and it thus might be no surprise that he maintained cordial relationships with his neighbors. As he explained:

I've noticed in other cities where you see little Saigon, little Koreatown, and stuff like that. It just don't happen here. Everybody kind of invite each other. We're all just such neighbors and we keep it almost a family atmosphere to where you don't really see the separate but equals and this is mine and that is yours type stuff—nah.

In Cupertino and Berryessa, most respondents' contact was with upper-middle- and middle-class individuals. These contacts did not necessarily approach the connectedness that LaVaughn portrayed. But interactions with newcomer individuals were nonetheless a prominent part of the neighborhood context that respondents described.

For respondents in all three cities, having children connected parents to immigrant neighbors who also had children. Though respondents in Cupertino and Berryessa often described second-generation children as overscheduled with activities meant to maximize an academic bottom line, when established and newcomer second-generation children living on the same street formed friendships, it had the ability to bring parents into the fold. My exchange with Lori Brewer, a white forty-year-old banker from Cupertino, highlighted the way that children connect their established population parents to newcomer individuals:

q: What is it about [your Indian-immigrant neighbors] that you guys have been able to become friends with them and perhaps not some of the others?

r: Probably because the kids are best friends.

q: If it weren't for the kids how do you think things would be with them?

r: Same as they are with the other people. Friendly, civil, but not connected.

Neighborhoods are not just places where people live. They are contexts that provide an opportunity for people to interact. And when established

and newcomer families live side by side, the opportunities to interact increase (Blau 1977). Of course, simply being neighbors does not necessarily mean that people will interact with each other: the characteristics of the neighborhood must be conducive to interaction (Sampson, Morenoff, and Earls 1999). The presence of children in these neighborhoods made them quite a bit more conducive to interactions among parents, established and newcomer alike. Whether that interaction happened through monitoring the children, scheduling play dates, or observing norms of neighborliness, like inviting people in the neighborhood to a birthday party or family celebration, it resulted in instances of parents getting to know each other well and even forming friendships. In this respect, the findings from Silicon Valley reveal what can only be inferred from the spatial assimilation hypothesis, which focuses on residential location alone as an indicator of newcomer assimilation (Brown 2007; Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1925). As newcomers move directly into the suburbs alongside established households, the contact that results drives a relational form of assimilation for both newcomers and established individuals.

*Assembly Lines, Cubicles, and Schools: Contact Away  
from the Neighborhood*

On top of the neighborhood diversity, the workplace presented ample opportunity for contact. Research in other metro areas suggests that the workplace may be far less segregated than the neighborhood (Ellis, Wright, and Parks 2004). For established respondents, work and school offered significant contact with newcomer individuals—often more than they found in their neighborhoods. This work contact usually was with immigrants of a similar class standing to their own—not surprising given that many people’s class position is partly defined by their jobs (Katznelson 1981). Working together on a cooperative basis made the contact more sustained, and even more intimate. Whether they worked in professional technology jobs, blue-collar manufacturing, or service-sector occupations, respondents often had coworkers who were born in another country. Just as when they described their neighborhoods, interviewees readily pointed out that their coworkers were born abroad, and this was to them an important feature of their work environment.



The description that Derek Jackson, a fifty-six-year-old black assembly-line worker, provided of his workplace offered both a sense of the diversity that other respondents depicted and the nature of interactions among coworkers:

There's a Vietnamese guy, [Ronnie]. There's a Filipino guy, [Mickey]. There's a Cambodian guy—two of them, well you got two Cambodians, [Bobby] and [Chann]. . . . But they talk about fishing a lot. They like to go out. They like the outdoors, and we talk about that a lot. Rocky's from the Philippines. And he told me about the culture at his house, how he grew up. Johnny's from Vietnam. He told me when he came over here when he was six, and he's been here ever since, so he speaks fluent English now, which is really good. But he still has his home native tongue with . . . which is good. (laughing) Sometime he be cracking us up by talking the Vietnamese stuff. But we don't pay him no mind. It's all funny, to me.

Professionals from Cupertino and Berryessa similarly described having a large contingent of newcomer coworkers. While the term “immigrant work” often conjures images of foreign-born workers shunted into low-wage, backbreaking work, Silicon Valley's entire labor force, from assembly lines to cubicles, is immigrant in character (Pellow and Park 2002; Saxenian 2006; Wadhwa, Saxenian, and Siciliano 2012). Bob Harmon, a white forty-nine-year-old engineer and manager at a major technology firm, provided a description of his workplace that was typical of those offered by other professional respondents:

Today, I spoke to Olga, who is Israeli-Russian; Luc from Taiwan; Manjaya from India, Hassan—Pakistani; Ed is second-generation Taiwan. We had a guy from Nigeria. It's a diverse, diverse group. We go, (chuckling) “Yeah. Us poor white guys—we're in the minority here, too.” It adds. The guys give me crap. We were supposed to go out to Indian food today. “Sorry. I went out with Mike from Canada.” He's a Canadian. “We went and had sushi, instead. Next week, Manjaya.” It's just a melting pot [at work].

Respondents from the youngest cohort described spending the bulk of their days in schools that were even more newcomer in character than their neighborhoods. High schoolers formed friendships with first- and second-generation immigrants, even if these friendships were less common than those with other established-population individuals. Young

respondents described having especially significant contact with newcomer individuals in the classroom and through extracurricular activities such as sports, drama, and other school-sponsored clubs and organizations. Tyler Takahashi, a twenty-year-old college student from Berryessa of Japanese descent, had frequent contact with Asian newcomer individuals at school and with Latino newcomer individuals while playing soccer, coloring his sense of Berryessa's demographics. He noted:

Well, I've been playing soccer for my whole life and I've been playing in the Berryessa area for most of my life. And most of the kids on my team . . . I'm usually the only Asian kid on the team. There's a few white kids, but it's mostly Hispanic. I don't know. My parents don't agree with me but I think there's a large Hispanic, a large percentage of the population of Berryessa I would consider to be Hispanic. But my parents think it's mostly predominantly Asian. But I think it's mostly . . . Well, it's probably just based on the people I know, but it's mostly Caucasian or Hispanic people I know around here.

Marquez Litt, a black, seventeen-year-old East Palo Alto resident, was a star high school football player and top student. As East Palo Alto had no public high school within the city limits, East Palo Alto high school students who stayed within the public school system attended school in one of the wealthier neighboring cities. Marquez went to a high school that was a mix of wealthy whites, wealthy Asians, poor Polynesians, poor Latinos, and a few poor blacks. As I observed firsthand, there was heavy segregation at the school. Moving from "the green," a grassy area where wealthy whites and Asians hung out during lunch, to "the courtyard," where Latinos, blacks, and Polynesians congregated, was like moving between two entirely different schools, even though the two areas were divided only by a bank of classrooms. Participating in athletics tended to break down these barriers for students who took part. Like Tyler, Marquez reported having the sort of intergroup contact with teammates that seemed to belie what I witnessed during lunchtime:

We're just like a big family! We have like practices before football really starts. So our coach makes sure that he wants that bond. No matter what race you are, he wants that bond. So he brings us to lift weights, run on the track. We just do everything together. Go to each other's house and eat. We have big

festivals like that so we can be one basically and get along, so we can win some games. So that's one thing . . .

Q: What about the racial or ethnic background of the kids who play football?

A: All that really doesn't matter. Like they just have that bond and basically focus on football and becoming as one basically. So that's one of the good things about it . . . Never comes up. Never comes up. That's the weird thing about it.

Q: Why do you think that's weird?

A: Because we have all these problems outside of that. But when we come to something that we all love, I guess we want to win so we just do whatever it takes and we just get to know each other. But that's a good thing also because then outside of football, like when we do see each other, we got that relationship now where we can just chill, talk to each other and so on. So that subtracts the more negativity and more problems with each other.

Young people who participated in sports were especially likely to report significant and meaningful interactions across ethnic and racial lines because those activities created the conditions under which ethnic and racial boundaries could become porous (Allport 1954), even if those barriers were clearer in the rest of the school.

### *Dating and Marriage: Contact and Contact by Proxy*

The contact that respondents described in their neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces could also be found much closer to home, in their own families. For some of the established people we interviewed, the immigrant lines of the family tree were not just relegated to distant branches. Marriage to immigrants or to second-generation children of immigrants could introduce (or reintroduce) a sustained and intimate contact with newcomers. Recall that Silicon Valley is something of an extreme case when it comes to the size and composition of its immigrant population. It is also an extreme case in terms of the scale of intermarriage in the region. According to analyses of 2007–8 American Community Survey data by sociologists Jennifer Lee and Frank Bean (2010: table 4.4), the intermarriage rate in the metropolitan area that includes a large swath of Silicon Valley was the highest in the country. More than 21 percent of marriages in the county involved interracial couples, more than three times the national rate.<sup>6</sup> Intermarriage rates are high among all of the major groups

in the region: Lee and Bean's analysis show that 50 percent of marriages among blacks, 54 percent of marriages among Latinos, and 60 percent of marriages among Asians/Pacific Islanders were interracial. Although assimilation research tends to focus on intermarriage rates for minorities as a key indicator of assimilation (Waters and Jiménez 2005), intermarriage among whites, viewed through the lens of relational assimilation, is equally important. According to Lee and Bean's analysis, 24 percent of marriages among whites in Silicon Valley involved a nonwhite partner. The high rate of intermarriage in the area likely has to do with the composition of racial groups. Asians and Latinos together comprise a majority of Silicon Valley residents; these are also two groups that have extremely high intermarriage rates regionally and nationally (Wang 2012).

Intermarriage rates in the Valley are to some extent driven by residents' limited opportunities to meet partners of the same racial background (see Blau 1977). The small number of African Americans in the region makes it harder for African American partners to find each other, and thus makes intermarriage more common. The same can be said of the region's relatively small percentage of white residents compared to other locales. A smaller pool of same-race partners increases the likelihood that individuals of these groups will find partners of different racial backgrounds, raising their rates of intermarriage compared to national figures.

This does not necessarily mean that intermarriages involve *established* and *newcomer* individuals. Indeed, when intermarriage occurs, it is most likely among people who are more generationally distant from the immigrant generation—between established individuals of different racial groups (Lichter, Carmalt, and Qian 2011). Still, we found that intermarriage between newcomer and established individuals occurred to a large enough extent that it constituted an important form of contact between established and newcomer individuals, usually across ethnic and racial lines. Our respondents' most sustained and intimate forms of contact with newcomers emerged in their descriptions of family members, including spouses, who came from an immigrant household. These relationships were significant because they brought the established spouse into contact with an entire web of foreign-born in-law family members. In Cupertino, Bob Russo's wife was born in Mexico and had a large locally based family that served as the primary hosts of holiday and other family events, bring-

ing both Bob and the children into regular and close contact with his wife's immigrant family. I interviewed Bob near Easter, prompting him to use the holiday as a reference point to explain his relationship to his wife's family:

We do a lot of events with her family, birthdays, weddings, holidays. For example, on Sunday we'll go to a park for an Easter celebration. Everyone will bring something and it will be primarily Mexican food. And I'm the white guy they bring. I joke with them all the time and they joke with me about it. It's interesting because most of the events that we have with our [children] are around [my wife's] extended family.

Some young and unmarried respondents reported dating second-generation children of immigrants. Such pairings often crossed racial and ethnic lines. In East Palo Alto, heterosexual dating trends mirrored larger gendered patterns of intergroup romance, with black men more likely to date Latinas while black women tended to be in relationships with, or limit their partner searches to, black men. In Cupertino, white young men and women both dated newcomer Asians, contrary to the gender asymmetries found in larger interethnic dating patterns, where Asian women are more likely than Asian men to date outside their ethnic group. In Berryessa, white young men dated newcomer Asian women, while both white young men and women dated Latinos (Wang 2012).<sup>7</sup>

Even when individuals did not themselves seek romantic relationships outside their own group, other family members often introduced newcomer individuals to families through marriage. A Pew Research Center study reports that 35 percent of U.S. residents say that a member of their immediate family or a close relative is married to someone of a different racial group, a figure almost surely propelled by immigration-driven diversity (Wang 2012). Reflecting these broader trends, our interviews abounded with accounts of siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, and even remarried parents who partnered with newcomers.

Contact with newcomer relatives was hardly relegated to the youngest or middle cohort of respondents. Those from the oldest cohort also described close contact with their diverse sons- and daughters-in-law. Changes in rates of and attitudes about intermarriage are partly a function of "cohort replacement," in which older individuals are replaced by younger cohorts who have greater opportunities for intergroup contact

and hold laxer attitudes about intermarriage. The result is an increase in intermarriage over time (Wang 2012). The idea of cohort replacement would seem to suggest that age cohorts live in isolation: that the marriage patterns of younger cohorts have little or no bearing on older ones. The interviews suggest a different story, however. Take, for example, the case of Anna English, a white, seventy-year-old retired teacher of Portuguese descent in Cupertino. Anna explained that she had had regular contact with both whites and Mexican Americans when she grew up in the area, but that her parents' deep prejudices made the latter romantically off-limits. Yet her daughters, having grown up in a context of tremendous immigration-driven diversity, chose marriage partners whom her own parents would have rejected. As Anna explained:

Now I have a daughter that's married to a Brazilian. She lived in Brazil for three years and speaks fluent Portuguese, plus she lived in Ecuador for a while with a family and speaks fluent Spanish. So she's trilingual. And so I'm the sandwich in between, where my parents told secrets so that we wouldn't know what they were saying. And then I hear her and her husband speaking Portuguese. And then my other daughter married a Mexican from the Yucatan. He is a brilliant guy and she's learned Spanish, not as fluently as [my other daughter], but she does.

Though Anna comes from a cohort whose intermarriage rates were low, suggesting much less interethnic contact among individuals of that cohort, marriage patterns among individuals in the subsequent cohort introduced diversity to the family networks of the older generation.

The effect could be even more profound for older African Americans, virtually all of whom told of the virtual impossibility of interracial relationships when they were growing up. They marveled at the relative regularity with which such relationships form now among their adult children and grandchildren. Black intermarriage rates are lower than for other nonwhite groups, indicating that the social boundaries between blacks and nonblacks are still relatively rigid (Lee and Bean 2010). Still, when older respondents in East Palo Alto discussed intergroup romance, the contemporary situation seemed to them a far cry from the Jim Crow segregation that defined their younger years. Many of their children and grandchildren had partnered across ethnic and racial lines and had

mixed-race children of their own. Ronald Johnson, a black, fifty-eight-year-old retired plumber in East Palo Alto, had two sons and a daughter, all of whom had children with nonblacks, including one with a second-generation Mexican American. Ronald explained the rather ethnically complicated family tree that resulted:

My [grand]daughter is black and white. And my son that's the plumber, he have a black kid, I have a white kid and a Mexican kid [from him for grand-children]. And my other son that's a legal secretary, he have a white kid and a Mexican kid. Well, my other son, he's with the mother of the Mexican child. But he's not with the first child's mother, which is Portuguese.

q: Do you ever get together with the families of your grandchildren's mothers?

a: Oh yeah!

q: Tell me about what those gatherings are like.

a: We just had one of them, my birthday in the park, [March] 23. And that son's wife[']s] mother and father come to all, every event we have. And he's a Mexican guy, he's in construction. And his son's in construction. And he had two kids to get killed in Mexico. [T]hey praise me on how I raised me on my kids and I praise them on the way they raised theirs. And you know the father, he didn't do a good job with his two sons that got killed down in Mexico. And I told him, from the little bit I know of him, that I thought he did a wonderful job . . . . Father speaks it real good but his mother, she ain't never really worked, but she works as a housekeeper, cleaning people's houses and stuff.

As Ronald's experience illustrates, one family member's choice to be involved with someone of a different ethnic background and immigrant origin made the composition of the extended family more mixed and brought family members into close contact with members of other groups. The network ties that formed as a result sometimes made for particularly strong bonds across ethnic and immigrant-generation lines. Marquez Litt, the black student athlete from East Palo Alto quoted earlier, described what it was like to be around his second-generation Mexican American ex-girlfriend by referencing the diversity in his own family:

I mean, it was slightly different because I know her Hispanic background was different than mine, different foods and stuff. So when I went over there, I ate the food that Hispanics eat. But it wasn't really a culture shock

because I have my second cousin, he's half Mexican, half black. And I'm really close to his Mexican part of the family, so it wasn't really a culture shock. It was just like regular . . . My uncle on my mom's side, my mom's brother basically, married a Hispanic lady and had [my cousin]. And then, as he was growing up, me and him just connected. I was always with him, every day, every day. I call him my big brother because that's how we're just cool like that. That's my big brother instead of my cousin because we got that relationship. And he's somebody I look up to as well.

This contact did not wash away the group boundaries that respondents articulated, but it did make those boundaries much more porous. These partnerships across ethnic and national-origin lines had a profound effect on the composition of family trees—an effect that extended both up and down the tree to previous and future generations. This effect had important implications, especially considering that younger cohorts across the United States have more relaxed attitudes about interethnic partnering and are more likely to make relationship choices that reflect those more relaxed attitudes (Hochschild, Weaver, and Burch 2012; Wang 2012). As the experiences of our established respondents show, the choices that any individual makes in regard to romantic partnering reverberate throughout the family network (also see Vasquez-Tokos 2017).

### *Casual Contact in Daily Life*

If neighborhoods, work, schools, and romantic partnerships provided established individuals with regular and significant interactions with newcomers, more casual contact offered equally regular, but less meaningful contact.

Respondents' descriptions of their participation in clubs, organizations, and leisure activities showed this casual contact in action. For many established individuals, these contexts had a smaller immigrant presence than they encountered in neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and a less meaningful presence than they found through romantic or familial connections. Some newcomers were present in these contexts, but that presence did not necessarily lead to significant contact with established respondents.



Among these various activities, children's extracurricular pursuits created the most opportunities for casual connection. Involvement in recreation like sports and performing arts meant that young respondents made direct connections to their newcomer peers who also took part in these activities. Parents who were frequent attendees at their children's games or performances often became friendly with newcomer parents who were also present. Daniel Gildish's daughter was on a jazz dance team that had an active group of parents. Daniel explained the relationship between parents, some of whom were from China and India, like this:

So it tends to be the parents participate and bring food to the competitions and work together and get really close to making it a positive experience for each participant. And like talking about each other's daughters and how they're doing in school and what's happening in each other's families and things like that . . . so you get to know them pretty well.

Daniel's experience, as well as that of other parents with children who participated in sports or performing arts, illustrates the way that organizations facilitate particular kinds of network ties. Using the example of day care centers in New York City, sociologist Mario Small (2009) noted that people are more likely to form ties when they have opportunities to interact frequently and when those interactions center on a cooperative activity. Daniel's experience illustrates a similar phenomenon in Silicon Valley. When children are involved in performing arts or athletic teams that require parental involvement, and when the group of parents involved represent a spectrum of nativity, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, ties that span these different backgrounds almost inevitably form.

While children's activities fostered some contact, there were several significant social contexts where established individuals reported little important contact with newcomers. Consider churches and temples, which are places where newcomers and established individuals alike might be expected to find close community (Foner and Alba 2008). While the churches and temples that established respondents attended provided some contact with newcomers, respondents described newcomers' involvement as largely confined to religious services: the newcomers would attend services and then go home, seldom staying to socialize with other members of the congregation. When there was a large newcomer presence, the

immigrant newcomers were often part of a “parallel congregation,” attending services at another time and in another language, or participating in aspects of the church where the primary language was not English (López-Sanders 2012).<sup>8</sup>

Respondents who took part in other kinds of clubs and organizations, whether political or civic in nature, likewise did not register their participation as facilitating meaningful contact with immigrants, perhaps because immigrants are less likely to participate in such activities alongside the established population.

Yet even though this more casual contact was less consequential than contact in the neighborhood, school, work, and romantic partnerships, it was nonetheless significant. The people we interviewed found it hard to imagine doing anything outside of their homes that did not include some contact with newcomers. A trip to the grocery store, a leisure walk, depositing money in the bank, a night out with the family, or mailing something at the post office almost inevitably included some contact with people born outside the United States. Combined with more intimate contact, these encounters saturated the everyday life of established individuals with an up-close and personal view of the newcomer experience.

More than a half century ago, the psychologist Gordon Allport (1954) asserted that this kind of contact between members of different racial groups, under certain conditions—equal status, shared common goals, institutional support—would produce more positive intergroup attitudes. The interviews we conducted do not offer a clear picture of whether the frequent and meaningful contacts in multiple aspects of life improved established individuals’ attitudes toward newcomers. What the interviews do depict, however, is the extent to which the immigrant experience was infused into established individuals’ daily lives, and resulted in their familiarity with that experience.

#### THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE SHARED

Relational assimilation is not simply a matter of established individuals regularly bumping into newcomers in multiple realms of life. For the peo-

ple we interviewed, this contact profoundly shaped the degree to which they saw newcomers as strange. Regular contact with newcomers gave established individuals a more nuanced picture of immigration and immigrant adjustment than that provided by the prototypical immigrant narrative—which is often comprised of harrowing stories of migration, struggles to learn English, poverty, and mobility (Agius Vallejo 2012). Most respondents' interactions with newcomer friends, acquaintances, coworkers, neighbors, family members, and strangers were void of overt references to what it is like to be an immigrant. But they described how the topic inevitably came up in casual conversation, manifesting as migration narratives or discussions of family dynamics, and sometimes extending to their becoming personally involved in the travails of being unauthorized. The overall effect was a newcomer experience that was hardly strange. Indeed, it was thoroughly familiar to established individuals.

### *Migration Retold*

When the immigrant experience did come up as a topic of conversation with newcomer individuals, established individuals reported that such conversations centrally included accounts of the migration process. Respondents found these accounts especially memorable when they included harrowing details. Interviewees who lived in Berryessa and East Palo Alto were likely to live and work alongside Southeast Asian immigrants, who relayed traumatic stories of their home countries and their migration and settlement. Interviewees recalled these stories occasionally coming up in casual conversations during lunch breaks or across front lawns. Mike Cervantes, a fifty-eight-year-old, later-generation Mexican American electronics technician, lived in Berryessa and worked for a Mountain View-based company, mainly with East and Southeast Asian immigrants. Mike and his coworkers frequently swapped childhood stories over lunch. For his immigrant coworkers, these stories revolved around descriptions of the harsh conditions that led them to leave their homelands, the process of migration, and the struggles associated with settlement in the United States. Mike had a keen familiarity with the struggles of one of his coworkers as a result of these interactions:

The guy I work with the most . . . he's from Cambodia . . . He was telling me that when he came over here [to the United States], only thought that Oakland, that's the way life was. No hope, no dream, drugs, fighting. Worked at McDonalds. He moved his way up as a manager . . . He's told me some stories about the communist era over there in Cambodia. I don't see how he survived. He was toting an M-16 at ten years old—forced to. Seeing his daughter killed; father shot right in front of him, for nothing. Him and his brother trying to survive. . . he's toting these rice bags at eleven, twelve. Can't eat till seven o'clock at night. Man. It's amazing how he made it—tracer bullets at night going over the bamboo. He doesn't know how he survived because he's seen the pits with bodies in them.

Mike's own father emigrated from Mexico during the early part of the twentieth century (his mother was born in Los Angeles). But Mike had only a fuzzy knowledge of the conditions under which his forebears lived prior to migrating. Working alongside immigrants, even if they did not come from his father's homeland, brought part of the migration narrative to life for him. These tales of the immigrant experience—of evading border security, trekking across deserts, long layovers in refugee camps, and life in the homeland—were not passed only from earlier generations to their children and grandchildren. They were also imparted to established individuals by their newcomer coworkers, friends, neighbors, classmates, and significant others. Paul Clark, a white, fifty-one-year-old computer engineer from Cupertino, described learning of the conditions under which his coworkers grew up:

I don't hang out with anyone from work like in nonworking hours. But again, in my business there's a lot of pressure to deliver on deadlines. So the teams tend to get fairly close-knit because you're all working towards a common goal. When we need a break, we'll hang out, have lunch, talk, relax, talk about anything but work to get away from it a little bit. And then that's what we discuss, what it was like growing up when you were a kid, what it was like growing up for me as a kid. Just an exchange of experiences . . . Maybe for some of my coworkers who grew up in India that came up from lower socioeconomic situations—their description of life there with rolling power outages and rolling water allocations, it's a little surprising. It's more from the standpoint of, "Wow. Are you serious? You would go two days without water?" And they talk about they remember as kids having to fill up their bathtub. When they had water they would fill up everything that would hold water because they might not have water for two or three days. Those types of experiences. It's interesting. And it's also a little shocking.

Even when interpersonal contact with newcomer individuals was limited to the workplace, these interactions imparted a level of familiarity with the immigrant experience that can only come from regular and sustained contact.

Similarly, the struggles that immigrants endured after migration gained significance and immediacy because of respondents' intimate connections to the newcomers who faced them. Assimilation theories conceive of the host society as part of the "context of reception" (Portes and Rumbaut 2006) that helps determine the ease with which assimilation unfolds for immigrants. But interviews with established respondents revealed that they were more than just part of a context of reception, judging newcomers' fitness to belong (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). They often shared in these struggles. Respondents were usually most intimately aware of the immigration struggles of people who shared their class background. The people we interviewed from East Palo Alto articulated a familiarity with the experience of being a poor, and even unauthorized, Latino immigrant. Cupertino respondents displayed a deep knowledge of the high-skilled immigrant experience, and established Berryessa respondents reported an awareness of multiple immigrant experiences, including high-skilled, unauthorized, and refugee. This familiarity often came about as result of involvement in schools and with children. Chloe Campbell, a white, fifty-eight-year-old retired social worker in Berryessa, recounted the travails of her son's friend, a refugee from Vietnam. In the course of extolling his remarkable work ethic, she recounted her knowledge of his experience:

I watched this young man go through elementary, through middle school, he became a friend of my son's. And he would come here—his name is [Van]—and I would say, "Hi, how you doing?" I remember I had a candle on and he said, "[Chloe,] what that?" And I said, "Okay, that's a candle." [He said,] "Candle." He was learning. Still, but that kid got straight As. He's a dentist, now. He worked in somebody's business tailoring, making clothes. He made his own clothes in high school and he's a dentist now. So he really persevered. And when I worked at the middle school I saw the kids that would persevere were the Asian kids. They would . . . The Caucasian kids were, "Eh." They were like, "Eh. I don't want to do that right now." They didn't persevere as the other ones did. So I did see that.

q: Why do you think they persevered?

A: I asked one of them 'cause it always bugged me. It was like, "Why are they doing so well? Is it just something in their makeup?" So I asked one or two of them when I was working there, "When you guys go home, is it super strict? 'Cause you get such good grades and everything." And they said, "No." They said, "When we go home we have to do homework. We can't receive phone calls. If a friend calls us on the phone, everybody gets to listen to it. We don't want phone calls. We go to bed early. And we get whipped. We get whipped if we are not doing these things. We get hurt badly." So that was their incentive. Not to get hurt. They don't have a lot of socialization because they're not allowed to.

As respondents like Chloe told it, it did not take much to encourage immigrants to talk about what it was like to migrate and adjust to life in the United States. In the process, their stories made the experience far less abstract and more familiar to established individuals whose immigrant roots, if they had them at all, were many generations in the past.

*Sharing in the Immigrant Struggle: Illegality  
and Parent-Child Conflict*

The immigrant experience became even more immediate when respondents shared directly in the struggles that immigrants and their children confronted. Interviewees described familiarity with, and even direct participation in, two kinds of struggles intimately connected with today's immigrant experience: dealing with unauthorized status and the conflict that arises between immigrant parents and their second-generation children.

No factor is more acute in the immigrant struggle to belong than legal status. There is now strong evidence that being unauthorized or having parents who are unauthorized imposes significant hardship that may take generations to overcome, if it is overcome at all (Bachmeier and Bean 2011; Gonzales 2015; Menjívar and Abrego 2012). Silicon Valley has one of the highest rates of unauthorized residents in California. According to the Migration Policy Institute, about 8 percent of all Santa Clara County residents are unauthorized (Migration Policy Institute 2015). Some established individuals in East Palo Alto and, to a lesser degree, Berryessa had deep familiarity with what being unauthorized entails because they had

significant and meaningful interaction with immigrants who lacked legal documentation. Though unauthorized immigrants and even their U.S.-born children generally do not announce their legal status, when established individuals developed close personal ties to them, the topic became relevant. In East Palo Alto, where the majority of immigrants are from Mexico and Central America (the largest sources of unauthorized migration), the tribulations associated with being unauthorized manifested as a collective issue that shaped the shared sense of community among residents. Carry Plimpton, a white, forty-seven-year-old head of a nonprofit in East Palo Alto, described the troubling effect of unauthorized status in the community:

Usually the situation is we got a high school student whose parents may or may not be legal citizens, and the high school student themselves may or may not be legal citizens. In this community we're now seeing a lot of kids turn eighteen who were brought here illegally as kids. And they're asking us, asking around, "How do I survive in this country without being able to legally work? And I don't want to go back to Mexico. I hear about all the crime going on there. I don't have a relationship with people over there." So that comes up.

Young respondents in Berryessa also described confronting the issue in communal ways. When a schoolmate or friend revealed their unauthorized status, it was relevant to entire communities. Take, for example, the story that Elaine Hayes, a black, sixteen-year-old high school student who lives in Berryessa, relayed about a schoolwide discussion on the topic prompted by the impending deportation of one of her schoolmates:

Well sometimes [immigration comes up] I guess, but last year we talked about it a lot in class and stuff like that. And my teacher, he made a good comparison because in our school we're going to have a lot more incoming freshmen than ever before. So he asked us how we felt about it and a lot of people said that they weren't that happy with it because they would get less attention and the school wouldn't be as . . . it's like a small community so everybody knows everybody and the teachers can help the students out and stuff like that. And so he compared that to immigrants, because that's how people feel about immigrants, you know. We also talked about the good facts of it too . . . Well I don't think anybody in my class is [illegal], but I know

that there were some seniors last year that were. Oh, there's a senior that graduated two years ago, he went to [Columbia University] and he was being deported and so, yeah, we had to sign a petition to help him out and stuff like that.

Today's young unauthorized immigrants face a set of potentially permanent detours in their efforts to chart a path to adulthood (Gonzales 2015). Significant publicity of their plight made them more open to "coming out" about their status in recent years, though that coming out can be tamped down by any crackdown on unauthorized immigrants. When they do come out, it reduces the stigma of being unauthorized, and it also forces those who live and work around unauthorized immigrants to confront the issue (Abrego 2008). As Carry and Elaine's comments illustrate, established individuals could be motivated to collectively address the challenges of unauthorized immigration when they were connected to unauthorized individuals through schools and other institutional ties.

Lack of legal documentation entered into the lives of established individuals more directly when they had personal links to unauthorized immigrants or to the children of those immigrants. Young respondents in East Palo Alto and Berryessa told of friends whose lives were complicated by the unsettling way in which unauthorized status was entwined in every aspect of their experience. Young respondents in East Palo Alto, where Mexican immigrants predominated, were especially likely to articulate their familiarity with the plight of people who were "illegal." Roxy Taylor, a black, fifteen-year-old high school student in East Palo Alto, was a case in point. The electronic ankle monitor she displayed with more than a hint of rebellious pride was an apparent indicator of a checkered past. During one of Roxy's stints in juvenile hall, she had become friends with an unauthorized Mexican-immigrant youth through whom she became intimately familiar with how lacking papers and getting entangled with the law made for a toxic set of circumstances. As Roxy reported:

I be feeling bad because I had a friend, she was in juvenile hall with me and she didn't have papers. But she was [raised] down here and her family lives down here. And they all have papers and stuff for her. And they made her go back to Mexico and I was feeling bad because it's like, dang, she don't have no family in Mexico. Everybody came down here and they have papers. And



it just makes me feel bad. And when they come and get them, people start running. And that makes me feel bad . . . My friend doesn't have no family to go to. She don't have no papers and now she can't get papers until she's twenty-one. She's only fourteen. She's going to have to be on her own. And she said that they mistreat her in Mexico.

The lives of unauthorized immigrants have always been complicated by fear of authority and deportation (Ngai 2004). Recent efforts to more stringently enforce immigration laws in the U.S. interior have only exacerbated fears among immigrants (Menjívar and Abrego 2012). As the interviews highlighted, these fears struck a chord with established individuals when they had close ties to unauthorized immigrants or their children.

The precariousness of legal status was all too familiar to respondents with unauthorized family members. Interviewees who were married to formerly unauthorized immigrants, or to newcomer individuals who had family members in a state of legal limbo, sometimes found themselves ensnared in the difficulty of the situation. Consider the case of Fred Nugent, a white, forty-one-year-old software engineer in Berryessa. His sister-in-law, a U.S. citizen, married a Mexican national and gave birth in Mexico to Fred's now-teenage niece. Because of a variety of complicated circumstances, the couple failed to register his niece for U.S. citizenship, and she had been living in the United States without authorization since early childhood. After the girl's mother returned to Mexico with her husband, Fred and his wife took over their niece's care. Fred explained his involvement in the situation like this:

Our niece was born in Mexico. And we're still trying to get her papers straightened out. It's because her mother didn't do the right thing at one point, so it's been messy. She started living with us about a year ago. Since then, we're still trying. She has two brothers, but they were born in San Diego, so they're okay . . . It seems like it's just the bureaucracy. But part of it is, from what we understand, only certain people can do the process, which in this case is her mother. And her mother hasn't been so forthcoming. Her mother lives in Tijuana with her husband who is—what's the word?—he was forced to leave the U.S. . . . deported, because of some jail issues or felony . . . But we started the process [of working out my niece's papers]. My wife went down there. They went to the U.S. Embassy in Mexico. We started the paperwork. They went in and found out, "Oh, we didn't have everything," so we gotta go back. Then we hesitate. I think the last thing was to get a birth certificate

from Mexico. My niece's mother said that the niece had to be there. And we fear if the niece goes down there to Mexico she won't be able to get back . . . . So it's still been a challenge, even though her mother's American by birth.

Q: What's this process been like for your niece?

A: Somewhat depressing. Sometimes she'll say she doesn't feel like anybody, she's a nobody. Without the papers, can't get a Social Security number. Can't get a job.

Scholars have pointed out the way in which an individual's unauthorized status can reverberate throughout an entire family, even when other family members are in the United States legally or are citizens (Bean, Brown, and Bachmeier 2015; Gleeson and Gonzales 2012; Gonzales 2015). Fred's experience shows that these reverberations can be felt by an extended family made up largely of established individuals. These experiences also suggest that a more aggressive enforcement of immigration laws that includes mass deportations is injurious not just to deportees, their immediate families, and perhaps those who depend on the labor that unauthorized immigrants provide. As the experiences of the established individuals we interviewed illustrate, the lives of newcomers and established individuals can be so deeply entwined that fear of deportation and deportation itself is a stress that extends well beyond the prototypical "immigrant community."

It is important to note here that legal status was not as pressing an issue for immigrants in the upper-middle-class city of Cupertino and the middle-class area of Berryessa. Many of these immigrants had come on H-1B work visas, had green cards, or had already earned their citizenship. Though the high-skilled can be found among the ranks of the unauthorized, respondents from these locales (especially from Cupertino) were more likely to interact with newcomers who came from an elevated class position and were thus less likely to be unauthorized.

Legal status was not the only struggle characterizing the newcomer experience with which established respondents had intimate familiarity or direct engagement. Established respondents were familiar with conflict between immigrant parents and their second-generation children. They also often found themselves in the middle of that conflict. Scholars have documented the way in which immigrants and their children negotiate

between the immigrant household they live in and an outside world where “homeland” ways bump up against ways of life viewed as more distinctly “American.” The distinctive differences between the life experiences of immigrants and their children can be the source of parent-child conflict over everything from views about dating and sex, to corporal punishment and work ethic (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2008; Waters 1999). Respondents who had close ties to immigrants had more than a front-row seat to this conflict. Interviewees in Cupertino and Berryessa showed considerable understanding of the conflicts that can arise from immigrant parents’ expectations for their children’s academic and professional success. Like other young respondents with many second-generation friends, Jennifer Schwarz, a nineteen-year-old college student of white and Japanese descent who lived in Cupertino, regularly witnessed the complicated relationship between immigrant parents and second-generation children:

I’ve seen a lot of conflict between my friends and their parents because their parents are [foreign] nationals and my friends are American in terms of . . . in every way they may be Chinese or Indian, but they’re as American as I am, and we’re all at the same spot. There’s conflict between them when their parents want them to do really well in school and like, “Oh, you had an opportunity I never had,” like, “Do well.” The kids are like, “I am doing well. What are you talking about? Just chill out.” That’s always something that I constantly saw . . . Sometimes, in middle school and high school, some of my friends wouldn’t be able to go out because their parents [were] like, “No. You have to stay home and study.” Or, “You have Chinese school.” Or, “You have to do well in such and such sport,” not understanding that there needs to be a little more balance, and time for other things socially, as well. Sometimes, my friends with parents from other countries, there’s more disconnect, not as much communication, or understanding between parent and child.

Established respondents sometimes became enmeshed in the sort of conflict that Jennifer described when their friends and romantic partners were second-generation immigrants. Brian McKenna, a white, eighteen-year-old college student who lived in Berryessa, was dating a second-generation Chinese woman. In the course of laying out his view of Chinese immigrants, he expressed tacit frustration over what he saw as strict

parenting strategies that his girlfriend's parents imposed because it cut into the time that he could spend with her:

[Chinese families] have really early curfews. My girlfriend's curfew is sometimes nine o'clock. She's seventeen and a half. And that's not even on a school night—on the weekends. It's just like the principle—they don't want them out. And a lot of them couldn't sleep over for a long time, they had to study. They make them read books. If you go to the library and walk around, it's 99 percent Chinese people in there and they have shopping bags with like twenty books. And then the kids start doing it because the parents do it and just naturally become really involved in education; it's just part of their life.

Other young respondents echoed Jennifer and Brian's characterization of Asian-immigrant households, noting how certain parenting strategies impeded their children's ability to socialize with friends or romantic partners outside of the school setting.

Without a doubt, the struggles facing immigrants fall most squarely on the shoulders of immigrants and their children. But the regular contact between the established population and immigrants meant that these struggles rippled into the lives of respondents, often quite directly.

## CONCLUSION

Part of what it means to be an immigrant is to get to know the way of life in the place of settlement. In the case of Silicon Valley (and likely in other prominent immigrant-receiving destinations as well), however, the way of life in the place of settlement is itself partly defined by newcomers. As these findings show, the give-and-take of adjustment—that is, relational assimilation—occurs through regular contact between established and newcomer individuals and the sense of mutual familiarity that it produces.

Although newcomers have been portrayed by scholars as strangers in a new land (Higham 1955), they were not so strange to the people we interviewed. Respondents saw the region, cities, and neighborhoods in which they lived as centrally defined by immigration-driven diversity. For respondents, especially the younger ones, this diversity was almost taken for

granted. Their significant contact with immigrant and second-generation individuals—in their neighborhoods, at school, at work, and even within their own families—gave them meaningful access to the immigrant experience through tales of migration and settlement, direct involvement in the challenges that come with unauthorized status, and close experience of conflicts between immigrant parents and second-generation children. From the perspective of respondents, the stories and experiences that newcomers carried with them were not strange possessions of strange people. Rather, they were defining features of daily life for all who lived in Silicon Valley, regardless of how long their families had resided in the United States. It is important to note that, for all the contact established individuals had with newcomers, not every dimension of life facilitated that contact. In churches and temples, for example, established respondents described some newcomer presence, but they seldom had significant interaction with newcomer members of their church or temple. Indeed, the religious institutions were not significant facilitators of contact.

It is also important to note here what will become abundantly clear in chapters 3 and 4: this familiarity between respondents and the newcomers with whom they interacted was marked by considerable ambivalence. Along with their knowledge of the immigrant experience, their consumption of ethnic culture, and their praise for immigration-driven diversity, established respondents saw immigration as a destabilizing force in their experience of ethnic and racial identity and their sense of community. These more negative views coexisted, often uncomfortably, with the positive ones: in the end the positive views prevailed in large measure because of respondents' familiarity with the immigrant experience and the people who embody it.

How does ongoing contact and familiarity with the immigrant experience shape other dimensions of relational assimilation for the established population? The subsequent chapters take up that question, beginning with culture.