Geographical Spread of Asians in California

By

Lydia Tang

Advised by

Dr. Gregory Bohr

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Social Sciences Department
College of Liberal Arts
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
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Senior Project Research Proposal

The goal of my senior project is to perform a spatial analysis of Asian American settlement patterns within California. With my findings, I want to predict future Asian immigrant settlement patterns, places within California that they will likely cluster around, the rate of immigration, and how their increasing or decreasing presence in California affects California’s urban and economic climate. What I hope to achieve from this study is an understanding for why certain areas attract more Asians than others. By finding the answers to the following questions, I will be able to forecast the future spread of Asian Americans in California: Why do Asians choose to establish themselves at particular places? Does it make geographic sense that they placed themselves where they are living today? What are the factors that pull Asians to California and the factors that push Asians to leave their homeland in the first place?

I will begin my research by looking into past Census data to find when major shifts in California’s Asian American population occurred. With this, I will look at what major events facilitated or suppressed Asians from establishing themselves in California. As I am researching, I will analyze how cultural, economic and environmental factors shape Asian American settlement patterns in California.

A number of issues will arise when the rate of immigrants coming to live in California continue to rise. Immigration’s negative effects are very pronounced – known for overcrowding and increasing resource consumption. With more immigrants expected arrive in California, the state will become more burdened with physical infrastructure and may have difficulty providing enough resources to meet the population’s needs. Due to the public’s concern on the impacts of immigration, Californians may see that it may be necessary to reduce immigration since there is a limitation to resource availability. However, by monitoring the growth of Asian immigrants in
California, promoting sustainable development and refurbishing our communities and neighborhoods, we can prevent California’s carrying capacity from exceeding and lower the negative impacts immigration is known for.

Urban planning should account for the characteristics and behaviors of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans. With more Asian immigrants expected to enter California in the future, we need to look at how to sustainably build and develop communities the already existing communities in California. Planners will need to rethink their plans for housing, schools and other public services so that it accounts for the newcomers among us. My ultimate goal for this project is to realize the spread of Asian settlement in California and to depict settlement patterns found in the influx of Asian immigrants.
Annotated Bibliography


Bohn discusses how the movement of immigrants associates with immigration policy, economic demography and the economy. An interesting observation she has made is that despite California being home to more immigrants than any other state, its popularity as an immigrant destination is dropping. Examining the reasons for the shift in popularity, she pays close attention to how labor markets and public policies may shape immigration patterns. This work will be helpful to my project because it offers to look at immigration in a socioeconomic and political viewpoint. It provides a description and explanation for the current trends in immigrant settlement in California.


Being a daughter of second-wave Chinese immigrants, she looks into how history has shaped the lives of Asian Americans, such as her own. She brings together stories from her own family and other immigrants’ stories, whose testimonies uncover how they adapt to being Chinese in America. While official discrimination has been outlawed, subtle discrimination in the form of a “glass ceiling” and the public perception of Chinese Americans, persist. However, their involvement in the American political system may reduce existing discriminatory behaviors. Yet, identity issues can continue to infect Asian Americans no matter how many generations they live in America. This work explores the Chinese American’s struggle for justice, which is an important theme to understand as we look at the spread of Chinese Americans in California.


Demographers Farley and Haaga offer an interpretation of the results from the Census 2000, linking what they see to past trends and explaining the underlying causes. In understanding the data of the Asian American population, they go as far back as to understand when and why Asian immigrants originally left their country to come to America. Brought to attention are a number of policies that restricted or enabled Asian immigrants to enter the United States. This work will help me see if there is a correlation between government issued policies, and the rise and fall of the Asian population in California.


Ling reveals how communities have emerged with the post-1965 waves of Asian immigrants and refugees. She addresses the unique characteristics of post-1965 communities,
which includes there being a high proportion of professionals, and more variability in settlement compared to earlier Asian migrations. A detailed account of Vietnamese settlement in California is also provided. This work is helpful to my project because it familiarizes me about the origins of Vietnamese Americans, and where they tend to cluster within California.


Li defines an ethnoburbs to be suburban ethnic clusters of residential areas and business districts in large metropolitan areas. The ethnoburbs that her discussion centers on are the ones that compose the San Gabriel Valley of California, such as Monterey Park. She also pays close attention to the spatial and social transformation of the Chinese American community of Los Angeles. Factors that contribute to the evolution of the Chinese American community in the Los Angeles area includes how the Chinese media marketed the San Gabriel Valley to people in Taiwan and Hong Kong. By analyzing the factors that pulled Asian immigrants to the Los Angeles area, we can better understand the reasons behind the settlement of Chinese Americans of Southern California.


Massey examines the causes and consequences of the shift toward new immigrant destinations. He reports that the presence of dynamic labor markets and social networks are variables that influence the movement of immigrants. Brought to light is the hypothesis of “cumulative causation,” which hypothesizes that the social networks of friends and family is a bigger determinant of where migrants locate themselves than other factors. This work will be helpful to my project because it indicates the common characteristics that tend to appear at the immigrant’s choice of settlement. It brings clarity to my understanding of why immigrants will migrate to a particular place.


Min’s main focus is to look at the variables and issues that impacts contemporary Asian American experiences. Topics presented includes: economic status, educational achievements, intergroup relations, labor force participation, and settlement patterns. She covers the Asian American population as a whole, as well as individual ethnic groups such as Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Japanese, South Asian and Southeast Asians. Sociological data is provided, being derived from 2000 Census data. Adding some depth in her work, she also presents historical information for each group. This work will be helpful to my project because its coverage on the various Asian American’s settlement patterns will allow me to compare each group’s residential patterns.

Toyota brings to the table, stories which naturalized Chinese in Southern California have shared with her, about their reasons for leaving Asia and deciding to migrate to California. They share with us their first impressions of America and how they wanted to be free from their “floating” life in Asia. She also brings forth their account on becoming involved civic and political actors, which challenges the belief that Asian Americans are indifferent about civic engagement. We learn how their actions are motivated by their emotional desire is to have a sense of belonging. This work is helpful to my project because the firsthand accounts offer a personal taste of the factors that pushed Chinese immigrants to leave their country and the factors that pulled them into California.


Võ traces the political strategies that bridges Asian Americans together. She illustrates that mobilization does not come by smoothly, as it is difficult to find sufficient resources to enable the development of community organizations. Brought to attention is the Asian Business Association (ABA), a key player in assisting Asian Americans find employment, make career advancements, and to increase business earnings. This association keeps members informed about business opportunities and assists them in writing proposals for business projects. There being organizations that help Asian Americans advance in business in California, it would be unsurprising to see Asian immigrants immigrate to California for the hope of establishing a potentially successful future in business.


Yung shows readers how Chinese women unbound themselves from the social constrictions of their ancestral land, and how they adapted to a new culture, making it uniquely their own without sacrificing tradition. She provides examples of how they overcame poverty, discrimination and preconceived ideas of what they are. Some organizations such as the YWCA and Methodist Church societies stepped in to help Chinese women, which is where most started learning English. Determined to survive, they found strength to ask for what they wanted such as equal education for their children and equality in the job market. The inner strength of women is what helped keep families together as they adapted to life in America. This work is helpful to my project because understanding the critical role that women have played in their family’s transition to being Asian American will contribute to explaining how Chinese Americans in California have become as successful and plentiful as they are.
Outline

I. Introduction

This paper will:
- Explain why certain times in history, Asians moved to California
- Examine what happened to the Asian immigrants once they got to California
  - How did they spread out geographically?
  - Look at the struggles Asian immigrants encountered when they arrived, and observe how they got past such struggles.
- Impact of Immigrants
  - Changes population of communities
  - Locals may not welcome new immigrants into their communities
  - Contributions to the community; eg. KAZM radio raising relief funds
- Challenge ourselves to think of what can we do to help future Asian immigrants establish themselves in California
  - Create organizations to help new immigrants adjust to life in America
  - Place translators in businesses/communities/public transportation systems
  - Construct new housing/apartment complexes
  - Construct community centers for the young and old
  - Construct retirement homes for the aging immigrants

II. Why Move in the First Place?

- Theories
  - Dual Market Theory, World Systems Theory of Migration
- Pull Factors:
  - Reunion of loved ones
  - Education
  - Economic opportunities
    - Gold Rush, Railroad work
  - Laws that are supportive of immigration
  - Affordable housing + “Chinese Beverley Hills”
- Chinese
  - Push Factors:
    - Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping
    - Seeking shelter from wars and rebellions in mid 1800s.
    - Qing Dynasty’s high taxes causes many peasants to lose land
    - Frequent floods; people live under threat of starvation
    - Labor shortages

- Vietnamese, Filipinos, Koreans, Asian Indians

III. Struggles Settling

- What can deflect immigrants: zoning, license-sing, housing codes
- Public attitudes towards immigrants; phone threats
• Immigration barriers
• Wilber Woo’s account (from Ethnoburb)
• Struggle for justice
• Language/cultural barriers
• Obstacles in career advancement
• May resort to reverse migration
• Urban renewal projects were immensely popular after WWII; many get displaced. Pushing residents to move.
  o South of Market and Manilatown Filipino residents were greatly affected by gentrification
    ▪ Must fight to keep their place
• Manilatown, SF. International Hotel
  o Residents struggle against eviction and IH’s demolition to make room for urban redevelopment. Manilatown fewl victim to urban renewal projects and the larger campaign to rid downtown of “blight.”
• Racial tension; struggles w/ racism
• Domestic policies such as Homeland Security Act and Aviation and Transportation Security Act affect Filipino employment.
• Filipino families living in unbearable conditions; poverty, occupational downgrading, some parents forced to work more than one job

IV. How They Are Spread Out Geographically In California and Factors That Explain the Spread

• Hypothesis of cumulative causation/migration network theory (move towards network of family/friends)
• Socio-economic characteristics of different areas (labor markets)
• Socio-historical forces (public policies/politics)
• Federal government cannot regulate the number of immigrants that settle in their border
• Handful settle in large metropolitan cities in west and east coast (place of dynamic labor markets and already well-established immigrant communities)
• Interestingly, there’s a shift away from the California starting in the 1990s
• Chinatowns
• Ethnoburb (proximity to freeways and work, good price for house, good Fenshui, hilly areas, climate, helped by realtors)
• Chinese ethnic economy developed into a multinuclear pattern, dispersing widely into ethnoburbs (Contemp. Chinese America)
• Secondary migration – flocking to areas where they can find educational and occupational opportunities
• Orange County’s Little Saigon – largest population of Vietnamese outside of Vietnam

V. What Helped Mobilize Them? What Helped Them Survive?
• Snakeheads (bringing Chinese into America)
• Asian Business Association (ABA)
• Chinese women (their role in keeping family together)
• Nursery school for the working parents
• Chinese Schools
• Taiwanese (President Nixon’s visits and the events that follow)
• Newspapers; Gilbert Woo (Establishes community), *World Journal*
• Media (serves ethnic businesses through marketing and advertising)
  o Television/Radio: Eg. DirecTV, EchoStar Communications Corporation’s Dish Network have aggressively expanded their Chinese-language programming
  o KAZN Radio; organized countless charity events, raise relief funds, sponsors cultural festivals, seminars…
• Online Publishing; Sina North America, Duoweii, access to publishings in China/HK/Taiwan
• Senior Centers such as Langley, which the city of Monterey Park sponsored
• Old people selling their property contributes to booming real estate sector; Frederick Hsieh
• Laws/treaties/court cases that affected Asian Americans (Box 3 of Census 2000)
• Theatres greatly influenced the Filipinos; provided sense of belonging in a larger community
• Churches and schools provided space for Filipinos to come together
• Many Filipino immigrants who came to U.S. after 1965 were sponsored by their predecessors
• Family consolidation; more than one nuclear family living in a single family home as a result of high price of housing in SF and other urban areas; coping mechanism, w/ roots in the Filipino practice of a “tribal system,” where the whole tribe/community is the family.
• American missionaries, Christian church, Chinese and Japanese predecessors, political leaders and their Confucian background helped Koreans successfully settle in California

### VI. Figures/Situation in California

• 3.7 million in CA in 2000; most popular state for Asian immigrants
  o Chinese figures did stall due to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, but picked back up in 1965
• Difference between Northern and Southern California (climate, work)
  o Orange County holds the largest concentration of Vietnamese refugees
  o San Francisco- San Jose Area has about 1.3 million Asian Immigrants
• Increasing presence in politics
• Presence in universities; eg. represent 58% of undergrads at University of CA, Irvine

### VII. Immigrant’s Impact in CA

• Changed landscape of the place
• Some units like the I-Hotel in Maniliatown, represented a roadblock to the desires of capitalist, who want vouch for urban renewal.
• Altering characteristics and management of businesses; hiring of bilingual representatives
• Companies taking the opportunity to capitalize on a new clientele; readjusting workforce to service new clientele, include different languages on signs/phones/machines
• Emerging in political scene
• Remittances – money leaving CA, is being sent back to families back in home country
• Traffic jams – those who moved outside the core of Little Saigon/ethnic enclaves return for shopping, entertainment, eating, religious service, professional needs

VIII. Conclusion

• Considering the difficulties that immigrants have faced since living in a new country, what can we do to help future immigrants more easily adapt to life in the U.S. How can we prepare them for their new life in California?
  o Provide for their material needs and consumer cultural tastes
  ▪ Be sensitive to their needs and tastes
  o Make U.S businesses and employment more inviting
  o Provide affordable housing
• First generation immigrants are aging. Leadership in the ethnic communities will change
• How can we prepare ourselves for the influx of more Asian immigrants?
• A changing population means we may need to do some restructuring
  o Urban – new housing units?
  o Socially – support networks, social services; provide education, training and advocacy for the community to participate in sustaining themselves
  o Institutionally – need ethnic institutions to ease their adjustment to difficulties.
• Is reverse migration an issue? (Asia; holds better opportunities now – greater rewards there)
Introduction

California’s cultural landscape is as diverse as its physical landscape – it is the home of various ethnic groups whose cultures have permeated well into communities, social issues, food, education, politics, and the economy of California. Historically, California has been the most sought-after destination for many immigrants. This is especially true for Asian immigrants, who are still immigrating to California to this day. People may wonder why Asian immigrants were attracted to this state in the first place, and what continues to attract them to the state today. They may also be curious as to why different Asian American ethnic groups concentrate in particular areas of California. The goal of this paper is to understand the geographic spread of Asians within California. Our steps to get there will involve looking at the reasons why Asian immigrants originally left their homelands, and what helped to mobilize them once they arrived in California. We will see how the struggles that they encountered while living in California could have affected where they decided to live and how they were spread-out. On top of this, we will consider a number of other factors that influenced their spread, and their growth (or lack-of growth) in certain parts of California. We will also explore the theories that explain the distributions we see across California today.

The importance of studying the spread of Asian Americans within California is to help give us a more clear idea of what the landscape of California will look like in the future, and to guide us on deciding what actions we could take to help Asian immigrants establish themselves in California more smoothly. By understanding Asian American’s current settlement patterns, we can predict what future settlement patterns of Asians will look like in California.
Why Move In the First Place

Every immigrant has a story for why they left their native country. What their stories have in common is that their movement involved a force that drew them away from their homeland, and that drew them to a new location. In other words, immigration is a product of push and pull factors. Factors can be economic, social or political. Examples of push factors include lack of employment and educational opportunities, political upheaval, war, or revolution. Examples of pull factors are better educational and working opportunities, promises of freedom, safety and shelter from wars and rebellions, reunification with loved ones, and a new way of life.

Filipinos happen to be one of the oldest Asian American groups in the United States, and the available work opportunities was a strong factor in their motivation to leave their home country and come to California. One of the factors that attracted Filipinos into California was the higher wages and better working conditions that could be found there, compared to the Philippines. Many who arrived before World War II worked in fields near Stockton, Salinas, Delano, and Watsonville. During the off season, many of them found temporary work as busboys, bellhops, cooks, waiters, servants, house cleaners and chauffeurs (Ling).

Let us take a look now at the factors that pushed and pulled Chinese to immigrate to California. One can observe that their migration was a response to the economic, social and political developments in China. During the Qing Dynasty, which was a ruling from 1644 to 1912, many peasants lost their land trying to pay high taxes, and were also under the threat of starvation due to the frequent floods that destroyed their crops. Loss of land and being at risk of starvation influenced the early immigrants’ decision to leave China and immigrate to California.

Some of California’s early Chinese immigrants were drawn to the gold that could be found in the state. Others were sent over to work on the construction of the Central Pacific
Railroad, or brought into factories after white workers went on strikes over labor disputes. The most popular reason for emigration was economic. According to Ko-Lin Chin’s study on immigrant’s top reason to emigrate from China, 61% of his respondents cited that money was the dominant reason (Farley). One man explains that before he immigrated to the United States, he envied the people he saw come back from the United States, who would “spend money like water.” The opportunity to obtain wealth in the U.S. highly motivated people to make a journey across the Pacific Ocean.

As for Taiwanese immigrants, it was political instability and uncertainty that fueled their massive emigration out of Taiwan around the 1970s and 1980s. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter announced that the United States and China would establish diplomatic relations, and it would become effective on New Year’s Day of 1979. Following this announcement, the United States sent an ambassador to Beijing to terminate its official diplomatic relationship with Taipei. Because of the heated tension between Taiwan and China, there were a number of Taiwanese who wanted to leave their state. Thus, the movement of Taiwanese into America in 1980 was a consequence to the bipartisan U.S. policy that normalized the relationship between the United States and the People’s Republic of China. It was a policy that made Taiwan feel like it was abandoned by the United States, who originally guaranteed for their safety and security for three decades after World War Two (Li).

Political instability was also an issue that gave immigrants from Hong Kong the push to move to California. From 1941 to 1945, they were under the occupation of Japan. Then in 1983, the British made Hong Kong their colony. During the period of colonization, residents of Hong Kong were not allowed to become citizens of the United Kingdom. Their legal status was in limbo and they were not even allowed to participate in electoral politics of the United Kingdom.
or China. By the early 1980s, the U.K. and Chinese government began to negotiate the fate of Hong Kong. Uncertain of what their fate would be, the people of Hong Kong fell into a state of panic and insecurity. Around this time, large numbers of Hong Kong residents fled outside the country. While many immigrants from Hong Kong left Hong Kong voluntarily, there were also immigrants who left unwillingly. Referred to as “reluctant exiles,” they were well-to-do Hong Kong residents who did not want to leave the investment haven that Hong Kong represented (Li). Despite all that would be left behind if they left, they ultimately left Hong Kong to save themselves from the Communist rule. The places that these “reluctant exiles” resettled tended to be in commonwealth countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia.

Like the Chinese, most Korean immigrants were escaping poverty and political persecution in their homeland. By 1910, imperial Japan took Korea and turned it into a colony of Japan. Because of Japan’s harsh imperial rule, many Koreans wanted to leave their homeland. Rather than to live under a strict authoritarian government, some left for California. Once in California, they scattered over eight locations within the San Joaquin Valley: Fresno, Visalia, Hanford, Dinuba, Reedly, Delano, Willows, and Maxwell (Cha). Early Korean immigrants also consisted of voluntary political exiles, who once hoped to influence Korean politics and form new governments after gaining independence from Japan. Since Korean immigration mostly occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, the majority of Korean Americans are first and second generation.

Korean immigrants, their emigration out of Korea was partly inspired after Horace Allen, an American minister, arrived in Korea in 1884. During his stay, Allen made a point to the Korean king Gojong that immigration would strengthen Korean American relations and that remittances sent home from emigrants would help the Korean economy. Hearing this, the Korean
king decided it was good to open Korea to the outside world. From there on, he began sending hundreds of political exiles and students to settle in California’s San Joaquin Central Valley (Cha). Movement to California actually sounded attractive as the living conditions for most Koreans in their homeland were worsening at the time.

Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, and Vietnamese Americans originally arrived in the United States as refugees during 1975, and were immediately sent to four government reception centers. Camp Pendleton, a center located in California, brought the placement of about 130,000 refugees on the grounds of California. Over time, California became home to the largest Cambodian community in the nation. The majority of Cambodians were to be found in the Long Beach area of Los Angeles County. As for Laotians – their largest enclave lies within San Diego, California. On the other hand, the Hmong community is largest around the Fresno area. By 1990, the largest concentration of Vietnamese in the United States was found in Orange, California. Originally coming into California as refugees, they survived and built new homes and established communities for themselves. What continued to interest them into immigrating to California was the development of technology corporations and startups in northern California. Now known as Silicon Valley, it is a place and time that resembles the Gold Rush days for high-tech Asians. Silicon Valley continues to attract Asians to immigrate to California because of its rapid growth in technology jobs. Standing as a leading hub for high-tech development, many immigrants want to establish themselves around the cities that Silicon Valley encompasses.

Some unconventional reasons to immigrate emerged while the Monterey Park area underwent development. To avoid the highly competitive college entrance examinations in Taiwan, and the compulsory military service required of every young Taiwanese male, some Taiwanese parents sent their children to study in California. Known as “parachute kids,” these
overseas students were as young as 8-14 years old. Parachute kids are so young because if they waited to be any older than fifteen, they would not be allowed to leave Taiwan for a long period of time. This is due to the order that prevents evasion of military service, which forbids boys who are over the age of fifteen to leave the country for an extended period. This rule applied to every family, whether rich or poor. Parachuting therefore became a strategy for many wealthy families to help their sons avoid military service and also as a way to protect their child’s future in light of Taiwan’s shaky relationship with Mainland China.

**Popularity of California**

One of the reasons why immigrants choose to immigrate to California has to do with proximity. Distance is not something to disregard when trying to understand why we see more Asians in California than in any other state. Since California sits closer to Asia than is the rest of the country, California is a popular destination for Asian immigrants. Cultural elements also affect where Asian Americans place themselves in California. Once Asians settle and establish their own communities, they begin to attract other Asians immigrants. There is also a historical element to consider. California was a docking point for Asians who were sent over to the United States to be laborers. Over time, some returned back to Asian, but a number of them remained and worked on establishing themselves in California. These three elements are not to be ignored when studying the geography of Asian Americans in California.

To get a more clear idea of California’s popularity among Asians, we can refer to what the 2000 Census reveals. There, it states that California is home to at least 3.7 million Asian Americans. When compared to the nationwide population of Asian Americans, California holds more than one-third of the nation’s Asian Americans (Min). More specifically, within California, San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose area together is recorded as the third largest Asian
American center. According to the 2000 Census, these areas are home to at least 1.3 million Asian Americans.

California has long been a popular destination for Asian immigrants. In 1970, about 32% of Asian immigrants selected California as their intended state of residence (Min). The following two decades found that the percentage continued to increase. Even if we take a look at major Asian immigration groups separately, California is still the most popular state for all groups.

Between 1985 and 1990, there was a net in-migration of 18,666 Chinese migrants, who chose California as their destination (Ma). Even through the twenty-first century, California continues to be the most popular state for immigrants. Places that attract new immigrants from China and Taiwan are the metropolitan areas of Los Angeles and San Francisco. The Census tract in Los Angeles highlights the tremendous growth of Chinese in Los Angeles County – growing from the 93,747 Chinese that came into the county in 1980, to 244,907 more in 1990, and 329,352 more in 2000 (Ma). Interestingly, observations reveal that immigrants from Taiwan show a stronger preference for California’s newer metropolitan areas that are adjacent to traditional urban centers than are the immigrants from China.

A reason why Southern California is a popular destination for many Taiwanese immigrants could be because they are drawn to the Hsi Lai Temple, which is the biggest Buddhist temple in the Western Hemisphere. Located in Hacienda Heights, it attracts many Buddhist followers. Among them are Taiwanese immigrants, who originate from a state whose major religion is Buddhism. It is possible that the temple attracts Taiwanese immigrants to live in Southern California as opposed to Northern California because they might prefer to live in a place that features something that brings them closer to home. A Buddhist temple such as Hsi Lai can potentially make Taiwanese immigrants feel more comfortable in a new country.
Another reason why Asian immigrants prefer to live in California may be due to California’s warm climate. In fact, warm climate was a factor that attracted a large number of the post-1965 Filipino immigrants (Min). The mild weather of Southern California probably plays a role in attracting Taiwanese immigrants as well. According to Min, Taiwanese people are accustomed to warm weather, which helps us understand why many of the Taiwanese immigrants are found to prefer the warmer weather of Southern California compared to the cooler weather in the San Francisco area. Although weather is not the only factor that explains the growth of Taiwanese Americans in California, it is certainly a factor that should not be ignored.

Another reason for the popularity of California is because the people of Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan recognized that California is home to a liberal education system that guarantees a relatively open and equal access to anyone who desires to learn. With the U.S. leading the world economy, overseas Asians looked at degrees from U.S. colleges of any rank as highly valuable (Min). This can be observed if we look at the number of foreign students were present in U.S. college campuses. According to Ling, Asians constituted 25% of the University of California, Berkeley’s undergraduate population in 1981, and then 40% in 2000. As for the University of California, Irvine, they represented 58% of the undergraduate population.

**Ways to Measure Geographic Distribution**

There are several theories we can look into to better understand the geographic spread of Asian immigrants in California. The first is the Migration Network Theory. This theory emphasizes that immigrants focus on settling where networks of Asian immigrants are established. The second is the Dual Labor Market Theory. This theory argues that migration stems from the demands of the economic structure of industrial societies. The third theory is
World Systems Theory of Migration. This theory says that international migration is the natural result of the globalization of the market economy. It highlights that a developing global market economy attracts human capital to a number of global cities; Los Angeles is one of these (Poston).

We can also analyze the distribution of Asians in California by measuring their absolute and relative distributions. Absolute distribution of Asians indicate where they tend to live and concentrate. Relative distribution on the other hand shows where Asians are overrepresented relative to other racial groups in the United States population (Farley). As found in the Census 2000, California is recognized to account for 36% of all Asian Americans in the United States.

The spatial distribution of Asians in California can also be analyzed by studying the difference between those who live uptown or who live downtown. The notion of uptown and downtown first arose to categorize the layout of New York (Li). Uptown was characterized to be a place where well-off and professionally trained people were living in. Downtown on the other hand was characterized to be low-skilled laborers who worked in the ethnic labor market and more likely to be owners or laborers of Chinese restaurants, grocery stores, and garment and gift shops. Similar patterns of distribution are found among the early immigrants in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Like the immigrants in New York, the immigrants in California vary socioeconomically, and their place of residence is partly determined by their economic condition and social status.

Economic factors are found to be the secondary reason behind an immigrant’s decision to settle at a particular place. Immigrants tend to cluster around areas where they will be able to find work. According to Bohn, early immigrants were likely to cluster in the Los Angeles area for the construction and manufacturing work that was offered there. However, the new
immigrants who came into Los Angeles from 1990-2007 came for Los Angeles’ service industry, rather than its manufacturing industry. Examples of work that attracts new immigrants includes jobs found in the finance, insurance and real estate industries. Being a place that offers both manufacturing and service jobs, Los Angeles is a place that attracts immigrants who are looking for low-skill jobs or professional work. Los Angeles is home to many of the best scientists and technicians, but is also a home to many blue-collar workers and low skilled immigrant laborers too.

The geographical distribution of Asians can also be analyzed by looking into where their ethnic businesses would profit. Asians are found to situate themselves and their businesses where they believe their business will do well. Chinese restaurants for example, will usually concentrate in a particular area such as Chinatown because most of their customers will come from the Chinese community. Chinese laundries however are more dispersed in the general public because it is a service that does not attract more clients from one ethnicity than another. The owner of a Laundromat strategically positions her business in an area that will attract the most customers. Thus, the spread of Asians can be affected by where they feel is an opportune place for their business.

The residential patterns of Asian immigrants are not all the same. Some ethnic groups follow similar residential patterns, while some others do not. Their distinctive pattern of settlement seems to be explained by their linguistic, religious and regional subgroup differences. For example, unlike how Chinese immigrants were concentrated, Filipino and Indian immigrants were widely dispersed around suburban areas and central cities.

There are a couple of factors that can explain why Filipino and Indian immigrants do not have established ethnic ghettos. One of the reasons is that these groups lack cultural
homogeneity (Min). They consist of subgroups that significantly differ in language, customs and ethnic identity. The presence of subgroup differences and lack of strong national identity could be what influences Filipino and Indian groups to create communities that are more dispersed. Another reason is that some of the early Filipino and Indian immigrants were from middle class and professional backgrounds, and so they may not have needed an ethnic ghetto or a residential area for low-class immigrants to live in. Filipino and Indian immigrants were also more fluent in English than other Asian immigrants, which meant that they did not have to depend as much on ethnic ghettos to help them adjust to life in America. Their fluency in English was a result from their the colonial exchange that their country shared with the United States and Britain. Without having English as big of a barrier to adjusting to life in America, the Filipino and Indian immigrants were more comfortable to spread themselves out and live alongside native English speakers.

**Where Asians are Concentrated**

Occupation highly correlates with where Asians are present in California. Occupational data from 1960 reveals that Asians’ likelihood to be in occupations of “farmers and farm laborers” was twice as high as the average non-Asian American. Consequently, early Asian immigrants would be found in places where there is available farm work. This would consist of various locations across Central California/Central Valley. In fact, there were about 25,000 Filipino immigrants working in the Breadbasket of California, otherwise known as the San Joaquin Valley, during the 1930s (Min). These immigrants would travel seasonally from one farm community to another, following the harvesting time of various crops.

Korean immigrants in the early 1900s also were settled in Central California. Between 1903 and 1910, they were primarily found working in three of California’s major agricultural
centers – Fresno, Hanford, and Visalia. In 1909, they began settling in Dinuba, Reedley, and other small farm communities (Cha). Their movement simply followed the places where they could find jobs, and this stood true for many early Asian immigrants who came to California. Agricultural development in California was the primary element that determined where migrant workers went to work and settled at during their first years in California.

Metropolitan cities attract Asian immigrants. It is a place that immigrants recognize as the place to live in or near if they want to be in the center of where economic activity takes place, and where they can encounter potential economic opportunities. A city’s dynamic labor markets, expanding wealth, and well established immigrant communities are characteristics that draw the attention of immigrants. Urban centers attract both skilled and unskilled workers because it they hold occupations for two types of occupations. They are the high status professional and technical occupations, and the low skilled service and manual jobs. With metropolitan areas attracting so many kinds of people, it is not a surprise that the Census 2000 found that the place with the lowest Asian Americans population is in nonmetropolitan areas, at 0.3%.

The trend of settling into large cities is a characteristic of new immigrants. New immigrants tend to settle in the largest cities, which is generally where earlier immigrants of the same national origins have previously settled. Hence, immigrants tend not to disperse themselves randomly across California. They rather move to a place where they would have social ties with current or former migrants. It benefits immigrants to live near someone with prior migration experience because they can help jumpstart them into finding a steady job, places to eat, good schools to send their children too, and ultimately finding a community that will help them feel more comfortable in their new home. The convenience of living nearby people they know is that their family and friends could offer them advice on how to adjust to life in America, offer
emotional support, and provide resources that could help them start-up a new life in the United States.

There is research that shows that the primary reason behind an immigrant’s choice of location choice is social ties. Social factors for migration have been found to be the strongest predictor of immigrant location choice (Bohn). Immigrants realize reconnecting with relatives and friends who immigrated before them can help them finding temporary housing and employment. Thus, there are immigrants who prefer to establish themselves where their family and friends are located. Social network of family and friends is by all means a factor that facilitates the growth of Asian immigrants in California.

Like many others, Asians would choose to live near where they would work. Those who worked for a Chinese business within Southern California in the early days may have lived in the west and middle part of the San Gabriel Valley, because that was where the businesses were located. Their businesses were located in this particular area because it was where small offices and warehouses are available. However, when the location no longer sufficed, the businesses moved to East San Gabriel Valley, where large warehouses and offices were more commonly available.

Chinatowns are typically recognized to be a spot where large concentrations of Chinese Americans could be found. They are physical sites where immigrants could build social ties and make their lives more comfortable after being uprooted from their native country. The rise of Chinatowns began when the early Chinese immigrants found it difficult to live where they wanted. Due to the racial oppression and physical violence against Chinese immigration at the end of the 19th century, the Chinese resorted to living together in Chinatowns. Chinatowns as a result were in some ways created involuntarily in response to the oppression they faced in the
United States (Min). By the turn of the 20th century, Chinatowns began to attract immigrants from China and Hong Kong. It appealed to immigrants at the time due to its conveniences of employment in ethnic businesses, availability of ethnic food and familiar language.

Today, Chinatown’s residents are mostly elderly – a majority of them were born in China. Chinatown is a community primarily comprised of immigrants who arrived between 1965 and 1969, and between 1980 and 1984. Newer immigrants however, comprised mostly of younger age groups, and were not as interested to live in Chinatown. What they sought for instead was a more young and energetic community rather that a community whose residents were mostly around the age of seventy.

There are disadvantages and advantages to those living in Chinatown. A disadvantage is that residents are living in crowded conditions. Some rooms will have more than 1.5 persons living in it. An advantage to living in Chinatown is that public transportation, grocery stores, post offices, banks, bakeries, the library, the park and other services are very accessible. This convenience may be especially attractive to elderly Chinese who may the sense of community available to them in Chinatowns.

While Chinatown attracted early Chinese immigrants, Koreatown was an attraction to many Korean immigrants. Being a residential and commercial center, the Koreatown in Los Angeles was home to about 200,000 Koreans by 1990. This place alone contains more than 20% of the total population of Korean in the United States at that time (Min). While the Korean population was large in the Los Angeles Area, California overall was home to more Koreans than any other state in 1990.

Although the Filipinos in San Francisco are not as concentrated in a particular area as the Chinese are, there is a place that many of them resided in. This place is South of Market, and it
was considered home to the Filipinos who worked in the war industry and who were military personnel (Ling). They eventually moved to the Excelsior neighborhood and into Daly City when they were pressured by the urban renewal projects that were waiting to be built.

Ling writes that by 2009, the Excelsior district had over 12,000 Filipinos, which makes 30% of the Filipinos in San Francisco. She also mentions that there were about 2,200 Filipinos residing in the Tenderloin district, and 3,000 Filipinos residing in South of Market. The reason to why there may be more Filipinos residing in the Excelsior district is because the Excelsior neighborhoods offer far more affordable homes than what could be found downtown. What makes the Excelsior neighborhoods even more appealing is that its residents could easily commute downtown to where many blue and white collar jobs are located.

A reason why Monterey Park attracts high concentrations of Chinese could be attributed to the Chinese belief in Feng Shui. According to Chinese folklore, hilly areas with better views are considered to have better Feng Shui, which brings good luck (Li). On top of that, hilly areas in Monterey Park in some ways reminded Chinese immigrants of the places they came from, such as Hong Kong and Taiwan. Thus, Chinese are noticeably congregated in the hilly highland areas of the city. With Monterey Park becoming highly populated with Chinese, Monterey Park became referred to as the “Chinese Beverly Hills (Li).”

The San Gabriel Valley has long been attracting many Chinese – between 1985 and 1990, the SGV received 64.3% of new immigrants and 65.1% of the internal immigration (Li). The SGV is a springboard for Chinese who hope to move into an ethnoburb. It is both a residential neighborhoods and a business center, providing a place to live and work. Being a place to live and a place to do business, a large proportion of residents work in the community where they
live. Hence, in 1990, 40.1% of all ethnoburb Chinese who worked in Monterey Park also lived there (Li).

When we look at the geographical spread of the various Chinese subgroups, we will notice that each group will be more concentrated in some cities compared to others. To depict this variation, we will compare where immigrant the Chinese from Indo China, Taiwan and Mainland China are generally found within Southern California. The places that a majority of immigrant Chinese with descent in Indo China live in includes El Monte, La Puente, Industry and South El Monte. Immigrants from Taiwan stands as the largest group living in the upper-middle-class neighborhoods of Arcadia, Covina, Hacienda Heights, Rowland Heights, San Marino, Temple City, Walnut, West Covina and Diamond Bar. The immigrants who descend from Mainland China on the other hand are the largest group in Alhambra, Monterey Park, Pasadena, Rosemead and South Pasadena. This spatial separation among the Chinese subgroups correlates with their differences in socioeconomic status and country of origin.

Because the immigrant Chinese from Indo China are generally of lower socioeconomic status, they are found to live in lower scale neighborhoods such as ones found in El Monte and La Puente. Neighborhoods like these mainly house lower to lower middle class Chinese that originate from Southeast Asia. Over half of the residents have incomes less than half the county’s median income (Li). The Chinese living here are also the Chinese with the lowest education levels. With 42% of them being unable to speak English well or at all, it is difficult for young Chinese students to graduate from High School.

Analyzing the characteristics of the places that Taiwanese immigrants are more likely to be found living in, one will see that these places are where affluent families live in. Arcadia and San Marino for example, is home to wealthy households. In fact, a third of the homes in Arcadia
and San Marino are valued at more than $400,000 (Li). Such neighborhoods are particularly attractive to upscale Chinese, who are more likely to live in neighborhoods where other wealthy people live. The rest of west San Gabriel Valley, otherwise known as the inner suburbs of Los Angeles County, is home to a solid middle class. East San Gabriel Valley, a more newly developed suburb, immediately drew the favor of many ethnoburban Chinese who sought to live in newer houses than older ones.

Immigrants originally from Mainland China tend to be from middle class, and live in places where a majority of houses are valued in a middle range bracket between $100,000 and $399,000 (Li). Such places include neighborhoods found in Alhambra, Monterey Park, Pasadena, Rosemead and South Pasadena. Crowding is not an issue here, which appeals to Chinese. Unlike the Chinese found in El Monte, a majority of these residents speak English well, and about 60% of them are white collar workers (Li).

The spread of Asian Americans within Southern California is not only correlated with their country of origin, but also by their economic interests. For example – a person who is interested in the retail business may be more likely to live in Monterey Park and Rosemead because the economy there is focused on retail. Those who are interested in professional and related service would benefit from living in Pasadena. Individuals who seek lower-skilled work would likely prefer to live in El Monte, where their economy is focused on manufacturing.

To help us visualize the spread of the Chinese within Southern California, we can look at the map below that represents where Chinese were concentrated within the Los Angeles area in 2000.
As we can see from Figure 1 (Zhou), many of the Chinese are concentrated in Monterey Park, Rosemead, Arcadia, Temple City, San Gabriel, South Pasadena, Alhambra, Chinatown, Diamond Bar, Walnut and Hacienda Heights. To understand why Chinese are concentrated in these particular areas, we can refer back to the factors that influence where Asian immigrants and Asian Americans to be attracted to certain areas.

Socioeconomic diversity plays a role in where Asian immigrants and Asian Americans choose to settle. Those with less wealth tend to live in poorer areas, while those with more wealth tend to live in more expensive areas. The table below depicts this.
Table 1 (Zhou) presents to us the trend of socioeconomic diversity. Depending on where they live, their median household income varies. San Marino looks to be the home of the wealthier population of Chinese, while Rosemead is home to a population who is not as wealthy as the Chinese who live in San Marino.

Many Asians are also found in Northern California. They mostly reside in an area called the Bay Area. San Francisco is the place where most Chinese immigrants first started out at. However, between the 1950s and 1960s, Asians began spreading themselves out to other parts of the Bay Area such as the East and South Bay for better job opportunities and newer improved living environments. Santa Clara Valley, now the epicenter of America’s high-tech industry, was one of the spots that attracted Asians. By the year 2000, there were 115,782 Chinese living in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>% Non-Hispanic White</th>
<th>% Asian</th>
<th>% Chinese</th>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles County</td>
<td>9,519,358</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>$42,189</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>$36,687</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monterey Park</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>$40,724</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Marino</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arcadia</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>$56,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Gabriel</td>
<td>39,084</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>$41,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alhambra</td>
<td>85,804</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>$39,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemead</td>
<td>53,505</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>$36,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple City</td>
<td>33,377</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>$48,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowland Heights</td>
<td>48,553</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>$52,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walnut</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>776,733</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>$55,221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census of the Population, 2000 (http://factfinder.census.gov/).
Santa Clara County; a 75.6% increase from 1990 (Li). Among these residents is a mixture largely composing of entrepreneurs, engineers, executives and professionals. The Santa Clara area attracts many Asians. Taking this under consideration, we will notice that the cities neighboring it will naturally transform.

    Good school districts attract Asian Americans and affect where families choose to live. Due to the superior quality of schools that Fremont and Cupertino is known for, there is observably a high concentration of Asians living in these cities. Fremont and Cupertino is actually home to two of California’s best high schools – Monte Vista High and Mission San Jose.

    As previously mentioned, parents in Taiwan have sent their sons to study in the United States to study all on their own. Referred to as parachute kids, they concentrated in the Chinese ethnoburbs in Southern California and lived with their relatives, unrelated caretakers whom their parents know well and trust, or lived alone in the properties their parents bought for them. The reason for sending them to live with relatives was so that the relatives could monitor their children’s behavior, becoming the eyes and ears of the child’s parents. Parachute kids are well aware that their parents prefer to send them to Los Angeles, because it is where there is a high presence of relatives and family friends.

    A main reason for sending them to live in upscale middle class neighborhoods was because it was more likely where the reputable schools were. Most parents were well aware that the quality of American schools depended largely on the socioeconomic standing of the neighborhoods. Thus, if a parent sent to child to live in a well-to-do neighborhood, then they are more likely to be able to find a high quality school around that area.
The name, “parachute kids” simply reflects the fact that they have been dropped into a dramatically different environment, and expected to function normally with little or no parental supervision (Li). Unfortunately, sending a young child to grow up on their own in an unfamiliar country can lead to some negative consequences. It has been observed that some of the “parachute kids” have a difficult time adjusting to a new place, and end up joining gangs. Frighteningly, some of the wealthy children become tarts of crimes such as kidnapping for ransom (Li).

Although some parachute kids get veer off track from what their parents intended for them to follow, there were many parachute kids who did okay on their own. They faced struggles, but were able to make it through them by hanging with fellow parachutes, church friends, and by hanging out with the right people and others who worked hard (Zhou). Living the life of a parachute kid is difficult, but those who were self-motivated usually ended up to be doing alright in America.

**Suburbanization Trend**

According to the 1990 Census, each Asian ethnic group showed a higher level of residence in Census defined urban areas than any non-Asian racial group. The Census’ definition of an urban area by the way is a central city or cities surrounding closely settled contiguous territory that together have a minimum population of 50,000 (Min). In other words, Asian Americans were overrepresented in suburban areas by 1990. Compared to other minority groups, the groups that were most represented in suburban residential areas were the Chinese, Korean, Filipino and Indian immigrants.

Asians however were not originally well represented in the suburban residential areas when they first came to California. Take Monterey Park for example. Until the 1980s, Monterey
Park was primarily White. This began to change in the mid-1980s. During this time, the city was being remade into an immigrant suburb with an Asian majority (Ling). From then on, there was a visible presence of foreign born Chinese living in Monterey Park. This trend can be explained by the “invasion and succession” model, which stems off from the concept of ecological succession. This model theorizes that newly arrived, often poor immigrants typically occupy inner-city neighborhoods first. As soon as they become economically well-off, they move out of the inner city to find better living conditions in the suburbs. Like most Americans in the 1950s and 1960s, minorities started moving to the suburbs to secure better housing and neighborhoods. By 2000, Monterey Park’s racial composition was 41% Chinese, 30% Hispanic, 21% Other Asian (Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipinos and South East Asian), 7% White and 1% African American (Zhou). As more Asians leave the inner city for the suburban neighborhoods, they leave space in the inner city that can house new minority groups.

As Asian immigrant’s economic conditions and social standing improved, their settlement patterns adjusted. When their economic conditions improved, they were better able to afford moving to more desirable residential districts. This explains why most second generation Asian Americans moved away from the ethnic ghettos and dispersed themselves to suburban areas. After all, there are many Asian Americans who want the make the American dream come true. Part of that dream is being able to live in a safe neighborhood, and in a beautiful home with a yard.

Beginning in 1980, the concentration of Chinese began to expand from Chinatown to more suburban locations. As Chinatown became more and more congested, Chinese were becoming attracted to the quiet suburban community in Monterey Park. Monterey Park and adjacent neighborhoods within Los Angeles Country became important Chinese settlements that
eventually replaced Chinatown as the largest Chinese settlement in Los Angeles Country by 1990 (Ma). This favoritism may come from the positive image that Monterey Park was marketed with. Monterey Park stood out in particular for being one of the most affordable suburban communities known to have tree lined streets and spacious green lawns. Asians flocked to Monterey Park when they saw how reasonable the housing prices were. In fact, Monterey Park was one of the most affordable suburban bedroom communities after World War II (Ling). According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 44% of the Chinese who selected Monterey Park as their preferred destination between 1983 and 1990 were from Mainland China, while another 42% of them were from Taiwan (Ling).

Over time, the Chinese began extending their settlement northward and eastward from Monterey Park, developing into an area referred to as the San Gabriel Valley. The San Gabriel Valley started being recognized as a place of relatively new and more popular suburban type of settlement with lower population density and less defined spatial boundaries. In a short time, Monterey Park and its adjacent communities transformed into an area accommodating large number of recent immigrants from Taiwan. The extent of its popularity is demonstrated by the nickname that Monterey Park was soon given – “Little Taipei.”

Nicknaming Monterey Park as “Little Taipei” reflects the visibility of the Taiwanese community within Monterey Park. If someone drove through Monterey Park, they would see a large number of Taiwanese owned businesses along the streets. “Little Taipei” is a self-sufficient community of Mandarin speaking Chinese, who by 1990 composed 37% of the population in Monterey Park. This percentage is up from 15% in 1980 (Ling).
Ethnoburb

When more Asians began to move into suburbs, some people started to describe their urban settlement as an “Ethnoburb.” As Li defines it, an ethnoburb is a suburban ethnic cluster of residential and business districts with large metropolitan areas. It is a place highly concentrated by an ethnic minority group, but is not a result of forced segregation. Rather than forced, it is voluntary concentration of ethnic people. Unlike ghettos and ethnic enclaves, ethnoburbs are located in suburbs and may include many municipalities and unincorporated areas instead of blocks and sections in the inner city. The ethnoburb continues to attract Asian Americans as it is a place they can maximize their own personal network and business connections, and create a community with familiar language and culture.

Ethnoburbs in California are mainly composed of Chinese from Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Southeast Asia who arrived after 1965. In 1990, first generation immigrants compose over four-fifths of the Chinese population in ethnoburbs while American born Chinese composed of less than one-fifth of the Chinese population in the ethnoburb. Over time, the proportion of American born Chinese in the ethnoburb increased to 25.2% (Li).

Key industries for ethnoburb Chinese includes finance, insurance and real estate. In 1990, 15% of the ethnoburban Chinese labor force were self-employed entrepreneurs. This was a higher percentage than the Los Angeles County workforce as a whole, where 10.2% were self-employed entrepreneurs. A majority of the ethnoburban Chinese is white-collar workers, with more than two-thirds of them being managers and professionals or has an administrative support or sales position (Li).

The ethnoburb in Southern California continues to grow, but it may face limitations in its expansion in the future. Blocking its northward expansion is the San Gabriel Mountains.
Expansion cannot happen towards East or West Los Angeles because the areas are already saturated with people (Li). Expansion would not happen towards Pomona or San Bernadino either because these places lack the kind of residential neighborhoods and good school districts that is preferred by the more affluent ethnoburban Chinese. In spite of this, the cheaper land prices in these inland areas may attract savvy Chinese investors who want to create new centers of ethnic Chinese economic activities (Li).

Residential Segregation

Early Asian immigrants of California suffered severe racial discrimination, and were restricted to living in ethnic groups. However, contemporary Asian Americans are much less segregated from Caucasians than earlier Asian Americans were. The Census 2000 proposes two reasons to explain this shift in residential pattern. The first reason is that because Asian Americans have achieved relatively high socioeconomic status, they are more able to afford to live where they choose. The second reason is that because the Asian Americans who move into a non-Asian community now are doing so in small numbers, which helps a community to grow comfortable with seeing Asian Americans a little bit at a time. This works better than if Asian Americans were entering into a community in massive numbers. Attitude results even show that contemporary Caucasians are not as hostile to the thought of having Asian neighbors as they are to the prospect of having Black neighbors.

Asian Americans once preferred living in neighborhoods that was home to people of the same ethnicity. To understand why early Asian Americans preferred living next to each other, one has to consider that early Asian Americans maintained a strong identification with their native culture, and relied heavily on ethnic communities for a successful transition to American life. It was a community where strong ethnic identity and social networks could be maintained
among co-ethnics. When Asians first set out to establish themselves alongside friends and family, a clustering pattern of residence started developing.

A consequence to living in such a cohesive community is that the children of these Asian Americans may have a more difficult time assimilating into mainstream America. Many of the Chinese who live in the ethnoburbs of Los Angeles explain that they feel as if they were living in Hong Kong, Taipei, Shanghai or Guangzhou (Zhou). However, when these Chinese are comfortably living amongst people who share the same ethnicity, they may not feel as compelled to make friends with their non-Asian neighbor. Cohesive community environments therefore become a sort of barrier that barricades immigrants and some Asian Americans from improving their relations with other groups.

Today, the preference to live in segregated neighborhoods is not as prevalent as it used to be. The Segregation Index, a measurement of the degree of residential segregation between two sub-groups inside a larger population, found in the Census 2000 shows the relationship between generations of Asian Americans to the degree of assimilation – second and third generation Asian Americans are less likely to be segregated residually from Caucasians than first generation Asian Americans (Farley). This observation helps explain why the more assimilated Asian Americans, such as the Japanese, have the highest rates of intermarriage with non-Asians. By integrating themselves into non-ethnic neighborhoods, some Japanese Americans became more exposed to non-Asians. Living arrangements affect who interacts with whom.

Residential segregation is largely a result of socioeconomic factors that come into play. Research has found that preferences and avoidance of certain areas is influenced by income differences, which can explain why new Chinese settlement have generally been away from inner-city areas that have a high proportion of Blacks and Hispanics. The Chinese have avoided
living in West Los Angeles and South Central because of the high proportions of Blacks and Hispanics in the neighborhoods. Instead, we see them settling to the east and north of Monterey Park.

The residential segregation among Chinese in Los Angeles can be better understood by using the Similarity Index (S), which was applied to census tract-level data for 1980, 1990 and 2000. What the Similarity Index is is a measure of dissimilarity between two communities among a larger population. According to the similarity index, the level of segregation of Chinese was most severe with Blacks, followed by Hispanics and Caucasians (Farley). The least level of segregation was with other Asians (Ma). These observations confirm that between 1980 and 2000, there was a high presence of residential segregation between Chinese and Blacks and Hispanics.

**Immigration Fuels Housing Demands and Growth in Real Estate**

The arrival of large numbers of new immigrants since 1980 fueled the demand for housing beyond the supply that Chinatown and Monterey Park provided. As Chinatowns became more densely populated, and the housing stock becoming older, Chinatowns started looking less desirable to the new immigrants. Instead of settling in the central-city setting, new immigrants preferred to live in cities that were further east of Monterey Park. Thus, developers began building neighborhoods and large new residential shopping complexes and amenities specifically for the new Chinese immigrants who wanted to live east of the San Gabriel Valley. Cities that received attention include Walnut, Hacienda Heights, Rowland Heights and Diamond Bar. Together, they became the newest suburban Chinese settlements in Los Angeles that are no longer dependent on commercial and cultural amenities in Chinatown and Monterey Park.
During the mid-1970s, additional property became available for immigrants to purchase because elderly Caucasian residents were selling their properties and moving into retirement homes (Li). This attracted many Chinese into the Monterey Park area. Mostly from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Malaysia, they were rich and purchased property with cash. Local banks however, discouraged cash sales because they would lose interest revenue that they would otherwise make from mortgage loans. Yet, because these particular immigrants had the resources, they were able to buy directly into a middle/upper class neighborhood during a time when some original residents were ready to move out. In many cases, Chinese buyers offered higher than regular market prices for a home. Some even offered to pay twice as much, and some were found trying to convince owners to sell their homes to them.

Having to cater to a growing inflow of Asian immigrants, the real-estate sector in California grew. Some professional Chinese saw a career opportunity in real-estate and so some received training in order to begin handling real estate transactions. Thus, this sector became a primary career for some Chinese professionals. One of the most popularly known names in the real-estate of Monterey Park’s is Frederick Fukan Hsiech, who had a vision of Monterey Park being a place highly concentrated of Chinese. Hsiech was instrumental in capturing the attention of overseas Chinese to Monterey Park. After getting his broker’s license in the early 1970s, Hsiech began to advertise Monterey Park as the “Chinese Beverley Hills” in Taiwan and Hong Kong. He continued to be actively involved in transnational real-estate transactions and investment until his death in 1999 (Li).

As more Asians populated neighborhoods across California, the California landscape began to change. Let us look at the San Gabriel Valley for instance. If it were not for the Chinese, SGV’s landscape may not be as commercially successful as it is today. Until the 1970s,
lots were quite vacant. However, when the Chinese began to populate the SGV, the empty lots became a place for new building projects to take place on. Old bungalows that stood around were torn down to make room for commerce and mixed-use real estate developments. According to the report made by a leading business real estate company in the region, 50% of warehouse purchases in 1991 involved Chinese immigrant investors and Chinese-owned firms, and 60% of the shopping and retail property transactions it handled in the San Gabriel Valley in 1989 were for Chinese investors (Zhou).

When local real estate brokers and developers saw the demand for property from Asians, they realized that they had in front of them an opportunity to capitalize on the immigrant market. Hence, they started to work on transnational advertising and marketing to lure Chinese businesses and immigrants to settle in the region. They promoted Monterey Park in a smart way, calling it the “Chinese Beverley Hills” and a “Mecca for Chinese Businessmen.” As a result of their efforts, they earned the attention of their target market.

Even when the price of land skyrocketed by the 1980s, many lots were still being bought for commercial development. Between 1960 and 2000, we can see a rise in housing units. There was 12,833 housing units in 1960, then 19,331 in 1980, and 20,209 housing units in 2000 (Zhou). These numbers reveal an increase of 40% within a forty year time frame, and the numbers probably continue to increase as of today.

**People’s Reaction to Asians Settling in Their Communities**

The settlement patterns of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans impact communities in a variety of ways. They bring diversity to communities, which can also bring forth conflicts. People react to immigration in different ways, and so their presence can bring out the best or the worst in people.
As the Asian immigrant and Asian American community make themselves more comfortable living in California, they bring changes to the landscape around them, and are changes that some longtime White residents of Californian may not be comfortable with. This can take form in ways such as altering the aesthetics and management of business such as adding an Asian flair to bus stops or the addition of ethnic signs and businesses. The improvement of storefront displays and services is encouraged by Vietnamese American economic leaders as a way to increase business. Some people might feel strange about the way Vietnamese residents remodel their homes and transform their gardens so that they grow plants such as guava, dragonfruit, lemon grass, and a variety of herbs that commonly accompany Vietnamese cooking (Ling). The rapid growth of new Asian establishments in their communities become something that some Californians do not tolerate well, and ask that there be someone to control the growth of the ethnic community.

Residential patterns influences how likely it is for someone to be exposed to people of different races. Since Asians tend to live amongst other Asians, they may be more exposed to other Asians than to non-Asians in schools, work settings and residence. Although they tend to live amongst people who share the same ethnicity as theirs, the non-Asians that reside nearby will get some bit of exposure to an Asian culture. Some native residents may not have minded their presence, but there certainly were a number of residents who did not greet the Asian residents with open arms.

With a large immigrant influx going into Monterey Park, local residents began to express their concerns. Many of the original residents felt they were losing control of their own community and were reluctant to see the community they knew and were familiar with, to fade away. For example, residents saw a former bowling alley turn into a Chinese supermarket (Li).
Sensitive to the community’s concerns, Chinese businesses and real estate developers would speak to local business leaders in hopes of minimalizing conflicts. With the agenda of turning Monterey Park into a Chinese-oriented community and a Chinese business mecca, the Chinese worked to achieve a relatively peaceful transition.

Unfortunately, there have been cases when the movement of Chinese into predominantly White neighborhoods sparked controversy. Back in the 1960s, when Wilber Woo, the father of Los Angeles’s first Chinese American Councilman, first moved into Monterey Park, he received a number of anonymous phone calls, death threats and demands that he and his family moved out of the neighborhood (Li). Although the communities that Woo lived in resisted the entrance of Chinese Americans into their community, Woo stood firm and called the Monterey Park Police, who strengthened their patrols in the Woo’s neighborhood and even stationed officers at Woo’s house for a few days. It is unfortunate to see that such measures were needed to be taken to protect Woo’s family from community harassment. Although the situation did not look good, what resulted from the harassment that Woo’s family and other Asian families experienced was the formation of Monterey Park’s first Community Relations Commission, which would facilitate bridging Asian Americans with non-Asian Americans in shared community spaces.

Members of the community also gave Filipinos a hard time. Filipinos who resided in San Francisco’s International Hotel were pressured to leave the place to make room for urban development. Residents were completely against the demolition of their home, and struggled to protect their building. The hotel housed a community of Filipinos, and its residents tried to defend the hotel from being demolished. Although their efforts could not prevent the demolition of the Hotel, their demonstration became a symbol for Filipino American self-determination and their fight for their civil rights.
What Helped Mobilize Asian Immigrants

There were four factors that played a key role in early Korean settlement. The first was Ginseng, which is a unique herbal root that is valued for its tonic effect. Trading ginseng was very profitable among Koreans, and when the Chinese immigrated to San Francisco, the Korean traders who originated from Korea followed them into California to continue the ginseng trade.

Contractors also played a key role in early Korean settlement. These contractors would help secure work for immigrants who arrived. Work that was found for them was generally jobs found in mining, railroad, and fruit picking in and outside of California. They also helped immigrants secure a contract with their employer.

Boarding house operators and owners functioned as a job placement agent for early Korean immigrants. Usually run by a husband and wife, these houses provided residents three Korean meals a day. Serving Korean meals meant a lot to the Korean men’s emotional and physical well-being. To have a taste of food from home away from home probably comforted them and gave them the energy continue with their work.

Community organizers played an important role in the mobilization of early Korean immigrants as well. Established in 1909 in San Francisco was the Korean National Association. Members of this organization agreed to help one another, followed rules of conduct, and helped each other stay away from vices (Cha). Fortunately, associations served to help the immigrants survive in the place that was foreign to them.

On that note, their Confucian upbringing was found to help them persevere and cope with discrimination and alienation while in California. Confucianism instilled values of social order, diligence, filial piety, self-discipline and good workmanship (Cha). Knowing this, the United States wanted to bring Korean immigrants into California or work on their farms, orchards, rice
fields and railroad construction sites. The Koreans also held a strong Christian faith, which gave them the strength to survive the discrimination they when they arrived. One of the ways they sought solace and comfort happened to be at the Church.

Snakeheads were helpful to Chinese who wanted to smuggle themselves into the United States during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Chinese who sought to be smuggled into America would turn to a “Big Snakehead” for help, who were Chinese who had already left the country and could help organize the smuggling. “Big Snakeheads” were bosses of “Little Snakeheads” who would encourage people to emigrate, and help them find transportation and places to stay on their way to America. They would also give potential immigrants passports, other travel documents and sometimes new clothes and shoes so that those who would be immigrating would look like well-to-do-travelers (Chang). The expense of getting a Snakehead to help one to immigrate is substantial. Many paid at least thirty thousand dollars for the service that a Snakehead provides. Due to the high price, there were immigrants who paid a small part of the total before leaving China, and then paid the rest back when they get to America. The way immigrants can be smuggled can happen by plane and by ship. While some Chinese were able to fly straight from China to the United States, most of the immigrants had to make several stops at other countries on their way to America. In this case, a trip to the United States could take more than a year long. For those who traveled by ship, their travels usually took place in the middle of the night, to avoid being caught by United State officials. The way immigrants were brought to the shores of California involved small boats sailing out to meet the ships that are carrying the smuggled immigrants, and then sailing them in. Unfortunately, some immigrants never do make it to America. It is apparent that the journey that immigrants had to embark in order to get to America was stressful and dangerous.
The Asian Business Association (ABA), which is a nonprofit advocacy based organization, made it easier for Chinese immigrants to transition into America. They assisted Asian Americans find employment, make career advancements, increase their business earnings, and helped them create economic opportunities with Asia. Fortunately, many of the affluent Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong had a strong business background, which helped them engage in international trade and other business when they arrived in California.

While realtors were instrumental in channeling the movement of Asian immigrants from the inner city of Los Angeles to the Monterey Park area, media played a major role in this as well. Media connected immigrants together, and helped incorporate them into their new homeland. With the media’s help, individuals were informed about goods, services and about business or employment opportunities. The media even helped rebuild people’s social networks.

Beginning in the 1970s, the Chinese media in California worked with Chinese media overseas to promote and advertise about Monterey Park’s residential opportunities. It turns out that many Chinese immigrants first heard of Monterey Park through sources such as newspapers, magazines, and television in their home country, well before they migrated to the United States (Li). In Taiwan, an immigration consulting firm would hold brochures that promote Monterey Park. On it, it would say “In Monterey Park, you can enjoy the American life, quality and Taipei’s convenience at the same time. (Ling).” Advertisements like these are what contribute to the high population of Mandarin speakers living in Monterey Park. The influx of people into Monterey Park and nearby cities is in part a result from developer’s overseas marketing campaign to bring people into Monterey Park. H.F. Pacific for example included maps of Monterey Park’s neighborhood area in their advertisements when they did their promotion in
Taiwan, to give the potential buyers a geographic proximity of various cities in the San Gabriel Valley to Monterey Park (Ling).

Not only do the Chinese newspapers help bring immigrants into California, these newspapers also helped the Chinese establish a sense of community. Newspapers would list job opportunities, provide advice, list social events and services that could facilitate a new immigrants’ transition into live in the United States. Some papers even present a chart that lists the top twenty-five colleges according to the ranking in the *U.S. News and World Report*, and education related stories because Asians were worried about getting their kid into a good school.

Headquartered in Monterey Park is the largest Chinese newspaper in North America, *Chinese Daily News*, who got its start from the funding of the largest Taiwanese news company. *Singtao Daily* and *Qiaobao* are two other major papers whose offices are also set up in Monterey Park. These newspaper companies have a large audience that reads their material. According to Zhou, a 2006 survey revealed that 93% of the Chinese speaking community in Los Angeles and San Francisco reads Chinese language newspapers. Seeing their popularity, it must mean that the Chinese enjoy and see the usefulness of the contents in the newspapers.

Alongside Chinese newspapers, Chinese television stations were also valuable tools that helped comfort the Asian population. Asian American Television (*AATV*) is a popular network among the Chinese community. It showcases a variety of programs – ones that offer news about China, variety shows from Mainland China, popular and classic Chinese movies, Cantonese opera, children shows and financial reports (Zhou). The station also offers local news and discussions on local politics, real estate and education. Such information keeps the Asian up-to-date about the happenings in their city, and keeps gives them access to what they might miss from their homeland.
Radio is another medium that the Asian population grabbed ahold of as they adjusted to life in the United States. It was radio that assisted the Chinese population to be actively organized and encouraged them to participate in charity events. The radio has multiple functions – it announces traffic updates for commuters, community service announcements, discussions on business and finance, shopping, lifestyle and entertainment. Radio covers a multitude of topics that are relevant for the Asian communities to listen-in on.

The Vietnamese community also found radio, newspapers and television useful in helping them thrive in California. Popular newspapers included *Viet Bao*, the largest and oldest Vietnamese newspaper in the United States, and *Nguoi Viet Daily News*. Radio stations that Vietnamese enjoyed tuning into included *Little Saigon Radio* on 1480 AM, and *Vietnam California Radio* on 106.3 FM. The well watched television stations included *Little Saigon TV*, *Saigon TV*, *VATV*, and *VHN-TV*. These pieces of media were useful tools that kept the Vietnamese community in-the-loop about the happenings in their city, in California, the United States and the world. The media help its readers, listeners and viewers be informed citizens, which can ultimately help them make more informed decisions.

There was also online publishing, which provided Chinese communities a bounty of resources they could utilize to find answers to questions they have about life in California, becoming a U.S. citizen, enrolling their children in school, establishing a bank account, purchasing utilities, and much more. Online articles and websites provided a wide range of information for those who wanted to stay in touch with what was going on back in their home country, as well as with any news that would concern them in the United States. People could find real time coverage of global news, community affairs, e-commerce, and entertainment as well as analyses and commentaries from many perspectives. Asian Americans and Asian
immigrants could easily use media to gather information about jobs, housing, schooling, childcare, healthcare, welfare, taxation, traffic rules, immigration services, classified ads for rental housing, and carpooling notices (Zhou). The accessibility of information makes it easier for the Asian community to retrieve answers to questions they may have on their own.

As we have seen, the media is very useful for the Asian population in California. Media even has the power to subtly influence certain habits and behaviors that are not typically Chinese. It can encourage immigrants to practice democracy, and provide them an outlet for voicing their opinions. Things like these were not things that they did do normally or comfortably in their homeland (Zhou). As immigrants become more comfortable with expressing their opinions in public, they become less afraid to report problems that need to be corrected.

Media is an information agent that reaches out to immigrants of diverse backgrounds. It extends information to people of differing educational and occupational statues, ranging from cooks, seamstresses, engineers, and scientists. Information supplied is relevant to immigrants who are trying to assimilate into American society. Since information is provided in the immigrant’s native language, immigrants who do not even speak or understand English well can still know what is going on around them and around the world.

Ethnic language media serves as a bridge between the Chinese speaking immigrant community and mainstream societies. It keeps immigrants in close contact with their homeland, and eases the psychological and emotional problems about being a foreigner. Having media that uses a language that immigrants are familiar with eases the existing language barrier. Ethnic media also fills the gap that mainstream media usually leaves out. While mainstream media omits detailed coverage on what goes on back in the immigrant’s homeland, ethnic media will
fill them in on the politics and economy that is affecting their family and friends who stayed behind.

Chinese supermarkets were vital in helping new immigrants become comfortable to a new life in America. To cook with the ingredients they were familiar with and that reminded them of their homeland may have helped them relieve any homesickness they felt. Thus, new Chinese immigrants may be more likely to live that is within as decent range from a Chinese market. Fortunately, finding a Chinese supermarket in California became more convenient for Chinese by 1996. By 1996, *Tawa Supermarket Incorporated* had thirteen Asian American Supermarkets spread out across Southern California (Li). Their supermarkets could be found in the ethnoburbs in San Gabriel, Arcadia, Rosmead, Monterey Park and Rowland Heights. Not only did they serve immigrants who craved the food products from their homeland, *Tawa* also provided jobs for more than 1,200 people. Interestingly, *Tawa’s* supermarkets are often the anchor store in large Chinese malls in Northern California. In other words, Chinese businesses try to follow *Towa* locations to piggy bank on the firm’s vast clientele (Li).

Chinese schools were helpful to Chinese immigrants who wanted to learn English. Among the hundreds of Chinese Schools available in California, many of them taught their students English to help them pick-up English more quickly. Chinese Schools not only taught the young children of immigrants how to read, write and converse in English, but they also offered things such standardized test prep classes, math and science drills, and debate practice, to improve their performances at school (Zhou). Enrichment classes such as dancing, calligraphy, cooking and basketball are also offered. All-together, Chinese schools provided a valuable service to young Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans who wanted to boost their
academic performances in an environment they found comfortable. It was also served a special place for those who simply wanted to enrich their lives with extracurricular activities.

Parents and other adults also benefited from the services that the Chinese schools provided. Some schools offered seminars and informational sessions on topics that drew parent’s interests such as: parenting, helping children select advanced placement courses, doing business, financial investments, applying for colleges, and financial aid for college. Chinese schools gave parents a sense of assurance that their children would do fine in an American school. Parents had less reason to worry over their children’s academic performance when they saw that Chinese school’s curriculum was well-rounded and geared to the requirements of public education and college admission. Chinese schools in some way help prepare both students and adults to be successful in the future.

For those who settled in Monterey Park, it was accessibility of Los Angeles’s freeways that helped get them to where they needed to. There is Interstate 10, which is known as the San Bernadino Freeway that heads north. There is Interstate 710, which is the Long Beach Freeway headed west. And there is State Highway 60, known as the Ponoma Freeway, which heads south. The benefit of living close to these highways is that those who need to drive themselves to work may have a shorter commute, or will save travel time when they travel across Southern California.

Readjusting the workforce to service the new Asian immigrants and Asian Americans greatly helped Asians adapt to living in California. Carrying on every-day errands and business becomes easier for those who have difficulty communicating and understanding English. Fortunately, there were various businesses that were prompted to offer their services in different languages, as they knew that taking such steps would help them capitalize on a new clientele.
Early on, banks such as Wells Fargo and Bank of America began hiring of bilingual tellers, and offering information and services in various Asian languages. Car dealerships such as Toyota and Mercedes-Benz in Los Angeles even report that their sales are higher due to the strategic marketing they have for the Asian community (Ling). By seeking the ethnic media to advertise their products, AT&T, Motorola and Prudential also increased their sales.

**Role of Government**

Governments play a role in the settlement and the spread of Asian immigrants. While the federal government can control the number of immigrants allowed to enter the country each year, the state and local governments do not have power to regulate the number of immigrants who choose to settle within their borders (Bohn). This means that immigrants have the right to live wherever they choose. Thus, California will not designate Asian immigrants to live in a particular place.

As the number of Chinese immigrants increased, Americans eventually decided to put a cap on Chinese immigration. In fact, Chinese immigration was legally restricted by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. This stalled the flow of the Chinese immigrating to California. While the legislation intended to blockade any more Chinese immigrating to America, it did not completely block out all Chinese immigrants. Some immigrants found ways to get around the Act. One of the ways was to find people who would smuggle them into the United States. Known as Snakeheads, they would help Chinese during the late 1800s and early 1900s to sneak them into America. Many Chinese were eager to enter America, as they wanted to escape the poverty and hardship they faced in China. It was not until the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965 that immigration of Chinese and other Asians to the United States flourished again. Chinese
immigrants who came prior to the 1965 legislation were primarily peasants and manual workers with little or no formal schooling, and settled in rural areas. After the 1965 legislation, the Chinese immigrants who came tended to be highly educated, with professional and technical occupations, and gravitated toward urban centers such as San Francisco and Los Angeles. One will find that the influx of Chinese immigrants highly correlates with legislations that the United States passes.

During the presidency of George H.W. Bush, an executive order permitted Chinese citizens who had entered the United States by April 11th of 1990 to stay. Later on, President Bill Clinton issued the Chinese Student Protection Act, which allowed Chinese students and other Chinese citizens to apply for permanent residency starting July 1st of 1993. Then, between 2007 and 2008, seventeen immigrant-related laws were enacted and fifteen resolutions were passed (Bohn). These laws and resolutions, which were supportive of immigrants and immigration, welcomed incoming Asian immigrants into California. Despite there being laws that support immigration, the state can deflect immigrants by enforcing zoning and housing codes that discourages the presence of immigrants in certain areas.

When Asian immigrants sought for citizenship in the United States, some Asian groups had a more difficult time obtaining citizenship. Take a look at the government of Mainland China. Unlike the government in Taiwan, the Mainland China government makes dual citizenship illegal. This means that a citizen from Mainland China can be a citizen to only one country. If an immigrant from Mainland China decides to become a U.S. citizen, then he would have to give up the privileges and rights he had in the People’s Republic of China. The impact that government has on one’s citizenship may cause some immigrants to hesitate and think more
carefully about if they are willing to give up their citizenship in their homeland in order to become a citizen of the United States.

Some city governments are found to have lent a hand in helping the elderly immigrants live a comfortable life in a new country. The city of Monterey Park and local institutions for example have sponsored activities for Chinese seniors. Named as the Langley Senior Center, this elderly center offers recreational rooms equipped with table tennis, pool tables, and mahjong rooms. Mahjong by the way is a popular game that originates from China. Aside from providing various activities for the elderly, the center also offers lunches and free barber services (Li).

Monterey Park also houses several Chinese organizations that helps Chinese immigrants become more comfortable to life in America. Organizations include the Chinese Senior Citizen’s Club, a Peking Opera Association, and the Evergreen Chorus, which is a choir group composed of elderly Chinese. Such centers and organizations are convenient for Asian Americans who need a place to send their elderly parents to, while they are out at work. Other examples of Chinese oriented facilities includes the Golden Age Village, which is one of the two senior citizen complexes that opened in 1980. A characteristic of senior citizen complexes is that many of the residents are those who were not able to afford their own house or unable or unwilling to live in their children’s household. A city that caters to a generation who needs more taking-care-of could be a determinant that helps a Chinese family choose where they want to settle, because they may want to be in close proximity to a facility that could take care of their elderly parents.

**Issues Concerning Asian Immigrants and Asian Americans**

Changes in national policies were important in opening the door to immigrants. There were policies that created new needs for entrepreneurs, investors and cheap labor. This need became a great opportunity and a good time for immigrants to leave for California. However, the
inflow of immigrants has an enormous impact on the demographic, residential landscape, business environment, and socioeconomic structure of California. Unfortunately, big change could result in misunderstandings, distrust, and tensions between ethnic minorities and longtime residents.

The presence of Asian immigrants in large numbers has a significant impact on the local and state economy, politics, education, culture, social services and intergroup relations within cities. Wherever they are spread, they have an effect on the area they settle in. Contributing to the heavy weekend traffic jams in southern California is one such way their presence alters the dynamic of a place.

Asian immigration has also left an impact felt by major American universities. As the proportion of Asian American students rose, academic programs in many Universities began to readjust themselves. To meet the growing demands of the Asian American student body, many of the Universities within California began to establish Asian American studies programs.

America today would not be the same without the achievements of ethnic Chinese. Their early struggles for justice created new foundations of law later used by the civil rights case-law movement. They were the ones who helped the passage of the United States 1965 Immigration Law. Back in 1965, a delegation of Chinese Americans including longtime Chinese community leaders and lawyers from the Los Angeles and San Francisco, headed to Washington D.C., when Congress was debating the proposed changes of immigration laws. There, they were able to meet with Senator Edward Kennedy, who was chairman of the Immigration Sub-Committees at the time. They also testified in a Congressional hearing, and urged Congress to increase immigration quotas. For every small step that the Chinese made, it ultimately helped turn more Californians to become more welcoming to Asian immigrants.
Chang points out that the successes of Chinese Americans could be held against them during times when the United States is in financial trouble. She addresses that the mass media could project their contributions as a threat instead. During times of economic downturns, the media is found guilty of painting on the idea that the high unemployment rate of Americans is partly due to Asians that are stealing the jobs that should belong to Americans. When the United States is facing a recession, immigrants are more likely to become easy targets and scapegoats charged with taking jobs away from “real” Americans (Li). Times like these makes bashing on immigrants seem acceptable, and welcomes a negative portrayal of an ethnic group as a whole. On the flip side, during economically smooth times, people are more tolerant towards immigrants. When jobs are plentiful, there is even an increased pressure on the government to adopt policies that recruit foreign laborers to ease labor shortages. As indicated by the high demand in increasing H-1B Visas today, there is a high demand from high-tech specialists seeking for highly educated and professionally trained laborers. While this is serves as good news for immigrants seeking work in the professional field in California, they may later be subject to harassment from the media the next time America faces an economic downturn.

Some Americans discourage letting Asian immigrants come work in the United States because it looks like they are taking jobs away from American citizens. It may be surprising to hear this but their economic activities and resources actually creates jobs in the United States. Coming into America, they bring with them their know-hows and can start up their own businesses. This is widely observable within the San Gabriel Valley of California. There, the SGV has one of the lowest unemployment rates and healthiest local economies in the Los Angeles County, even in the face of recession in the early 1990s (Li).
The Asian workforce in California sometimes sends money back to family and relatives that live abroad. It is estimated that millions of U.S. dollars leaves the U.S. to support their families back home. This flight of U.S. money abroad is known as remittances. Some Californians have an issue with this because they say that the profits and earnings which gets redistributed abroad is better to be reinvested into California.

The topic of immigration can be a quite controversial. Not every American is fond of seeing more and more Asian immigrants coming onto the shores of the United States. Thus, throughout American history, Asian immigrants have had to struggle with discrimination. However, in the face of injustice that is brought upon them, Chinese Americans have not stood silent. Since the beginning, they have fought against racial discrimination in the courts, which has helped create a solid foundation of civil rights that they and other minorities can benefit from. Rather than returning back to China when things in the United States do not turn out well for them, they have learned to endure hardships and fight for the justice they want.

Some Chinese immigrants have learned the hard way on how dangerous it can be to return to China. One may not expect this, but during the Korean War and Cultural Revolution, a number of returning Chinese were persecuted in Mainland China because of their former association with the United States. This demonstrates how difficult the life of an Asian immigrant can be – they can be treated as strangers on both shores. Immigrants may find themselves in an uncomfortable position of being too Chinese to be American on one shore, and being too American to be Chinese on another shore. While the topic of immigration gets debated about, immigrants face a kind of internal debate within themselves – no matter the spatial difference, immigrants can never entirely shake off the perception of being seen as foreigners in their own land.
The Pan-Asian American Movement grew from the efforts that Asian Americans laid in effort to improve their future. Started in the University of California at Berkeley and San Francisco State College, this movement hoped to mobilize people from Asian descent to have a bigger voice in the political issues that affected them. The goal of the movement was to unite people of Asian descent under one umbrella (Gwak). Its establishment enabled people of Asian descent come together to create a coalition to fight for their rights alongside other minorities.

Among the Asian immigrants who entered California, the immigrants from Taiwan brought with them a culture of civic participation to the United States. Many had prior experience with community involvement back in Taiwan, and when they became U.S. citizens, they became one of the most active groups among all Chinese immigrants. They involved themselves by volunteering at community events, and by participating at their child’s school and Parent Teach Association activities. They also served on community committees, fundraised for political candidates and ran for office at local and state levels.

The new arrival of Asian immigrants challenged the power structure of the San Gabriel Valley beginning in the 1950s. Immigrants had needs that needed accommodation. Some democrats were willing to adapt previously all white institutions to accommodate new immigrants and minorities, but there were also conservatives who were less accommodating as they were against Chinese newcomers and their ethnic community development (Zhao). Although some conservatives did not welcome newcomers, they eventually could not hold off from the influence of Asians immigrants. Immigrants brought with them strong economic resources, which tipped the power balance and transformed local politics into a politics of diversity. When the old White conservative elite’s influence decreased, it opened up a new political order in Monterey Park. It surely opened up the doors for Lily Lee Chen in 1983, as she
was inaugurated as the first Chinese American Mayor in Monterey Park. Following her, Monterey Park’s city council has had Chinese American presence. There was Judy Chu serving on the council from 1988 to 2001, Tom Chu serving mayor in 2006 and David Lau as Mayor in 2007 (Zhao). When the Chinese immigrant community witnessed electoral success, it empowered them and reaffirmed to them that every vote counted. Seeing one of their own earn a position in local government inspires many to participate in local politics. Participation is not confined in Monterey Park, but extends beyond Monterey Park. In 1999, Joaquin Lim became mayor of Walnut City. In 2001, Ben Wong became the mayor in West Covina. In 2005, Matthew Lin became the first Chinese American mayor in San Marino. These are only a few of many examples of Asians taking leadership positions within their cities.

**Conclusion**

To facilitate Asian immigrants and Asian Americans adjust to U.S. society more smoothly and more rapidly, it is important to examine the current challenges that immigrants face and the challenges that immigration presents. Where they decide to settle within California causes shifts in demographics, economics, social integration and political participation. The spread of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans within California leaves an impact on their local economy as well as the national economy. Their presence contributes to the economy through their financial investments, job creations, technical innovations and labor (Li). Besides contributing to the U.S. economy, they also contribute to American society by diversifying its culture and bringing different heritages and traditions onto American soil. Li presents a positive perspective on immigrants – “The very existence of immigrants from different parts of the world offers Americans a chance to observe firsthand and comprehend the diverse cultures and heritages in the globalizing world and strengthens American transnational ties to the world.” She
also explains how not only should the general public share an awareness of the immigrant’s role, but policy makers should be sensitized and educated about the challenges and the contributions of new arrivals. She goes on to say that it is imperative for us to understand ethnic attitudes, behavior, culture, and evaluate the contributions and challenges in the ethnic communities. Examining Asian immigrants and Asian Americans in a geographical perspective helps us get a more wholesome understanding why we see Asian immigrants and Asian Americans in California in the first place, and the factors that influence their settlement patterns. Studying the geography of Asians within California pushes us to research the reasons that can offer explanations as to why there are much more Asians found in California than in any other state in the United States. Understanding the factors that bring Asian immigrants to California and that draw Asians to a particular place within California, as well as the issues they face and present, brings forth cultural sensitivity when discussion topics that regard Asian immigrants and Asian Americans. By integrating the knowledge we collect from our geographical studies of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans with U.S. policy, economics and social issues, the United States will be able to make more informed decisions and offer more informed solutions to the conflicts that arise in the United States. Being conscious of the sentiments, concerns and the characteristics of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans will help decision makers think up plans and projects that will appeal to the Asian audience and that meets their needs at the same time.
Bibliography


