

The AMERICAN DREAM

Helping Immigrants Join Mainstream America

The Merage Foundation for the American Dream was established in 2004 by Paul and Lilly Merage, both immigrants to the United States. In establishing the Foundation, Paul and Lilly Merage hope to help immigrants join mainstream America. The Foundation inspires young immigrants to achieve their American Dream. It helps immigrants become leaders in their communities and in the nation. It encourages Americans to recognize and celebrate the contributions of new Americans and their individual and collective positive impact on the nation. It fosters nonpartisan discussion of key immigration issues facing the United States. The Foundation's hope is that increasing numbers of immigrants will be able to reach their own and their family's aspirations.

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A Progress Report from Paul Merage



We are pleased to send you the latest issue of our American Dream newsletter. It highlights our 2008 National Leadership Awardees: Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Edwidge Danticat, Kati Marton, Hamid Moghadam, and Dr. Alfredo Quiñones-Hinojosa. They reflect the historical fact that immigrants to this country have meant much to the nation's wellbeing. They are a magnificent, diverse group

of leaders. Their stories about coming to America and their lives here are compelling. The newsletter also announces our new Merage American Dream Fellows. They are top graduating scholars and immigrants from around the world. Their leadership potential and commitment to give back to America is exemplary.

The Merage Foundation for the American Dream administers four important programs directed at helping immigrants integrate into American society and at increasing immigrant ability to achieve the American Dream. Apart from the National Awards program and the Fellows initiative, this year, with the help of Dewey Obenchain Films and Scholastic, the Foundation developed and

distributed 36,000 DVDs on the experiences and history of immigration to the US. The Foundation also completed a major paper on Mexican immigrant integration by Dr. Frank Bean, noted immigration scholar at the University of California, as part of its occasional paper series.

I want to thank Marshall Kaplan, Executive Director of the Merage Foundation for the American Dream and Editor of the Newsletter for his innovative leadership of the Foundation and his colleague Kelly Ocampo, Foundation Program Officer, for her outstanding work on the Foundation's agenda.

Paul Merage
Founder and President

Helping Immigrants Join Mainstream America



The Merage Foundation for the American Dream is pleased with your response to the American Dream newsletters. You have indicated that the newsletters have provided you with thoughtful brief articles on immigration. You have marveled at the backgrounds of the Merage Fellows. You have expressed appreciation concerning the choice of National Leadership Award winners. Some of you have responded describing your

support of or disagreement with the articles summarized in the newsletters.

The Foundation hopes that you find this issue of the newsletter interesting for its inspirational stories concerning this year's National Leadership Award winners, the new young Merage Fellows, and our Merage Alumni. We welcome your response to the article addressing the current shortages of H-1B visas. We would like your reaction to the summary article describing the recent studies on the impact of unauthorized immigrants on criminal behavior and the costs and revenues resulting from unauthorized immigration. We also would welcome your thoughts on the article concerning the integration of immigrants into the Los Angeles area based on an analysis by out-

standing scholars.

Excerpts from a recent talk by Dr. Henry Cisneros provide what the Foundation believes is a thoughtful overview of the successful implementation of integration strategies. Dr. Cisneros notes the tremendous drive to succeed on the part of immigrants and their contribution to, as well as achievement of, the American Dream.

The Foundation's DVD series has met with a very positive reaction in high schools across the nation, and from public interest groups. The Foundation's newest DVD focusing on the history of Mexican immigration to the U.S. is now available.

We welcome your feedback.

Marshall Kaplan
Executive Director
mkaplan@meragefoundations.com



Our Fifth Annual National Leadership Awards Dinner National Press Club, Washington, DC, June 3, 2008

The Merage Foundation for the American Dream will hold its fifth annual National Leadership Awards dinner at the National Press Club in Washington, DC on June 3. The event will be held in association with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The Foundations' National Leadership Awards recognize nationally and even internationally respected American leaders who are immigrants to the United States and who have made this country significantly better for all Americans.



National Leadership Award for Public Service

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Former U.S. National Security Advisor and Foreign Policy Scholar

Born in Poland, Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski was the first director of the Trilateral Commission strengthening relations between the U.S., Western Europe, and Japan. He was the principal foreign affairs advisor to President Carter: From 1977 to 1981, he was U.S. National Security Advisor and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom "for his role in the normalization of U.S.-Chinese relations and for his contributions to the human rights and national security policies of the United States." Dr. Brzezinski has distinguished himself as a professor at Harvard University, Columbia University and, currently, Johns Hopkins University as Professor of American Foreign Policy. He serves on numerous private, nonprofit, and public sector boards, including Amnesty International. He is an international corporate adviser; public speaker; commentator; and media contributor. He has been given numerous honors, including "The Order of the White Eagle," Poland's highest civilian decoration.



Portrait by Nancy Crampton

National Leadership Award for Arts & Culture

Edwidge Danticat
Author and National Book Critic Circle Award Winner

In March 2008, Edwidge Danticat was announced the winner of the 2007 National Book Critic Circle Award for her most recent book *Brother, I'm Dying*, a memoir. She was born in Haiti and moved to the United States when she was twelve. She is the author of several books, including *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, an Oprah Book Club selection, *Krik? Krak!*, a National Book Award finalist, and *The Farming of Bones*, an American Book Award winner; and the novel-in-stories, *The Dew Breaker*. She is also the editor of *The Butterfly's Way: Voices from the Haitian Diaspora in the United States* and *The Beacon Best of 2000: Great Writing by Men and Women of All Colors and Cultures* and has written two young adult novels, *Anacaona*, *Golden Flower* and *Behind the Mountains*, as well as a travel narrative, *After the Dance, A Walk Through Carnival in Jacmel*.



Portrait by Joyce Ravid

National Leadership Award for Media

Kati Marton
Journalist and Human Rights Advocate

A best selling author of six books and now writing her seventh, Kati Marton fled Post-Revolution Hungary in the late fifties with her parents and has combined a career as a reporter and writer with human rights advocacy. She has just completed 5 years as Chair of the non-profit International Women's Health Coalition. Previously she was Chief Advocate for the Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict at the United Nations. She is currently a Director and formerly Chair of the Committee to Protect Journalists. She also serves on the board of directors of the International Rescue Committee, Human Rights Watch, and the New America Foundation. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, P.E.N. International, and the Author's



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2008 National Leadership Award Honorees

Guild. She has contributed as a reporter to multiple news sources including PBS, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Newsweek*. She hosted NPR's *America and the World* and was involved in the development of NPR's *All Things Considered*. She was Bureau Chief in Germany and Foreign Correspondent for ABC News. She has received several honors for her reporting, including a Matrix Award and a George Foster Peabody Award.



National Leadership Award for Business

Hamid Moghadam

Co-Founder, Chairman, and CEO of AMB Property Corporation

Hamid Moghadam is Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of AMB Property Corporation (NYSE:AMB), a leading global developer and owner of industrial real estate, a company he co-founded in 1983. He is a Trustee of Stanford University, serves as a Chairman of Stanford Management Company, and sits on the Stanford Graduate School of Business Advisory Council and its Campaign Steering Committee. He also serves on the board of the California Academy of Sciences and Town School for Boys. As an immigrant from Iran,

he is a recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, as well as the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award. He has been named CEO of the Year on six different occasions by three separate industry publications. Mr. Moghadam received SB and SM degrees in engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an MBA from Stanford Graduate School of Business.



National Leadership Award for Science & Technology

Dr. Alfredo Quiñones-Hinojosa
Professor of Neurological Surgery and Oncology

Originally emigrating from Mexico to California as an undocumented migrant farm worker, Dr. Alfredo Quiñones-Hinojosa received his BA from the University of California, Berkeley and his MD from Harvard where he graduated cum

laude and became a citizen. He then completed his residency in neurosurgery and a postdoctoral fellowship in developmental and stem cell biology at the University of California, San Francisco. Now an Associate Professor of Neurosurgery, Oncology, Neuroscience, and Cellular and Molecular Medicine, Dr. Quiñones serves as the Director of the brain tumor program at Johns Hopkins. He focuses on the surgical treatment of primary and metastatic brain tumors, with an emphasis on motor and speech mapping during surgery. Dr. Quiñones conducts numerous research efforts on the role of stem cells in the origin of brain tumors and the potential role stem cells can have in fighting brain cancer and subsequently regaining neurological function. He was recently inducted into Hispanic Scholarship Fund's "Hall of Fame." He has also been named one of *Popular Science* magazine's "Brilliant 10 Scientists" and one of *Hispanic Business* journal's "Top 100 Most Influential Hispanics in the U.S."

Past National Leadership Awardees

Francis Deng

Research Professor of International Law, Politics, and Society and the Director of the Center for Displacement Studies at Johns Hopkins University – National Leadership Award for Public Policy

Jack Rosenthal

President of the New York Times Company Foundation – National Leadership Award for Journalism

Shirley M. Tilghman

President of Princeton University – National Leadership Award for Education

Jerry Yang

Co-founder of Yahoo! Inc. – National Leadership Award for Entrepreneurship

Vartan Gregorian

President, Carnegie Corporation of New York – National Leadership Award for Education and Philanthropy

Jenny Ming

Former President, Old Navy – National Leadership Award for Business and Community Service

Cesar Pelli

Principal, Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects – National Leadership Award for Architecture and Design

Madeleine Albright

Former Secretary of State – National Leadership Award for Public Policy

Mario Molina

Nobel Laureate in Chemistry – National Leadership Award for Science and Education

Max Frankel

Former Editor of the New York Times – National Leadership Award for Journalism

Armando Codina

Entrepreneur – National Leadership Award for Business and Philanthropy



Woodrow Wilson
International Center
for Scholars

Each year, the Foundation selects outstanding graduating seniors from our 22 Partner Universities to be American Dream Fellows. The Fellows are selected based on their academic record, their leadership, their consistent ethical behavior, the clarity of their American Dream, and their potential to make an important contribution to America. Fellows receive a \$20,000 stipend over two years to help them pursue their American Dream. The Foundation currently has 68 Fellows pursuing important career trajectories in medicine, law, public policy, psychology, business, drama, and other fields.

"I want to be the friendly face that not only cures [my patients], but who also speaks their language."

—Felipe Serrano

The Merage Foundation for the American Dream Announces Our New Class of 2008 Fellows!



Mr. Kristijonas Bartkus
(Harvard University)

In 1991, at the age of 5, Kris and his family emigrated from Lithuania fleeing political upheaval in the USSR. They were on the last flight out of the former USSR. With a BA in Development Economics from Harvard, Kris's dream is to become an immigration policy expert. Before pursuing his PhD in Immigration Economics and Public Policy, Kris will spend 2 years traveling to immigrant communities where he will research individual experiences by living and working with immigrants as well as partnering with local immigrant NGOs. He will live with populations such as Mexican, Southeast Asian, and Sub-Saharan African immigrants to the U.S.; Arabs in France; and Indians in the Persian Gulf Coast.



Nataliya Binshteyn
(Hunter College)

Nataliya emigrated from the Ukraine with her family in 1993, at the age of 7, because of political and economic insecurity and state-sanctioned discrimination against Jews in the former USSR. At Hunter, she triple-majored in Political Science, Spanish, and Special Honors. Nataliya's dream is to pursue a career in Public International Law and Government in Latin America, working with issues of development, economic transition, and human rights. She

will use the fellowship towards a concurrent JD and MA in International Affairs. She is currently interning for the State Department at the US Embassy in Buenos Aires helping to assess the region's political and socio-economic environment in the wake of a historic election year. There she is responsible for organizing cultural exchanges between US and Argentine representatives.



Olga Eydlin
(New York University)

Olga emigrated with her family from Belarus in 1991, at the age of 5, to escape religious persecution of Jews and to seek better education and career opportunities. Olga majored in Art History with minors in Biology and Chemistry. Her dream is to be a surgeon and help reform the healthcare system through clinical research and teaching. As a physician, she wants to organize a free clinic for immigrants and the uninsured that would be run by doctors, not medical students. Olga will start classes at NYU School of Medicine this August.



René Flores
(University of California, Berkeley)

Originally studying law at the largest university in Mexico City, René came to California when his university went on strike in 1999. In California, he found work as a hotel housekeeper, went to a community college, and transferred

to Berkeley. His research on ethnic tensions in Pennsylvania was published in the *New York Times*. He wrote a book chapter on the new Salvadorian economic elite that will be published by Duke University Press this year. René will use the fellowship towards a PhD in Sociology at Princeton studying ethnic animosity, political xenophobia, and the growing nativist movement in the US. While getting his doctorate, he plans to take a year to research these issues in Germany. Ultimately he wants to be a Social Scientist developing strategies to reduce tension in areas of high ethnic animosity.



Edmond Fomunung
(University of Georgia)

Edmond emigrated from Cameroon in 2002, at the age of 16, to realize his dream of becoming a cardiothoracic surgeon. While separated from his parents, he lived with his uncle. Edmond is now a certified pharmacy technician with a BS in Cellular Biology. He will begin his studies towards a joint MD/MPH degree at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine this Fall. There he plans to conduct research to raise the awareness of the correlation between heart diseases and controllable risk factors like smoking, obesity, inactivity, stress, and alcohol. He wants to implement health education to help people avoid addictive lifestyles and to address the disparity between male and female mortality rates. Eventually he wants to take his work to the international level.





Marsiyana Henricus
(Fordham University)

Marsi immigrated to the US with her family in 1989, when she was 3 years old, because of economic and political hardships. Before immigrating to the US from Sri Lanka, she lived with her family in Italy for 2 years. Marsi majored in Chemistry with minors in Biology, Philosophy, and American Catholic Studies. Marsi's dream is to be a physician-scientist that improves the lives of underserved Americans and immigrants. She will begin her studies towards an MSc in Chemical Biology at Oxford University this Fall where she will conduct research on new proteins and hydrophobins. Then she wants to return to the US to get her MD/PhD and help to link research efforts in the US and UK. She plans to research the detection of cancer cells through imaging techniques and drug delivery devices.



Arman Jahangiri
(University of Houston)

In 1997 at the age of 11, Arman emigrated from Iran with his family. Since the 1979 revolution, his parents had been committed to immigrating to gain freedom of speech, religion, and political expression. A major in Biology with a minor in Chemistry, Arman's dream is to become a neurosurgeon that contributes to healthcare as a provider, educator, and policy maker. He wants to lobby congress for healthcare for uninsured and underserved populations, and to advocate for US training programs for healthcare administrators from

third world countries. He plans to attend UT Southwestern for his MD. This year he is planning a medical mission trip to Trinidad and Tobago.



Oisín Kenny
(University of Illinois at Chicago)

In 1995 at the age of 8, Oisín and his family emigrated from Ireland for better economic opportunities and to reunite with his father. Oisín majored in Economics with a minor in German/Indo-European languages. He studied abroad in Brazil and Germany, worked in construction, and interned for the European Parliament. Oisín's dream is to create a consulting firm on corporate sustainability that would be able to advise major oil companies. He also dreams of being CEO of an international firm that markets renewable energy technologies. As the world tries to decrease dependence on fossil fuels, his firms may be in high demand. After completing an internship in sustainable development and renewable energies and gaining sufficient work experience, Oisín will continue his graduate education in energy.



Kristina J. Liu
(Harvard University)

Kristina emigrated with her family from China in 1996, at the age of 10, when her father received a job offer to continue his research in Louisiana. While getting her BS in Neurobiology at Harvard College, she did research on hedgehog protein transport. She also worked for an obesity and diabetes clinic in Australia. Kristina will be entering

Yale School of Medicine this Fall. Her specific area of interest is obesity. After getting her MD, she plans to split her time between clinical research and work in the health policy sector. Kristina's dream is to study epigenetics as the cause of weight gain, while working for a governmental health policy group to minimize the associated physical and social costs of obesity on the US population.



Lang Liu
(Stanford University)

Lang and her parents fled political persecution in China when she was 3. After leaving China, the family lived in Germany and Scotland before finally coming to the US when Lang was 10. She will be starting her joint JD/PhD program at Yale Law School in the Fall. Lang's dream is to be an activist and a professor (with both a PhD and JD) in a law school legal clinic specializing in elder law. She will expand Generation to Generation (G2G), a community service organization that she founded for students and senior citizens based on adopt-a-grandparent programs. She would like G2G to include a computer literacy program and partnerships with legal aid centers where the senior citizens can serve as translators.



Felipe Serrano
(Rice University)

Felipe emigrated with his family from Colombia in 1997, at the age of 11, when his father was offered a position in Texas. While majoring in Computer Science at Rice, he volunteered in a medical mission

to Ayacucho, Peru. Felipe's dream is to become a doctor providing not just medical care, but also health education and general advocacy for severely underserved communities in the US and abroad. He will begin Baylor College of Medicine this Fall. While in school, he plans to volunteer in clinics and county hospitals, as well as to return to Ayacucho. After graduating, he plans to lead a group of providers in a program offering low-cost health care in underprivileged community clinics and hospitals. Through his volunteer efforts to educate people in low-income neighborhoods about health care, he wants "to be the friendly face that not only cures them, but who also speaks their language."



Rany Woo
(Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

In 1986, just after her birth, Rany and her family immigrated to North Carolina from South Korea. As a Brain and Cognitive Sciences major, Rany worked in India and began implementing her own unique TB drug program adherence solution using cell phone reminders and incentives. Rany's dream is to be a doctor committed to improving the lives of the underserved and advocating for public health solutions in the developing world. In medical school, she intends to pursue an MPH to gain a better understanding of how population-based social determinants like poverty and education affect the quality of health. She will perform clinical rotations abroad and practice in free clinics during medical school. She wants to provide direct health care services for the needy, pioneer treatment strategies, conduct research for infectious diseases, and be a leader in international health.

Merage Alumni Achieving Their American Dreams

New York Regional Networking Dinner

This April, the Foundation held its first Fellows Alumni regional networking meeting in New York. The dinner was graciously hosted by board member Sharmin Mossavar-Rahmani, Managing Director, Goldman, Sachs & Co.

In attendance were Fellows from our 2004, 2005, and 2007 classes, as well as board member Peter Goldmark, Director, Climate & Air Program, Environmental Defense.

- Villamor Asuncion '04
- Katerina Kelman '05
- Svetlana Meyerzon '05
- Engin Ayaz '07
- Yuliya Lapitskaya '07
- Irina Novoselsky '07

The Foundation hopes to continue these regional meetings with board members and alumni in various US locations to further develop our alumni support network.



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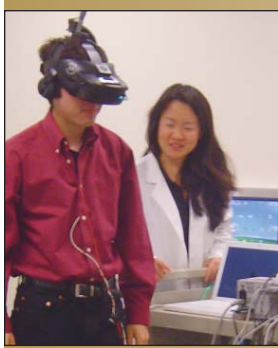


Yukyan Lam – 2004 Fellow

After graduating from Harvard Law School in June 2007, Yukyan spent two months in La Paz, Bolivia continuing work on a civil case being brought in US federal court against Bolivian ex-President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada for the execution of civilians by state security forces in 2003.

With the support of a post-graduate fellowship from Harvard Law School's Human Rights Program, she began working in October for the Colombian Commission of Jurists, a human rights NGO based in Bogotá, Columbia. Her work consists of investigating extrajudicial violence and litigating cases before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights against Colombia for the state's failure to comply with its human rights treaty obligations.

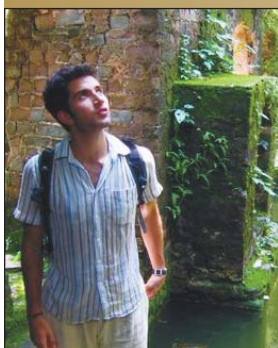
Photo: Yukyan in La Paz working on the civil case against Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada for the execution of civilians by state security forces in 2003.



Christine Ma – 2006 Fellow

Christine is in her second year as a social psychology graduate student at the University of California, Santa Barbara, continuing her research on culture, emotion, and cognition. She is spearheading a new series of projects on using novel immersive virtual reality (VR) technology to test the link between culture, bodily change, and emotional experiences. When using VR the person is "immersed" in a non-real-virtual-world created by the researchers. The lab participant wears a headset which transports them to the different setting by having everything they see become a product of the fabricated world made for them.

Photo: Christine's VR lab subject experiences a non-real-virtual-world by wearing a headset.



Engin Ayaz – 2007 Fellow

After graduating from Stanford with a BA in Civil and Environmental Engineering in 2007, Engin spent two months over the summer in Dharamsala, India, a rural town in the Kangra District in Northern India. Working with SEEDS, a local NGO, and a team of 3 architects and engineers, Engin surveyed historic mud houses, forts, and churches across the Himalayan Belt for earthquake resistance. At the end of the study, they presented their findings on the essential design elements of these unique, resilient structures to local authorities in New Delhi, and later in San Francisco.

Now Engin is working in a global sustainable design and consulting firm, Arup. In a unique 1-year rotational position, Engin is moving between Arup's offices in San Francisco, New York, London, and Brisbane gathering and disseminating technical sustainability information related to topics such as carbon neutral projects, urban agriculture, and closed-loop water systems.

Photo: Engin surveying historic architecture for earthquake resistance in Northern India.



Aswin Sekar – 2007 Fellow

In June 2007, Aswin graduated from UCLA with a BS in Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology. He then traveled to India to do service work through Project RISHI (Rural India Social & Health Improvement), a non-profit organization that he co-founded. During his 2 weeks in Vadamanappakkam, a rural village in Southern India, in the State of Tamil Nadu, his group helped run a mobile clinic in the village. Additionally, the group talked to hundreds of school children about various diseases and basic sanitary practices. Aswin is planning a return trip to India this summer to continue the project.

Now Aswin is a Research Associate at the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) in Phoenix, Arizona where he develops techniques to improve the speed and cost-efficiency of DNA sequencing. He co-authored a paper on genetic defects in Hypothalamic Hamartoma in *The American Journal of Human Genetics*. This Fall, he will begin his first year at Harvard Medical School. He is well on his way to becoming an outstanding physician-scientist.

Photo: Aswin with Project RISHI in India talking to a shy, young patient.

Problems with H-1B Visa Caps

By Stuart Anderson

High skill immigrants contribute greatly to America, although you would not know this from the way current U.S. policy treats them. While the United Kingdom, Canada and other countries are going out of their way to attract skilled immigrants, it seems U.S. policymakers are sending a message of indifference (or worse) towards these highly sought individuals.

U.S. companies hire skilled foreign nationals because they represent an important part of what is now a global labor pool for technical talent. For larger companies, U.S. immigration policies dictate whether these talented people are hired to work in the United States or in offices overseas. For smaller companies without a foreign office, the lack of an available visa to hire a skilled foreign-born individual means they may lose out on a key person needed to grow the company.

The current policies affect many regions around the country. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (April 13, 2008) reported, "The [H-1B visa cap] limitations are especially crippling to cities such as Pittsburgh, many businesses here argue, because drawing an educated immigrant class is the city's best short-term hope for population and economic growth, since the native-born population keeps dropping."

Talented people are crucial for companies that rely on innovation to grow and gain market share. U.S. companies try to hire as much talent as possible, including Americans. But when U.S. employers recruit on college campuses they find foreign nationals make up a high proportion of the graduates in fields in great demand. For example, in 2006, 73% of new electrical engineering Ph.D.s were

granted to international students, according to the National Science Foundation, while in 2005, foreign nationals (international students) received 55 percent of electrical engineering master's degrees and 42 percent of computer science master's degrees.

Research

Recent research from the National Foundation for American Policy found that major U.S. technology companies today average more than 470 U.S.-based job openings for skilled positions (B.A. or above), while defense companies have more than 1,265 each. A number of companies have thousands of skilled positions open, with this level of openings persisting for a year or more.

Another recent study from the National Foundation for American Policy found that contrary to concerns that skilled foreign nationals harm the job prospects of Americans, H-1B visa holders are more likely to be complementary to U.S. workers and create jobs. The study found that for every H-1B position requested from the Department of Labor, U.S. technology companies increase their employment by five workers. For technology firms with fewer than 5,000 employees, each H-1B position requested was associated with an increase of employment of 7.5 workers. While it is not possible to determine from available data the mix of workers it is logical that the increased employment would be in complementary positions. Moreover, if critics were correct and H-1B visa holders "take jobs away from Americans," then one should have seen no employment increase or negative results, which was not the case. (See www.nfap.com for the complete study.)

Key Policy Problems

H-1B visas are important because they are essentially the only way international students at U.S. universities and outstanding, educated individuals seeking to come here from abroad can stay and work in the United States long-term. These temporary visas are good generally for 6 years (renewable after 3 years).

In April 2008, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced it received more than enough applications for H-1B visas to fulfill the quota of 65,000 for fiscal year 2009 (which starts October 1, 2008), as well as enough for the additional 20,000 H-1B slots reserved for foreign nationals with advanced degrees from a U.S. university. This marked the fifth year in a row the H-1B quota had been reached before the fiscal year started.

H-1B visas only allow individuals to stay on a temporary basis. An employment-based green card is necessary to stay permanently and later become a citizen. The separate quota for green cards (permanent residence) for skilled immigrants is set at 140,000 a year (including dependents of the skilled immigrant). It has also been insufficient to meet demand. Typically, a skilled immigrant now waits 5 to 7 years for a green card, although the wait may reach 10 years for individuals from countries such as India and China (due to "per country" limits). This great uncertainty causes some to give up and leave the United States and others to not even begin the process of coming here. The current long waits "cause a reverse brain drain affecting American competitiveness and innovation," according to Aman Kapoor, executive director of the advocacy group Immigration Voice. "At the same time, these green card backlogs create severe quality of life issues for the applicants and their families."

"...contrary to concerns that skilled foreign nationals harm the job prospects of Americans, H-1B visa holders are more likely to be complementary to U.S. workers and create jobs."

What Can Be Done?

Congress can act to align U.S. policy with the current realities of the global economy. First, lawmakers can increase the H-1B visa cap, including addressing the large pent up demand of recent years, and not count against the annual quota those who have received a master's degree or above.

Second, Congress can significantly raise the employment-based immigration quotas (green cards) for those seeking to stay permanently in the United States. In doing so it should not count against the green card quotas those holding an advanced degree (master's or higher) from either a U.S. or a foreign university. Both sets of individuals bring significant human capital to the country.

While there are additional reforms that would help, these two actions would place U.S. companies in a more competitive position internationally and set America on the path to maintaining its edge in innovation and job creation in the 21st century.

Stuart Anderson, a former Staff Director of the Senate Immigration Subcommittee, is Executive Director of the National Foundation for American Policy, a nonpartisan policy research group based in Arlington, VA.



“...the cost impact unauthorized immigrants have on most states and local governments may be relatively small. ...negative impacts might be responded to by increased transfer payments from the federal government to state and local governments.”

“...recent data suggests the arrest rates of deportable and non-deportable immigrants released from Los Angeles County jails were quite similar for the same time period.”

Review of Literature: A Tale of Two Thoughtful, Recent Reports by CBO and RAND

By Marshall Kaplan
Executive Director,
Merage Foundations

Two recently published reports by respected research organizations, the **Congressional Budgeting Office (CBO)** and the **RAND Corporation**, have shed some light on two issues often discussed in the ongoing national dialogue concerning immigration policy. While both studies illustrate some methodological and interpretative problems, both help begin to sort out the complexities associated with framing national immigration policy.

CBO Report: The Impact of Unauthorized Immigrants on the Budgets of State and Local Governments¹

Based on a review of 29 reports completed over the last decade-and-a-half, CBO indicates:

- State and local governments incur costs for providing services to unauthorized immigrants and because of regulations and court opinions have limited options to avoid or minimize costs.
- State and local governments spend a relatively small percentage of their total expenditures on services for unauthorized residents.
- At the state and local level, tax revenues provided by unauthorized immigrants do not offset the total cost of services provided to such immigrants.
- Federal aid programs do not fully cover the costs of state and local government services to unauthorized immigrants.

The CBO study notes that the balance in some states between taxes and costs favors the state; that is, that unauthorized immigrants, in these states, pay more in income, property, and excise taxes (e.g. education) than the costs of received services. The CBO report and the work of other reputable analysts suggests that the impact of unauthorized immigrants on the federal budget is often different than the impact on state budgets. Succinctly, they conclude that the federal government receives more in revenue than it pays out in benefits.

Coming to a precise conclusion concerning net benefits and costs is difficult. State-by-state analyses often cover different populations, different demographic characteristics, different services and revenue sources, and different time periods. There is clearly a need for more definitive national and related state studies; but CBO's effort provides a real service. It suggests that the cost impact unauthorized immigrants have on most states and local governments may be relatively small. It also implies that negative impacts might be responded to by increased transfer payments from the federal government to state and local governments.

RAND Report: Are Deportable Aliens a Unique Threat to Public Safety? Comparing the Recidivism of Deportable and Non-Deportable Aliens²

According to the RAND study, recent data suggests the arrest rates of deportable and non-deportable immigrants released from Los Angeles County jails were quite similar for the same time period. Differences in percentages seem due to age, ethnicity, and criminal history rather than immigration status. The authors believe that

unauthorized immigrants do not have higher rates of recidivism than other immigrants. The authors recognize the limits of their study, given its focus and sample characteristics. They suggest, however, that their findings at least question the assertions that deportable immigrants are more prone to criminal activity than legal immigrants and native born Americans.³

Summary

Clearly more research is required to moderate arguments concerning the benefits and costs of immigration on each level of government and on the nation as a whole. Just as clearly, more studies are needed before answers can be developed with certainty concerning comparative criminal behavior among unauthorized and legal immigrants as well as native born Americans before we can put to rest the fear factor implicit in the national debate on immigration.

¹ Congress of the United States, Congressional Budget Office, "The Impact of Unauthorized Immigrants on the Budgets of State and Local Governments," *A CBO Paper: A Series on Immigration*, Pub. No. 2500, December 2007.

² Laura J. Hickman & Marika J. Suttorp, "Are Deportable Aliens a Unique Threat to Public Safety? Comparing the Recidivism of Deportable and Non Deportable Aliens," *Criminology and Public Policy*, 7 (1), 59-82, February 2008.

³ See the Occasional Paper prepared by the Merage Foundation for the American Dream: Michael R. Gottfredson, *Crime, Immigration, and Public Policy*, March 2004.



Los Angeles on the Leading Edge

New MPI Report Assesses Immigrant Integration Needs, Opportunities in a Region that Serves as a National Laboratory

By Michelle Mittelstadt,
MPI Communications Director

WASHINGTON – Given the size of today's immigration flows, the pressure the globalizing economy is placing on U.S. communities and the aging native-born workforce, the public and private sectors should devote far more attention to the integration of immigrants into U.S. classrooms, workplaces and civic life, says a new report from the Migration Policy Institute.

Though much of the current debate in Washington and around the United States is chiefly focused on illegal immigration, the report, *Los Angeles on the Leading Edge: Immigrant Integration Indicators and Their Policy Implications*, comprehensively details the need for development and implementation of coordinated integration strategies and policies that will benefit immigrants and the broader U.S. society alike.

"Despite the transformative nature of immigrant demographic trends in recent decades, the integration of immigrants remains an afterthought in policy discussions and could be considered one of the most overlooked issues in American governance," said one of the report's authors, MPI Vice President Michael Fix.

As the largest immigrant metropolis in the nation, with more than one-third of its 9.9 million residents comprised of immigrants, Los Angeles County stands at the leading edge of national immigration trends because of demography, geography and history – and thus can serve as a policy laboratory for other U.S. communities.

While the immigrant population grew dramatically from the 1970s through the mid-1990s, the story today is Los Angeles' transition from city of immigrants

to one dominated by their American children, with over half of students in the Los Angeles schools the U.S.-born children of immigrants (known as the second generation.)

"With naturalization rates up, new immigrant flows declining and the emergence of the second generation, Los Angeles is positioned to catalyze smart investments in state and regional integration policy – even in the absence of coherent national action," said co-author Margie McHugh, who directs MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy with Fix.

The MPI report, by Fix, McHugh, Aaron Matteo Terrazas and Laureen Laglagaron, found that:

- Nearly half of the Los Angeles County workforce is foreign-born
- Over 40 percent of all students in Los Angeles schools are English Language Learners – the great majority of them U.S. citizens
- One-third of Los Angeles adults are English Language Learners

"The skills and energy of immigrants and their children will help our society weather the retirement of the Baby Boom generation and meet the challenges of the changing world economy," said Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. "Local governments need the President and Congress to be full partners in helping immigrant families maximize their success. The federal government must step up to the plate not just on immigration reform, but also in key immigrant integration areas such as education, health-care access and adult English and workforce skills training."

The report finds that increased access to English language and civics instruction as well as greater workplace acceptance of immi-

50% the LA County workforce is foreign-born

40% of LA students are English Language Learners – the great majority of them US citizens

43% of California's recent Latino immigrants with a BA or higher are employed in unskilled jobs

60% of LA County immigrants entering more than 30 years ago are homeowners (the US born average is 50%)

grants' foreign educational and professional credentials would speed and improve their integration into the fabric of the broader society and economy.

"This report makes clear that most institutions could play a more active role to help immigrants and their children," said Antonia Hernández, president and chief executive officer of the California Community Foundation, which funded the MPI research. "The only way we can tap into immigrants' full potential and improve Los Angeles County's competitiveness is through social integration, economic mobility, educational opportunity and civic engagement."

The report is available online at: www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/NCIIP_Los_Angeles_on_the_Leading_Edge.pdf

"The skills and energy of immigrants and their children will help our society weather the retirement of the Baby Boom generation and meet the challenges of the changing world economy."

–Los Angeles Mayor
Antonio Villaraigosa



Photo courtesy of MPI

This report is a product of MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, with generous support from the California Community Foundation.

The Migration Policy Institute is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank dedicated to analysis of the movement of people worldwide. Founded in 2001, MPI provides analysis, development and evaluation of migration and refugee policies at the local, national and international levels. It aims to meet the rising demand for pragmatic and thoughtful responses to the challenges and opportunities that large-scale migration, whether voluntary or forced, presents to communities and institutions in an increasingly integrated world.

The California Community Foundation, founded in 1915, is one of the leading philanthropic organizations in Los Angeles County, managing more than \$1 billion in assets. Each year, it gives out more than \$100 million in grants to invest in the future of our local communities. The foundation partners with individual donors and actively supports nonprofit organizations to address diverse and dynamic needs of our communities. The expertise and commitment of CCF enables individuals, families and organizations to fulfill their charitable goals and dreams. To learn more, visit the foundation's Web site at www.calfund.org.



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Dr. Henry Cisneros is Executive Chairman of CityView. He was the first Latino elected as mayor of a large American city (he was elected Mayor of San Antonio in 1981), and later served as U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development from 1993 to 1997. He also served as Deputy Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, was a board member of the Rockefeller Foundation, and was President of Univision, a Spanish-language television station. Dr. Cisneros has a BA and MA from Texas A&M, an MA from Harvard, and a doctorate from George Washington University. He is a member of the board of the Merage Foundation for the American Dream.

Striving to Achieve the American Dream

“The American Dream has meant the right to strive with the best chance in the world of being rewarded for it. The American Dream has not been fool-proof, but immigrants have understood that here, if you strive you have a fair chance of success, if not for you, in your time, then for someone you love who comes behind you.”

I have always been most inspired, indeed moved to tears, by the people who strive, who work so hard for what they care deeply. The strivers are the people who work, who apply themselves, who sacrifice, who discipline themselves, and who play by the rules. Sometimes they strive because they aspire to something for themselves, such as an economic advancement, a promotion, a material good, or an honor. Sometimes it is because they love others—their children—and want something better for those they love: a home, an education, or a career success. America’s immigrants are on the whole a community of strivers. They reinvigorate our society with their hopes and ambitions. They understand that striving is at the core of American culture. It is not that people do not strive in their home countries or that many

do not achieve, but immigrants in America believe that the difference here is that it is possible for every person to advance. The cultures of many other nations are more class-bound, fatalistic, blocked, rigid, prejudiced, or unfair. The American Dream has meant the right to strive with the best chance in the world of being rewarded for it. The American Dream has not been fool-proof, but immigrants have understood that here, if you strive you have a fair chance of success, if not for you, in your time, then for someone you love who comes behind you. As a nation, we lose when we allow that incandescent hope, that lightning bolt of energy, that sacred power of the human soul to be lost — with a *hand up* for our immigrants, we will keep our nation’s optimism strong and our nation’s prospects rising. This effort will

give us ideas. This forum will *add insights*. We must translate those *ideas* into *action* because *We know...* that the striving of immigrants, encouraged by the nation that has always understood the power of striving, is the basis for an America whose best days are still ahead...

-Excerpt from the *Immigrant Integration and The American Future: Lessons from and for California* conference address given by Dr. Henry Cisneros, Executive Chairman of CityView and Merage Foundation for the American Dream board member on April 22, 2008 at the University of Southern California. The Conference was sponsored by USC, the California Community Foundation, and the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute.

A Summary of the Presidential Candidates’ Views on Immigration from the *New York Times* Election Guide 2008

Hillary Clinton,
Democratic Senator from
New York:

“Supports a path to legalization for illegal immigrants that includes learning English and paying fines; toughen penalties for hiring illegal immigrants; voted for fence along Mexican border.”

Barack Obama,
Democratic Senator
from Illinois:

“Supports a path to legalization for illegal immigrants that includes learning English and paying fines; toughen penalties for hiring illegal immigrants; voted for fence along Mexican border.”

John McCain,
Republican Senator
from Arizona:

“Supports a path to legalization for illegal immigrants that includes learning English and paying fines; voted for fence along Mexican border.”



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New York Times Election Guide 2008: <http://politics.nytimes.com/election-guide/2008/issues/immigration.html>.

Award-Winning DVD Series Inspires Young Immigrants to Achieve their American Dream

The February release of the compilation edition of the Merage Foundation's award-winning American Dream DVD series helps personalize the immigrant experience for high school students in over 36,000 classrooms across the country. The series, which began with the first DVD winning a Telly, the International Film and Video Silver Screen Award, an Accolade, and the Videographer Awards Award of Excellence, examines the American Dream concept through the history of immigration to the United States and the narratives of prominent immigrant citizens and their outstanding contributions to America.

This February, 36,000 teachers and students received a compilation edition of the Merage Foundation's American Dream DVD series in the February editions of Scholastic's *Upfront*®, *ScholasticAction*®, and *Choices*® magazines. The DVD series, which was created and produced by the Merage Foundation for the American Dream, in association with Dewey Obenchain Films, and in cooperation with Scholastic, provides young people with positive role models and inspires them to define and work toward

their own American Dream.

The DVD series features an overview of US immigration, a spotlight on the Mexican immigration experience, and focused pieces on specific successful immigrants like Pulitzer Prize-winning former New York Times Editor Jack Rosenthal, the Critics' Choice Award-winning Chilean author Isabel Allende, famous for her magical realism novels, and Jenny Ming, whose immigration from China led to her eventual success as president of the popular Old Navy clothing brand. Students learn the stories of others such as the NBA basketball professional from Mexico, Eduardo Nájera; Jamaican scholar Orlando Patterson, famous for his studies of race-relations, culture, and class in the US; and Dr. David Ho, who emigrated from Taiwan and now conducts cutting-edge AIDS research. In addition, the series includes the profiles of four Merage Fellows. They are outstanding immigrant students who, after graduation, were sponsored by the Foundation to pursue their American Dreams.

The circulation of these 36,000 new compilation DVDs expands the distribution of the standards-based American Dream DVD

series which has been used in 1,200 high school classrooms nationwide since 2004. An online teacher survey showed that all of the respondents who are already using the series in their classrooms plan to continue doing so. Similarly, all the respondents agreed that the activities proposed in the accompanying educational materials were either "very effective" or "reasonably effective" in encouraging discussion about immigration in the classroom. The vast majority of the respondents believe the series helped their students understand the positive impact of immigrants on America. They responded:

"The new Mexican Immigration Experience DVD was awesome for liberating my students from their fixed views."

"Showing [my students the stories of] others like them that have 'made it' is a very powerful motivator."

Each of the American Dream Experience DVDs may be viewed online at www.meragefoundations.com/Infad.html. You may also email Kelly Ocampo, Program Officer at kocampo@meragefoundations.com to request a free copy.



Immigrant Rights rally in Philadelphia, 2006 (Immigrant Solidarity Network)

The American Dream DVD Series

Becoming an American: The Immigrant Experience

Jack Rosenthal:

From Palestine to Pulitzer Prize: A Courageous and Productive Journey

Isabel Allende: Exile, Traveler, World-renowned Author, Foreigner, Immigrant, and American

David Ho: From Taiwan to Time Magazine's Man of the Year

Orlando Patterson: From Jamaica to Harvard Sociologist, Author, and Advisor to World Leaders

Eduardo Nájera: From Chihuahua to the Basketball Court, One of the First Mexican Immigrants to Play in the NBA

Jenny Ming: From Canton to the Top of Corporate America in the Best of Fashion

The Merage Fellows: America's Bright Future

The Mexican Immigration Experience: An Overview of the History of Mexican Immigration to the United States

"The Mexican Immigration Experience" DVD

The new "Mexican Immigration Experience" DVD chronicles the history of immigration to the United States from Mexico beginning with the founding of Santa Fe and Los Angeles, through the Mexican-American War, the Mexican Revolution, the vaqueros, railroad workers, and braceros, Operation Wetback, Cesar Chavez, IRCA and NAFTA, to the present day.



Children play in a Barrio with downtown Los Angeles in the background, 1946 (USC Digital Archive)



A family of Walnut pickers from Northern California, 1983 (California Historical Society)



United Farm Workers strike near Oxnard, California, 1966 (California Historical Society)



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National Advisory Board

The Foundation's National Advisory Board is composed of outstanding Americans, many of whom are immigrants to the United States. Biographies of our board members may be found on our website.



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Founder & Chairman, Edison Schools

Partner Universities

The Foundation's Partner Universities are outstanding institutions of higher learning in areas of the country characterized by large immigrant populations and significant influxes of immigrants.

Boston University
Columbia University
Fordham University
Harvard University
Hunter College
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
New York University
Northwestern University
Princeton University
Rice University
San Francisco State University
Stanford University
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Chicago
University of Georgia
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University of Miami
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University of Washington

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The Foundation's Teachers Advisory Board is composed of high school teachers and curriculum specialists across the nation.

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