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THE ADJUSTMENT EXPERIENCE OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT CHILDREN
IN NEW YORK CITY

City University of New York

Ph.D. 1983

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THE ADJUSTMENT EXPERIENCE OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT
CHILDREN IN NEW YORK CITY

by

BETTY LEE SUNG

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1983

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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The City University of New York

Abstract

THE ADJUSTMENT EXPERIENCE OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT
CHILDREN IN NEW YORK CITY

by

BETTY LEE SUNG

Advisers: Professors Aubrey Bonnett, Bogdan Denitch, William Kornblum

The purpose of this study is to document the adjustment process of Chinese immigrant children and youth in New York City during the late 1970s:

- to see if the immigrant experience is as stressful and disorganizing as the sociological literature relates for immigrants in the past,
- to look at the unfolding processes of adapting to a new life in a new country,
- to pinpoint problem areas and difficulties as well as support systems and coping mechanisms,
- to take note of the changes that have occurred within the family, the school, and the community within the context of a more receptive social climate than that of past decades,
- to draw some conclusions as to the level of social and psychological adjustment attained by these children and youths, and
- to relate their experiences to sociological theories pertaining to uprooting, social change, ethnic relations, cultural conflict, group interaction, networking, status and roles, community cohesiveness, minority status, and the like.

The presence of Chinese children and youth in the United States is a recent phenomenon, and studies of immigrants have generally focused upon adults. Little is known about the juvenile immigrant experience, the assumption being that the young are but appendages of the grown-ups, but there are differences. The child's world is narrowly circumscribed by his family, school, and immediate neighborhood. At the same time, children are more flexible. This study provides specific information about the community, the institutions, and the social milieu that the children are catapulted into as well as the actual experiences that the children undergo in their adaptation. The approach is a holistic one, viewing the children in their total setting. Answers are sought more along the lines of concrete manifestations rather than subjective responses and participant observation, although both these research techniques were employed.

The study hypothesizes that with the improved social climate and the more tolerant attitude of the American people toward ethnic minorities since the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the experiences of the newcomers have been correspondingly more favorable and the immigrant experience less stressful. To note the degree of adjustment, specific and concrete indicators such as school performance and youth gang involvement were used. The subjects were children and youth from certain grades in all three levels of public schools in New York's Chinatown and a suburban "satellite" Chinatown. The intent was to note if age or environment had any appreciable impact.

The findings were that immigrants of different socio-economic back-

ground and place of origin went into the satellite Chinatown; hence the immigrant groups could not be compared. The age cohort who experienced more problems were the teenagers, the language barrier being the most severe problem for high school students and the gang threat an extremely menacing one for teenage males. The fact that the children and youth viewed their immigration as an opportunity for a better life, and that education was the channel to their goals provided strong motivation toward high academic achievement. Both the ethnic communities served as decompression chambers in the transplantation process. Interracial contacts were kept to a minimum, thus conflict was perhaps postponed.

However, disorganization, conflict, and change are evident in the community and particularly in the families. Status and role changes are pronounced, as are changes in size and make-up of the families. The most disquieting syndrome was the lack of parental presence in the home. However, the traditional values of filial piety and duty to family mitigate the consequences of the avalanche of social change. Except for the rise of youth gangs as a gauge of maladjustment, most of the other indicators point to a healthy adjustment, both socially and psychologically.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, my respect, thanks and acknowledgment go to my mentors and advisors at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York--Professors Aubrey Bonnett, Bogdan Denitch, and William Kornblum--who gave me much valued scholarly direction and guidance, but even more important, boundless moral support and encouragement. Special mention also goes to Professor Lucie Saunders of Lehman College for reading the dissertation manuscript and for serving on my committee.

I might never have attempted to write this dissertation if I had not already done a major portion of the research and fieldwork under a generous grant from the Administration for Children, Youth and Family, Department of Health, Education and Welfare (now known as the Department of Health and Human Services). My consultants under this grant were prestigious and renown scholars and educators. They were Professor Francis L.K. Hsu, director of the Multi-Cultural Program, University of San Francisco, past president of the American Anthropological Association, and prolific author; Dr. William Liu, director of the Asian American Mental Health Research Center and professor of sociology at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle; Mr. Richard Kramer, principal of P.S. 130 in New York City; Professor Eva Sandis of the Department of Sociology at Fordham University, New York; and Professor Stanley Sue of the Department of Psychology at the University of California Los Angeles. This team brought a wide and interdisciplinary perspective to the research.

In my fieldwork, I was the beneficiary of hundreds of pairs of helping hands. The most important of these belonged to my research associate, Dr. Rose Chao, former college guidance counselor, mother of four, and Very Knowledgeable Person about the Chinatown community, having grown up in the neighborhood. Special thanks go to Fay Loo, Annie Wang, Margaret Pan Loo, and Susan Hsu for the supportive services and invaluable information that they provided. I am constrained by the Board of Education against identifying by name all the principals, deans, and teachers in the schools where we did our research. I do want them to know, however, that there is gratitude in my heart for their time, their cooperation, and their sharing of first-hand experiences with me. Thanks also to all the people we interviewed.

How shall I express appreciation to my long-suffering husband, Charles Chia Mou Chung, who put up with a wife whose every spare moment was spent chasing after data and banging away at the typewriter night after night? Finally to my four children and four stepchildren, who provided me with plenty of insight and practical experience in child-rearing, and to all children everywhere, I dedicate this work.

Betty Lee Sung

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Abstract</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>xii</i>
<i>List of Maps and Graphs</i>	<i>xv</i>
Chapters	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Objectives	
Methodology	
II. EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT OF THE LITERATURE	18
Review and Analysis of the Literature	
III. IMMIGRATION NETWORKING	46
Migration Theories	
Immigration Patterns of the Chinese	
IV. DETERMINANTS OF IMMIGRANT TYPES	67
Legal and Structural Factors	
V. THE COMMUNITY	80
Boundaries	
Physical Conditions	
Ethnic Makeup	
Economy	
Organization and Structure	
Evolutionary Stages of Mutual Aid	
Functions of Chinatowns	
Satellite Chinatowns	
Factions and Cleavages	
VI. THE SCHOOL -- ENROLLMENT AND PROFILES	125
Enrollment	
Profiles	

VII.	SCHOOL PERFORMANCE	147
	Academic Achievement	
	Attendance	
	Graduates and Dropouts	
	Theoretical Implications	
VIII.	BILINGUAL EDUCATION	178
	Dealing with the Language Barrier	
IX.	BICULTURAL CONFLICTS	200
	Areas and Instances of Cultural Conflicts	
X.	AFTER-SCHOOL HOURS	223
	Jobs and Chores	
	Recreation	
	After-school Centers	
	Parental Absence	
XI.	THE DEVIANTS -- CHINATOWN GANGS	236
	Rise of the Gangs	
	Membership and Activities	
	Threat to Community	
	Police Response	
	Case Studies	
	Theories of Crime	
XII.	PEER GROUPS	275
	Peer Support Systems	
	Diminishing Role of Parents	
	Increasing Role of Peers	
XIII.	THE IMMIGRANT FAMILY	286
	Altered Family Structure and Roles	
	Lower Male Status	
	Improved Female Status	
	Reversal of Parent-Child Roles	
	Family Size	
	From Kinship to Nuclear Families	
	Family Abodes	

XIV. ADJUSTMENT	318
Social and Psychological Adjustment	
Cultural Standards of Behavior	
Adjustment Difficulties	
Outlook and Values	
Inner and Cultural Resources That Aid in Coping	
XV. CONCLUSION	347
Summary of Findings	
Role of Social Institutions	
Theoretical Implications	
The Future	
<i>Bibliography</i>	364
<i>Autobiographical Data</i>	381

LIST OF TABLES

2-1	Dissertations Pertaining to the Chinese in the United States, 1920 to 1980	39
2-2	Evolutionary Stages of Literature Pertaining to Chinese in the United States	45
3-1	Petersen's Typology of Migration	47
3-2	Political and Legal Obstacles to Chinese Migration Between China and the United States	53
3-3	Time Sequence of Immigration Networking	61
3-4	Chinese Admitted Under Relative Preference, Occupational Preference, and Non-Preference Categories, 1968 to 1978	62
3-5	Chinese Immigrant Aliens by Sex, 1944 to 1978	65
4-1	Migratory Forces and Immigrant Types	68
4-2	Chinese Immigrants Admitted to the United States by Relative Preference Categories, 1968 to 1978	71
4-3	Chinese Immigrant Children or Youths, Admitted to the United States, Age 19 and Under, 1950 to 1978	76
4-4	New York City Resident Births to Chinese Mothers, 1970 to 1977	77
4-5	Chinese Children and Youth, Age 19 and Under, by Decades, 1940 to 1970	78
5-1	Chinatown High School Student Population by Ethnic Group	89
5-2	Chinese and Asian Population by Census Tract for Satellite Chinese Community, 1970 and 1980	119
5-3	High School in Satellite Chinese Community, Student Population by Ethnic Group, 1971, 1976, and 1979	120
6-1	Asian Children Enrolled in New York City Schools, by Borough, 1970 to 1979	130

6-2	Asian Pupils Enrolled in Manhattan School Districts, by Level, 1970 to 1979	131
6-3	Asian Pupils Enrolled in Bronx School Districts, by Level, 1970 to 1979	132
6-4	Asian Pupils Enrolled in Brooklyn School Dis- tricts, by Level, 1970 to 1979	133
6-5	Asian Pupils Enrolled in Queens School Districts, by Level, 1970 to 1979	135
6-6	Asian Pupils Enrolled in Staten Island School Districts, by Level, 1970 to 1979	136
7-1	Marks of Foreign-born Chinese Seventh Graders, Satellite Community Junior High, 1977	155
7-2	Marks of Recent Immigrant Chinese Children in the Seventh Grade, Chinatown Junior High School	156
7-3	Former Grade Level of Chinese Immigrant Students in Chinatown High School Bilingual Program	158
7-4	Future Plans of Chinatown High School's Chinese Bi- lingual Program Graduates, 1975 to 1978	165
7-5	Discharged Chinese Students from the Bilingual Pro- gram at Chinatown High School, 1975 to 1978	167
7-6	Discharged Students with Chinese Surnames from Satel- lite Community High School, 1976 to 1979	168
8-1	Language Programs for Chinese Immigrant Students	183
8-2	Chinese Bilingual Programs in New York City, 1977 to 1978	187
8-3	Attitude of High School Bilingual Program Students Toward Bilingual Education	195
9-1	Mean Age of Independence Training for Selected Ethnic Groups	213
10-1	Weekly Hours Spent on Job, Chores, or Television by Chinatown and Satellite Community High School Students	227
11-1	Gang-Related Arrests of Chinese in New York City's Fifth Police Precinct, 1955 to 1978	241

11-2	Chinese Youth Arrests by Crime in New York City's Fifth Police Precinct, 1975 to 1978	245
11-3	Total Arrests of Chinese by Cause in New York City's Fifth Police Precinct, 1975 to 1978	248
11-4	Characteristics of Chinese Gangs	266
12-1	Persons Turned to When Faced with Problems by Chinese Immigrant Students in High School Bilingual Programs	278
12-2	Friends of Chinese Immigrant Students in High School Bilingual Programs	280
12-3	Frequency of Dating by Chinese Immigrant Students in High School Bilingual Programs	281
13-1	Parents' Occupations Before and After Immigration by Residence	297
13-2	Parents' Present Occupation and Level of Education	302
13-3	Contact with and Closeness to Parents of Chinese High School Students	304
13-4	Disciplinarian in the Family	306
13-5	Agreement or Disagreement with Parents	307
13-6	Five Ranking Areas of Disagreement with Parents	307
14-1	Adjustment Difficulties of Chinese Immigrant High School Students	330
14-2	Things Liked Most About Living in the United States	333
14-3	Outlook of Chinese Immigrant High School Students	334
14-4	Feelings and Beliefs of Chinese Immigrant High School Students	334
14-5	Values Believed in by Chinese Immigrant High School Students	336
14-6	Suicides for Chinese in New York City, 1976 to 1980	343

LIST OF MAPS

Map 1	Chinatown, New York	83
Map 2	Satellite Chinatown in Queens County, New York	115
Map 3	Asian Town in Flushing, New York	117
Map 4	School Districts, New York City	129

LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph A	Networking of Immigration to the United States Under the Family Reunification Preference System	59
Graph B	Chinese Immigration to the United States, 1944 to 1978	64
Graph C	Structural Changes in Re-establishing Social and Economic Network Ties for the Chinese Immigrant to the United States	95
Graph D	Evolutionary Stages of Chinese Communities	113
Graph E	Changing Husband/Wife Identity Roles	291
Graph F	Age and Sex Status Hierarchy in the Chinese Family	295
Graph G	Parent-Child Role Reversal	301
Graph H	Suicide Rates Per 100,000 for Chinese in the United States, 1962 to 1973	340
Graph I	Age Specific Suicide Rates Per 100,000 Population, Chinese and New York City, 1974 to 1976	340

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Each year, about 25,000 to 30,000 Chinese enter the United States as immigrants. Approximately one-fourth of these are children and youth under 19 years of age. Surprisingly, the presence of the younger generation on the American scene is a fairly recent phenomenon, for only a few decades ago, the Chinese population in this country consisted primarily of adult males.

A review of the immigrant literature reveals almost a vacuum in studies on how children weather the immigrant experience. They simply are not viewed in a separate light. Children are generally considered appendages of the adults. They go where their parents take them. They live where their parents decide. They eat what their parents can provide. Yet children do have concerns of their own, and their experiences are different. In fact, immigrant parents may even come to lean on their children, shifting an inordinate share of the burden of adjustment to life in a new land upon the shoulders of their offspring. Does this responsibility force the child to mature more quickly or does it overwhelm him? What about the child's own process of adjustment? Is it a fairly smooth transition or is it a bumpy one?

Pathological Perspective

Seldom, if ever, have people thought of the immigrant experience in anything but negative terms. Sociologists, in particular, associate the experience with pathological conditions such as culture shock, language barrier, lowered status, economic difficulties, psychological problems, prejudice and discrimination, concentration in ethnic ghettos, social conflict, breakdown of norms, disorganization, and the like. Thomas Wheeler summed it up in the title of his book, The Immigrant Experience: The Anguish of Becoming American.¹ Louis Adamic cynically titled his book, Laughing in the Jungle, when he wrote about the tears and the heartaches, the sweat and toil of the Yugoslavian immigrants in the early part of the twentieth century.² Reading the letters of the Polish Peasants from William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's monumental work, one cannot help but sense the pain of separation of family members and their intense desire to be reunited.³ In more factual tones, Oscar Handlin chronicled the debilitating social disorders that afflicted Blacks and Puerto Ricans who migrated to New York City in his book, The Newcomers.⁴ Carlos Bulosan's accounts of his Filipino compatriots in America Is in the Heart revealed how a gentle, fun-loving people became insensitive and brutalized toward their own kind after they came to the United States.⁵ If the

1. (New York: Penguin Books, The Dial Press, 1971)

2. (New York: Harper Bros, 1932)

3. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1918)

4. (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1962)

5. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1943)

immigrant experience of these groups has been accompanied by so much pain and sorrow, hardship and dislocation, difficulties and conflict, how much more so would it be for the Chinese who encountered a much more hostile reception?⁶

However, changes have occurred in the political, judicial, international, and social realms in recent years that may modify the process for the better. Can the more favorable factors such as the improved international relations between the China and the United States, the ease of travel, the removal of the Chinese exclusion acts, the liberalization of the immigration laws, the heightened ethnic consciousness, the civil rights guarantees and government programs such as bilingual education, help in the adjustment process by underpinning a more solid platform from which the immigrant and his family might spring back from the trauma of uprooting? Is it unalterably true that taking oneself out of the physical and social context in which one was born and raised entails social ills? Or can we hypothesize that the conditions under which one migrates affect the transitional process?

Changes have taken place in the characteristics of the more recent immigrants also. Immigration laws favor the educated and the skilled, so that, unlike the earlier immigrants, the ones coming to the United States are no longer confined to the lower laboring classes. The Chinese population has become better balanced with the presence of women, children, and the elderly.

6. Gunther Barth. Bitter Strength: A History of the Chinese in the United States, 1850-1870 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964). Mary Coolidge. Chinese Immigration (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1909)

Objective

To study the impact of immigration on children, the Chinese may be one of the best groups to look at. They have had a long period of history in the United States, yet they remain a first-generation immigrant population. They have suffered severe persecution and discrimination. They have a viable and cohesive ethnic community and distinct racial features. They have maintained a hold on their own culture for more than a century. Their culture is radically different from the American one. The proportion of immigrant children to native-born children is substantial.

This research, then, is an ethnographic study of the adjustment process of children of a distinctive racial immigrant group with a strong cultural heritage. The study will provide a broad overview rather than one that is narrowly focused. At this point in time, the larger picture is more meaningful because so little factual information about the Chinese in the United States is available. The paucity of published data is documented in the following chapter, "Review of the Literature." First, a context must be established before we can hone in on the specifics. Although our emphasis will be on Chinese immigrant children, we cannot ignore the adult experience because it provides a backdrop to our context.

What happens in the lives of Chinese immigrant children and youth when they make that transoceanic leap from the Orient to American soil? More than geography is involved. The language, ways of thinking, behavior, responses, customs, and fundamental beliefs of the two cultures are poles apart. The entire body of culture with which the immigrants

are cloaked is called into question. The children must unlearn as well as learn. Even though they may find some aspects of the old culture obsolete, they are loathe to give up that which is part of them. How much of the new must they take on to function adequately? How much are they handicapped at first? How long does it take to acquire some of the new ways? How much of their old culture do they retain? Which parts are universal and can be transferred? To answer the above questions, information was sought along the following main topics:

- Historical perspective
- Accurate and detailed description of the family, school, and community
- Problem areas such as bilingual education, bicultural conflict, and gangs
- Support systems such as after-school programs and peer groups.
- Change in status and roles
- Social and psychological adjustment

METHODOLOGY

In his book, Symbolic Interactionism, Herbert Blumer criticized the conventional methods of social science research. One of these conventional methods is to set out with a priori theoretical schemes or unverified sets of concepts and try to fit the social world into their mold. He said: "The prevailing disposition and practice is to allow the theory, the model, the concept, the techniques, and the scientific protocol to coerce the research and thus to bend the resulting analytical depictions of the empirical world to suit their form. In this sense, much current scientific inquiry in the social and psychological

sciences is actually social philosophizing."⁶

Another favorite research methodology is to operationalize the procedure by using an already devised instrument such as a scale or a test. "If the given operation meets tests of reliability, the operation is taken as a sound instrument for disengaging specific empirical data. In turn, these data are thought to be valid empirical referents of the concept or proposition that is operationalized."⁷ Blumer felt that such a procedure would only narrowly measure that concept or proposition under study.

His severest criticism is leveled at the quantitative procedures. "Today, 'methodology' in the social sciences is regarded with depressing frequency as synonymous with the study of advanced quantitative procedures, and a 'methodologist' is one who is expertly versed in the knowledge and use of such procedures. He is generally viewed as someone who casts studies in terms of quantifiable variables, who seeks to establish relations between such variables by the use of sophisticated statistical and mathematical models conforming to the canons of 'research design.' Such conceptions are a travesty on methodology as the logical study of the principles underlying the conduct of scientific inquiry."⁸

Blumer advocates the methodology of symbolic interactionism, which is grounded in the empirical world.

Nothing is real except what exists. Nothing is known to human beings except in the form of something that they can indicate or refer to. This empirical world must forever

6. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969) pp. 33-4

7. Ibid. p. 31

8. Ibid. p. 24

be the central point of concern. It is the point of departure and point of return in the case of empirical science. It is the testing ground for any assertions made about the empirical world. 'Reality' for empirical science exists only in the empirical world, can be sought only there, and can be verified only there.⁹

What Blumer is saying is: Start with the real world out there. Look, observe, gather your data, organize these data and interpret them and relate them to an outside body of theory. This is the proper order, not the other way around--trying to gather data to fit the theory. Glaser and Strauss termed this methodology the discovery of grounded theory.¹⁰

Essentially, Blumer's approach is the one I followed. My study is a qualitative rather than a quantitative one, although I did use a survey questionnaire to elicit attitudinal responses from high school students. My purpose was to tap all sources whether it be from references, informants, surveys, government statistics, or unpublished research or by observation and interviews. The premise was that the greater the variety of sources, the wider the perspective gained on the issue.

First-hand research meant going to the scene and ferreting out the information. It meant plenty of legwork tracking down persons and checking out accounts. It meant trudging up narrow stairs and hallways to knock on doors that would not open. It meant hours of establishing rapport before one could begin to ask questions. The

9. Ibid. p. 22

10. Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss. The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research (New York: Aldine Publishing Co., 1967)

data we sought were not to be found on library shelves nor between the cover of books. It was life as it was being lived. There were bits and pieces of writings in reports and little-known sources, but these, too, had to be uncovered and put together in a meaningful picture.

We had our share of wrong leads, wasted effort, and blind alleys. Our research design called at first for a comparison to be made between pupils who had made a fairly good adjustment and those who had not. We planned to pair students by age group or school level. The intent was to note what factors in their lives contributed to the well-adjustment or maladjustment of these pupils in their immigrant experience. With this as our starting point, we made inquiries of the teachers, principals, and deans to locate likely subjects, based upon their assessment and evaluation. This avenue led to a dead end. The teachers suggested many well-adjusted candidates, but when asked about the maladjusted, the teachers and deans would give us comments like: "I've been in this school for eight years, and only two exceptional behavioral problems involving Chinese children have come to my attention;" or "I know they just sit there with a blank look on their faces now, but within a year or so they will have caught on." The few incidences cited could not be paired with well-adjusted students for comparison.

In our revised approach, we decided to try to paint as accurate and descriptive a picture as possible to provide a sense of what happens to immigrant children when they arrive in this country. The home, the school, and the neighborhood are the child's universe. How are these areas different from the ones from which the child came? In their structure, do they facilitate or impede adjustment? Are they

sources of strength in the development of the children and adolescents, or are they breeding grounds for future trouble? |

Limits

The study was confined to New York City because large numbers of Chinese immigrants are heading for this eastern metropolis. In fact, our subjects were drawn from the schools in only two boroughs of the city--Manhattan and Queens, because it is there that the two main Chinese communities of the city are located. The subjects were selected from the three levels of school: elementary, junior high, and high school. Three schools were chosen from Manhattan's Chinatown area and three from the satellite Chinatown community, one from each level, for a total of six schools. Within these levels we narrowed our focus down to the third and fifth grades in the elementary schools, the seventh grade in the junior highs, and the students in the bilingual programs in the pair of high schools.

The schools selected had good size Chinese student populations, but not disproportionately large ones. In order to conduct our research, we first had to obtain permission from the Board of Education. For each school, the district superintendent and the principal had to give their consent. For the respondents and subjects under eighteen years of age, permission slips had to be signed by the parents. Many hours were spent obtaining permission from these sources before our research could begin. Because of time constraints, no attempt was made to study those who were widely dispersed or scattered throughout the schools in the city. It would have been impractical for us to

extend the research to cover a fair sample of those recent immigrant pupils who were the isolated few in their schools.

Fieldwork

My fieldwork, undertaken from 1976 to 1979, was funded by a grant from the Administration for Children, Youth and Family of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The thrust of this research was fact-finding to document the needs assessment of Chinese immigrant children and to make policy recommendations. The data are now being re-examined in this dissertation for theoretical sociological implications.

Conducting research on the Chinese in the United States is not a new experience to me. I have been doing it for more than thirty years, so that some of my data may be drawn from the "storehouse" of information that I have accumulated over the years. As an insider and a member of the ethnic community under study, I am privy to a great deal of information generally not known to outsiders. The years have given me longitudinal perspective, and my personal and professional interest in this particular subject as a writer, researcher, and faculty member have exposed me to a network of sources and informants.

I am conversant in three dialects--Toishanese, Cantonese, and Mandarin--spoken by the overwhelming majority of the Chinese in the United States. The value of knowing the language in the Chinese communities cannot be overemphasized, especially when one is conducting research among recent immigrants. Just to be able to listen in on conversations without being directly involved opens up an additional source of information.

I was assisted by an associate, Rose Chao, who has a Ph.D. in psychological counseling. Dr. Chao is conversant in two Chinese dialects. She was raised in Chinatown and knows the neighborhood well. As the mother of four children, she also has practical experience in child-rearing in addition to theoretical knowledge. (I can also claim practical child-rearing experience from having raised eight children.)

In our research, we sat in on classes, visited the lunchrooms, roamed the schoolyards to watch the children at play, stood in front of schools to observe the children arrive and leave, stayed for the after-school centers, talked to teachers, security guards, deans, attendance officers, principals, guidance counselors, and, of course, the students. Visits were made to community agencies to talk to street workers, social workers, family workers, ministers. We interviewed policemen, a judge, and even gang members.

We observed, we listened, we asked questions, and we looked for occurrences that were not just isolated incidents but fairly recurrent. Examples noted were the absence of parents from the homes, the long working hours of the pupils from elementary school through high school, the higher socio-economic status of the residents of the satellite Chinese community over that of the Chinatown residents, and the fear that the gangs evoked among the teenage boys. After a period of immersion in the schools and the communities, one began to develop a sixth sense about things.

We undertook a survey, administered to the students in the high school bilingual programs in both communities. Answering the question-

naire was voluntary. The students were asked to come to a certain room during their lunch period where they were served roast pork buns and drinks while they answered the questionnaire. We two researchers took turns explaining the questionnaire in both English and Chinese. We read each of the questions, allowing time for the students to mark the answers. In other words, the questionnaire was administered under supervised conditions to about twenty to thirty students at a time. Two hundred students out of the 430 enrolled in the Chinatown high school bilingual program came voluntarily to answer the questionnaire. Seventy, or almost all, from the satellite Chinatown community high school bilingual program answered the questionnaire. Tabulation of the results from the survey provided very revealing insights into the daily lives, outlook, and attitudes of the teenagers and youths, who could assess their inner feelings about their transplantation from one continent to another and from one culture to another.

Our mission was as scouts. We were the eyes, ears, and antenna tuned to the happenings of a people trying to make a new life for themselves.

Impediments

Seeking information from a community that has always found it more discreet to reveal nothing is a task that calls for ingenuity and perseverance. For one thing, the researchers must be familiar with the community and its undercurrents. They must be aware of the stance of each informant if they are to be able to objectively evaluate the information obtained. For example, a social service worker may overstate a problem to justify his program. A teacher may attack bilingual education

because his own job is threatened if he lacks bilingual skills. Adversaries may make comments against each other that are colored by their prejudices.

The Chinese people are suspicious of outsiders, but they are careful not to offend. Consequently, they will provide "putoff" information contrary to fact. Many of the techniques for doing so are extremely subtle, and it is a game they enjoy playing. In fact, if you ask the Chinatown elders about the gangs, they will deny that gangs exist. Others will admonish the researcher to avoid writing anything uncomplimentary about the people or the community. They will provide favorable information but not anything adverse. They are concerned about "face" and are prone to bury their heads in the sand. Social science research is something foreign to their past experience. Hence the unfamiliar to them is cause for suspicion.

Fortunately, in most schools, the teachers and staff were extremely cooperative. The teachers understood the importance of and need for the research, although some thought we might uncover data unfavorable to their teaching performance and were a bit on the defensive side. Some schools kept excellent records, and these we could tap into immediately. To obtain comparable data, we would then have to construct the same data for the matched school, if at all possible. Obviously, at times, it was not possible to do so. Some records that could have thrown better light upon the situation were private, and we were not given access to them. In such instances, we relied upon what we could obtain. An example would be the academic records. Thus, we could not match names with the grades to see how any particular pupil was doing,

but we were able to examine the grades without the names.

The Board of Education stipulated that we could not name the schools that we studied. We were permitted to refer to them only in a general way. Nor could we name any principal or teacher. Consequently, we have had to be vague at times, reporting that "A teacher said," rather than being specific in ascribing comments and statements

The most difficult part of our research were the home visits, undertaken to talk to the parents or to see what the homes were like. The Chinatown community is no longer a safe one, and few people open their doors to strangers. But the main difficulty was that the parents were rarely home, especially the fathers. Since we saw few fathers in the homes, this is a vacuum that must be taken into consideration.

Even when we gained access to respondents and managed to establish some trust and rapport, we found that many of these folks had a very limited vocabulary and even more limited experience. They tended to answer in monosyllables, have no opinions, or speak more in generalities rather than specifics. It took skillful prodding to elicit the type of information sought.

Data Related to Theory

As mentioned earlier, immigration has generally been associated with and followed by pathological conditions. Yet, new contact between diverse groups, whether through conflict or cooperation is one of the greatest stimuli for social and cultural change. Teggert maintained that the "collison" of cultures, which followed upon migrations per-

formed the constructive task of opening new avenues of progress by breaking the cake of custom, and liberating new creative energies.¹¹ Migration, therefore, is a dynamic force that compels change. It involves interaction between the host society and immigrant group. If the immigrant group perceives the contact to be hostile, it will reinforce its identity and group cohesion by clinging more strongly to its own ways. If the reception is warmer, the immigrant group may react more positively and be more willing to respond to the overtures of the new culture.¹² In other words, the immigrant defines the situation and adapts his response accordingly.

At first, immigrants define all their experiences within the context of their old culture and life experiences. Modification can only come about through subjective redefinition by the immigrants themselves.¹³ They do not and cannot cast aside the basic personality structure or value orientations acquired during childhood.¹⁴ They build upon what is already ingrained.¹⁵ However, the options opened to immigrants are greater because the group and cultural constraints of the past have been loosened, and they are freer to construct new ways.

11. Frederick J. Teggert. Theories of History, as quoted in Donald Taft and Richard Robbins, International Migration: The Immigrant in the Modern World (New York: Ronald Press, 1955) p. 22

12. See George Herbert Mead's theory of symbolic interactionism in Mind, Self and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967)

13. See W.I. Thomas' theory of definition of the situation in Lewis A. Coser and Bernard Rosenberg. Sociological Theory, 3rd Ed. (New York: Macmillan Co. 1969). pp. 245-247

14. Talcott Parsons. The Social System (Glencoe, Ill: The Free Press, 1951) pp. 226-235

15. See Hurh and Kim's theory of adhesive adaptation in Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim. "Korean Immigrants in America"(NIMH, Dec. 1980)

Children, however, adjust more readily. Unlike adults, they do not carry as much cultural baggage. Their absorption of the primary culture is still shallow, is not so deeply ingrained, and can be relinquished or modified more readily. Their transitional process should be much smoother and easier. Combined with improved immigration and transportation conditions, their experiences should be more positive ones.

In this type of research, the social scientist sees the data unfolding rather than fixed. Instead of going in with a preconceived notion of what to find, the researcher lets the continuous discovery of clues and data guide the study. It is in the analysis of the data that categories and concepts take shape and patterns begin to emerge. What is quite evident from our observations and interviews, as well as from the documentary evidence, is that the Chinese communities are undergoing rapid change--so much so that they are in a state of flux. The underlying reason is the tremendous and continuous increase in immigration. Former institutions are being challenged. New ones pop up and shortly disappear. Movement into and out of the communities is at a rapid pace. Social relationships, attitudes, values, etiquette, customs, traditions, centuries old from the old country, are now altered in an attempt to adjust to the ways of the host country. The alterations are not always good fits. What we see happening in the Chinese communities with the new influx of immigrants is social experimentation in an attempt to adjust in a trial-and error manner, but of course drawing upon their cultural heritage and taking into account the new values dangled before them. By looking at what is actually happening

we may fathom the process of how people go about adapting. By looking at some of the mechanisms that are supposedly helping them in their transition, such as bilingual education, we can come to some evaluation of their effectiveness. By identifying the levers that result in action, we can conjecture about causal relationships.

As Blumer noted, most of our behavior is repetitive and stable.¹⁶ Most people know in advance how people usually react to certain things or objects. Norms, rules, laws, values, tradition, customs specify how people should act. Of course, this assumes that people stay within their own culture or country. Under such conditions, there is less opportunity to see how the linkages between human behavior develop from actor to object, so that the process of interaction has been little studied or noted. Only when people, taken out of their familiar surroundings and social context, must adapt to new surroundings with different rules and norms, are we afforded an excellent opportunity to see the process in action. Studying the Chinese immigrant children offers this opportunity.

¹⁶. Blumer. Op. cit.

CHAPTER II: EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT OF THE LITERATURE

In this study, the target group of our research were Chinese immigrant children. Children meant minors, teenagers, youths, juveniles, or those still supported by parents or guardians. We did not, however, look at anyone below school age, and nineteen was generally the upper age limit. The term Chinese immigrant children actually consists of three components: Chinese, immigrant, and children. Each component is exclusive and narrows down our focus considerably. If we start our search of the literature with Chinese children, we come up with a few autobiographies written by American-born Chinese describing their own childhood experiences growing up in this country. None dealt with immigrant children per se. If we focus on the term immigrant, we have to link immigrant with Chinese. Then almost the entire corpus of literature on the Chinese in the United States is applicable--but for adults only. Even here, the literature was conspicuous by its paucity until the 1960s, and what has been written since then is just getting off the ground. Historians who wrote on the history of American immigration totally ignored the non-European immigrants, and social scientists who grappled with the theories and problems of weaving the immigrants into the American fabric did likewise. Their facts and theories rested entirely on European ethnic groups.

Focus on European Immigrants

Examine the works of Arthur Schlesinger, "Significance of Immigration in American History,"¹ Henry Steele Commager, "The Study of Immigration;"² Carle F. Wittke, We Who Built America;³ Marcus Hansen, The Immigrant in American History;⁴ Oscar Handlin in his many books, The Uprooted,⁵ The Newcomer,⁶ Race and Nationality in American Life,⁷ Robert E. Park, Race and Culture,⁸ and "Human Migration and the Marginal Man;"⁹ Milton Gordon, Assimilation in American Life;¹⁰ G.E. Simpson and Milton Yinger, Racial and Cultural Minorities;¹¹ W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, The Polish Peasant;¹² Thomas Burgess, The Greeks in America;¹³ and so on, and you will find scarcely a mention of any Asian or black immigrant in any of these classic works. The list is not exhaustive. These are only some of the better known writings in the litera-

1. American Journal of Sociology, vol. 27 (July 1921) pp. 71-85.
2. Immigration and American History (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962).
3. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1940).
4. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1940).
5. (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1951).
6. (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1962).
7. (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1957).
8. (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1950).
9. American Journal of Sociology, vol. 33 (May 1928) pp. 881-893.
10. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).
11. (New York: Harper and Row, 1953).
12. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1918).
13. (Boston: Sherman French & Co, 1913).

ture of American immigrants, but to continue is to be repetitive. It were as if the Chinese immigrant never set foot on these shores. Yet, his imprint is an indelible part of American history.

Here and there, an isolated reference could be found in such historical works as Hubert Howe Bancrofts' voluminous The History of California published in 1890.¹⁴ In the thirty-nine volumes of this monumental work, the Chinese figured in two of them. In Vol. VII, Chap. 14 titled "Chinese, the Labor Agitation and Politics," Bancroft discusses the immigration of Chinese to California, laws regarding the Chinese, treaties between China and the United States, earnings of the Chinese in California, and other miscellaneous information. In Vol. XXXVIII, Chap. 13 titled "Mongolianism in America," the noted historian gave detailed descriptions of the way of life of the Chinese, including manner of dress, food, religion, festivals, manufactures, customs, and values. Bancroft is one of the few early historians who provided us with some information about the Chinese before the turn of the century. He would have been very remiss if he had totally disregarded the Chinese. After all, they did form one-fourth of the Californian population in 1850 and approximately one-seventh in 1860.¹⁵ Also, for more than a quarter of a century, the Chinese were the dominant political and economic issue in the

14. The History of California, 1884-1890 (San Francisco History Co, 1890).

15. Mary Coolidge, Chinese Immigration (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1909) pp. 425-427.

state. No politician in California dared campaign on other than an anti-Chinese pledge.¹⁶

Anti-Chinese Stance

Congressional hearings and legislative proceedings of municipal, state and federal governments are prolific in bulk but extremely one-sided. The content of these were arguments for and against the exclusion of Chinese labor.

Other sources of published information are available from old newspapers such as the San Francisco Chronicle or the Morning Call, each of whom tried to out-do the other in their anti-Chinese journalism. In effect, other than harangues against the Chinese, literature about them is scarce and difficult to locate, except for the classic work done by Professor Mary Coolidge in 1909. Her book, Chinese Immigration,¹⁷ is both scholarly and shorn of the hysteria pervading the harangues characteristic of the newspaper and legislative accounts. Step by step, Prof. Coolidge showed how white Californians wove a net of legal restrictions against the Chinese to cast them out of the state to insure racial purity of the population. Unfortunately for the racists, economic factors kept intruding in the demand for labor to develop the budding industries of the West. The dilemma was that the whites did not want to do the menial, backbreaking work. At the same time, they could not tolerate the presence of non-white people. Coolidge's book was the best source of information up to that time and for many decades to follow.

16. Henry K. Norton, The Story of California (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co, 1913) p. 291.

17. Coolidge, Op. cit.

Thirty years later, Elmer Sandmeyer published his doctoral dissertation on The Anti-Chinese Movement in California.¹⁸ This book amplified Coolidge's work and showed how economic and social forces finally led to exclusion of the Chinese. The subject matter was the same. The research was based on government documents and newspaper accounts and therefore lopsided in its white Western perspective, for there was no literature presenting the Chinese viewpoint.

White Man's Perspective

The Chinese themselves did not leave much information in the way of letters, diaries, records, or documents. Most of the early immigrants were laborers who had little or no book-learning. Letters were written by scribes, so these were few, infrequent, and extremely stylized. For the sake of self-protection and survival, most of the Chinese tried to be as inconspicuous as possible so as not to arouse the attention of any immigration official or government authority. As a result, for about half a century, the history and experiences of the Chinese in the United States from their perspective added up to a blank page. What was published was written from the white man's perspective and consisted of heavy doses of myths, stereotypes, and accusations harping on the major theme that the Chinese were an undesirable element and hence to be excluded.

Autobiographies and Fiction

It was only after repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts in 1943, when the United States became an ally-in-arms with China against the Japanese

18. (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1939).

during World War II that a few native-born Chinese Americans began to write first-hand accounts of their own lives. The first of these autobiographies was Pardee Lowe's Father and Glorious Descendant published in 1943.¹⁹ It was followed by Jade Snow Wong's Fifth Chinese Daughter in 1949.²⁰ Both were delightful stories of young children growing up in San Francisco's Chinatown and about how they integrated the teachings of their parents clinging to the old ways with the teachings of the school and the outside world. Tears and heartaches often accompanied their discovery that things were done differently outside from the ways that they were taught at home.

Another autobiography did not follow until 1963 with the publication of Virginia Lee's The House That Tai Ming Built.²¹ Meanwhile, well-known novelists Lin Yutang and Pearl Buck fictionalized the lives of some Chinese in the United States, he with Chinatown Family,²² and she with Kinfolk²³ and the Three Daughters of Mme. Liang.²⁴ Pearl Buck was the first to write about the upper-class lifestyle of the well-to-do refugees who had fled China in advance of the pending Communist takeover.

19. (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1943).

20. (New York: Harper Bros., 1950).

21. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1963).

22. (New York: John Day, 1948).

23. (New York: John Day, 1949).

24. (New York: John Day, 1969).

Chinese Writers Emerge

In 1951, Carey McWilliams came out with his Brothers Under the Skin.²⁵ In it, he devoted one chapter to the "Long Suffering Chinese." Another decade passed before further literature on the Chinese in the United States was forthcoming. Prof. Rose Hum Lee broke the ice in 1960 with the publication of her book The Chinese in the United States of America.²⁶ Lee was a sociologist and chairperson of the department at Roosevelt College in Illinois. A second-generation American-born Chinese, Prof. Lee wanted to document the history and experiences of the Chinese from a sociological perspective. Her aim, as stated by the author herself, was to gain an "understanding of how the process of acculturation, assimilation, and integration operates when persons with distinguishable physical characteristics, bearing a different culture, come into contact with people of European origin."²⁷ The book dealt with social institutions, the community, the family, personal disorganization, population characteristics, and the history as well. Rose Hum Lee was the first scholar to place the Chinese within the context of American society and to measure their acculturation. Prior to that time, they were viewed as undesirable foreigners or as oddities with strange ways of their own, not wanting to and not permitted to mesh into American life. Prof. Lee was also the first person of Chinese ancestry to write about the Chinese in this country in an objective manner.

Rose Hum Lee's book was followed immediately by S.W. Kung's Chinese

25. (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1951).

26. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960).

27. Ibid.

in American Life.²⁸ Kung was an intellectual who came to the States for his higher education and stayed to become a Chinatown banker. His book resembled Rose Hum Lee's in many respect except that it dealt more with the immigration problems of the Chinese. Both the Lee book and Kung book were published by university presses and had limited readership. Five years later, Macmillan published my book titled Mountain of Gold.²⁹ As a trade book, it reached a much wider audience and it appeared just at the time of heightened ethnic consciousness among minority groups. The book went through five printings, first in hardcover under the original title and later in paperback under the title The Story of the Chinese in America.³⁰ The book was comprehensive and inclusive, touching on almost every aspect of Chinese life in America. It brought the whole scene within the covers of one book and gave the growing native-born generations of Chinese Americans a link with their heritage. In essence, my book was an amalgam of personal experiences combined with extensive research into the history, the experiences, and problems of the Chinese people.

Academics Dwell in the Past

The above three books, written in the 1960s, were by authors of Chinese ancestry. Those published by non-Chinese during this period were Richard Dillon's Hatchetmen,³¹ Gunther Barth's Bitter Strength:

28. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1962).

29. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1967).

30. (New York: Colliers, 1971).

31. (New York: Coward McCann, 1962).

A History of the Chinese in the United States, 1850 to 1870,³² and Stuart Creighton Miller's The Unwelcome Immigrant.³³ These three books dealt with the historical past--the nineteenth century to be exact. Hatchetmen were the strong-arm enforcers of the vice-lords or tong leaders who controlled the gambling, the brothels, and the opium. They were also the exacters of protection money. Dillon's subject can always attract attention and readership, but he did his research on the subject well. Gunther Barth relied heavily upon newspaper sources for his information, and since these were biased in the first place, Barth's book could not help but reflect this one-sided view. The book covered only the two decades of 1850 to 1870 and dealt primarily with the question of Chinese labor. Was it free labor, slave labor, or "coolie" contract labor? The literal translation of "coolie" in Chinese is bitter strength, hence the title of the book. Undoubtedly the life of the Chinese laborer in the United States at that time was a bitter one.

Miller's premise in the Unwelcome Immigrant was that anti-Chinese feelings did not sprout in California. They had roots in the traders, diplomats, and missionaries who had negative images of the Chinese prior to their immigration to California. He maintained that the rejection of the Chinese immigrant was not wholly a Californian phenomenon but a national attitude. Miller's book covers the period from 1785 to 1882.

32. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1964).

33. (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1969).

Protest Literature

The 1970s ushered in an entirely new genre of literature on the Chinese in the United States. The late Sixties was a time of unrest with students rioting at Kent State, the Universities of California, Columbia, Cornell, Buffalo State, etc. Chinese immigration had increased phenomenally since the enactment of the 1965 Immigration Act. From an annual quota of 105 prior to 1965 to an upper limit of 20,000 under the new act, the Chinese population shot upward. The crop of native-borns from the war brides who came in after 1946 were of college age. Their outlook differed markedly from the outlook of former generations cowed by exclusion and discrimination. The Civil Rights Act had given minorities a shot in the arm. Racial pride supplanted racial shame in being identified as a member of a minority group. Ethnic studies courses like Black Studies, Puerto Rican Studies, Chicano Studies were initiated in some colleges. Asian American Studies courses were found in only isolated campuses such as the University of California and the California state university system, the University of Washington, and on the East Coast, at the City College of New York. The students were the ones who marched, demonstrated, and protested for the courses. It is almost certain that they would never have been instituted otherwise. The students demanded input into the course content and a voice in the hiring and firing of faculty. Some courses were entirely student-run with a faculty observer. The climate produced a cathartic outpouring of protest writings--against the Vietnam War, against racism, against sexism, against pollution, against elitism, against imperialism, against the system, against the establishment, against the social structure,

against the status quo. The Asian American movement was part of the larger youth movement, but the ethnics had more to protest against than the whites. Asians took up the pen as well as microphones to voice their dissent. They attempted to make known their views whereas previously only the white scholar had spoken for or against them.

Much of the protest literature appeared in newsletters, campus newspapers, short-lived Asian periodicals, and radical publications. A widely used compilation for Asian American courses was Roots: An Asian American Reader³⁴ put out by the University of California at Los Angeles' Asian American Center. The writings, some poetry, some prose, revealed the depth and breadth of Asian American anguish and marginality. A sequel to Roots titled Counterpoint³⁵ published six years later showed a maturing in the activists' writings. This thick (600 pages) offset volume contained articles dealing with current Asian American concerns. Note that in the ethnic minority movement of that decade, the younger set of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, and others had taken on a larger identity--that of Asian Americans. As separate, isolated, national minorities, they were politically ineffectual. Banded together, they found commonality and strength. In their writings, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Filipinos became Asians. Later on they embraced an even larger identity in the 1970s--that of Asian/Pacific Islander Americans.

In the early 1970s, the books written about the Chinese were still authored by established academics such as Stanford Lyman, Chinese

34. Amy Tachiki, et al. (eds.) (1971).

35. Emma Gee, et al. (eds.) (1976).

Americans;³⁶ Francis K.L. Hsu, Challenge of the American Dream;³⁷ Alexander Saxton, Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California;³⁸ C.T. Wu, Chink!³⁹ Wu's book culled from the discriminatory documents of the past. The one-word title, Chink! utilized the shock effect to sum up the experiences of the Chinese in America. Francis Hsu applied the social theories of contact and conflict to the two vastly different cultures in his analysis. Lyman dealt with the emergence of a Chinese middle class and the growing social and political problems of a rapidly increasing population against a backdrop of anti-Chinese history in the 19th century. Saxton continued to dwell upon the anti-Chinese movement of the past as did almost all of the non-Chinese scholars. For these writers, the Chinese in the United States had not advanced beyond the stage of being rejected.

Community Studies

Community studies are also a substantial part of the literature pertaining to Chinese Americans. The earliest of these appeared in the form of doctoral dissertations such as Homer Loh's "Americans of Chinese Ancestry in Philadelphia" (1944);⁴⁰ Yu Chen Liu's "Interaction Within

36. (New York: Random House, 1974).

37. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1971).

38. (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1971).

39. (New York: World Publishing Co., 1972).

40. (University of Pennsylvania, Ph.D. 1944).

Chinese American Families of Portland, Oregon" (1951);⁴¹ Wen Hui Chen's "Changing Socio-cultural Patterns of the Chinese Community in Los Angeles" (1952).⁴² Community studies were favorite dissertation topics. Later ones will be listed under dissertation literature. Most of these dissertations were written by Chinese students from China pursuing their higher education in the United States. Although the scholars were of Chinese descent, they were not insiders to the Chinese American experience. But they did provide a theoretical framework and social structure to the study of Chinese communities.

A number of community studies followed in book form in the 1970s. Melford Weiss' Valley City⁴³ is an excellent profile of the Sacramento Chinese community. Weiss is one of the few non-Chinese who took an active participant-observer role in the community to ferret out original data. He showed the changing settlement patterns of the Chinese community. He categorized the population as traditionalists, modernists, and activists. The classification could have been along the lines of generation, but his terms are more appropriate labels.

Sister M. Alfreda Elsensohn's study of Idaho Chinese Lore⁴⁴ dealt with recollections of the Chinese in Idaho. James Loewen wrote about The Mississippi Chinese: Between Black and White.⁴⁵ His book showed how the Chinese were sandwiched between the two races and served as a buffer between them.

41. (Oregon State College, Ph.D. 1951).

42. (University of Southern California, Ph.D. 1952).

43. (Cambridge, Mass: Schenkman, 1974).

44. (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1970).

45. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971).

A one-of-a-kind book appeared in 1972. It was Victor and Brett Nee's book Long Time Californ'.⁴⁶ This husband-and-wife team conducted interviews in San Francisco, and the book is a transcription of their chats with the people. For the first time, the voices of the common Chinese people are heard. What are their feelings? What are their dreams? What has life in the United States been like for them? These are the voices of living people. If only there were a similar volume for those Chinese Americans whose voices were stilled long ago!

Demographic Studies

After the 1970s, literature on the Chinese in the United States was no longer confined to autobiographies, histories, overviews, and community studies; it took off in all directions. Much of the new writing no longer awaited publication in book form but began appearing in journals, government reports, conference proceedings, and the ethnic press. Government reports generally called for needs assessment in Chinatown to plan for programs and services. However, reliable statistics were sorely needed. Although the decennial censuses had identified total numbers of Chinese in the United States since 1870, further breakdown of demographic data for this group were not published. Neither did other government agencies provide data on health, crime, vital statistics, school enrollment, or population distribution. To remedy this lack, government grants provided a number of scholars with funds to do the research that would give the government the basic data needed for policy decisions.

46. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973).

I was one of these researchers who undertook to do a demographic study based on the original tapes from the 1970 census. The census had been taken of Chinese American respondents, but the results had not been tabulated for any state with less than 10,000 or more Chinese population. Only five states in the entire Union met this criterion. My special tabulation resulted in the retrieval of detailed socio-economic data for the Chinese in all fifty states. This information was published by Arno Press in a volume called A Statistical Profile of the Chinese in the United States, 1970.⁴⁷ This work was the offshoot of a larger study on Chinese American Manpower and Employment,⁴⁸ in which some of the statistics generated from the census tabulation were used to do an analysis of the employment situation. I showed how the labor market, the economic climate, Chinese cultural factors, American antagonism, immigration laws, and other legal restraints have boxed the Chinese into two main occupations: restaurant work for the males and garment factory work for the females.

Another statistical study was undertaken under government contract to Urban Associates and compiled by Cantia Pian. It is titled A Study of Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ethnic Minorities Based on the 1970 Census, Vol. II: Asian Americans.⁴⁹ This study is valuable for its comparative statistics for the five Asian American groups: the Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Filipinos, and Hawaiian Americans.

Another employment study was Ivan Light's Ethnic Enterprise in

47. (New York: Arno Press, 1979).

48. (New York: Praeger, 1976).

49. (U.S. Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare, 1974).

America: Business and Welfare Among Chinese, Japanese, and Blacks.⁵⁰

Light set out to find out why there has been an absence of black small business enterprises whereas Japanese and Chinese proprietorships are commonplace. Some very important factors, Light discovered, are the social networking, the ability to accumulate capital, and the cultural traits of the two Asian groups.

Chia Ling Kuo published her dissertation on Social and Political Change in New York's Chinatown in 1977.⁵¹ This work explains the social structure of the Chinese community, its quasi-official governing bodies, and the voluntary associations that provide mutual aid, recreation and social activities, and social services.

As one can plainly see, the subject and content of the literature on the Chinese in the United States has expanded to include more writings and to encompass a wider variety of subject areas. These indicate changing attitudes and perspectives, not only from the point of view of the Chinese but also from the point of view of the American people.

In the 1950s, the sojourner mentality gave way to the immigrant outlook. While the problems of the immigrants are still very much with us, the native-born generations in the 1960s and 1970s are trying to claim their rightful status as first-class American citizens. Whereas the concerns of the immigrants are with immigration regulations, the language barrier, social services, employment, and Chinatowns, the native-born concerns are with identity, civil rights, voting, mental health, mar-

50. (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1972).

51. (New York: Praeger, 1977).

ginality, acculturation, stereotyping, affirmative action, bilingual education, racism, intermarriage, upward mobility, and Asian American studies in the school curriculum. The native-borns have a higher level of ethnic and social consciousness.

Journal Articles

Articles written by Chinese American authors are now appearing with increasing frequency in journals and periodicals. Amerasia,⁵² a journal devoted exclusively to Asian American concerns is published by the University of California at Los Angeles, the Asian American Studies Center. First published in 1972, this journal has provided Asian Americans with a forum not only in researched topics but also in fiction and poetry. Articles in the journal deal with a wide variety of problems and issues. Even in the historical pieces, the writers are delving into areas where little research had been done before.

In the field of psychology, the two Sue brothers, Derald and Stanley, have been prolific contributors to the social and psychological journals. Some of their articles along with similar writings were incorporated into a collection titled Asian Americans: Psychological Perspectives.⁵³ In sociology, Stanley Fong contributed a number of articles to social science journals. "Identity Conflicts of Chinese Adolescents in San Francisco,"⁵⁴

52. (University of California Los Angeles, Asian American Studies Center) Quarterly, 1971 to present.

53. Stanley Sue and Nathaniel N. Wagner (eds.) (Palo Alto, Calif.: Science and Behavior Books, 1973).

54. In E.B. Brody (ed.) Minority Group Adolescents in the United States (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1968).

"Assimilation and Changing Social Roles of Chinese Americans,"⁵⁵ "Sex-role Strain and Personality Adjustment of China-born Students in America"⁵⁶ are examples. Tragically, Stanley Fong's career was cut short by his death in an automobile accident.

Conference Proceedings

Conference proceedings have also generated some papers on Chinese Americans. The first national Chinese American conference took place under the auspices of the Chinese Historical Society of San Francisco in the bicentennial year of 1976, and the proceedings were published under the theme of the conference: The Life, Influence, and Role of the Chinese in America, 1776 to 1960.⁵⁷ Many conferences have taken place since, and publications of the proceedings were promised but few have reached fruition. The second national conference on Chinese American studies was held again in San Francisco in October of 1980. Over eighty papers were presented, and we can expect publication of these proceedings in the future.

55. Social Issues, vol. 29, no. 2 (1973) pp. 115-127

56. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, vol. 74 (1969) pp. 563-567.

57. (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society, 1976).

The Ethnic Press

The ethnic press or Chinese language newspapers have traditionally focused on news items pertaining to the homeland or Taiwan. Most headlines are about happenings on the other side of the Pacific Ocean. Only recently have editors turned their attention to what is happening in the Chinese communities or to what is happening on the American scene that affects the Chinese in this country. Listed below are most of the Chinese language newspapers published in the two major Chinese centers of San Francisco and New York.

NEW YORK

China Daily News
China Post
China Times Weekly
China Tribune
China Voice Daily
Chinatown Weekly
Chinese Journal
Centre Daily News
International Daily News
Pei Mei News
Sing Tao Jih Pao
Sino Daily Express
United Journal
World Journal

SAN FRANCISCO

Cathay Times
Chinese Commerical News
Chinese Pacific Weekly
Chinese Times
East/West (bilingual)
People's News
San Francisco Journal
Sing Tao Jih Pao
Sun Yat Sen News
Tien Shing Weekly
Tien Yang Monthly
World Journal
Young China

From the two lists above, one can see that the Chinese are well served by newspapers. Some of them like the Chinese Times and Young China of San Francisco have had long histories and continuous publication since the beginning of the century. Some of them are fairly new to the American scene like the Sing Tao Jih Pao, which has made a tremendous inroad into the Chinese newspaper readership. The China Daily News in New York has been consistently pro-Communist in editorial policy. All but the East/West, a weekly, are printed in Chinese. The East/West is unique in that it focuses primarily on Chinese American news and issues. Half of the paper is printed in English and half in Chinese. It is a good source of information about the Chinese community in San Francisco.

Dissertations

The most voluminous data about the Chinese in the United States lie "hidden" in theses and dissertations that are not as accessible as journals or books to the uninitiated researcher. Until recently, a laborious search had to be conducted through the Dissertation Abstracts or Master's Theses Abstracts. Fortunately, some of this tedium has been reduced by some compilations done by Asian American bibliographers at the University of California at Davis. Asians in America⁵⁸ is a bibliography of theses and dissertations. It has been updated with three supplements up to 1973. For later works, one can order a computer search with key words from the University of Michigan Microfilms International Service. Having employed all three methods mentioned above to extract titles pertaining to the Chinese in the United States, I have done an exhaustive search of the literature from these sources.

In analyzing the dissertations pertaining to the Chinese in the United States from 1920 to the mid-year 1980, I have delineated about 173. Of these, 106 were authored by doctoral candidates of Chinese ancestry--judging from their names--and 67 by non-Chinese. Many of these, especially those dealing with pedagogy, language and linguistics, and college students, dealt only marginally with the life and concerns of the immigrant population. For example, topics like the brain drain on China, the contributions of returned students from the United States to China, the personal and professional problems of Chinese college students, comparative teaching strategies, teaching English to Chinese speakers,

58. William Wong Lum (comp.) (Davis, Calif.: University of California at Davis, Asian American Studies Division, 1970) Supplements to 1973.

TABLE 2-1
DISSERTATIONS PERTAINING TO THE CHINESE IN THE UNITED STATES
1920 to 1980

Major Topic	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980*	Total
Acculturation & Assimilation		3	2	1	4	9		19
Chinese Communities	1		3	2	2	4		12
College Students	1	1	2	6	1	7		18
Demographic Studies			1	3		1		5
Discrimination	2	1		1	2	1		7
Education	1	2	2	3	2	14		24
Family	1	1		1		5		8
Images & Stereotypes				1	5	5		11
Immigration	1		2	1	2	7	1	14
Labor	1	1			1	3		6
Language & Linguistics			1	2	1	9		13
Mental Health						7		7
Occupations				1		5		6
Vol. Assns. & Social Service Programs			1	1		6		8
Women						4	1	5
Miscellaneous			1	4		5		10
Total	8	9	15	27	20	92	2	173

*Six months only

SOURCE: Dissertation Abstracts (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, annual).

etc. only touch indirectly on our subject.

I have classified these 173 dissertation into sixteen categories. These categories are listed in the left-hand column in Table 2-1. This table serves a number of functions. It shows the number of dissertations completed under the category headings thus revealing the major topics of interest for the doctoral candidates. It shows the decade in which the dissertations were completed and the concentration of dissertations by topic and decade. It also gives cumulative totals.

Setting the table up in this manner, one can see that the 1970s saw an explosion of interest, research, and writings on the Chinese in the United States in dissertation form--a total of 92 in comparison with the isolated few submitted in former years. Those written in the 1950s were done by the contingent of students from China who came to the United States for higher education immediately after World War II. Mostly they wrote about themselves as evidenced in that 6 out of 27 dissertations on Chinese college students were completed in the 1950s. This pattern of interest in writing about Chinese college students was repeated in the 1970s, but it was counterbalanced by a larger number of native-born Chinese Americans who had come of age and were more interested in other areas such as acculturation, education, and mental health.

More dissertations were written in the field of education and pedagogy than any other topic. One reason for this is because of the popularity of the profession in education for Chinese graduate students, again a reflection of the cultural bent and high social standing of the teacher. Some of these dissertations dealt with Chinese language schools, the Freedom Schools, adult English language classes, motivations or the

intelligence of Chinese American children, Chinese culture and education, etc. The language dissertations emphasized heavily the linguistic component. Another factor worth noting from this table is that topics like mental health and women did not surface until the latter part of the 1970s.

At the time of our search, the column for 1980 in Table 2-1 was only for half a year in which two dissertations touching on the subject of Chinese in the United States were found. My projection for the 1980s is that there will be a continued and heightened interest in the Chinese in this country as a topic of research and that the areas of interest will proliferate to reflect an even broader spectrum of topics and issues such as intermarriage and political participation.

Peripheral to the dissertations that pertained to Chinese persons in the United States, there were approximately 33 written about Chinese in other countries or other parts of the world. An old saying goes, "The sun never sets on the Chinese people." The question then arises: How different are the experiences of these people to those who came to the United States? These dissertations can provide good comparative source materials.

Evolution of the Literature

To summarize, the literature pertaining to the Chinese in the United States has evolved only within the last few decades in skips and jumps. Chinese Americans were practically ignored by historians, social scientists, or fiction writers until the mid-twentieth century. The scant literature that was formerly available consisted of either attacks against

the Chinese or were arguments against their admittance to the United States. They were written entirely by non-Chinese and reflected only the white man's perspective.

In the 1940s, a few native-born Chinese Americans wrote autobiographies about their own lives and experiences growing up in two cultures, and a few well-established novelists like Pearl Buck and Lin Yutang fictionalized Chinese American life. Two decades were to pass before some general overviews of the Chinese American experience were published by writers of Chinese ancestry. These were supplemented by a number of historical works dealing with the anti-Chinese period of the nineteenth century by non-Chinese academics. These scholars continued to write about the Chinese as if they had not progressed beyond the rejection stage.

Community studies were the subject of a number of dissertations. These were written primarily by Chinese graduate students from China pursuing a higher education in the United States and occasionally by some non-Chinese scholars who undertook fieldwork in the Chinese communities. Most of the graduate students returned to China and dropped their interest in the Chinese in this country. Their dissertations were one-shot deals.

Note how each period seems to call forth a certain type of writing as if fulfilling a felt need at the time. Note also the progression from complete indifference toward the Chinese to some attention by white scholars and gradually to some writings by Chinese Americans. Progress, spanning the century that the Chinese have been in the United States, had been at snail's pace until the 1970s, which resulted at first

in an explosion of emotional catharsis in the protest literature emanating primarily from college campuses. As time passed, the writings of these activists matured and developed into scholarly research found in some doctoral dissertations.

Literary Works

With the 1970s, the younger generation among the Chinese enlarged their identity to that of Asian/Pacific Islander American, and their writings took on a pan-Asian American perspective rather than a purely Chinese American one. All forms of writings began to appear: oral histories, psychological studies, journal articles, conference proceedings, government publications, research papers, theses, and dissertations. These were finally capped by two works of literary merit that somehow captured the essence of it all. Both works were written by Maxine Hong Kingston, a second-generation Chinese American. The first book, Woman Warrior,⁵⁹ published in 1976 brought rave reviews from all quarters and won the year's National Book Critics' Circle Award. The book was autobiography, history, sociology, psychology, myth, ghost story, and fantasy all rolled into one. In Time magazine, critic Paul Gray wrote:

With the Woman Warrior, author Maxine Hong Kingston left herself a hard act to follow. That book, her first, indelibly rendered the pain of growing up female and Chinese in the U.S. of being in effect a servant among the dispossessed. It bridged two vastly different cultures; its drawing of Chinese legends and customs was thorough and fascinating, while its evocation of the uncertainties of assimilation was quint-essentially American. The Woman Warrior did, in short, what all great autobiographies do: it turned self-knowledge into art.⁶⁰

59. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1976).

60. (June 30, 1980) p. 67.

Kingston's first book centered around herself and the womenfolk in her life. The second, published in 1980, dealt with the menfolk. China Men⁶¹ was equally praised and acclaimed by John Leonard of the New York Times. He wrote:

. . . fiction, memoir, dream, epic, or elegy--whatever Maxine Hong Kingston is writing, it is certainly art. Four years ago, I said the Woman Warrior was the best book I'd read in years. China Men is, at the very least, the best book I've read in the four years since.⁶²

Within the short span of a few decades, literature on the Chinese in the United States has gone from near non-existence to works of high literary attainment. The quality is there, but quantity remains scant. There are huge gaps in our history, in our experiences, in our emotions and thoughts that need to be expressed. In most of the writings mentioned in this review, little reference to children was ever made, except in the autobiographies, and these were from the pens of native-borns, not immigrants. Even in searching the literature of other immigrant groups, literature dealing with children was equally scarce. The research has been directed primarily at the adults. It was assumed that children have no choice but to go where their parents go, to accept what their parents can provide, and to suffer if their parents cannot cope. As dependents, their fate was tied in with the grown-ups. Consequently, the children were ignored just as the Chinese were ignored in the immigrant literature. This study will attempt to remedy some of that lack.

61. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1980).

62. New York Times Book Review Section. Requoted in Chinatown News, vol. 28, no. 2 (Vancouver, Canada, September 18, 1980) p. 3.

TABLE 2-2
EVOLUTIONARY STAGES OF LITERATURE
PERTAINING TO CHINESE IN THE UNITED STATES

PERIOD	TOPICS	SOURCES	RACE OF WRITER
Prior to 1900	Debates over Chinese Exclusion, Stereotypic diatribes	Newspapers Govt sources Bancroft (14)	Whites
1900 to 1930s	Chinese immigration	Coolidge (15) Sandmeyer (18)	Whites
1940s to 1960s	Autobiographies	Lowe (19) Wong (20) Lee (21)	Chinese
	Fiction	Lin (22) Buck (23, 24)	Chinese White
	Community studies	Dissertations (40, 41, 42)	Chinese
1960s	General works, comprehensive accounts	Lee (26) Kung (28) Sung (29)	Chinese
1970s	Anti-Chinese accounts dating back to 19th century	Dillon (31) Barth (32) Miller (33) Saxton (38) Wu (39)	Whites Chinese
1970s	Protest literature Ethnic studies	Tachiki (34) Gee (35)	Asian Chinese
	Community studies	Weiss (43) Elsensohn (44) Loewen (45) Nee (46)	Whites Chinese/ White
	Demographic studies	Sung (47, 48) Pian (49)	Chinese
	Institutions	Light (50) Kuo (51)	White Chinese
	Sociological and psychological studies	Sue (53) Fong (54, 55, 56)	Chinese
	Diverse subjects	Doctoral dissertations	Chinese & Whites
1980	Literary works	Kingston (59, 61)	Chinese

Note: Number in parentheses refer to footnotes in text.

CHAPTER III: IMMIGRATION NETWORKING

In any study of immigration, the persistent question arises: Why does man migrate? Why does he leave country and home? Why does he leave the familiar and the tried to risk the unknown? To intrude into other people's land is to incur hostility and perhaps danger. To tear oneself away from loved ones must be a heart-rending experience. To be separated from them for an indefinite period of time must be even more so. The isolation and alienation experienced in the new land at first can be psychologically devastating and painful. The journey itself may be hazardous. The mode of transportation can be dangerous and uncomfortable. Certainly the reasons against pulling up roots are overwhelmingly convincing. And it is definitely not a decision taken lightly. Most of the time it was a question of survival. When life was endangered by natural calamities, climatic changes, depletion of the land or resources, population pressures, or war and conquest, people were forced to move and go elsewhere.

A Typology of Migration

As history unfolded, the reasons for migration became more complex. Man does not migrate just for food or survival. Other factors and other forces come into play. William Petersen¹ developed a comprehensive

1. Population, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1969) p. 298.

TABLE 3-1
PETERSEN'S TYPOLOGY OF MIGRATION

RELATION	MIGRATORY FORCE	CLASS OF MIGRATION	TYPE OF MIGRATION	
			CONSERVATIVE	INNOVATING
Nature and Man	Ecological Push	Primitive	Wandering	Flight from the land
			Ranging	
State (or equivalent) and Man	Migration Policy	Forced	Displacement	Slave Trade
		Impelled	Flight	Coolie Trade
Man and His Norms	Higher Aspirations	Free	Group	Pioneer
Collective Behavior	Social Momentum	Mass	Settlement	Urbanization

SOURCE: William Petersen. Population, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1969) p. 298.
Reproduced with permission from The Macmillan Co.

typology to reflect the variety of reasons for population movements, and the typology is reproduced in Table 3-1. From this typology, one can see that migration is no longer governed by nature and survival alone. The polity or state can force or impel man's movement or obstruct it, as we shall witness later in the case of Chinese immigration to the United States. Man's higher aspirations may lead him to venture forth even in the face of uncertainties and danger. Social momentum may lead to collective and mass migration. This networking process is now very apparent with Chinese immigrants to the United States, whereas formerly they were lonely sojourners.² The human traffic of Chinese migrants to the American continent fits into this typology in many respects.

Even though there is much evidence to suggest that persons from China had touched the American continent as seafaring adventurers and left behind cultural relics and convincing evidence,³ it was not until the cry of gold went up in California that the Chinese arrived in California in any numbers. By 1851, it was estimated that 25,000 Chinese in California were engaged in placer mining or manual and domestic labor.⁴

The first immigrants were able-bodied males whose aim was to earn money to take back to China. Mostly small farmers, fishermen, and tradesmen, they came as "coolies." Literally coolie means bitter strength and these newcomers brought no assets other than the strength of their bodies.

2. Rose Hum Lee. The Chinese in the United States of America (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960). p. 21.

3. Hans Breur. Columbus Was Chinese (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972). pp. 270-272.

4. Mary Coolidge. Chinese Immigration (New York: Henry Holt, 1909) p. 17.

Strangely, the only ones who ventured abroad to the new land came from a small area in the southern province of Kwangtung near the mouth of the Pearl River. The provincial capital, Canton, was the only port in the entire empire open to foreign ships and news of the Gold Rush reached there quickly. Although the Laws and Precedents of the Ching Dynasty stated that any person caught leaving the country illegally whether to go out to sea, to trade, to live, or farm would have his head severed from his body by one stroke of the executioner's axe, the prospect of finding gold was a strong magnet that offered the promise of quick wealth.⁵

The push factors were equally strong. China's veneer of invincibility had just been shattered by defeat in the Opium War. Hong Kong was ceded to Great Britain, and the threat of further European imperialism hung heavy over the weakened nation. The Manchu government, then in power, was decadent and corrupt. A wide-spread revolt, known as the Taiping Rebellion, led by Hung Hsiu Chuan, lasted from 1851 to 1864. Estimates of lives lost ran as high as 20 million.⁶ The country was ravaged and devastated. The revolt was finally put down by government forces with the aid of foreign powers, who had vested interests in seeing a weak emperor on the imperial throne.

Moreover, Kwangtung suffered internal strife between the Puntis (native people) and the Hakkas (guest people). The Hakkas from the north

5. Betty Lee Sung, Mountain of Gold (New York: Macmillan, 1967) p. 10.

6. Him Mark Lai and Philip P. Choy, Outlines: History of the Chinese in America (published by the authors, 1972) p. 35.

had attempted to push onto and settle in the coastal lands, but they were repelled and decimated by the Puntis. The fratricide lasted for two years between 1854 and 1856 and left more than 150,000 dead.⁷ Thus bloodied and impoverished by war and rebellions, the discontented and more adventuresome looked beyond the oceans to a land that promised a better life.

It is difficult to delineate whether the early Chinese immigrants were more coolies or pioneers. They had fled the intolerable conditions in their homeland, impelled by war, civil strife, and population pressures, but they also came as free men with higher aspirations. One notable difference from other immigrants was they had no intention of permanently settling abroad. As such they did not truly fit into the typology as migrants until recent years. Nowadays, the sojourner mentality no longer applies to the Chinese, and migration more accurately answers to the last stage of Petersen's typology, where social momentum has resulted in large numbers settling in U.S. urban centers.

It is not my intention in this study to recount the history of Chinese immigration. That has already been done in a number of authoritative works (see review of the literature, preceding chapter), and I, myself, have published a number of works on the subject. My purpose here is to draw upon the Chinese experience and relate it to some of the theories pertaining to immigration.

Theories of Migration

There are three middle-range theories of migration--the structural, the behavioral, and the normative. The best known one, of course, is

7. Ibid.

the structural, which postulates that "the movement of people are seen within a 'system' of structural elements and relationships. Such relationships are characterized as 'mobility streams' attributable to 'forces' acting within a 'field' whose inherent trend toward equilibrium is disrupted." This structuralist approach contends that "migration is an equilibrating mechanism, redistributing population in response to inequalities in the distribution of social and economic opportunities."⁸ The world is viewed as an international economic system, and labor is viewed as human capital. Forces within the system become activated when equilibrium is disrupted setting up push-and-pull factors, such as the ones that sent the Chinese across the Pacific to California. In this structuralist approach, the migrant is merely an object, acted upon by economic forces.

The early immigrants from China, in the period of free immigration in the United States, certainly fit this mold. The push factors of war, civil strife, poverty and population pressures were strong. The pull factors of gold and an overwhelming demand for labor were magnetic. Like iron filaments, they were drawn to the American West and played out their destiny.

In the structuralist scheme, manpower like horsepower in those days may have been measurable in constant units as so many men in response to so much demand for labor. Lost sight of, however, is the fact that men are human beings with feelings, sensitivities, attitudes, rationality, values, attachments, and a cultural heritage as well as an historical

8. Paul Meadows, "Immigration Theory: A Review of Thematic Strategies," Source Book on the New Immigration, Roy Simon Bryce-Laporte (ed.) (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1980) pp. 403-405.

heritage. In short, man is unique and behaves in a unique fashion. He interprets the world around him, and his response to the structural forces is a product of his socialization, his perception, his individuality, his survival, as well as his economic condition. Under the same circumstances or impacting forces, most people stay put. Only a select few make the decision to pull up roots and migrate. Why some remain at home while others uproot themselves is not explained by the structuralist model. Increasingly the emphasis has shifted to the behavioral properties of the migrant as an actor. In this approach, the inner world of the migrant--his perceptions, motivations, values, and attitudes--are taken into account. Migration is conceived of as a social process, having some aspects located in the culture system, some within the social system, and some within the personality system of the individual.⁹

Behavioralists contend that "migration is preceded by decision-making on the part of the migrants based upon a hierarchially ordered set of values or valued ends and resulting in changes in the inter-related system of the migrants." Stephen Golant and H.A. Simon believe that the decision is a "subjectively rational" one.¹⁰

In the case of the Chinese, however, a rational decision to leave one's homeland for the United States for the most intelligent and valid reasons would be futile if structural barriers prevented one from implementing that desire or that decision. However, as we shall later see,

9. Ibid. p. 407

10. Ibid. See also S.M. Golant, "Adjustment Process in a System: A Behavior Model of Human Movement," Geographic Analysis, vol. 3 (July 1971) pp. 203-219, and H.A. Simon, Administrative Behavior (New York: Macmillan, 1947).

TABLE 3-2
POLITICAL AND LEGAL OBSTACLES TO CHINESE MIGRATION BETWEEN
CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES

<u>CHINA</u>	<u>UNITED STATES</u>
<u>To 1860</u>	<u>To 1882</u>
Imperial Decree Against Emigration (DOORS CLOSED)	Free Immigration (DOORS OPEN)
<u>1860-1949</u>	<u>1882-1943</u>
Few Impediments Against Emigration (DOORS OPEN)	Chinese Exclusion (DOORS CLOSED)
<u>1949-1979</u>	<u>1943-1965</u>
China's Borders Closed (DOORS CLOSED)	105 Chinese Quota (CRACK IN DOOR)
<u>1979-</u>	<u>1965-*</u>
More Exit Visas Issued (CRACK IN DOOR)	20,000 Chinese Quota (DOORS OPEN)

* Immigration law pending in U.S. Congress in 1982 again seeks to alter Chinese immigration pattern.

another component of the behaviorist theory--the social process of family linkage and networking has engendered a momentum into which family members and relatives are fed into the migratory stream.

When the free movement of human beings across territorial boundaries is controlled, then the normative theory that migration is governed by international and national policies gains ascendancy. My contention is that Chinese migration to the United States has largely been governed and shaped by political obstructions and legal enactments. Table 3-2 shows how the Chinese and American borders have opened and shut since 1849. Most of the time, the gates have been shut on both sides of the Pacific Ocean. Either the emigrants are not allowed to leave or the immigrants are not allowed to enter, so that neither disequilibrium in the international labor market nor personal inclination to change one's country of residence could affect the movement of people to any perceptible degree. For example, the out-migration of Chinese in the 1850s undoubtedly would have been much greater had the imperial decree against emigration not been promulgated. The threat of decapitation certainly deterred many Chinese from leaving home, even while the virgin, undeveloped lands of the American West beckoned. It took daring and courage for those who defied the Emperor in their surreptitious departure, but there will always be some who manage to circumvent the authorities.

The imperial ban was lifted in 1860. Chinese migration to the United States enjoyed a brief span of free movement until the passage of the first Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. Subsequent exclusion acts such as the Scott Act of 1888, the Geary Act of 1892, and the Immigra-

tion Act of 1924 reinforced the thickness of the doors to the United States and made them almost impenetrable.¹¹ The impediment had shifted to the other side of the Pacific Ocean.

So while the push factors for emigration in China grew stronger with foreign invasions, national humiliations, civil wars, and reform movements, which eventually culminated in the Revolution of 1911, coupled with the intense desire of many Chinese to come to this country, the exclusion laws managed to keep them out. The gates were sealed against the Chinese until the Repeal Act of 1943.¹² Repeal of exclusion did not result in lowering of the American barriers. The door was merely opened a tiny crack to permit an annual quota of 105 Chinese to enter. At that rate, only a handful squeezed through. In the 22 years that this quota was in force, a mere 5,891 quota immigrants of Chinese ancestry were admitted.¹³ Built-up pressure for increased Chinese immigration brought about a few temporary relief measures such as the War Brides Act of 1946 and the Refugee Relief Acts of 1953, 1957, and 1962, but these only permitted the entry of a few thousands.¹⁴ The political and legislative barriers held.

Meanwhile, the door on the other side of the Pacific clanged shut as well. When the Communist government came to power on the Mainland in

11. Sung, Op. cit. p. 50-56

12. Ibid. p. 78.

13. Ibid. p. 82

14. Ibid. pp. 92-93

1949, China closed her borders to the outside world, neither allowing her people to leave nor others to enter. The Chinese barrier was almost impenetrable except for those who risked life and limb to try to cross the borders into Hong Kong. Thus the only ones who could take advantage of the tiny American admission quota were those already in Hong Kong or those who had escaped earlier to Taiwan.

Lowering the Barriers

In 1965, the United States decided to open her doors a little wider and to abolish the national-origins quotas, which gave preference to white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Under the new law, the quota for any one country in any one year was set at 20,000 with an over-all limitation of 170,000 from the Eastern Hemisphere. From a quota of 105 to one of 20,000 was almost a twentyfold increase. However, conditions on the sending side had not changed. Since the Chinese exit barriers were still in place, Chinese immigrants came primarily from the two islands of Hong Kong and Taiwan.

It was not until early 1979 that diplomatic relations were re-established between China and the United States. Since then, the Chinese barriers have been lowered somewhat. It was reported that during Deng Xiaoping's state visit to the United States in January 1979, President Carter, ever concerned about human rights, appealed to the then premier to relax the ban on exit visas for relatives of Chinese Americans to allow them to join their families in this country. Much to President Carter's surprise, Premier Deng was very amenable. "How many millions do you want?" he inquired. Even if China were to allow the mass depart-

ure of its people, the American quota would still act as an effective cork to large-scale immigration from China. Although perceptible improvement has been noted by recent immigrants in the number of exit visas issued by the People's Republic of China, such documents are still difficult to come by.

A new immigration bill, pending in the 1982 Congresss at the time of this writing, may again restrict Chinese immigration drastically if some of the provisions--such as those abolishing the 5th preference and limiting the 2nd preference were to pass. If the bill becomes law, America's door to the Chinese would be partially closed again. In sum, political decisions remain the primary determinants of Chinese migration.

Networking

In spite of the fact that immigration is more often viewed as an economic phenomenon, the social aspects loom large as well. This lends weight to the behavioralist theory that migration is a social process. For example, the American immigration law now in effect is based upon both the manpower needs of the country and upon concern for the stability of society, which is grounded in the institution of the family. Therefore, immigrants are admitted on the basis of occupational preference and relative preference. According to the labor-needs premise of the structuralist, occupational preference would operate to draw in the larger number of immigrants, but the laws, as written, operates in favor of family reunification. For one, U.S. citizens can bring their parents, their spouse, and their children into country without regard to any numerical limitation. These are classified as non-quota immigrants.

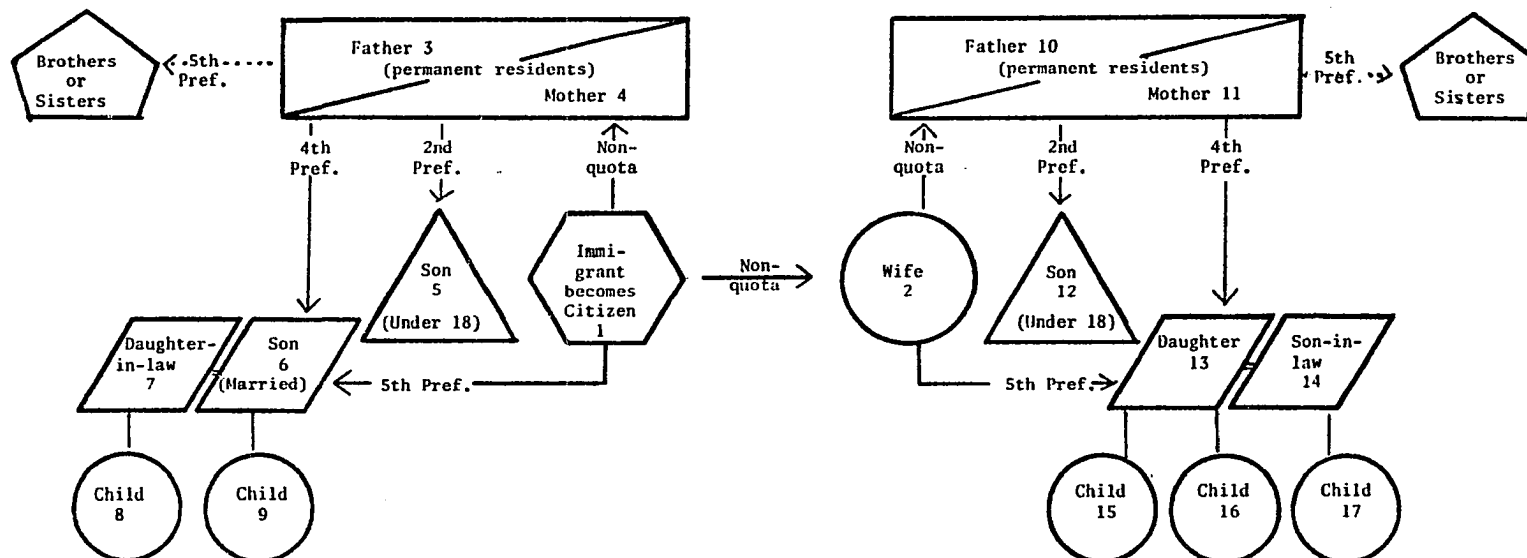
Even for quota immigrants where six preference categories were set up for priority issuance of immigrant visas, 80 percent were set aside for relatives, while only 20 percent were allocated for occupational preference. The preference categories are listed below:¹⁵

- 1st Preference: Unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens (20 percent)
- 2nd Preference: Spouses and unmarried sons and daughters of aliens lawfully admitted for permanent residence (26 percent plus any numbers not utilized for 1st preference)
- 3rd Preference: Members of the professions or persons of exceptional ability in the sciences and arts (10 percent)
- 4th Preference: Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens (10 percent plus any numbers not required by first three preferences)
- 5th Preference: Brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens over 21 years of age (24 percent plus any numbers not utilized in first four categories)
- 6th Preference: Skilled and unskilled workers in short supply (10 percent)
- Non-Preference: Numbers not used by the six preference categories.

Given this preference system and legal constraint, the labor-needs theory cannot operate freely to bring about an equilibrium in the international labor market. Within the constraints of the normative theory where laws and policy already operate to limit and designate categories of immigrants, social momentum in family networking operates as the primary migratory force. Under the family reunification provisions listed above, Chinese immigration can theoretically increase at a geometric rate. A model for this process is shown in Graph A. The model

15. U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary. "Immigration and Nationality Act with Amendments and Notes on Related Laws, 7th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980). pp. 22-23.

GRAPH A
NETWORKING OF IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES UNDER THE FAMILY REUNIFICATION PREFERENCE SYSTEM



Source: U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 as Amended

shows how an immigrant can rapidly rebuild his family network in the United States:

Immigrant (1) becomes citizen. He immediately sends for his wife (2) and his father and mother (3 and 4). If there are minor children, all of these are entitled to enter the country as non-quota immigrants. As soon as the parents arrive, they gain status as permanent residents and can file for their unmarried child (5) under second preference. Their married son and daughter-in-law (6 and 7) as well as any minor children of this couple (8 and 9+) can apply for fourth preference visas. Or the citizen (1) can take another route by directly applying for his married brother's family under fifth preference.

The wife of the citizen must wait three years before she obtains citizenship, but when she does, she can duplicate the entire procedure that her husband went through to bring her side of the family to this country. (See right side of Graph A). A lateral move may also take place simultaneously by the parents applying for their brothers' and sisters' families utilizing the fifth preference category.

Of course there is a time sequence to this networking process. The Immigration and Naturalization Service is notoriously slow in processing the applications, and there are statutory waiting periods before one is eligible to become a citizen. The approximate time sequence is outlined in Table 3-3.

TABLE 3-3
TIME SEQUENCE OF IMMIGRATION NETWORKING

No. of Person in Model	Procedure	Waiting Period or Time Lapse
(1)	Enters U.S. as immigrant. Applies for citizenship. 5 years statutory wait.	5 to 6 years
(1)	Obtains citizenship. Sends for wife (2), mother & father (3 & 4) non-quota.	3 to 6 months
(3 & 4)	Enter as permanent residents. Send for minor son (5) under 2nd preference.	1 to 2 years
(3 & 4)	Simultaneously send for married son and his family (6 to 9) under 4th preference	2 to 3 years
(2)	Wife applies for citizenship. Reduced waiting period of 3 years	3 to 3½ years
(2)	Obtains citizenship, sends for parents (10 & 11) non-quota	3 to 6 months
(10 & 11)	Wife's parents send for unmarried son (12) under 2nd preference	1 to 2 years
(10 & 11)	Wife's parents simultaneously send for married daughter and her family (13 to 17)	2 to 3 years
(3 & 4) (10 & 11)	Both sets of parents may send for their respective siblings under 5th preference Eligibility has now branched out fourfold	3 to 4 years

- NOTES 1. The time sequence may overlap and is not necessarily consecutive.
2. Assumption is made that immigrants will send for their immediate family members, but not all do. Size of the families will naturally affect the multiplication factor in the networking process and the number of people eligible to immigrate to this country.

TABLE 3-4

CHINESE ADMITTED UNDER RELATIVE PREFERENCE, OCCUPATIONAL PREFERENCE,
AND NON-PREFERENCE CATEGORIES, 1968 to 1978

	Relative Preference & Non-quota		Occupational Preference		Non- Preference		Total Quota & Non-quota
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No. = 100%
1968	8,998	.68	3,479	.26	773	.06	13,250
1969	13,976	.74	3,968	.21	1,032	.05	18,976
1970	8,795	.59	2,920	.20	3,181	.21	14,896
1971	9,563	.56	2,910	.17	4,454	.27	16,927
1972	9,893	.47	3,359	.16	7,917	.37	21,169
1973	12,756	.59	1,815	.08	7,027	.33	21,598
1974	15,025	.67	1,724	.08	5,656	.25	22,405
1975	16,396	.70	1,988	.08	5,174	.22	23,558
1976	20,830	.85	1,856	.08	1,741	.07	24,427
1976 qtr.	5,340	.82	835	.13	306	.05	6,481
1977	20,908	.84	2,733	.11	1,104	.05	24,745
1978	21,454	.84	3,237	.13	905	.03	25,596

Note: Relative preference includes those admitted as non-quota immigrants.

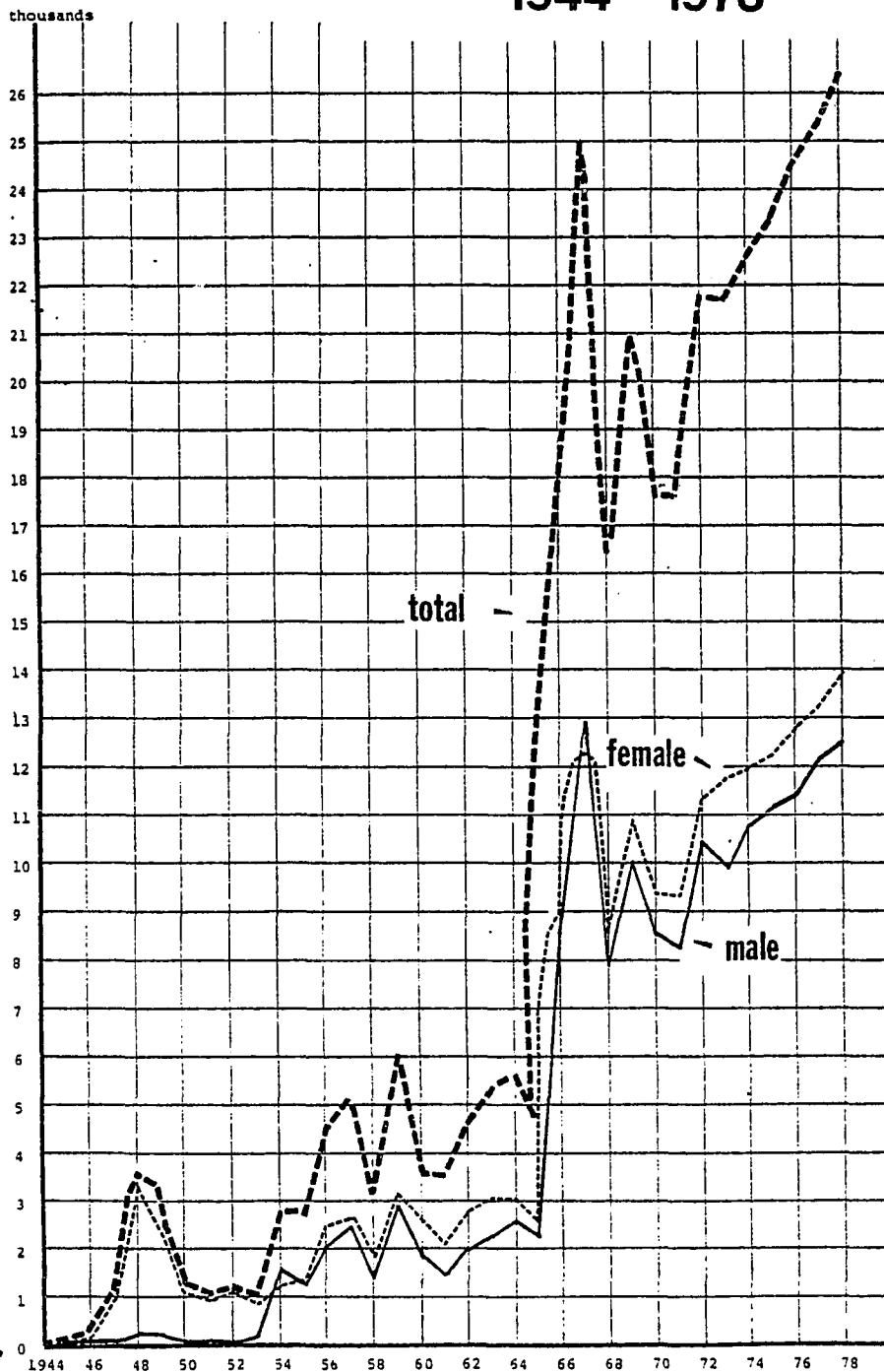
Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service Annual Reports and Statistical Yearbook (Washington, D.C. 1968-1978).

In 1972, 15 percent of those admitted were non-quota immigrants. By 1977, these had increased to 20 percent. As the immigrants obtain citizenship, they will increasingly take advantage of the non-quota provisions of the law to complete their family networking. Table 3-4 compares the number of Chinese admitted under relative preference, occupational preference, and non-preference categories from 1968 to 1978. Non-quota immigrants are added to the relatives category because they are by legal definition close family members. As is apparent, family networking was responsible for 84 percent of immigrants admitted whereas occupation preference was only 13 percent and non-preference was 3 percent in 1978. This underscores the fact that collective behavior and social momentum through family networking rather than the demand for labor under the structuralist theory is responsible for the larger proportion of Chinese immigrants.

But both these theories must be subordinated to the normative theory that government policy and legal enactments have the final word in how many and who comes in. Graph B shows Chinese immigration to the United States from 1944 to 1978. Each spurt in the line graph reflects immigration legislation. Since 1972, the Chinese have fully utilized the maximum quota of 20,000 permitted any one country. This quota was doubled by Congress in 1981 when it permitted Taiwan a separate 20,000 quota apart from Mainland China. The potential existed to increase Chinese immigration twofold, but no sooner had Congress given, than it was ready to take away. The very next year it was working on a new immigration bill, which would drastically curb family reunification by abolishing the fifth preference and limiting the second preference.

GRAPH B

CHINESE IMMIGRATION TO THE U. S. 1944 - 1978



SOURCE: Table 3-5

TABLE 3-5

CHINESE IMMIGRANT ALIENS BY SEX, 1944-1978

Year	Male		Female		Annual Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
1944	10	29	24	71	34
1945	20	41	64	59	109
1946	71	31	162	59	233
1947	142	13	986	87	1,128
1948	257	8	3,317	92	3,574
1949	242	10	2,248	90	2,490
1950	110	8	1,179	92	1,289
1951	126	11	957	89	1,083
1952	118	10	1,034	90	1,152
1953	203	19	890	81	1,093
1954	1,511	55	1,236	45	2,747
1955	1,261	48	1,367	52	2,628
1956	2,007	45	2,443	55	4,450
1957	2,487	49	2,636	51	5,123
1958	1,396	44	1,799	56	3,195
1959	2,846	47	3,185	53	6,031
1960	1,873	51	1,799	49	3,672
1961	1,565	41	2,273	59	3,838
1962	1,916	42	2,753	58	4,669
1963	2,297	43	3,073	57	5,370
1964	2,597	46	3,051	54	5,648
1965	2,242	47	2,527	53	4,769
1966	8,613	49	8,995	51	17,608
1967	12,811	51	12,285	49	25,096
1968	7,862	48	8,572	52	16,434
1969	10,001	48	10,892	52	20,893
1970	8,586	48	9,370	52	17,956
1971	8,287	47	9,335	53	17,622
1972	10,437	48	11,293	52	21,730
1973	9,937	46	11,719	54	21,656
1974	10,724	47	11,961	53	22,685
1975	11,179	48	12,248	52	23,427
1976	11,819	48	12,770	52	24,589
1976 qtr.	3,109	48	3,418	52	6,527
1977	12,176	48	13,220	52	25,396
1978	12,507	47	13,966	53	26,473

NOTE: Fiscal year changed in 1976 to year ending in September 30th rather than June 30th.

SOURCE: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Reports or Statistical Yearbook (Washington, D.C., 1965-1978) Tables 9.

In the next chapter, we shall see how the causes of migration affect the types of migrants to the United States.

CHAPTER IV: DETERMINANTS OF IMMIGRANT TYPES

Numbers are one dimension of the immigrant flux, but characteristics of the immigrants are another. Basically, the characteristics of immigrants are determined in large part by the causes of migration or the migratory forces, whether these causes be structural, behavioral, or political factors. Using the Chinese immigrants' experience as a model, it is quite evident that at certain periods in history, certain types of migrants stand out. This becomes quite evident as shown in Table 4-1.

The Chinese migrant labor movement of the Gold Rush period is already well known. The economic forces at work were the lure of gold in California, the labor needs of a developing West, population pressure in China, as well as the unrest caused by war and civil strife in the homeland during the mid-nineteenth century. Since laborers were needed, it was laborers who responded. Naturally these would be young men in their prime--men who could withstand the rigors of hard work and adjustment to a new way of life.

From Males to Females

A different type of immigrants did not emerge among the Chinese until the late 1940s and early 1950s. For a period of eight years, from 1947 to 1953, almost 90 percent of the Chinese immigrants admitted to

TABLE 4-1
MIGRATORY FORCES AND IMMIGRANT TYPES

Period Beginning	Migratory Forces	Type of Migrant	Demographic Characteristics
1848	*Lure of gold in California *Labor needs of developing West *Population pressure in China *War and civil strife in China	Laborers	Primarily men. Lower socio- econ. classes.
1943	*Repeal of Chinese exclusion acts *War Brides Act	Wives and children	Primarily women. Lower and mid- dle classes.
1946	*Civil war in China, 1946-49 *Communist take-over, 1949 *U.S. refugee acts	Students Refugees	Primarily men. Intelligentsia, Officials.
1965	*Political flight fr. communism *U.S. Immigration Act of 1965	Professionals Educated Skilled	Primarily adults, Upper-middle class.
	*Relative preference, non-quota for immediate families	Nuclear fam. members	Both sexes, all ages/classes.
	*Relative preference	Kinship/ fam. members	Both sexes, all ages/classes.
1979	*Ouster of ethnic Chinese fr. Vietnam *U.S. Refugee Act of 1980	Refugees fr. Vietnam	Both sexes. Many children, business & profes- sional people.

the United States were females--predominantly wives or brides of the earlier immigrants. The cause of their migration was the enabling legislation of the Repeal Act of 1943 and the War Brides Act of 1946. The first repealed the entire body of exclusion acts against the Chinese and permitted the reunification of immediate family members. The second allowed men who had served in the Armed Forces of the United States during World War II to bring their wives into the country outside of the quota restrictions. The infusion of females into the Chinese community certainly brought about a drastic change in its makeup and structure from a group of unattached males to a more stable society of families.

Intelligentsia and Officials

The 1950s also saw a different socio-economic group--the intelligentsia--join the ranks of the Chinese in the United States. They were relatively few in numbers, but they added diversity to the former laboring class. Many were students sent to this country immediately after World War II for their higher education, so that they could help in the reconstruction of their country when they went back. Mao Zedong's victory over the Nationalist government in 1949 left these students stranded in the United States. Their support from China was cut off. At the same time, the United States forbade their departure and return to China on the grounds that these students had knowledge and skills that might be used against the United States, especially with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. These students, about 2,000 of them and primarily young men, became involuntary immigrants, forced to seek a livelihood in

this country as a result of revolution, war, and international politics.¹

These same conditions forced other Chinese as well to flee China and seek refuge in the United States. Many were former officials and people associated with the Nationalist government which had fled to Taiwan. Some were granted political asylum, and others were permitted to enter or remain in this country under a number of Refugee Relief Acts enacted in 1953, 1957, and 1959.²

The stranded students and political refugees were of the educated or monied classes. As such, they injected into the former laboring-class Chinese population a new socio-economic tier. The Immigration Act of 1965 further increased the ranks of the professionals and educated by granting them occupational preference. The Sixties were the decade when brains replaced brawn in the immigration selection process.

Kinfolk

As noted previously, the family reunification preference system of American immigration laws continues to network family members. Eighty percent of the quota is allocated to relatives. Table 4-2 shows that the fifth preference category reserved for brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens has been increasing substantially over the years. In 1978, it was one-half of all relative preference immigrants admitted. In other words, Chinese immigration has now entered the phase where the kinship structure of the population is broadening its base, not only

1. Rose Hum Lee. The Chinese in the United States of America (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960) pp. 103-112.

2. S.W. Kung. Chinese in American Life (Seattle, Wash: University of Washington Press, 1962) pp. 118-120.

TABLE 4-2

CHINESE IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED TO THE UNITED STATES
BY RELATIVE PREFERENCE CATEGORIES
1968 to 1978

	<u>Relative Preference Categories</u>				
	Total Relat.Pref.	1st Pref.	2nd Pref.	4th Pref.	5th Pref.
1968	4,950	130	2,110	882	1,828
1969	10,341	159	2,647	1,681	5,854
1970	5,538	101	2,130	706	2,601
1971	6,539	70	2,789	847	2,833
1972	7,012	75	3,374	592	2,971
1973	8,505	75	3,613	647	4,170
1974	10,707	79	4,749	523	5,356
1975	12,029	118	5,009	743	6,159
1976	15,647	104	5,543	1,084	8,916
1976 qtr.	4,142	20	1,423	211	2,488
1977	15,904	69	5,273	814	9,748
1978	14,848	111	6,017	938	7,782

Note: Fiscal year changed from June 30 to September 30 in year 1976.

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Reports or Statistical Yearbook, 1968 to 1978. Tables 7A.

vertically but also horizontally to include brothers and sisters, who may also be aunts and uncles to other members of the family. The figures in Table 4-2 also show that the second preference immigrants make up another 40 percent of relative preference Chinese admitted. It is precisely these reasons that pressure is building up in Congress to eliminate the fifth preference and limit the second preference. By this legislative stroke, Chinese immigrant family networking would be slashed by 90 percent. The consequences of such legislation would be to reinstate severe restrictions upon Chinese immigration, which would again prove the heavy hand of political decisions upon human mobility.

Refugees

The latest wave of Chinese newcomers to the United States actually have a dual or multiple identity. These were the ethnic Chinese ousted from Vietnam in the year 1979. In fact, many of the plane loads who fled the country immediately after the fall of Saigon in 1975 were also of ethnic Chinese origin, but the largest exodus occurred during the summer of 1979. Why were Chinese refugees fleeing Vietnam? Chinese presence in Vietnam was noted as early as the second century B.C., but the largest influx occurred between the period 1860 to 1930. By 1970, the Chinese population in Vietnam was estimated to be around the neighborhood of 1.5 million out of a total population of 39 million. Most of these people clung to their Chinese nationality, and during the French occupation, they served as middlemen between the indigenous people and the French colonists. As such, they were primarily businessmen and traders, or in Communist terminology, capitalists. As relations between

China and Vietnam worsened after the fall of Saigon and after the departure of American troops, the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam were caught in the middle. Labeled foreigners, capitalists, and eventually enemies after China invaded Vietnam in February of 1979, the ethnic Chinese were forced to leave the country but not without payment extorted for their departure. After paying from \$1,000 to \$3,000 in gold for the "privilege" of leaving, many boarded flimsy boats with no destination in mind. They put out to sea in the hopes that they could seek a new life in another land.³ They were labeled "boat people."

From 60 to 90 percent of these expellees or refugees from Vietnam were of Chinese ethnic origin. Hanoi viewed the expulsion as a means of ridding itself of unwanted people,⁴ but these hapless souls found no welcome in the neighboring countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, or Thailand. Thailand simply pushed the refugees back into their own country at gunpoint. Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, Mahathir bin Mohammad declared that his Government would load its 75,000 Vietnamese "boat people" into boats and push them out to sea and would fire on any newcomers.⁵ Japanese ships steered 200 miles off course to avoid the seas traversed by "boat people" to avoid picking them up.⁶

3. National Indochinese Clearinghouse, Center for Applied Linguistics. "Indochinese Refugee Education Guide, no. 22" (Washington, D.C., 1981).

4. Ibid.

5. Henry Kamm. "A Confrontation on Refugees," New York Times, June 28, 1979).

6. Henry Scott Stokes. "Ships Bound for Japan Avoiding Seas Traversed by 'Boat People,'" New York Times, July 15, 1979).

When the plight of these drifting people on the high seas came to President Carter's attention, he ordered the Seventh Fleet in the Pacific to pick up the boat people and take them to nearby receiving centers for processing and resettlement in other countries, the United States promising to take 168,000 a year--more than the rest of the world combined.⁷ Later at the Geneva Conference, convened by sixty-five nations to curtail the refugee exodus, Vice-President Walter Mondale pledged that the United States would take in 14,000 refugees a month for an indefinite period. This pledge was enacted into law by the Refugee Act of 1980. Up to March 1981, 450,000 refugees from Vietnam had been admitted to the United States. As stated earlier, many of these boat people had dual identities. They were refugees from Vietnam, but they viewed themselves as ethnic Chinese.

"The ethnic Chinese refugees entering the United States are by and large educated and more sophisticated than other refugee groups."⁸ Women and children as well as men were among the uprooted. Young and old alike numbered in their ranks, but the refugees are heavily weighted toward the young. Nearly 50 percent were under the age of 18.⁹ These refugees are the latest large-scale group to join the ranks of the Chinese in the United States. Unlike the earlier immigrants, their flight, according to Kuntz' study of general immigration patterns, is of the acute rather than the anticipatory type. Anticipatory migrants are those who

7. "Jimmy's Boat People," Newsweek (August 6, 1979) p. 37

8. "Indochinese Refugee Guide," Op. cit. p. 23

9. Daniel Montero. "Vietnamese Refugees in America: Toward a Theory of Spontaneous International Migration," International Migration Review, vol. 13, no. 4 (Winter, 1979) p. 627.

plan for their departure. Acute refugee movements are caused by massive political and military upheaval. These refugees flee en masse with the emphasis on escape!¹⁰ Since the experiences of these refugees are so dissimilar to the former Chinese immigrants, and since they are marginal to the established Chinese communities with their dual identities, they pose a special set of queries and problems distinct and separate from the Chinese immigrants who came before.

Basic Changes in Types of Immigrants

Looking back at the historical pattern of Chinese immigration to this country, one sees that certain levers set into motion the sending or receiving of a certain type of immigrants with their distinctive demographic characteristics. Particularly within the last three to four decades, the Chinese population has undergone basic structural changes by the types of immigrants coming here. First, the sex composition underwent change. Then the class composition was altered, and subsequently the kinship base was broadened, but what we are concerned with here in this study are the young--the immigrant children--for the children are the ones who will affect the future course of events.

Table 4-3 shows the number of Chinese immigrant children or youths admitted to the United States, age 19 and under from 1950 to 1978. In the decade of the Fifties, the number of Chinese children entering the United States was insignificant, from less than 200 per year to less than 2,000 at the end of the ten-year period. The decade of the Sixties showed a tremendous jump in numbers to as high as 8,007 in 1967. The

10. "The Refugees in Flight: Kinetic Models and Forms of Displacement," International Migration Review, vol. 7 (1973) pp. 125-146.

Seventies saw a drop from former years in the number of immigrant Chinese children, but the numbers seem to have stabilized at around 6,000. Undoubtedly the Eighties will show an increase.

TABLE 4-3

CHINESE IMMIGRANT CHILDREN OR YOUTHS ADMITTED TO THE UNITED STATES
AGE 19 AND UNDER, 1950-1978

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1950	199	1960	943	1970	5,051
1951	160	1961	1,064	1971	4,254
1952	152	1962	1,111	1972	5,691
1953	195	1963	1,312	1973	5,548
1954	507	1964	1,406	1974	6,030
1955	537	1965	1,282	1975	6,208
1956	1,310	1966	6,476	1976	8,850*
1957	1,273	1967	8,007	1977	6,682
1958	551	1968	4,941	1978	6,474
1959	1,854	1969	7,189		

* Change in fiscal year from June 30th to September 30th. Three months added to 1976.

SOURCE: Immigration and Naturalization Service Annual Reports or Statistical Yearbooks.

Birth Rate

With the huge influx of women and the enlargement of the population base, the expectation was that children would be born, thus giving rise to a growing native-born second generation. This expectation has not been borne out to the extent that one would normally presume. Up to 1973, the total number of Chinese births never exceeded 8,000 per year

for the entire United States.¹¹

For New York City specifically, the metropolis that boasts the largest Chinese population in the country, very few babies were born to Chinese mothers. See Table 4-4.

TABLE 4-4
NEW YORK CITY RESIDENT BIRTHS TO CHINESE MOTHERS
1970 to 1977

Year	Number
1970	1,490
1971	1,423
1972	1,332
1973	1,354
1974	1,345
1975	1,576
1976	1,596
1977	1,526

SOURCE: Birth Files, New York City Dept.
of Health

At the same time that the number of births were declining, the Chinese population of New York City was increasing. For the five boroughs, the figure is estimated to be around 100,000, so that means a crude birth rate of approximately 15, which is equivalent to the U.S. rate. The phenomenon of declining births was to be expected. According to the theory of demographic transition, declining births inevitably accompany industrialization and urbanization. Consequently, the number of native-born Chinese children will remain small, while immigrant children will make up the bulk. Hence the focus on Chinese immigrant children is

11. Vital Statistics of the United States, Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare, Annual Reports.

especially pertinent and appropriate, because in spite of the low birth rate, the number of Chinese children has risen dramatically over the past few decades. Table 4-5 shows Chinese children and youth, age 19 and under by decades, 1940 to 1970. These data are taken from the decennial censuses. They show that within the span of 30 years, the number of Chinese children has increased more than sixfold.

TABLE 4-5
CHINESE CHILDREN AND YOUTH, AGE 19 AND UNDER
BY DECADES, 1940-1970

Age Group	1940	1950	1960	1970
Under 5	4,375	13,628	27,734	35,813
5 - 9	5,464	6,543	27,522	39,159
10 - 14	6,569	7,129	22,638	39,955
15 - 19	7,318	8,377	11,800	43,607
Total	23,726	35,677	89,694	158,534

SOURCE: Decades 1940 and 1950 from Rose Hum Lee, The Chinese in the United States of America (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960) p. 43. Decades 1960 and 1970 from U.S. Census Bureau, Subject Reports PC(2)1C and PC(2)1G.

The usual train of thought is that children are part of the immigrant families, and that whatever happens to their parents applies to the offsprings as well. There is a great deal of truth to this reasoning, but in the United States and especially in the highly urbanized areas, children lead lives that are almost compartmentalized and apart from adult lives. A disquieting trend seems to be that family lives are no longer lives intertwined but parallel tracks separate and apart from one another. As this separation becomes more pronounced, it becomes

increasingly important to examine what is happening to the children.

Children are dependents. Someone must nurture and care for them. Others must educate them. Their personalities and characters are impressionable. Their futures may be shakened or shaped by their first encounters in this country. They are confused by different standards and customs. They need someone to turn to in case of trouble. They need guidance and direction. Children were once a rarity in the Chinese communities here. Now these communities have to accommodate to many children coming on the scene in rapid succession. A community without children had no need for schools, playgrounds, ball parks, day care centers, Boy Scouts, and the like. These facilities cannot be set up in a hurry, if indeed they can be provided at all. Children are not miniature grown-ups. Their lives are circumscribed by their families, their school, and their immediate neighborhood. Their development is still in the formative stages. In this study, we will look at the situation of Chinese immigrant children in two New York Chinese communities to view their process of adjustment.

CHAPTER V: THE COMMUNITY

Immigration is like a surgical process. One is physically pulled up by one's roots and transplanted onto foreign soil. It is not only the physical severance of oneself in one fell swoop from one's country, community, neighborhood, home, relatives, culture, and friends, the immigrant is cut off from all that is familiar and dear to him. He goes to live in a foreign land. He is cut loose from the buoy that anchored him and made him feel secure.

But man is a social animal. He cannot stay isolated for long. He cannot survive economically, socially, or emotionally without forging new links in his social network. Fortunately for the Chinese immigrants who relocate in New York City, there are ethnic communities that aid these newcomers in their transition.¹ These Chinatowns, as they are commonly called, are more than aggregations of people living within prescribed areas. If they are communities in the real sense of the word, they must have a system of institutions. The concept of community encompasses a common way of life and a common identity. "For Max Weber, the communal relationship is based upon a sense of solidarity resulting from the emotional or traditional attachments of the participants. It is not enough to share common characteristics or a common situation; even racial distinctions do not in any way imply a communal relationship.

1. New York City is now the favored destination of Chinese immigrants.

People may react to their shared situation in the same way, they may also have a common feeling about it without it leading to the creation of community. 'It is only when this feeling leads to mutual orientation of their behavior toward each other that communal relationship arises among them.'² "People begin to feel that they belong together when they acquire a consciousness of kind. Such social bonds are characterized by emotional cohesion and continuity in time."³

Judith Kramer maintains that American minorities communities were formed on the basis of categorization and exclusion, in other words on the basis of ethnic or racial birth and discrimination.⁴ Of course, segregation from without is usually the main factor in the establishment of ethnic communities, but self-segregation also plays a large part when immigrants or minorities prefer to be together where they feel more comfortable being among their own kind.

New York's Chinatown is a community in every sense of the term. It has a history that goes back to 1870 when Wo Kee opened his general store at 8 Mott Street.⁵ The store was a drawing magnet for the handful of lonely Chinese laundrymen who gathered there on Sundays to pick up their mail from home, to exchange pleasantries and small talk, to relieve the loneliness of their solitary existence, and to wager a few bets behind the store. Grocery stores for Chinese foods and supplies sprang up

2. Max Weber. Basic Concepts in Sociology (New York: Citadel, 1963) pp. 91-94 in Judith Kramer. The American Minority Community (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1970) p. 43.

3. Kramer. op. cit. p. 43.

4. Ibid. p. 39.

5. Calvin Lee. Chinatown, U.S.A. (New York: Doubleday, 1965) p. 125.

alongside of Wo Kee, and restaurants opened up to serve the men a decent meal once a week. It was not until the 1890s that Caucasians discovered the Chinese restaurants and began to patronize them.

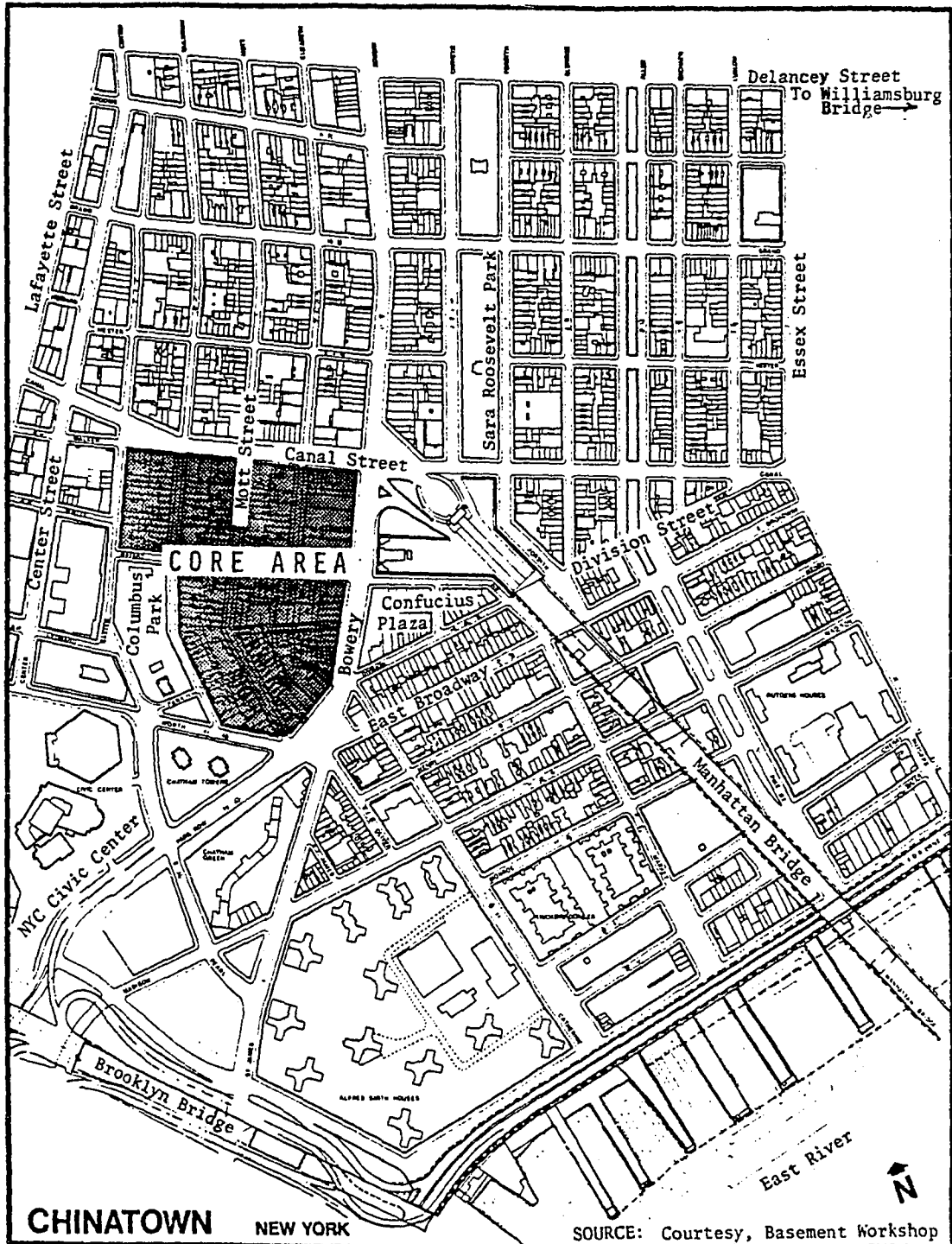
Boundaries

The Chinese curio shops, groceries, and restaurants spilled over into Pell and Doyer Streets. These short, winding, narrow cobblestone streets are still the heart of Chinatown today, but the boundaries of the contiguous Chinese community on the Lower East Side have been extended. Map 1 shows the enlarged Chinatown of the early 1970s. The northern boundary is Delancey Street; the southern boundary is the Brooklyn Bridge; the eastern boundary is Essex Street; and the western boundary is Lafayette Street. The shaded area shows the core area of approximately nine blocks.

In the early 1960s the community looked as if it was heading for decline. Calvin Lee predicted its demise as the old people died off⁶ and the young refused to live there. Changes in the American immigration laws quickly reversed the decline. As more and more immigrants arrived, they headed toward Chinatown causing a tremendous demand for housing. Chinatown became larger and larger. If we define Chinatown as a contiguous community with large concentrations of Chinese population, even the boundaries on the map are already outdated. The expanded borders are 14th Street to the north, Broadway to the west, Columbia Street to

6. Ibid. p. 143.

MAP 1: CHINATOWN, NEW YORK



the east, and Beekman Street to the south.

Housing Stock

Most of the housing in lower Manhattan is of ancient vintage. In his survey, C.N. Yung found that thirty-five percent of the buildings in the core area were built before 1900 and ninety percent before 1935.⁷ New construction has been sparse. In the 1950s, when Chinatown was still confined to the nine-block area, there were plans by the New York City Housing Authority to demolish the old buildings and put up a modern, well-laid-out Chinatown in graduated stages. The plans were scuttled when a community delegation went to the Housing Authority to protest any contemplated change in their community. Those who had businesses and real estate in the area did not want their vested interests disturbed, even if it meant a newer, more attractive, and cleaner neighborhood in the long run.

The housing stock of the Lower East Side where the Chinese are moving is already celebrated as a slum area serving the wave after wave of new immigrants to these shores. There were the Irish, the Italians, the Jews, and now the Chinese and Puerto Ricans. Most of these buildings are five- to six-story walk-ups. Rentals in these buildings are controlled; the dollar amount is small, but the condition of the housing is deplorable. The landlords have found that it does not pay to fix the roof, or paint the hallways, or provide better lighting, or fix the

7. Chinatown Report. (unpublished, 1969) p. 196.

plumbing, and as a result the buildings are by and large in advanced stages of disrepair.⁸ Nevertheless, for the new immigrants living in or near Chinatown, it means that sense of security of being with one's own kind, so they compete fiercely for these rundown tenements. To take advantage of this demand, many circumvent the rent control laws by means of a convention called "key money." Key money is money paid in advance to either the landlord or the former tenant for the privilege of renting that apartment. Sums ranging from a few hundred to two thousand dollars are not uncommon, and it is money "up front," paid in advance in a lump sum. Adding on that amount of money makes the rents no longer cheap by any means.

Low cost urban renewal projects such as the Alfred Smith Houses, Knickerbocker Village, Rutgers Houses, Allen Street House, Gouverneur Gardens, or Seward Park Houses have been put up on the outer fringes of Chinatown. These government-sponsored, urban renewal projects, built largely during the 1950s and 1960s, are rent-controlled and occupied largely by the Jewish and Italian people who had prior claim to the housing at that time. The low rentals make them much too attractive for the occupants to move out, so that few Chinese families can get into any of these projects.

Middle-income housing projects like Chatham Green, Chatham Towers, and the Southbridge Towers near Beekman Street south of the Brooklyn Bridge have many Chinese tenants. These are cooperatives. The newest

8. The condition of some of these tenements will be described in detail in the discussion of our home visits. See also New York City Planning Commission, "Chinatown Street Revitalization," (1976) for detailed and extensive study of Chinatown housing and land use.

housing to rise in the heart of Chinatown is the 44-story Confucius Plaza built primarily over the air space of the Manhattan Bridge. The project combines commercial, educational, and residential functions. On the ground level are a 1,200-pupil primary school, store fronts, offices, and a playground. The upper stories are devoted to 750 moderate-income cooperative apartments. Confucius Plaza was completed in 1976. Most of its occupants are Chinese. The impact of this project on the Chinatown community has been enormous. It has revitalized the Bowery and Division Street. It has brought many middle-income Chinese families back to the neighborhood. It has upgraded the entire locality leading to private renovation of buildings nearby. Confucius Plaza is an excellent example of the domino effect of up-grading urban areas.

Shown within the map of Chinatown to the lower left is the Municipal Civic Center where City Hall, the Municipal Building, the Court houses and governmental agencies are situated. Chinatown stands on prime urban real estate. However, because of its rundown buildings, the tax base is low, but abandonment of buildings and tax arrears are minimal. In fact, recent prices for sale of Chinatown property match those of mid-town Manhattan from \$62 to \$210 per square foot.⁹

Unfit for Children

As a community for children growing up, however, Chinatown lacks space, recreational facilities, playgrounds, and safe streets. The only playgrounds are those connected with the public schools. The only

⁹. New York City Planning Commission. "Chinatown Street Revitalization." May, 1976. p. 22.

park to speak of is Columbus Park, an area the size of one city block and heavily used by the children and elderly as the major open-space recreational facility. Another neighborhood park, Sara Roosevelt Memorial Park, is no more than an elongated center mall of a busy city street. Ball-playing would be a hazardous game for children who might try to retrieve balls from between cars whizzing by.

The traffic is something else altogether. Canal Street is a thoroughfare for traffic leading from Brooklyn and Queens via the Manhattan Bridge to New Jersey via the Holland Tunnel. An hourly vehicle count shows that between 1,600 and 1,800 cars and trucks pass on Canal Street at an hour when children are getting out of school. (Five hundred cars per hour is considered high volume traffic.) Chatham Square is another nightmare to navigate. Ten streets converge into a hub and the volume of vehicular traffic is high. Such traffic conditions are certainly not safe for children playing in the streets.

Ethnic Make-up

Chinatown and its surrounding environs contain a diverse mixture of peoples. The white ethnics are the Jews and the Italians, but both Little Italy and the Jewish stronghold in the Lower East Side have been infused with large numbers of Chinese and Puerto Ricans. Chinatown is growing at a fast clip. According to the dress rehearsal census of lower Manhattan taken in September 1978, the Chinese make up 30 percent of the total population south of Houston Street. As such, they are the largest minority group in the area. Puerto Ricans follow with 20 percent, and other Hispanics are 8 percent. Whites of non-Hispanic origin only

make up 16 percent, and blacks are an insignificant 8 percent.¹⁰

The number of Chinese children, 19 years and under, enumerated for the 1978 census in lower Manhattan was 10,776 of which 5,588 were males and 5,188 were females. For Puerto Ricans in the same age group, there were 9,609.¹¹ For whites, there were 9,386 and for blacks 3,066. These figures are not comparable, however, because the Puerto Ricans may have been counted twice, either as blacks or as whites, and the two racial groups may have included some Puerto Ricans. At any rate, immigrant Chinese children coming into the community will find themselves among many faces like their own. Dealing with other racial groups, however, will be a new experience, one they never encountered before in the homeland, but the children in this community are in the majority so their transition from a Chinese setting into an interethnic one is less drastic.

In conducting research, one tries to find as many sources of data as possible either to ascertain or to invalidate prior findings. To use another yardstick to see how the ethnic composition of this region has changed over time, one can gauge by the ethnic census of one of the neighborhood high schools. (See Table 5-1) From 1965 to 1979, the white student enrollment dropped from 40 percent to 8 percent. The Asian enrollment rose from 8 percent to 25 percent, whereas the Hispanic increased phenomenally from 31 percent to 50 percent.

10. U.S. Census Bureau. "Special Census of Lower Manhattan, New York City" September 26, 1978

11. Ibid. As of this writing, detailed characteristics of the population from the 1980 census are not available.

Of course the ethnic make-up of a school's enrollment may not be an accurate yardstick of the population of the area. The white ethnics in the area are generally the elderly who have no children enrolled in school whereas the Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics have many children. Nevertheless, these figures give us some clues as to the other groups living alongside the Chinese.

TABLE 5-1
CHINATOWN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT POPULATION
BY ETHNIC GROUP

Ethnic Group	1965	1970	1975	1979
White	40%	23%	10%	8%
Black	21	23	19	17
Asian	8	14	21	25
Puerto Rican	27	38	45	} 50
Other Hispanic	4	2	5	

NOTE: Other Hispanics include Caribbean and Latin Americans

SOURCE: New York City, Board of Education, "Student Ethnic Survey."

Lower Manhattan is an area of lower to middle income working people. The Chinese and Puerto Ricans represent the newest wave of immigrants, and they may be classified as poor. The elderly from the former waves of immigration live on pensions or social security checks. They are also poor, except that they are settled. The working people are civil servants in the government, service workers, clericals, and laborers.

The Economy

In many ways the Chinese community has generated its own jobs. The tremendous increase in immigration has created a demand for everything not brought over in suitcases. To meet the needs of these people, sales in furnishings, appliances, housewares, and clothing are brisk, and demand for services is great. Tourism is big business in Chinatown. Sight-seers by the busloads descend upon the community and dash through the curio shops buying souvenirs to take home as mementos.¹² The Chinese groceries cater to a clientele that ranges from as far away as Connecticut or New Jersey. That weekly or biweekly trip into Chinatown seems to be a must for Chinese Americans who cannot find the necessary ingredients they need for their cooking at the local supermarket. The restaurants are another magnet. Culinary delights from all regions of China are now served in the more than 300 restaurants in and around Chinatown. Nor is Chinatown without its industries. The garment industry is the biggest, and the whirr of sewing machines can be heard coming from hundreds of commercial lofts. According to Local 23-25 of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union, there were about 350 to 500 garment contractors in Chinatown who employed from 12,000 to 14,000 workers in 1981.¹³ It is said that about 70 percent of the garments sewn in New York City are sewn by Chinese seamstresses. The garment

12. Interview with manager of Chi-Am Tours, June 1981.

13. International Ladies Garment Workers' Union, Local 23-25. Press Release, May 20, 1981.

industry, only a toddling infant a few years ago, has become one of the economic pillars of the community providing the newly arrived immigrants with ready jobs and the community with a strong economic base.

In some respects, immigrant families are fortunate in that they can find employment readily and easily--especially the mothers in the garment factories. On the other hand, the children are deprived of the mothers' presence in the home at a crucial time in their lives. In most instances, a working mother is a sharp change for the children. This problem will be taken up at greater length in the chapter on the role of the family in the adjustment of the immigrant child.

Organization and Structure.

The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association has traditionally been held up as the governing body of New York's Chinatown. It is an apex group consisting of the representatives of sixty organizations in Chinatown, among them the family and district associations, the guilds, the tongs, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Nationalist Party. A small inner circle actually controls the organization and dictates its policies even though its chairman is elected by the member organizations for a two-year term. Members of the inner circle are the Ning Yang Association representing the majority Toishanese, the Ling Sing Association, representing all non-Toishanese, the two tongs, and the Nationalist Party. The latter three are the tail that wags the dog because they control the financial resources and hold the political clout.

The CCBA enjoyed a time-honored role among the Chinese in the United States during a period of time when the population was small, consisting primarily of male adults of the laboring class. But

times have changed. The decisions and policies made by the CCBA reflect the interests and concerns of a group of old-timers who have vested economic interests in Chinatown, who are closely aligned with Nationalist China, and who are committed to the status quo. The huge influx of newcomers has a different set of concerns and needs social services in their resettlement. These services used to be provided by the family or district associations, but the large numbers of arrivals have overwhelmed the ability of these traditional organizations to handle the problem.

To cope with the tremendous need and demand for social services by the newcomers in the 1960s, a group of dedicated Chinese-American professionals such as lawyers, social workers, doctors, and teachers formed an organization called the Chinatown Planning Council (CPC) to deal with the problems as best they knew how. Instead of relying upon the entrenched leaders in the community to provide funds, they wrote proposals and applied to foundations or the government for funding. They were fairly successful in this: the CPC now operates seven day-care centers, youth services such as Project Reach, programs for the elderly, employment referral services, adult education classes in English, immigrant services, and research projects. It has made a tremendous contribution to meeting the social service needs of the community. Although the CPC is governed by a board of directors made up of people invited to sit on the board, and its day-to-day administration is in the hands of a career staff of social workers, it has continually competed with the CCBA for recognition and for funding.

Naturally, the CCBA feels that the CPC is intruding on its domain

and resents the agency's presence and successes. On the other hand, the CPC continues to snipe at the CCBA, undercuts its functions, and undermines its prestige. For all its successes, however, the CPC is not a governing nor a representative body. It must depend for its continued operation on outside funding which is tenuous from year to year, and it does not have the history and tradition of the CCBA. The CCBA, for its part, is hampered by heavy reliance upon the tongs and the Nationalist party for its financial support. Membership dues are minimal, and the community people are poor.

The CCBA operates the Chinese language school, which enrolls about three to four thousand Chinese pupils who attend classes every day after American school. The CCBA is the recipient of CETA funds for summer youth employment, and it holds English language classes for adults. At one time the CCBA scorned government grants for fear that its influence would be undermined, but it has now learned to apply for these monies to enlarge upon its social services.

The city, state, and federal governments continue to recognize the CCBA as the spokesman for the community and tend to deal with it as the recognized authority. The rivalry between the CCBA and CPC agencies is keen, with each putting the other down and sometimes both are the losers in their bids for funding and resource allocations.

The CPC is not the only social service agency serving Chinatown. Similar agencies, although on a lesser scale, have cropped up. To mention a few, they are: Chinese Immigrant Social Services, Chinatown Manpower Project, New York Chinatown Senior Citizen Center, The Golden Age Club, Chinatown Health Clinic, Chinese Development Council, Chinese

Scholars Service Corps., and others. These agencies are a new phenomenon on the Chinatown scene, having taken over many of the social and welfare services formerly performed by the family and district associations. This brings us to reflect upon the changes that have taken place in the organizational structure of Chinatown, and it is hypothesized that as time, social environment, and receptivity toward the Chinese change, the agencies, the institutions, and the means that the Chinese employ to re-establish themselves in this country undergo change as well. It is further hypothesized that an evolutionary process is taking place involving not only the structure of the community and the network systems that help the immigrant find support and help, but that the medium of exchange is different in each of the evolutionary processes. If the immigrant is culturally and spatially removed from his source of help and support in re-adjusting to a new land, he will either suffer an increased feeling of isolation and helplessness or he must be provided with some kind of conduit to lead him to the sources of help--in other words, a culturally familiar network link.

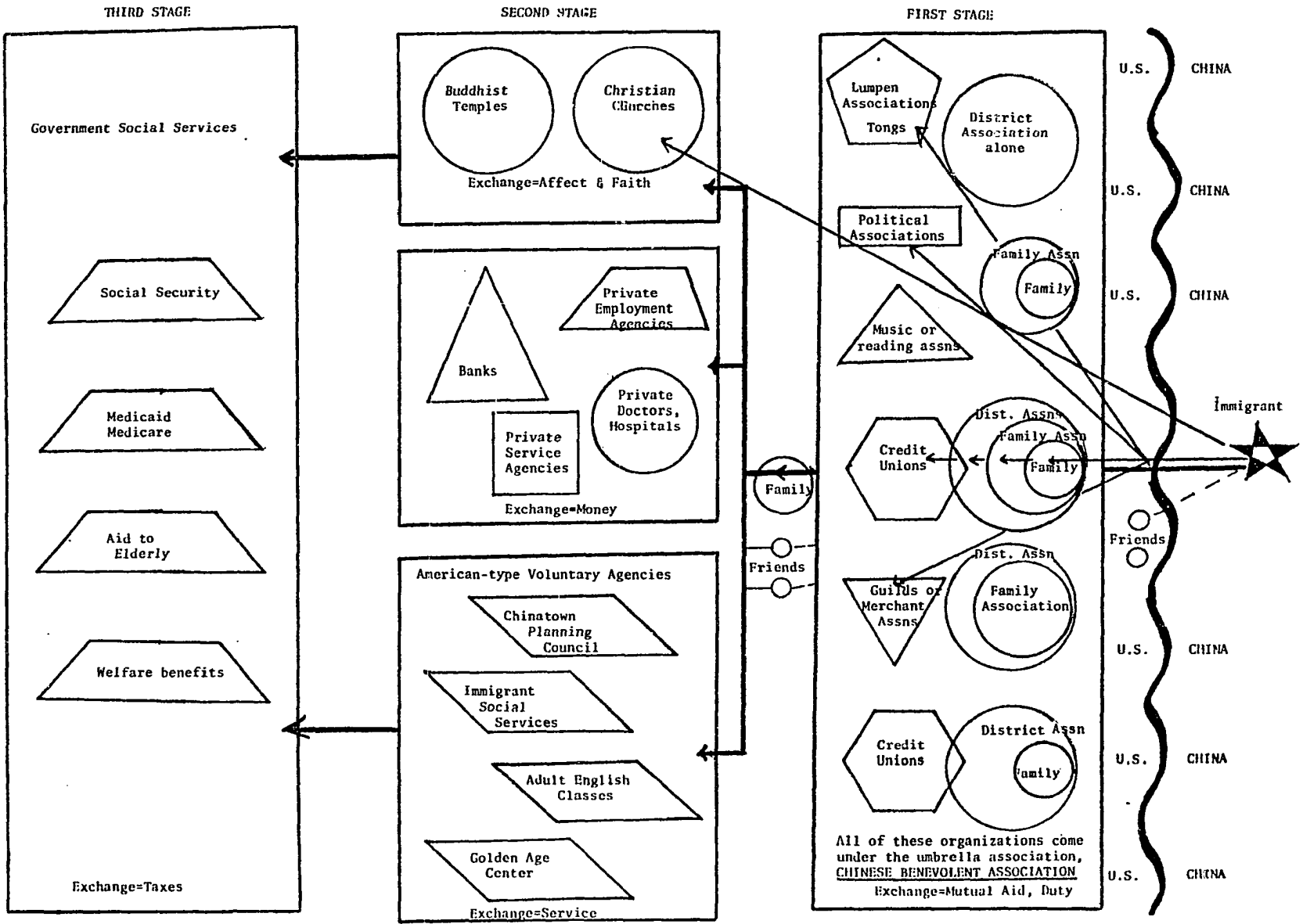
The network links and evolutionary processes can best be explained in graphic form as diagrammed in Graph C. From the extreme right hand side of Graph C, the immigrant crosses the wavy lines of the Pacific Ocean and comes to the United States. The strongest impetus toward his migration invariably is family ties. Friendship is a possibility, but a weak one, hence the broken lines. Friends also remain outside of the first stage network system that the immigrant immediately taps into.

The three vertical boxes represent three stages in time--the past, the present, and the future. In the past, when the immigrant arrived

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GRAPH C

STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN RE-ESTABLISHING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC NETWORK TIES FOR THE CHINESE IMMIGRANT TO THE UNITED STATES



in the United States, he usually contacted his blood relatives or immediate family members. Traditionally the Chinese concept for family differs from the western concept. From the Chinese perspective, family is the kinship group which includes uncles, aunts, cousins, grandfather, grandmother, etc. on the father's side. In a larger context, "family" denotes anyone with the same surname, and there are only 435 surnames for the more than one billion Chinese throughout the world. Some surnames such as Wong, Chin, Lee, Moy, are very common. It is believed that all Wongs descended from one ancestor, so that the incest taboo applies to persons with the same surname. In cities where many Wongs or Lees or Moys resided, family surname associations sprang into existence. So even if the new immigrant did not have an immediate nuclear family to re-establish his social network link, he could plug into his family association for all his needs. His kinsmen would help him find a job, give him food and shelter, provide emotional support, lend him a hand if he needed it, and this help extended to the immigrant's entire social and economic spheres. It was a Wong's duty and obligation to help another Wong, and it was his right to expect such help from his kinsmen. No payment was involved, and there was no squaring of debts. If one Wong was not available, another was. The family associations maintained headquarters in Chinatown, and there were no set hours.

The circles within the first-stage box in Graph C show the variations and combinations of organizations that the new immigrant would contact. Even if he had no surname family ties, he could fall back on district associations, which were based upon hometown ties rather than kinship ones. The district association usually provided him with es-

entially the same social and welfare services as the family association, except that hometown ties were never as strong as kinship ones.

Auxiliary to the family and district associations were special organizations that catered to special needs. The district associations invariably operated simple credit unions for the members to save or borrow money. Guilds and merchants associations served those with commercial and artisan interests. The political associations such as the Kuomintang or Nationalist Party drew adherents to their ideology, and the tongs, controlled the vice trades of gambling, prostitution, and opium.

In most cities, all of these institutions came under the umbrella of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. The CCBA mediated between its member organizations and served as spokesman in any dealings with the larger society. In this type of network and organizational hierarchy, the exchange was mutual aid and duty. It was the obligation of one member to help the other, and it was the expected due of the other to receive help. In this way, the new immigrant re-established ties in a culturally familiar way within his own ethnic group in the foreign land. He did not reach out into the larger American society. In fact contacts outside his own group were few and far between. The reasons for this were both historical and cultural.

By 1882, the Chinese made up a sizable proportion of the population on the West Coast. They were a highly visible racial group and noticeably employed at a time when whites were not. They had replicated a facsimile society to which they confined themselves, so there was little interaction with the host society. These factors, along with a number of other reasons, made them ideal scapegoats for the economic ills of the late nineteenth century. Beginning in 1882, a series of anti-Chi-

nese exclusion acts were passed by Congress, which forbade Chinese from entering the country. Those who were here could remain, but hatred and hostility against them were pronounced. Mob riots against them were common. Discrimination and persecution were institutionalized in the form of laws that said they could not own real estate, they could not intermarry, they could not testify in court, they could not become citizens no matter how long they had been in the country, they could not vote, etc. This atmosphere of hatred and persecution drove the Chinese closer together, for they had little or no recourse to any support outside of their own community. Their network was therefore reinforced and confined primarily to the first box in stage one as depicted in Graph C.

In essence, the Chinese immigrants built their ties upon their family-based culture, but their network was also circumscribed by the hostile larger society. Such networks were perpetuated because Chinese immigration remained small, and also because the nuclear family or rather women and children were missing. Up until recent time, the Chinese population in the United States consisted primarily of young adult males. Deprived of their wives and children, the men naturally sought closer ties to one another within the family association structure.

Increased Immigration

The entire body of discriminatory Chinese exclusion laws were repealed in 1943, but the gesture was tokenism at best. Exclusion was replaced with a quota of 105 per year, which was tantamount to exclusion.

The Chinese population in the United States remained small, and its institutions remained unchanged until the U.S. immigration laws were liberalized in 1965. The Chinese who had been so severely restricted for admission immediately made use of this liberalized quota, and immigration shot up. Chinese population increased dramatically, but the immigration links were still tied mainly to the family. There were exceptions, however, because the immigration laws gave preference to those with skills and education. Individuals with special qualifications could apply to come to this country on their own. Nevertheless, they still had to have someone in this country sponsor them, assure them of employment and support, and vouchsafe that they would not become public charges. Links with someone in the United States had to be established, and they had to be strong links to offer such guarantees.

Social Change

The 1960s were a period of rising ethnic consciousness and improved social climate for civil rights. Concurrent with the liberalized immigration laws, opportunities opened up outside of the ghettos for the Chinese people. For example, the Chinese found credit available to them from private banks. They could utilize private hospitals and look for employment beyond the borders of Chinatown. By and large, the new immigrant waves still came through family links, but they no longer came into a closed community. As more and more immigrants arrived, the facilities and ability of the former institutions were overwhelmed. The characteristics and compositions of the new immigrants were changing as well. Immigrants were not just single adult males but women and children, young and old, educated and skilled, as well as illiterates and

dependents. Families immigrated as units, and family association headquarters could not accommodate them. Family associations, traditionally governed by the elders, were not equipped to deal with the changing conditions. They did not know how to shift gears to deal with a more open society. Sheer numbers and inflexibility rendered these institutions helpless to deal with the myriad problems cropping up in Chinatowns.

The Chinese communities may now be said to be in the second stage of the evolutionary process of re-establishing network ties in the new land. As mentioned previously, the close family links are still present and the friendship link is greater. Beyond the family, the immigrant now has other options, of which the primary one is the private sector located in the middle of Graph C. With money, the immigrant can buy the services he needs. However, he must be more sophisticated or educated to have knowledge of where to go for services and how to tap into them. He must also allocate financial resource to pay for the services. The exchange is impersonal and commercial. Nevertheless, the private sector is the most important link in the immigrant's daily life. The private sector also extends into the larger society.

Religious Organizations

Christian churches have always played an important role in the Chinese communities in the United States, and they have always rendered vital services to the new immigrants. Oftentimes, an immigrant comes through the church link rather than the family link because he is sponsored by the church, hence the direct line linking the Christian churches with the immigrant in China in Graph C. The churches served

the Chinese community in the hopes of converting new adherents to the faith. The Chinese accepted the services with affection and gratitude. There was no exchange of money. The church gave of its services for free. The immigrant went to the church for English language classes, for social events, to seek the pastor's help in getting medical help or other forms of aid, and he did not have to pay, except for the offering placed in the Sunday collection plates.

Buddhist temples are a fairly recent institution in the Chinese communities. Most of them are still store-front operations where statues of the Buddhist gods have been installed and where the faithful go to burn incense and pray. Buddhism does not have priests who minister to the congregation and who provide social services as such. There is, however, the social aspect of belonging and being with others of the same faith.

American-Type Voluntary Associations

What has sprung up in response to the changing social climate and the huge influx of immigrants is the American-type voluntary associations exemplified by the Chinatown Planning Council, the Immigrant Social Services, the Golden Age Center and similar organizations in New York's Chinatown. The organizations listed in the bottom box of the second stage in Graph C are but examples. These organizations are of very recent vintage. The huge increase in Chinese immigration brought about problems that were overwhelming the associations' ability to handle them. The larger society, saddled with the myth that the Chinese always took care of their own, ignored the whole situation. Each day new immigrants arrived who needed help in getting settled, in finding

Jobs, in trying to learn a new language, in caring for their children while at work, in learning about the American way of doing things, in finding out where places are and how to get there. As mentioned previously, the immigrants often arrived as family units, and the ability of the immediate kinship family to help a group rather than an individual was limited.

Sensitive and concerned about the problems multiplying in the community, a group of American-born Chinese professionals sought to find means of dealing with them. They appealed to the elders in the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, but found them inept and unresponsive. Having been brought up in the United States, the young professionals sought American solutions to their problems. They wrote proposals to governmental agencies and private foundations for funding with which to set up social service agencies staffed by professionals and paid personnel. In many ways, these agencies have been dealing with the most pressing problems facing the newly arrived immigrant. They maintain English language classes, day-care centers, employment referral services, health clinics, old-age centers, recreational programs for youth, housing referral service, etc. All of these services are vitally needed and utilized, and the services are free, so that the exchange is one-way street without some recompense to the agency to enable it to continue to provide service. The agencies are staffed and paid from grants. There is no membership or grassroots base in the community so that there is little loyalty and identification with the programs. Until recently the expense of providing service was borne

almost entirely by the government and philanthropic sources.¹⁴

Those who are familiar with how government funding and private grants operate realize that funding is uncertain from year to year, and a three-year time limit is the maximum for social programs. Then the agency director must scrounge around immediately for funds to keep going. Such uncertainties are not conducive to a feeling of permanency or security, and the realities are that the sources of funding may soon run dry. Then the entire structure of social service programs will come tumbling down, catapulting the entire task into the third stage--government social services.

In many respects, the third stage has already been entered. Oftentimes the voluntary agencies merely act as intermediaries for services from the government. They help the elderly fill out forms for medicaid or social security benefits. They refer the sick and indigent to the free health clinics. They help the families enter their children in school or place them, if needed, in institutional care. They show the poor how to apply for food stamps. The agencies are able to better serve the community in that they are staffed with bilingual personnel who speak the language and understand the customs of their clients. Thus, they provide a very essential link to the third stage process.

Government Social Services

In many respects, the means of meeting social and economic needs of the Chinese community is following along the lines of the American

14. With government funding severely cut back in the 1980s fund-raising projects in the community have been rather successful in maintaining on-going programs.

one. Without question, the satisfaction of social and economic needs of the average American is primarily in the private sector, but the role of the family has declined. A son, faced with a personal problem, would go to a psychiatrist rather than talk it over with his father or his priest. The role of the church is shrinking as well. Not only is church membership declining, the way churches deal with their parishioners is also changing. More and more they, too, are referring those who come to them for help to private professionals or to government agencies rather than provide the counseling or service themselves.

The exchange for services provided by the government is taxes, paid by all. Certainly, if the Chinese community pays taxes, then it is entitled to its share of the services. Unfortunately, the newly arrived immigrants, trying to re-establish contact in this country, does not understand how the American system works. He does not know what services are available or how to avail himself of them. The common feeling is that government services are dole, and the Chinese is yet reluctant to accept help from such a source. The realities of the situation may soon be that no other sources will be available to those in need except that through government social services, and if the immigrant is spatially and culturally removed from these institutions, he may have little or no access to help at all.

Is it possible to go back to the first stage and re-activate the family associations or ethnic organizations? That may be going against the tide, as the trend in the United States is toward more individualism and less toward family orientation. And if options are open to the Chinese in the larger society, the immigrant will inexorably be drawn

away from community organizations because they do not fit the exigencies of American life. The voluntary agencies that are serving the immigrants in Chinatown today are performing a vital service. Perhaps they can be restructured so that they will put down roots in the community and start raising private funds, or they can be given permanent funding from governmental sources based on satisfactory performance. Certainly the services rendered in this manner cannot be less efficient or less effective than if they were taken over and assumed by the more remote, impersonal, and unfamiliar government agencies.

Meeting the Needs of Children

In a community that had few children previously, it was natural that most organizations catered to the needs of adults who were predominantly men. Now that the community is more evenly distributed in terms of age and gender, the needs of these groups must also be taken into consideration. The most important concession to the presence of children and the fact of working mothers is the day-care center. Many of these have been established, but more are needed. Recreational facilities are sorely lacking, but no attention has been paid to this problem at all. Youth gangs have terrorized the community, and the community has been helpless. These issues will be explored more fully in later chapters.

Functions of Chinatown

Chinatown is a community of people interacting with one another. It has a history, tradition, and social structure bound together with strong emotional and cultural ties. It has a long list of diverse functions that will perpetuate its existence. Among its functions are as a center

of ethnic identity for all Chinese in the larger metropolitan area; as a marketplace; as a social gathering place; as a residence; as a place of employment; as a recreational, educational, and religious center; as an industrial area; and most unique of all, as a tourist attraction.

Ethnic Identity. New York's Chinatown not only serves those Chinese people within its own boundaries, but it attracts Chinese from the tri-state area of New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey, and also those from towns up and down the East Coast. A prospective borrower at a Chinatown bank was overheard saying that he was from Miami, Florida. Asked why he did not do business with a local bank, he said, "I don't know to deal with them. It's comforting to know that there is a place where one can go to mingle with one's own people, to renew one's ethnic ties, to relieve one's "homesickness," and to be one's own self. Anyone who has traveled abroad will recognize the feeling that although it was fun to be away, there's no place like home. Even though the place is dirty, crowded, unsafe, and not a desirable place to live in, one still gets a sense of belonging that comes with a trip to Chinatown.

Marketplace and Social Gathering Place. In Southern China, few goods are bought and sold in stores. Every five days, there is a market day and people from the surrounding area bring their goods to the open marketplace to be sold. The market square is crowded and noisy with people haggling over the prices at the top of their lungs. There is jostling and pushing but also merriment and socializing. The transactions are swift. By sundown, the market square is empty.

In New York's Chinatown, market day is Sunday. Tens of thousands of Chinese swarm into the area to replenish the groceries for the week,

to stock up on supplies needed in their business, to eat in the restaurants, and, of course, to see friends or relatives, go to the movies or book stores, visit the family association headquarters, attend a wedding, or even see the doctor. The sales volume in the exchange of goods and services is high. The Chinese reserve their shopping for Chinatown.

Residence. Many Chinatowns throughout the United States have only a few Chinese actually living within its borders. For example, less than one-tenth of Boston's Chinese live in the vicinity of its Chinatown. A smaller fraction of Washington, D.C.'s Chinese live in the one- or two-block area of Seventh and H Streets, N.W. They are widely scattered throughout the district and its suburbs. Only the Chinatowns of San Francisco and New York have heavy concentrations of Chinese actually living within their boundaries. This concentration is especially pronounced in New York, where in 1970 approximately three-fourths of the Chinese in Manhattan lived in a contiguous area adjacent to the core Chinatown. Therefore Chinatown is their neighborhood, their community, and their home, and home has sentimental overtones and emotional attachments.

Educational, Recreational, and Religious Center. Mention has already been made of the movie houses, teahouses, clubs, family associations, book stores, and restaurants that draw the Chinese to Chinatown for recreation. For those who would have their children retain their language, there are Chinese schools, and for those who need to learn English, there are English classes. Altogether, twenty Christian churches, missions, or sects hold services or meetings in Chinatown, and four Buddhist temples

can be found there as well.¹⁵ Although many among these worshippers are devout, many others utilize the church and temples largely for social purposes, as places where members can meet in fellowship.

Place of Employment. Over 300 restaurants and 350 garment factories provide employment to thousands of men and women within the narrow confines of Chinatown. The large numbers of restaurants and factories indicate that they are small in size and probably operating on slim profit margins. Yet they are sources of jobs. Two other major types of small business enterprises are the grocery stores and gift shops.

Tourist Attraction. Both the gift shops and the restaurants cater to the thousands of tourists who are drawn to a "little Cathay" in the midst of a bustling American metropolis. Each day, sightseeing buses disgorge thousands of out-of-towners who are in New York on business trips or vacations. Local New Yorkers also come regularly for the food and exoticism. The public schools regularly schedule class trips to Chinatown. The residents of Chinatown sometimes get annoyed at being gawked at and having cameras shoved in their faces, but they also realize that the tourist dollar is an important factor in Chinatown's economy and in the city's economy as well, for tourism is the No. One Industry in New York.

Factionalism

There are commonalities that bind the Chinese community together, but there are differences that divide as well. The splits are along the lines of older versus newer immigrants; American-born versus foreign-born; Cantonese-speaking versus Mandarin-speaking; the Nationalist or

15. "Handbook for Chinese in New York," (December 1978) (in Chinese).

pro-Taiwan faction versus the pro-Communist faction; the vested interests versus the working class; the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association versus the Chinatown Planning Council; and the conservative reactionaries versus the radical activists.

The older immigrants had a headstart and are now comfortably ensconced in businesses and positions of influence and status in the community. In numbers they are the minority, but they call the tune while the newcomers must dance to it. The corps of newcomers is increasing so rapidly that it may dislodge the old timers in due time.

In times past, the American-born Chinese would move out of Chinatown as soon as possible, but ethnic consciousness and ethnic pride have altered that movement somewhat. Some young American-borns are coming back into the community to live, and they want to make it a better place. They want to replace the traditional Chinese ways with the more democratic American ways. They have little use for the elders who do not accept change readily. The young American-borns are impatient. Most do not speak Chinese in any dialect. They feel that the traditional Chinatown organizations are not responsive to the needs of the young or the newcomer. Yet, their concerns do not dovetail with those of the newcomers. They want to oust the elders and step into the positions of authority, but they have neither the resources nor the cunning to play Chinatown politics, so invariably they are cut down to size, outsmarted, or themselves ousted.

The struggle between the young and the elders has been going on since the 1960s. At first, the frustrations of the young ran high, but

as of this writing, many of the younger Chinese, now in their late twenties or thirties have managed to get into positions of responsibility and are effecting rapid changes.

The majority of the Chinese in New York's Chinatown speak the dialects of Toishan or Canton. Speakers of these two dialects can understand one another, but the Mandarin dialect is another story. The Mandarin-speaking person is regarded by the Cantonese and the Toishanese as an outsider. In many instances, the only means of communication is in English. Recently, cleavages along the lines of dialect have multiplied as people from Shanghai, Fukien, Chung Shan, Hakka, and other places arrive in the community. Those who are educated will speak a common dialect akin to the Mandarin. Fortunately, the written language is the same, so that the newspapers are written in a script common to all Chinese. But distrust and non-acceptance of the Mandarin-speaking person in Chinatown is widespread. Doing business in the community is more difficult for the Mandarin-speaker because he does not have the fraternal or family association ties that help the Cantonese.

Chinese Politics. The most divisive issue in the Chinese community exists between the opposing camps of the pro-Nationalist or pro-Chiang faction of Taiwan and the pro-Mainland China faction. The pro-Mainlanders are not necessarily pro-Mao or pro-communist in sympathies, although many are, but they are more realistic than the pro-Nationalists and want to identify with a government that is growing in international prestige and stature. The pro-Nationalists are die-hard anti-communists and loyal supporters of the late Chiang Kai-shek and now his son, Chiang Ching Kuo. The overseas Chinese have traditionally supported the Nationalist party

since its founding by Dr. Sun Yat Sen when he overthrew the Manchu Dynasty. When the Nationalists fled to Taiwan in 1949, they came to rely heavily upon the Chinese in the United States to retain their position in the eyes of the United States government. And reciprocally, the Chinese in the United States looked to the Nationalists as their identification with a non-communist government, particularly during the Korean War period, for to do otherwise would have drawn upon them the hostility of the American people. Many Chinese during that period wore buttons that proclaimed, "I am Nationalist Chinese."

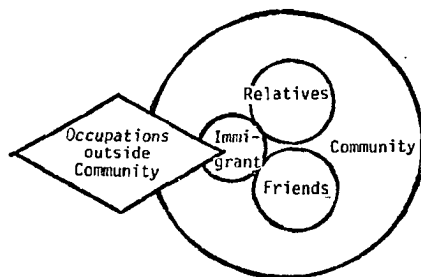
The stream of refugees that left China during the Fifties and Sixties continued to be strongly anti-communist; these were the people whose property had been confiscated and who were persecuted during the struggles of the "anti" campaigns and the Cultural Revolution. The local villagers and cadres saw the overseas Chinese families as the propertied class, but they did not realize what sufferings these Chinese abroad had to endure to be able to accumulate their savings to buy their land. The overseas Chinese families were treated as rich landlords and made the objects of attack and abuse. If the families were able to escape to Hong Kong and eventually to the United States, they joined the ranks of those who were vehemently anti-communist.

The younger students who had studied in the Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese schools had been exposed to the more progressive ideology of the Chinese communists. They came imbued with attitudes different from those of their parents and they gravitated toward the left and identified with communist China. The turbulent period of the late 1960s and early 1970s brought the American-born youth back into Chinatown to rally

against the Vietnam War, which they saw as a racist war against Asians.

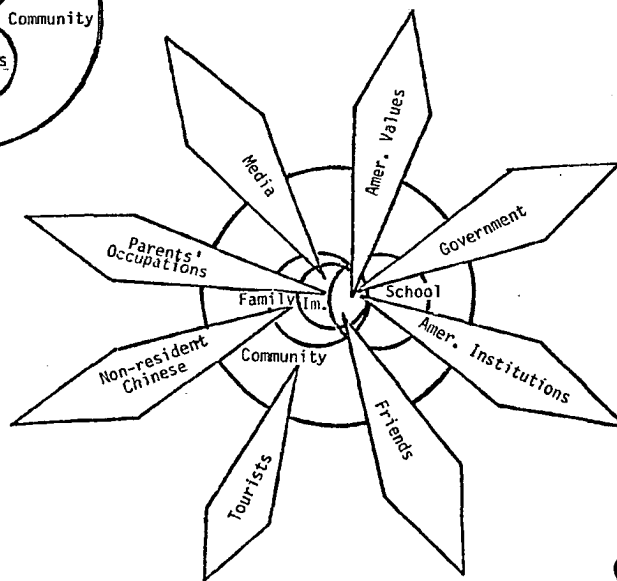
It was during this time that emotions revolving around Chinese politics ran deepest. In Chinatown, the Nationalist faction retained absolute control. Merely to label someone as "Communist" or "Leftist" was to smear his name, affect his business, and cause him to lose many friends and contacts. As a result, the circumspect Chinese tried to steer clear of Chinese politics regardless of their own personal convictions.

Richard Nixon's trip to China in 1973 legitimized pro-Mainland sentiments among the Chinese in the United States. They felt that if the President of the United States could reach out in a gesture of friendship with China, then it was not anti-American or subversive for them to do so. On December 15, 1978, in a surprise nation-wide broadcast to the American people, President Jimmy Carter announced recognition by the United States of the People's Republic of China. The step ended thirty years of isolation and alienation of a nation that contains one-fourth of the world's population. After Premier Deng Xiaoping came on a state visit to the United States in January 1979, Chinese goods have been found everywhere in Chinatown stores in great variety and great abundance. Chinese Americans are rushing to visit their homeland, and even the staunchest Nationalist supporters have moderated their stance. The political schism remains, but it is hoped that with the improved international relations between the two countries, the Chinese in the United States will no longer feel schizophrenic about their ethnic loyalties.

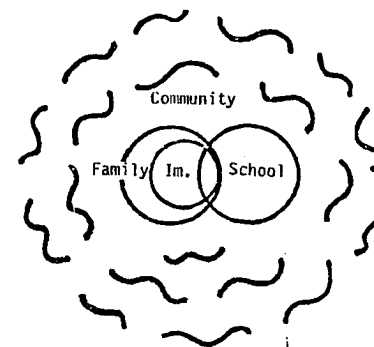


Left: In the past, Chinatown was a closed community brought about by residential exclusion and racial discrimination on the part of the larger society and by self-segregation on the part of the Chinese. The community contained few children and few families. Most members were adult males who worked, by and large, outside the community but whose private lives and social contacts took place almost exclusively within the Chinese community. American institutions, values, government, and media had little impact.

Right: Chinatown is a well-defined community with boundaries and structure but it is no longer a closed society. The immigrant child, represented by the circle in the center, is located totally within the family, but at the same time, more than half of his/her socialization takes place within the school. The government, American institutions and values reach the child through the school but also impact upon the community. The media, tourists, friends, and non-resident Chinese provide extensive contacts with the larger society. Many parents work outside the community.



Right: Satellite Chinatowns are new formations where Chinese prefer to live in proximity to one another. The immigrant child, represented by the circle in the center, is socialized both by the family and the school, but the community is an ill-defined one. It has a locale, but is loosely structured. Influences from the larger society have penetrated from all sides.



GRAPH D

EVOLUTIONARY STAGES OF
CHINESE COMMUNITIES

Satellite Chinatowns

Graph D is a representation of three types of Chinese communities. The one at the top to the extreme left is typical of former Chinatowns that were isolated and insulated. They existed within American society but were not part of it. Most of the members worked outside of the community, but their private lives took place almost exclusively within the Chinese community.

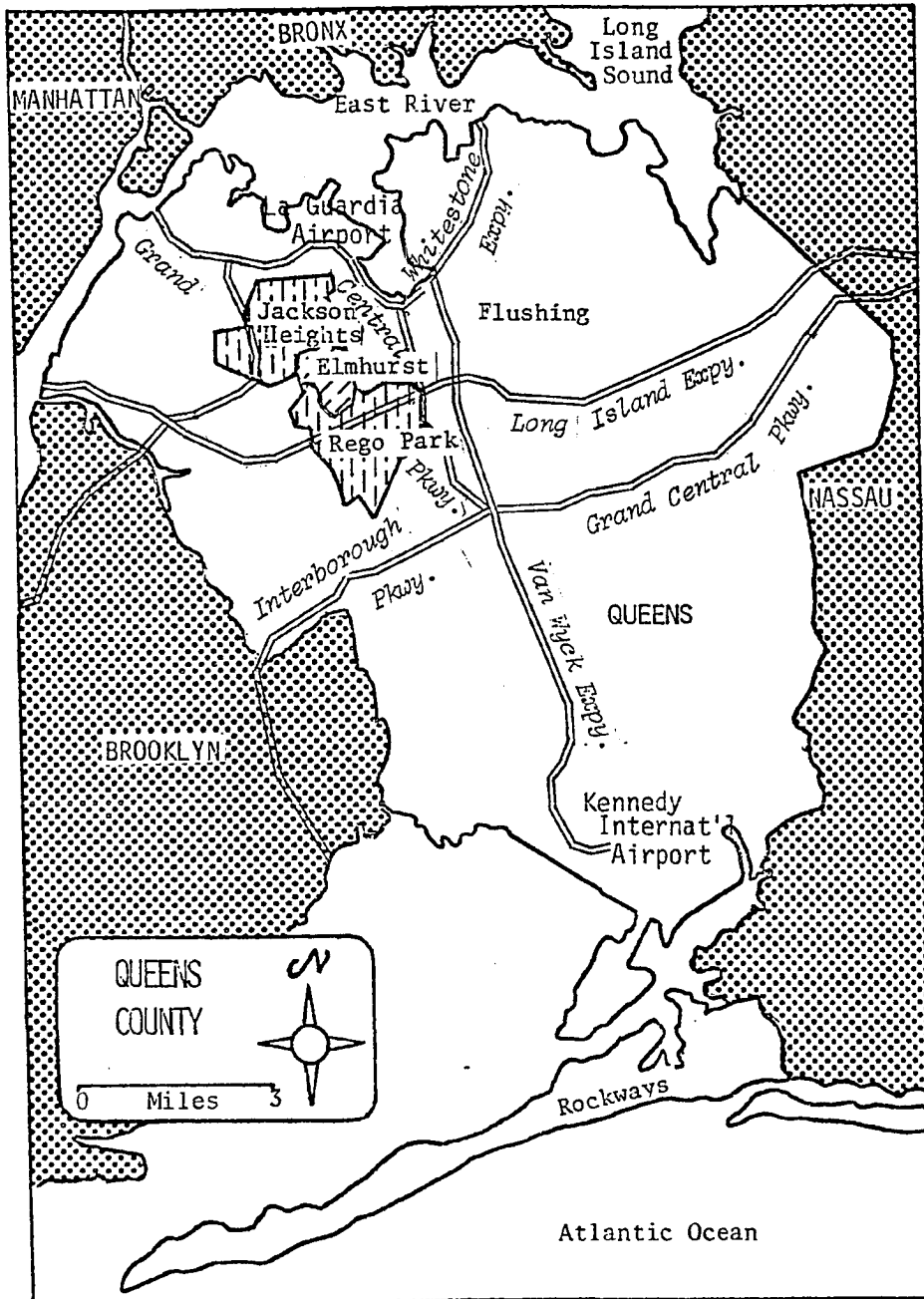
The center configuration represents Chinatown in New York City today. It is a well-defined community with boundaries and structure, but it is being penetrated from all sides by the government, American values and institutions, the media, tourists, and friends and Chinese residing outside the community. The family and school are within the community, but all are impacted by outside forces and influences. Yet the community remains a viable entity.

Satellite Chinatowns, represented by the third configuration, are new formations where Chinese prefer to live in proximity to one another. The communities are ill-defined, but they do have a locale. There is little structure or organization, and the communities are characterized by a loose sense of common identity and common culture. There are several pockets of high Chinese concentration in the New York metropolitan area. One of these is in upper Manhattan near Columbia University. Two others are in Brooklyn near Prospect Park and in the Bay Ridge area. Two more are found in the borough of Queens.

One of these Queens communities, indicated on Map 2 as the shaded area is being paired with New York's Chinatown for our study because it has the second highest concentration of Chinese population in the city.

Map 2

SATELLITE CHINATOWN IN QUEENS COUNTY, NEW YORK
Elmhurst, Rego Park, Jackson-Heights

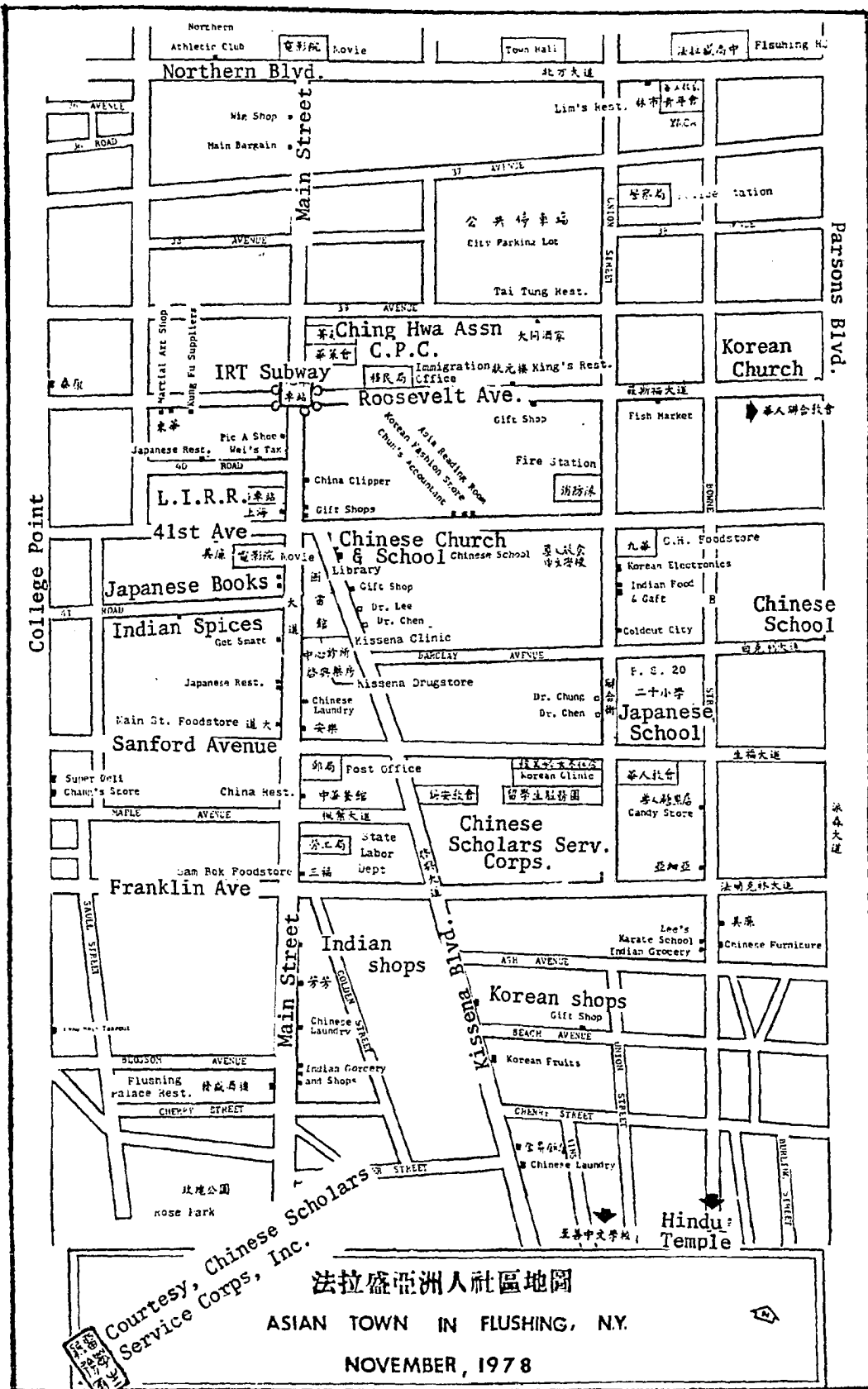


We are studying Chinatown and this satellite community to see if place of residence has any effect on the adjustment of immigrant children. The core area of the satellite is called Elmhurst, but the Chinese have also spread into Jackson Heights and Rego Park. These so-called towns in Queens county have no distinct boundaries--they just blend into one another to form one continuous expanse. One side of the street may be Elmhurst, whereas the other side may be Jackson Heights. Flushing, the second satellite community in Queens, about four or five miles to the east, is also rapidly gaining in Chinese population, but is comprised of, in addition, diverse groups of Asian peoples from Japan, Korea, India, and Vietnam. (See Map 3.) Flushing has been labeled, perhaps more accurately, Asian Town.

Elmhurst is reached by subway from Manhattan on the IRT line. Forty-five minutes would be sufficient to ride into Manhattan's Chinatown and much less time is needed to get to mid-town. Jackson Heights is one long stretch of high-rise apartment houses. Elmhurst is a neighborhood of one-, two-, and three-family homes. Rego Park along the Long Island Expressway, has some private homes, but apartment houses predominate. The population of this region is extremely dense. It is a bedroom community where most of the inhabitants go into Manhattan during the day and come back to sleep at night.

Home Ownership

The Chinese started moving into Elmhurst around the late 1960s. According to Mr. Howard Tom, one of the first residents to move into the neighborhood, only three or four Chinese families were around at that



time. Row upon row of new two- and three-family brick homes had been built and put up for sale. The first few Chinese families spread the word to their families and friends, and the houses were snapped up quickly by other Chinese. The price of the houses at that time was about \$50,000 for an attached row house with a six-room apartment on each of the upper floors and a three-room unit and garage on the ground floor. Some owners quickly converted the three rooms to another rental unit. They would live on the second level, rent out the top and bottom units, and live practically rent free in a brand new brick house.

The idea appealed to the thrifty Chinese. Not only were they indulging their intense wish to own a private house, they were also living rent-free and accumulating items deductible from their income tax. In many instances they were collecting more rent than they were paying in mortgage payments and maintenance. Moreover, they were only a one-fare subway ride from Chinatown. These very same houses have tripled in value within the last two decades. As more and more Chinese moved into the neighborhood, others followed suit in a snowball effect because they felt more secure about moving out into the suburbs when there are enough of their own kind to bolster their courage. This is a distinctive feature of Chinese mobility, whether in residence or in jobs. They tend to move in groups.

Ethnic Composition

Population figures from the census for the years 1970 and 1980 for this neighborhood are not comparable. As of this writing, figures for Asians, a more inclusive term, from the 1980 census are available,

but the breakdown for Chinese has not been released. Therefore, the numbers set forth in Table 5-2 serve only as a general indicator of population growth.

TABLE 5-2
CHINESE AND ASIAN POPULATION BY CENSUS
TRACT FOR SATELLITE CHINESE COMMUNITY, 1970 and 1980

Census Tract	1970 Chinese	1980 Asians
267	116	1,483
269	112	1,562
271	133	1,486
309.01	223	868
309.02	474	1,076
467	109	941
469	170	1,628
473	144	902

SOURCE: U.S. Census 1970, 1980

We can fall back on the neighborhood high school student population figures for some guidelines, but again, attention is called to the fact that white ethnics have fewer children in school than the other groups. (See Table 5-3.) Although the white student population shrank from 62 percent to 26 percent from 1971 to 1979, the area is still a predominantly white neighborhood with the largest increase among Hispanics other than Puerto Ricans. Hispanics as defined here include persons from the Caribbean and Latin America. The Asians in this tabulation include increasing numbers of Koreans, Japanese, and East Indians.

TABLE 5-3

HIGH SCHOOL IN SATELLITE CHINESE COMMUNITY
STUDENT POPULATION BY ETHNIC GROUP

	1971	1976	1979
Whites	62%	38%	26%
Blacks	9	16	12
Asians	3	10	16
Puerto Ricans	2	5	} 45
Other Hispanics	23	32	

SOURCE: High School Ethnic Survey

Although the neighborhood contains a high concentration of Chinese they are by no means the dominant group. In fact, the area is quite cosmopolitan except for an area of about four to five blocks, within which most of the houses are Chinese-occupied. Others are not far away, and there is the convenience of Chinese grocery stores. Two Christian churches with Chinese congregations of 200 to 300 are well established in the neighborhood, more as a social rather than religious magnet.

The Elmhurst-Jackson Heights-Rego Park community is primarily a residential neighborhood for the large numbers of Chinese who live there. The only telltale signs of its Chinese population are the few groceries that sell Chinese foodstuff along Broadway and the many Chinese faces near the subway station. There is no distinctive architecture. There is no social structure, nor are there any institutions to give the community cohesion. Certainly there are no tourists nor large numbers of outsiders who visit for purposes of recreation or education. The two churches, however, do draw Chinese worshipers from other parts of Queens County. There are no social service agencies in the Elmhurst community

although some have sprung up in Flushing, a short subway ride away and site of Asian Town.

Being a community of mostly private homes and family dwellings, the environs are more appropriate to rearing children than is the urban setting of Chinatown. There are front and backyards in the homes and most of the streets are lined with trees and shrubs. Although people are stacked on top of one another in the high-rise apartment houses, the feeling of congestion is not as intense as that in Manhattan's Chinatown. And, of course, the traffic volume is much, much lower, and playing in the streets and on the sidewalks is safe for the children.

Our research shows that the Elmhurst residents fall into three main categories: American-born Chinese, old timers who have the financial resources and the courage to move away from Chinatown, and newcomers with higher educational and socioeconomic backgrounds than those who settled in Chinatown. These newcomers tend not to be Cantonese. They come mostly from Taiwan and speak Mandarin with some basic knowledge of English. They are better off financially than those heading for Chinatown, having migrated with some money. Home ownership requires a large initial down payment, and rentals in the high-rise apartments are more expensive than are those in Chinatown. It is important to keep in mind the higher socioeconomic background of the satellite community residents in comparative analysis of the data.

Conclusion

The communities chosen for our study have been described in great detail as regards racial mix, physical environs and conditions, the economy, community organizations, and the interpersonal factors that separate

or bind a people together. These facts and details are necessary for the proper understanding of the processes by which recent immigrants relate to the community and interact with one another. For example, the fact that the Chinese are the dominant ethnic group in numbers in Chinatown means that the minority experience is modulated, but the presence of other racial groups is still a new factor to contend with. Even in the satellite community, there is the comfort in numbers when the children go out to play in the streets or when they go to school. They are not thrust into the midst of totally strange faces all at once.

It is obvious that the physical environs of Manhattan's Chinatown are not very desirable for the rearing of children. The housing is crowded and dilapidated; the recreational facilities are minimal; and the traffic is dangerous. Yet, the presence of much that is familiar in an ethnic community makes the transition from the homeland to the United States a more gradual one. Satellite Chinatowns may be the answer to better housing and surroundings while at the same time providing the sense of comfort and security that comes with being among one's own kind. In effect, the satellites are an example of adaptation and social change.

The availability of social services for the new immigrants in Chinatown is a tremendous help to the newcomer. Again, we see how the new ways of mutual aid are grafted onto the old. The dependence upon family and kin and the social structure of kinship organizations are slowly shifting toward voluntary agencies and bought services. Even these can now be seen as a transitional phase toward greater government assumption of social services.

The most important service rendered by the Chinatown community is the strong economic base it has created in its businesses and industries, thus generating employment for the newly arrived immigrants. It has capitalized on its renown cuisine, so that more than 300 restaurants provide jobs for many thousands. The exoticism and cultural distinctiveness of the Far East found in the midst of New York draw tourists by the busloads, and the gift shops thrive on the tourism. The garment industry--a hand-me-down from former immigrant groups--was taken over by the Chinese and now is the economic backbone of the community. Without these jobs, the Chinese immigrants might indeed experience severe financial problems and greater adjustment trauma.

Chinatown residents, including the children as well, cannot help but feel the pull between the political factions, the differences between the American-born and the foreign-born, the gap between the Cantonese-speaking and the Mandarin-speaking, and the power play between the Chinese Benevolent Association and the Chinatown Planning Council. Such conflicts are divisive and stressful, but according to Coser,¹⁶ they may be a constructive working out of differences leading in the long run to change for the better. From this researcher's point of the view, the differences are a healthy indicator that the residents care enough to work toward solutions of problems in their community. The history of ethnic communities in the United States is usually one of decline and demise resulting from the residents moving out rather than their staying and resolving the problems. The satellite Chinatowns may be seen as a change in locale, as a vent for

16. Lewis Coser. Functions of Social Conflict (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1956).

the overflow of population; or as a parceling out of the functions normally performed by the parent Chinatown.

It is difficult to separate the children from their families in assessing the transitional functions of ethnic communities. Children must reside where their parents decide, and the parents need what Milton Gordon calls a "decompression chamber in which newcomers, at their own pace, could make a workable adjustment to American society."¹⁷ However, the decompression chambers are no longer airtight. They are penetrated from all sides and from every direction. These outside influences impact more heavily upon the children than upon the adults. At first, the children may be cushioned against the culture shock, but in time, they will experience the conflicts that comes from straddling two cultures.

17. Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) pp. 105-106.

CHAPTER VI: THE SCHOOL--ENROLLMENT AND PROFILES

Of the three dominant spheres circumscribing the Chinese immigrant child's life--the community, the school, and the family--the school is by far the most pervasive and important. Compulsory education laws decree that the child spend at least six hours in school each day, and if meals and afterschool activities are taken into account, the hours are even longer. Generally the community affects the child indirectly, while the role of the family--in the Chinese immigrant family at least, as we shall note--is diminishing. The school remains the primary socializing institution, for it immediately takes the immigrant child under its wings and tries to educate, mold, and shape that child at all entry levels from kindergarten through high school.

Scope

In the next few chapters, and in the absence of up-to-date demographic data, we shall try to extrapolate the Chinese population in the five boroughs of New York City from the annual ethnic student censuses. We will look at the school set-up and environment, so that we can properly assess the backdrop against which the immigrant children try to learn. The primary focus, of course, is on the process or the actual experience

of the children as they try to adapt to a new language, new cultural values, a bicultural identity, a multi-racial social milieu, and strange faces all at once. To meet these special needs, the schools have devised programs such as bilingual education, and we will present these programs as they are set up to see if they help or hinder immigrant children in their adaptation as well as in their learning. Finally we shall examine the school record of these children to see if there are any symptoms of maladjustment. The indicators of their school performance shall be attendance, grades, conduct, dropout rate, graduation rate, and college admission rate. As noted previously the field work in the collection of these data was done over a two and a half year period from 1976 to 1979.

Demographic Data

The paucity of demographic data on the Chinese in New York has been noted. The 1970 census that provided the last official figures is already woefully outdated, and no intercensal projections are available. The Current Population Survey has only recently made an attempt to include Asians in its sampling, and the cumulative sample is not large enough to provide any degree of reliability in the data. The 1980 census has been taken, but the figures have not been tabulated or published as of this writing. When the fieldwork for this research began, census-enumeration day in 1980 was several years away, and it was necessary to obtain some idea of the number of Chinese children in New York City.

When figures are not provided, one must try to piece together information along some rational lines. This was attempted by utilizing the ethnic student censuses taken annually by the New York City Board of

Education, a centralized agency that administers the city's network of public schools. By taking the annual reports and culling from each the figures for Asian students, the number of Asian or Oriental¹ students was obtained. The problem remained of identifying Chinese students from the Asians since Asian and Chinese are not synonymous. Since no breakdown was provided, an extrapolation of the Asian student enrollment could be obtained by applying the ratio of Chinese to Asians in the 1970 census. That proportion was roughly five-sixths; in other words, the Chinese made up five out of every six Asians enumerated in 1970 or 75,000 out of 90,000.² However this five-sixth ratio may be too large for the latter years of the 1970 decade because Koreans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, and East Indians now make up substantially more of the Asian population.

By 1983, the Census Bureau will have tabulated and published demographic data on the Chinese in New York City, but the above process was described and outlined to show that reasonable approximations are possible in a roundabout fashion when data are lacking. In this study, the separating out of Chinese students from Asians was not done because the factor of five-sixths was inexact. Readers are cautioned to distinguish between "Asian" and "Chinese" when data are presented.

Table 6-1 shows Asian children enrolled in New York City schools for the five boroughs and by school level or type of school for a ten-year period from 1970 to 1979. In addition to telling us how many Asian

1. There was no consistency in the use of "Oriental" or "Asians" by the schools and the Board of Education. These terms seemed to be used interchangeably.
2. U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population, New York State, 1970 (PC)1 B34.

children are enrolled and revealing the spectacular increase that has come about, the data reveal a population distribution pattern as well as school-age cohorts. By 1976, the borough of Queens had outstripped Manhattan in the number of Asian students, and by 1979 Queens had pulled far ahead. The Asian student population in Manhattan seems to be leveling out; there was only a 24 percent increase over a ten-year period whereas Brooklyn's Asian student population more than doubled and Queens' Asian student population more than tripled. Every borough increased its Asian student population substantially. This means that Asian families are moving away from the central core of the city and that Asians are as much dispersed as they are concentrated.

Using grade level as an indication of age cohort, one finds an inversion in numbers between junior high and high school. High school students outnumbered junior high students by a substantial margin, and this inversion was apparent by the mid 1970s. The birth rate among the Chinese has been declining, but the inversion is extremely puzzling and without plausible explanation.

Student Population Distribution

An even more detailed breakdown--Asian students enrolled by school districts--is given in Tables 6-2 through 6-6. Map 4 outlines the school districts. By matching enrollment figures with the districts, one can obtain a fairly good picture of Asian population concentration and dispersion. These tables were constructed by aggregating Asian student enrollment school by school and placing them within the district boundaries. In actuality, high schools are not considered within the school districts that they have been placed in these tables. For our purposes

MAP 4
SCHOOL DISTRICTS
NEW YORK CITY

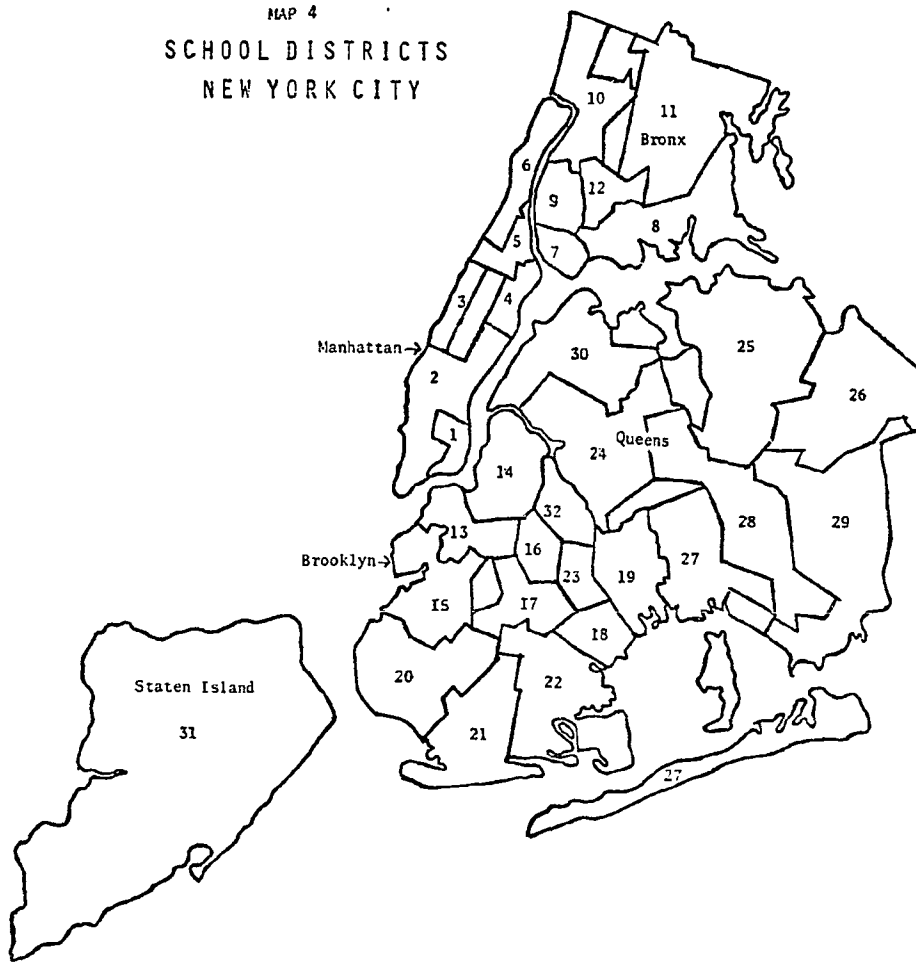


TABLE 6-1
ASIAN CHILDREN ENROLLED IN NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS, 1970-1972

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
MANHATTAN										
Elementary	7,828	8,155	8,361	8,594	8,622	8,812	9,407	9,332	9,150	9,740
JHS/Interm.	4,419	4,552	4,489	4,496	4,462	4,371	4,743	4,658	4,588	4,532
Academic Hi	1,755	1,785	1,889	1,923	1,875	1,968	2,068	2,034	1,845	1,838
Voc/Spec.Sch.	1,460	1,597	1,758	1,917	1,944	2,109	2,138	1,997	2,031	2,506
	194	221	225	258	341	364	450	643	686	864
BRONX										
Elementary	1,615	1,821	1,999	2,076	2,026	1,802	2,239	2,431	2,673	3,035
JHS/Interm.	922	1,038	1,140	1,177	1,157	973	1,180	1,217	1,397	1,445
Academic Hi	307	346	414	421	380	339	369	426	456	501
Voc/Spec.Sch.	374	424	431	463	468	472	675	755	776	1,041
	12	13	14	15	21	18	15	33	44	48
BROOKLYN										
Elementary	3,430	3,767	4,202	4,587	5,019	5,367	5,703	6,651	6,727	7,515
JHS/Interm.	1,725	1,825	1,932	2,102	2,256	2,362	2,552	3,016	3,056	3,305
Academic Hi	634	664	805	880	921	965	990	1,283	1,138	1,271
Voc/Spec.Sch.	913	1,120	1,328	1,474	1,652	1,751	1,951	2,138	2,248	2,642
	158	158	137	131	190	289	210	214	285	297
QUEENS										
Elementary	4,351	4,829	5,485	6,311	7,067	7,715	9,709	11,169	12,919	15,026
JHS/Interm.	2,717	2,982	3,326	3,732	4,130	4,408	5,713	6,635	7,750	8,581
Academic Hi	800	850	1,054	1,234	1,504	1,609	1,993	2,176	2,459	2,962
Voc/Spec.Sch.	754	889	985	1,196	1,268	1,516	1,820	2,099	2,415	3,130
	80	108	120	149	165	182	183	259	295	353
STATEN ISLAND										
Elementary	245	321	360	464	518	581	766	825	908	1,023
JHS/Interm.	162	218	240	314	325	390	497	524	530	549
Academic Hi	32	53	56	85	92	103	127	145	193	186
Voc/Spec.Sch.	49	49	59	60	83	70	114	144	171	204
	2	1	5	5	18	18	28	12	14	84
CITY WIDE TOTAL	17,491	18,931	20,452	22,067	23,252	24,277	27,824	30,408	32,377	36,339

TABLE 6-2

ASIAN PUPILS ENROLLED IN MANHATTAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY LEVEL, 1970-1979

District & Level	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
DISTRICT 1	899	955	924	979	931	931	880	890	801	842
Elementary	502	555	540	567	547	547	511	468	442	455
JHS/Interm.	397	400	384	412	384	384	369	422	359	387
Acad. Hi & Voc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DISTRICT 2	6,092	6,342	6,576	6,799	6,762	6,964	7,491	7,400	7,325	7,845
Elementary	3,386	3,435	3,435	3,432	3,410	3,330	3,638	3,590	3,570	3,584
JHS/Interm.	1,233	1,249	1,363	1,367	1,357	1,446	1,520	1,450	1,329	1,290
Acad. Hi & Voc.	1,473	1,658	1,778	1,959	1,995	2,188	2,333	2,360	2,426	2,971
DISTRICT 3	308	318	344	296	318	304	394	413	399	377
Elementary	202	210	216	193	202	195	238	244	240	192
JHS/Interm.	47	60	70	50	63	45	77	70	71	71
Acad. Hi & Voc.	59	48	58	53	53	64	79	99	88	114
DISTRICT 4	95	77	81	68	47	71	58	63	58	40
Elementary	65	60	45	38	38	42	36	43	32	23
JHS/Interm.	10	12	9	9	9	28	20	17	24	17
Acad. Hi & Voc.	20	5	27	21	0	1	2	3	2	0
DISTRICT 5	65	70	57	69	62	56	56	65	41	48
Elementary	46	52	42	47	52	48	50	47	35	39
JHS/Interm.	19	18	15	22	10	8	6	16	5	9
Acad. Hi & Voc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
DISTRICT 6	369	393	355	383	372	351	436	426	403	407
Elementary	218	240	211	219	213	209	270	266	269	239
JHS/Interm.	49	46	48	63	52	57	76	59	57	64
Acad. Hi & Voc.	102	107	96	101	107	85	90	101	77	104

NOTE: Technically, high schools and vocational schools do not belong in school districts. Students can and do select schools away from their neighborhoods. However, the large majority attend high schools close to home. For purposes of placing them geographically, they have been counted within the borders of local school district.

SOURCE: New York City Board of Education, Annual Pupil Ethnic Census.

TABLE 6-3
ASIAN PUPILS ENROLLED IN BRONX SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY LEVEL, 1970-1979

District & Level	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
DISTRICT 7										
Elementary	40	49	46	37	45	27	38	57	51	53
JHS/Interm.	22	31	29	13	27	12	18	18	22	17
Acad. HI & Voc.	9	8	8	14	9	5	12	19	18	11
	2	10	9	10	9	10	8	20	11	25
DISTRICT 8										
Elementary	146	165	146	164	152	126	157	165	150	167
JHS/Interm.	91	105	81	98	83	80	93	84	76	85
Acad. HI & Voc.	45	36	43	43	45	31	49	57	47	44
	10	24	22	23	24	15	15	24	27	38
DISTRICT 9										
Elementary	232	261	327	305	298	261	368	371	401	470
JHS/Interm.	142	167	209	202	183	158	200	231	246	288
Acad. HI & Voc.	59	54	74	63	72	71	102	82	101	120
	31	40	44	40	43	32	66	58	54	62
DISTRICT 10										
Elementary	899	1,014	1,177	1,224	1,265	1,200	1,339	1,442	1,542	1,765
JHS/Interm.	492	551	637	653	681	616	695	712	755	763
Acad. HI & Voc.	138	180	218	220	210	188	179	181	199	215
	269	283	322	351	374	396	465	549	588	787
DISTRICT 11										
Elementary	198	223	246	303	258	190	253	316	447	502
JHS/Interm.	105	121	130	154	138	66	126	127	246	247
Acad. HI & Voc.	48	59	65	77	40	34	18	72	88	105
	45	43	51	72	80	98	123	117	113	150
DISTRICT 12										
Elementary	100	109	81	83	66	59	62	73	63	71
JHS/Interm.	70	63	54	57	45	41	48	45	52	45
Acad. HI & Voc.	8	9	6	4	4	10	9	15	3	6
	22	37	21	22	17	8	5	13	8	20

TABLE 6-4

ASIAN PUPILS ENROLLED IN BROOKLYN SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY LEVEL, 1970-1979

District & Level	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
DISTRICT 13	500	615	703	786	912	977	969	1,024	1,074	1,094
Elementary	77	68	65	62	53	50	76	80	46	79
JHS/Interm.	13	18	16	15	16	8	22	24	20	21
Acad. Hi & Voc.	410	529	622	709	843	919	871	920	1,008	994
DISTRICT 14	195	207	234	271	263	311	282	333	317	372
Elementary	115	115	142	152	140	186	172	184	169	179
JHS/Interm.	47	49	50	54	68	57	54	74	75	89
Acad. Hi & Voc.	33	43	42	65	55	68	56	75	73	104
DISTRICT 15	350	406	377	373	379	397	506	585	562	569
Elementary	209	257	210	230	249	265	356	399	381	366
JHS/Interm.	79	81	92	92	79	68	69	98	93	112
Acad. Hi & Voc.	62	68	75	51	51	64	81	88	88	91
DISTRICT 16	33	40	52	2	4	3	7	6	2	6
Elementary	28	32	44	2	3	3	7	6	1	5
JHS/Interm.	5	8	8	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Acad. Hi & Voc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DISTRICT 17	579	580	640	NA	688	654	743	728	590	576
Elementary	304	297	303	NA	338	308	350	332	287	323
JHS/Interm.	89	101	130	NA	109	92	125	129	87	70
Acad. Hi & Voc.	186	182	207	193	241	254	268	267	216	183
DISTRICT 18	200	214	241	NA	318	307	382	414	381	394
Elementary	106	127	127	NA	153	150	194	185	195	185
JHS/Interm.	52	40	53	NA	56	64	72	134	67	69
Acad. Hi & Voc.	42	47	61	80	109	93	116	95	119	140
DISTRICT 19	134	140	165	34	143	148	187	297	373	474
Elementary	65	62	60	NA	61	63	94	185	245	242
JHS/Interm.	34	33	44	NA	38	52	40	61	56	51
Acad. Hi & Voc.	35	45	61	34	44	33	53	51	72	181

Continued on next page.

TABLE 6-4
ASIAN PUPILS ENROLLED IN BROOKLYN SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY LEVEL, 1970-1979

(Continued)

District & Level	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
DISTRICT 20	610	661	784	NA	990	1,155	1,216	1,373	1,414	1,638
Elementary	318	328	370	NA	462	525	598	683	716	794
JHS/Interm.	158	168	221	NA	315	354	354	371	354	410
Acad. Hi & Voc.	134	165	193	242	213	276	264	319	344	434
DISTRICT 21	343	377	443	506	562	655	518	839	1,001	1,180
Elementary	209	223	261	305	319	344	184	397	463	515
JHS/Interm.	72	67	82	99	110	133	87	155	175	215
Acad. Hi & Voc.	62	87	100	102	133	178	247	287	363	450
DISTRICT 22	465	499	537	621	697	680	786	886	895	1,077
Elementary	283	305	336	388	441	408	456	466	510	569
JHS/Interm.	83	95	104	110	113	130	154	212	186	207
Acad. Hi & Voc.	99	99	97	123	143	142	176	208	199	301
DISTRICT 23	13	15	19	13	4	10	19	30	8	9
Elementary	11	11	14	12	2	9	14	27	4	7
JHS/Interm.	2	4	5	1	2	1	5	3	4	2
Acad. Hi & Voc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DISTRICT 32	NA	NA	NA	71	51	60	69	100	63	77
Elementary	NA	NA	NA	48	35	51	51	72	39	41
JHS/Interm.	NA	NA	NA	17	14	6	8	22	20	24
Acad. Hi & Voc.	8	13	13	6	2	3	10	6	4	12
BROOKLYN TOTAL	3,430	3,767	4,208	3,192	5,031	5,357	5,684	6,615	6,680	7,466

NOTE: NA--Not Available

SOURCE: New York City Board of Education, Annual Pupil Ethnic Census

TABLE 6-5

ASIAN PUPILS ENROLLED IN QUEENS SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY LEVEL, 1970-1972

District & Level	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
DISTRICT 24										
Elementary	920	1,091	1,319	1,572	1,827	1,953	2,505	2,990	3,395	3,787
JHS/Interm.	498	592	677	771	856	889	1,230	1,482	1,698	1,810
Acad. Hi & Voc.	197	216	295	373	524	448	616	707	802	908
	225	283	347	428	447	586	659	801	895	1,069
DISTRICT 25										
Elementary	1,022	1,147	1,322	1,412	1,680	1,876	2,298	2,477	3,014	3,465
JHS/Interm.	736	749	871	917	1,120	1,235	1,501	1,610	2,030	2,239
Acad. Hi & Voc.	212	232	237	267	309	354	439	450	555	690
	74	166	214	228	251	287	358	417	429	536
DISTRICT 26										
Elementary	293	351	417	507	610	666	832	985	1,036	1,303
JHS/Interm.	171	192	213	278	356	390	489	575	587	775
Acad. Hi & Voc.	54	55	84	84	104	104	142	156	175	203
	68	104	120	145	150	172	201	254	274	325
DISTRICT 27										
Elementary	194	174	201	231	274	353	453	530	571	683
JHS/Interm.	98	115	110	127	157	208	269	313	330	336
Acad. Hi & Voc.	32	25	43	49	47	55	80	93	78	125
	64	34	48	55	70	90	104	124	163	222
DISTRICT 28										
Elementary	857	968	985	1,178	1,197	1,207	1,544	1,716	2,060	2,335
JHS/Interm.	570	650	651	736	723	671	912	1,034	1,251	1,269
Acad. Hi & Voc.	132	133	153	168	190	232	287	296	295	366
	155	185	181	274	284	304	345	386	514	700
DISTRICT 29										
Elementary	276	239	264	279	240	290	402	473	503	602
JHS/Interm.	164	181	179	180	165	198	262	353	383	474
Acad. Hi & Voc.	20	21	54	77	59	77	103	110	112	114
	92	37	31	22	16	15	37	10	8	14
DISTRICT 30										
Elementary	789	859	977	1,132	1,237	1,369	1,645	1,973	2,295	2,776
JHS/Interm.	480	503	625	723	753	817	1,050	1,268	1,471	1,678
Acad. Hi & Voc.	153	168	188	216	271	309	326	364	442	523
	156	188	164	193	213	243	269	341	382	575
QUEENS TOTAL	4,351	4,829	5,485	6,311	7,065	7,714	9,679	11,144	12,874	14,951

SOURCE: New York City Board of Education, Annual Pupil Ethnic Census

TABLE 6-6

ASIAN PUPILS ENROLLED IN STATEN ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY LEVEL, 1970-1979

<u>District & Level</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>
DISTRICT 31 =										
STATEN ISLAND TOTAL	245	321	361	464	518	580	761	823	903	947
Elementary	162	218	240	314	325	390	497	524	530	549
JHS/Interm.	32	53	56	85	92	103	127	145	193	186
Acad. Hi & Voc.	51	50	64	65	101	87	137	154	180	212

SOURCE: New York City Board of Education, Annual Pupil Ethnic Census

they were placed there in this study primarily to show population distribution patterns. The assumption was that most students will attend a neighborhood high school even though they have the option of attending other schools outside their district.

From Tables 6-2 through 6-6 one can see that the heaviest concentration in Manhattan is District 2, which takes in Chinatown. In the Bronx, the boundaries of District 10 hold the Bronx High School of Science, and Chinese student enrollment is heavy in this school. In Brooklyn, the Asian population is fairly well dispersed with concentrations in districts 13, 20, 21, and 22. In Queens, the Asian population is again fairly well dispersed with higher levels of concentration. There is little antagonism in any neighborhood to Chinese families. As one New York City Planning Commission member remarked, "Chinese tenants are considered desirable tenants." Even though no one district in Queens has as heavy a concentration such as that found in Manhattan, an area bounded by adjoining School Districts 24 and 25 is known as one of New York's satellite Chinatowns. This region, where our satellite school studies were targeted, is marked by the shaded area on Map 2, page 115, which comprises the communities of Elmhurst, Jackson Heights and Rego Park. Although moving to Elmhurst may be considered going to the suburbs, it does not mean total separation from an ethnic community. Residents in satellite communities such as this one tend to have a need for proximity with other Chinese people.

Although Staten Island is one of the five boroughs of New York City, it was isolated and undeveloped until the completion of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge and the Battery Tunnel. Now that it is quickly accessible

by car and because the island is off the southern tip of Manhattan and close to Chinatown, the Asian population on Staten Island can be expected to increase.

School Profiles

The schools were the easiest place to start our research. This was where large numbers of Chinese immigrant children could be found, and this was where they spent a large part of their day. As mentioned previously, schools representing the elementary, junior high, and high school levels were selected, and one at each level was chosen from the two communities--Chinatown and the Queens satellite Chinatown, for a total of six schools. For obvious reasons, the schools selected had large but not overwhelmingly large Chinese enrollments. Consequently, schools closer to the core Chinatown were not chosen. In accordance with a condition imposed by the Board of Education, none of the schools is identified by name or number. For background purposes, a profile of each school is presented below:

Chinatown Elementary School

The Chinatown elementary school is housed in a building sixty years old. It has seen many pupils from other ethnic groups sitting at its desks in years gone by. The school fronts directly on the street, and the so-called playground measures about thirty feet square. School capacity is 1,100, but enrollment exceeds that. Although most schools in New York City have seen a decline in enrollment in recent years, those receiving Asian or Caribbean immigrants are exceptions to that trend. In this school, the Chinese made up about three-fourths of the

school population at the time of our study. The ethnic breakdown was about 4 percent blacks, 14 percent Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics, and 7 to 8 percent whites.³ In School District 2, the area in which this school is located, white families tend to send their children to private schools.⁴

Of the Chinese-speaking children in the school, about one-third were fluent in English, one-third were hesitant, and one-third spoke English poorly. The reading scores of the total student population were somewhat below grade and the math scores were on grade. Daily attendance was above 92 percent.⁵

In spite of the preponderance of Chinese children in the student body, only six teachers of the fifty or so were of Chinese extraction. The principal, a non-Chinese, and his staff, however, were very much a part of the Chinese community. The principal in particular showed up at most Chinese functions. In conversation with the teachers in all the Chinatown schools, I found that each and every one of them regarded his or her assignment as a "plum." A Chinatown position is, as one teacher phrased it, "Teacher's Heaven." Reason: The children are well-behaved and discipline is not much of a problem.

Satellite Community Elementary School

The satellite community elementary school was built about fifty years

3. White in ethnic enumerations generally refers to non-Hispanic whites.
4. New York City Planning Commission. "Community School District Profiles," July, 1974.
5. New York City Board of Education, "Community School Profiles," 1973-1974.

ago. A new wing was added in 1966, however, giving the school as a whole a more modern appearance. School enrollment at the time of our study was also about 1,100, the same as that of the paired school in Chinatown. Again, enrollment exceeded capacity, and daily attendance was over 90 percent. Of the Chinese-speaking students, 62 percent spoke fluent English, 26 percent spoke hesitantly, and 12 percent spoke poorly. Both reading and math scores of the total student population were on or slightly above grade.⁶

In 1976, Asian students made up 20 percent of the student enrollment, blacks were about 15 percent, Puerto Ricans 9 percent, other Hispanics 22 percent, and whites 34 percent.⁷ The population within this school district is heavily Catholic; 46 percent of the whites living there send their children to parochial schools.⁸ The white population of this elementary school fell from 57 percent in 1972 to 34 percent in 1976, while the minority population increased. Currently, the school is ethnically "balanced;" although Asian students are substantial in number, they do not form the majority as they do in its Chinatown counterpart. No teacher of Chinese descent was on the staff of this school.

Chinatown Junior High School

The Chinatown junior high was built around the turn of the century, again pointing to the much more antiquated facilities of the school buildings in and around Chinatown. Enrollment outstripped capacity to such a

6. Ibid. p. 24-2.

7. Ibid.

8. "Community School District Profiles," Op. cit.

degree that an old school building eight blocks away was called back into service as an annex to house the seventh graders. The total enrollment in both school buildings was 1,600, with the Chinese accounting for 1,100 of that number.

At the time of our study, the ethnic composition of this junior high was 70 percent Asian, 5 percent black, 18 percent Puerto Rican, 5 percent other Hispanic, and 3 percent white. It is obvious that the Chinese were the majority group in this school, and this school is the focal point for many Chinese teenage activities.

We had decided to study the seventh graders, but the very fact that the entire seventh grade was physically separated from the rest of the school by eight blocks made the findings from our study less than representative and reflective of what is happening to students thirteen to fourteen years of age. After our observations and interviews had been completed, we realized that we should have used the eighth graders housed in the main building as the subjects of our study. By then it was not feasible for us to switch, but the lesson learned was a valuable one. The reasons why will be pointed out in a later chapter.

Of the Chinese-speaking students, 70 percent were rated fluent in English, 24 percent hesitant, and only 6 percent poor.⁹ These figures are open to question since the reading scores for that same year were 1½ to 2½ grades below normal and math scores were only slightly below grade level.¹⁰ Attendance at this Chinatown junior high was above 90

9. "Community School Profiles," Op cit. p. 2-25.

10. Ibid.

percent. In general, schools with a large Chinese student population have a high attendance record. At the time of our observation, there were seven teachers of Chinese on the annex staff. The two previous years had seen a drastic citywide cutback in school personnel due to budget problems, and since the Chinese teachers were among the last hired, they were the first to go.

Satellite Community Junior High School

The paired junior high school in Queens saw its Asian student population rise from 3 percent in 1971 to 12 percent in 1976. Its black and Puerto Rican enrollment remained steady at 12 percent and 3 percent respectively, but its other Hispanic group rose from 20 to 27 percent. The proportion of white students declined from 64 percent in 1971 to 46 percent in 1976, but it is still a predominantly white school.

The school was built more than fifty years ago, making it at least twenty years newer than its Chinatown counterpart. The Queens junior high is located in the midst of a neighborhood of small, one-family homes of lower middle-class working people. The school yard is quite large, and during lunch hours and recess the children have ample opportunity to run and play and work off their excess energy.

The capacity of the school is 1,600, but in 1976 actual enrollment exceeded 2,000. Attendance was 88 percent, slightly lower than for the Chinatown school. Asian students numbered 248 in 1976, but Asian groups other than Chinese--namely Koreans, Japanese, and some East Indians--made up 40 percent of the total. Chinese students numbered approximately

150, more than half of whom were American-born. This left approximately 70 foreign-born Chinese who were recent immigrants. The ethnic variety and preponderance of American-born schoolmates of the Chinese immigrant students at this school provides a different social setting from that of the Chinatown junior high, where an overwhelming number are Chinese immigrants.

The proficiency rating in English of the Chinese-speaking students showed that 62 percent were fluent, 19 percent were hesitant, and the remaining 19 percent poor. Reading and math scores were on grade level.¹¹ Again, the English fluency ratings are questionable; they are lower than those for the Chinatown junior high even though a greater number of students in the satellite community school are American-born.

Chinatown High School

The high school serving most of the Chinese students is on the outer fringes of Chinatown and is located in the heart of a community rapidly changing from Jewish to Chinese and Puerto Rican. The latter now make up about 45 percent of the student enrollment. Whites are about 10 percent, a drastic drop from 40 percent ten years ago. Blacks remain at a steady 20 percent, while Asians have increased from 8 percent in 1965 to 22 percent in 1976. Approximately 900 Chinese students attended this high school in 1976, although the figures declined significantly for the first time in 1977, perhaps indicating a trend toward a move away from Chinatown.

¹¹. Ibid. p. 24-21.

Student capacity at this high school is 2,500, but its 1976 enrollment was 3,800--extremely overcrowded, to say the least. A number of annexes takes care of some of the overflow, but all of the Chinese students in the bilingual program are housed in the main building. The attendance rate for the entire school is low--65 percent at the time of our study--and the dropout rate is disproportionately high at 45 percent.¹² Of the Chinese-speaking students, about 45 percent spoke English fluently, 41 percent spoke hesitantly, and 13 percent spoke poorly.¹³

Considering the age (it was built in the 1930s) and location of the school, its physical condition was good. There was little evidence of vandalism. There is, however, no school yard for recreation, and eight security guards patrol the grounds continually.

Satellite Community High School

The satellite community high school selected for our study was also overcrowded, to the extent that it had to have two end-to-end sessions per day. School capacity was 3,600, but enrollment exceeded 5,200. The first session started at 7:30 in the morning and ended at 11:30; the second session started at noon and ended at 4:00. There was no lunch period. The percentage of white students has been steadily shrinking from 62 percent in 1971 to 38 percent in 1976, while the Asian percentage rose from 3 percent to 10 percent over the same period (See Table 5-2). Blacks were 16 percent, Puerto Ricans 5 percent, other Hispanics 32 percent, and Orientals 10 percent in 1976. The neighborhood has a heterogeneous population of middle-class commuters who work in New York City.

12. Ibid. p. 78-3

13. Ibid.

Attendance rate exceeded 80 percent and the dropout rate was less than 25 percent, which is quite an improvement over the Chinatown high school rates. Of the Chinese-speaking students, 80 percent were rated fluent in English, 17 percent hesitant, and 3 percent poor.¹⁴

The school was built in 1922, but modernized in 1954. It was well-maintained and employed five security guards.

Conclusions /

In the absence of reliable demographic data on the Chinese in New York since the 1970 census, the ethnic statistics of the New York City school system were utilized to provide some indicator of the rapidly growing Asian population in the city's five boroughs. Clusters of Chinese population are found in School District 2 in Manhattan, location of the parent Chinatown, and in School Districts 24 and 25 in Queens, location of the satellite Chinatown. In actual count, a larger number of Chinese are widely dispersed throughout the city. The borough of Queens is gaining the largest number of Chinese inhabitants while Manhattan's growth is leveling off. By following the school enrollment pattern by school district, one can derive a fairly reliable picture of the settlement pattern of the Chinese in New York City.

The schools selected for this study mirror the neighborhoods in which their students live. All of the schools showed declining white populations and increasing Asian and Hispanic populations. These are the two newest waves of immigrants. All of the schools are antiquated and overcrowded. The 1973 Board of Education figures do provide a detailed breakdown for

14. Ibid. p. 78-3.

the Chinese in terms of their English-speaking ability. Other pertinent data, such as attendance and dropout rates and English and math scores for the school as a whole, were also available from this source.

In spite of similarities in the school profiles, schools in Manhattan differ from those in Queens primarily in ethnic makeup and in the ratio of American-born to foreign-born Chinese. Whether these two factors have any effect on the rate and process of adjustment for the Chinese immigrant students bear watching in our research.

CHAPTER VII: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The most convenient and reasonable index to use in evaluating the adjustment or maladjustment of our subjects--Chinese immigrant children--is school performance. The school is the arena where the children spend most of their waking hours and where they must demonstrate their performance. The children are evaluated and graded at set intervals. Detailed records are kept, and the record-keeping procedures are fairly standardized to permit comparative analysis and consistent conclusions. If one were to utilize these records to draw a general profile and make up a report card for the Chinese immigrant children used in this study, the marks would be as follows:

Conduct	Excellent
Respect for Teacher	High
Academic Achievement	Fair to High
Attendance Rate	High
Dropout Rate	Low
Work after School	Common

Conduct and Respect for Teacher

During my fieldwork at the Chinatown junior high school, a tall, blonde male teacher came up to me one day and introduced himself. "You're doing a study about Chinese immigrant children, aren't you?" he remarked. "Well, I must tell you how happy I am to be teaching at this school. As you know 70 percent of the student body here are Chinese. My transfer to this school has revived my interest in teach-

ing. I was just about to throw in the towel."

"Why? Where did you teach before?" I inquired. He mentioned a school in an upper middle-class, predominantly white neighborhood. Involuntarily, my face registered surprise.

"Yes," he reiterated, "discipline there was a constant hassle. A Chinatown appointment is teacher's heaven."

Another teacher, a nineteen-year veteran of the New York City schools could not stop raving. "The Chinese children are fantastic," he said. "The parents must have done their homework. They have dignity, sportsmanship. They don't want to get into trouble. They have respect for the teacher, and they fear any loss of face. I taught fifteen years elsewhere before coming here, but I really didn't teach at all. It was enough just to keep discipline and get through the day. It was very discouraging."

At both the Queens junior high and high school, the same sort of remarks were made by teachers about their Chinese pupils. Without exception, the teachers were full of praise. At the office of the Dean of Boys at the Queens junior high, an endless stream of students flowed in and out, but rarely was a Chinese student sent there for discipline.

This positive image of the Chinese student may be a stereotype, but it is, nonetheless, a tremendous advantage enjoyed by the Chinese children. Both teachers and administrators were favorably disposed toward the Chinese pupils. The teachers expected the Chinese students to perform well, and psychological tests have shown that high teacher expectations generally result in high student performance.¹

1. Rosenthal, R. and L. Jacobson. "Teacher Expectation for the Disadvantaged," Scientific American, Vol. 218, April 1968. pp. 19-23.

In the schools that we visited, most had high minority enrollment. The administrators mentioned that they were particularly happy that the Chinese students helped them maintain a high attendance rate and good scholastic standing.

The positive student-teacher interaction is also built upon the traditional respect accorded the scholar and teacher in Chinese culture. The children try to please the teachers, who are looked upon as authority figures second only to the parents. The role of the teacher is an exalted one. The parents as well as the children look up to the teacher in his or her role as dispenser of knowledge and wisdom and molder of character. No doubt this respect on the part of the students for the teachers results in a better teaching climate.

This awe and respect for the teachers, however, have their side-effects. The students tend to accept without question what the teachers say. This tendency is due in part to the Chinese system of education, in which learning is largely by rote, and in part because the students do not feel that it is proper to challenge the teacher. The inability of the students to express themselves well in English, is yet another factor, but the cultural influence--respect for the teacher--is the stronger factor.

Many teachers are happy about how well-behaved Chinese children are, but at the same time they are critical of the reluctance of the same children to speak up in class.

It is very hard to get them to participate in class. Even when they volunteer to answer questions of fact, they are hesitant about expressing an opinion. Some just won't open their mouths at all. The only way that I know they are learning the subject or are doing well is in a written exam.

Comments like that were very common among the teachers I spoke with. Coming from an educational system that does not invite the open expression of student opinions, the children will need time before they learn that it is all right and even expected of them to speak up. Meanwhile, their marks may be downgraded because of lack of participation in class.

In our classroom observations, we noted that nonparticipation in high school classes was much more noticeable than in the lower grades. In the elementary grades, the Chinese children were quite animated and waved their hands impatiently, waiting to be recognized by their teachers. Even at the seventh grade level, the students were not inhibited in answering questions put to them by the teacher. They would answer when called upon, but did not volunteer much.

The respect for the teacher as a revered authority is so ingrained that it was difficult for the immigrant children to countenance the misbehavior toward the teachers of some of their non-Chinese classmates. In interviews with the children, many asked why their classmates were so disrespectful and why the teachers tolerated the lack of discipline in the classroom. It was bewildering and disgusting to them that some children walked around the classroom while the teacher was talking, threw things across the room, made funny noises, erased what the teacher had put on the blackboard, and generally behaved in such a disrupting manner. Whenever asked about what they didn't like about school, a common reply was along the lines of: "Some bad classmates are always making disturbances so that we can't learn very well in class."

Academic Achievement

Elementary Level: In general, elementary schools would not grade the children if they were new immigrants until a comfortable period of time had lapsed. Nevertheless, comments from the teachers revealed that the academic record of the Chinese immigrant children in the lower grades was maintained at a fairly high level in spite of difficulty with the language. Several factors may account for this. Of course, the warm and supportive teacher-pupil relationship is one factor. Another is that the Chinese students come from an educational system that is competitive to the utmost. Both in Hong Kong and Taiwan, school is a grinding if not grueling ordeal, yet school is the number one ranking priority in the lives of parents who want their children to be upwardly mobile.

Until recent years, free schooling was available to all Hong Kong children only up to the sixth grade. Within the last few years, this has been extended through junior high. The nine grade limit exists also in Taiwan. At every grade level, the student must pass examinations if he is to be promoted or retained in school. Some schools will allow a student who has failed to repeat the grade, but others will simply drop him. At the end of the sixth grade, the student must pass the Secondary School Entrance Examination. Failure to pass this examination means he cannot get into the choice schools like the government subsidized public schools. Tuition is cheaper than in nonsubsidized schools and the high reputation of the school is maintained by selecting only the best students. In order to help the students survive this rigorous elimination system, the teachers cram a great deal of subject matter into their courses. They assign a heavy homework load, and the exams are very difficult. In a sense, the exams are a weeding out process; there

are simply not enough schools to accommodate everyone who wants to attend.

If the student cannot keep up with the work in school, he tries to catch up by diligence at home. Parents try to help the student with his homework, but if they cannot they will make every effort to hire a tutor for the child. The student may go to school from 8:45 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday through Friday and half days on Saturday. He may spend the good portion of the day remaining doing his homework or being tutored. The Chinese immigrant child is accustomed to a rigorous school program.

When he comes to New York City, he may think school is a "breeze." Homework can be done in a half hour to two hours at the most. Since he is habituated to exerting himself more, he will spend the extra time memorizing his math theorems or spelling words. He will spend the extra hour rereading his assignment. In terms of the requirements of his work here, the Chinese student is outstandingly diligent, and the results will show up as academic achievement.

A number of the third, fifth, and seventh grade students to whom I talked mentioned that school was too easy; they were eager to learn more, and they indicated that they would not mind having more advanced work or being asked to do a little more homework. When questioned about whether they preferred the demanding and competitive atmosphere of Hong Kong or Taiwan, however, not one spoke in favor of it. Even college students who had succeeded in the system, had been admitted to choice schools, and had gone on to the more prestigious institutions of higher learning condemned the system as "man-eating." Parents would prod their children, and if a child did not pass the examinations, would consider that a disgrace to the family name and a dashing of their hopes for the child's future. The

pressures on the children were so great that suicides were fairly common among those who failed their examinations. Small wonder that the immigrant children found the workload in America light in comparison; they remarked that, in contrast, promotion was almost routine, that one did not have to fight to stay in school, that one's parents did not have to sacrifice and work hard to pay the tuition, and that family name and honor were easier to uphold. Overwhelmingly, the students were grateful for the chance to obtain their education free.

It must be mentioned also that the Chinese immigrant children were being measured against Hispanic immigrant children who formed the other large ethnic group in the schools under study. It is conjectured that since the teachers graded on the curve, the Chinese children would tend to show up with better marks than if they were graded against another reference group.

Junior High Level: What did we find regarding the academic record of Chinese immigrant children at the junior high level? At the two junior highs that we studied and observed, the immigrant children took the same subjects as the rest of the student body. The curriculum included English, math, science, gym, industrial arts or home economics, and science lab. Usually social studies was deferred to allow class time for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Study of a foreign language like Spanish or French may also be postponed until the immigrant child was more proficient in English.

In spite of the language disadvantage, the teachers were pleased by what the children actually achieved. Here are some comments from teachers I spoke to:

Sometimes I feel so sorry for these children when they first come here. I don't know what it would be like for me to be in another country, at my age even.... I don't know whether I can handle it.... So I'm amazed at what these kids do. Perhaps they are young and learn easily. At the beginning they get marks like fifty or forty, but within the year they seem to be functioning adequately.

I teach science, but I don't give them a mark in science. I was told that at this point it is not that important for them to keep up with the science class. They are here mostly to learn English, so they just get a grade from the ESL teacher.

How long does it take for an immigrant to be able to function adequately in English? I'd say several years, assuming they didn't know any English. The brighter children pick it up more quickly, whereas I noticed that some of the slower children are frustrated in trying to learn, and if they don't pick it up soon they get turned off totally.

I want you to meet my star pupil, JCC. He's only been in this country for six months, but he gets 98 or 100 in every test that I have given the class. I am so proud of him.

The teacher in this instance taught math. To see how JCC was making out in a class other than math, I went to observe him in his ESL class. The ESL class was very small, about twelve students grouped around a teacher who drilled the students orally in spoken English. JCC raised his hand frequently to volunteer the answer. His pronunciation was good considering his short stay in the country. In conversation with the teacher after class, I inquired whether JCC had already outgrown the beginning ESL class. She felt that JCC needed to build up his vocabulary more before moving on, although she felt that he was making good progress.

I was not permitted to look at individual student records, but at the Queens junior high I was given a sheet listing the grades and attendance and length of stay of all the seventh grade students (without names) who were Chinese immigrants. The list is reproduced in Table 7-1 which gives a complete picture for this school of the seventh grade Chinese immigrant children.

TABLE 7-1

MARKS OF FOREIGN-BORN CHINESE SEVENTH GRADERS
SATELLITE COMMUNITY JUNIOR HIGH, 1977

Student	Yrs. in U.S.	Engl.	Soc St	Math	Sci	Lang	Read Score	Math Score
1	1	ESL	85	-	-	50	-	-
2	2	60	75	75	85	-	-	-
3	3	85	91	90	90	95	6.7	-
4	3	90	92	92	85	92	7.7	-
5	3	70	75	95	80	-	6.4	5.3
6	3	75	75	90	80	60	-	-
7	4	85	85	99	80	75	6.8	-
8	4	85	75	90	90	91	8.2	-
9	4	80	85	93	70	90	5.7	-
10	4	85	85	80	80	85	8.7	8.5
11	4	90	98	98	96	92	6.7	6.2
12	5	60	80	90	80	75	-	-
13	5	90	90	98	99	-	9.0	9.5
14	6	75	80	80	80	60	7.8	5.4
15	7	75	75	85	85	75	7.1	-
16	7	80	80	90	80	65	-	-
17	8	65	85	93	75	70	6.2	7.0
18	8	85	80	90	90	80	9.0	-
19	8	90	75	80	-	95	10.5	8.5
20	8	90	85	85	85	90	10.0	7.5
21	10	90	85	85	85	90	9.0	8.2
22	na	85	85	90	80	85	-	-
23	na	80	80	80	80	55	-	-
24	na	98	98	85	98	65	-	-

Source: Satellite junior high school

Note: Foreign-born Chinese students in the satellite junior high have been in this country much longer than those in the Chinatown junior high.

TABLE 7-2

MARKS OF RECENT IMMIGRANT CHINESE CHILDREN IN THE SEVENTH GRADE
CHINATOWN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Class level Student No.	-Subjects-				
	English	Math.	Soc. Stud.	Science	ESL
Orientation					
1	90	98	*	85	90
2	75	85	*	80	75
3	75	70	*	70	70
4	75	55	*	65	65
5	85	80	*	75	85
6	75	65	*	65	70
7	70	55	*	70	70
Orientation/Transition					
1	85	85	90	95	
2	85	90	90	95	
3	90	93	90	95	
4	65	75	80	65	
5	65	75	80	65	
Transition					
1	65	50	65	65	
2	75	90	85	85	
3	85	90	85	85	
4	85	85	85	85	

SOURCE: Students selected for interviews

NOTE: None of the above students had been in the United States for more than two years.
*Social Studies omitted until students had time to learn some English.

A similar list for the Chinatown junior high school was not available. Only a few recent arrivals to this school were selected for interviews; their marks are tabulated in Table 7-2 . Chinese in the orientation class were the newest arrivals. Each progressed at his own pace in the ESL classes, and when each felt comfortable enough to move on, he entered the orientation/transition classes and later the transition class. None of the students listed in Table 7-2 had been in the United States for more than two years. The academic record of these students as a group is noteworthy. It indicates individual differences in accomplishment rather than a pattern of difficulty with the school work. The majority of the children interviewed said that they did not understand much of what the teacher was saying, but they did not think the school work was hard.

High School: How about the high school level? At first, we planned to use only the tenth grade students as our subjects, but when we looked at the setup of the Chinatown high school, we found that it was possible to include the eleventh and twelfth grade students as well because their records were located in the same bilingual program office. It would have been more difficult to try to separate the tenth grade students from the entire group of recent immigrant Chinese youths than to include them all. In addition, the larger group gave us a broader sample upon which to base our findings.

A jump from the seventh grade to the tenth grade or above revealed wide differences in the marks and the achievements of the immigrant youths. The age of the students ranged from fifteen to twenty years and over. In New York, the students are placed in a homeroom class by chrono-

logical age, not by the number of years of schooling they have had. In Hong Kong and Taiwan, children do not necessarily start the first grade at six years of age and advance one grade with each year of chronological age. A child may start the first grade at ten years of age, so that by sixteen he will have only completed the sixth grade. Yet, if he comes to this country, he will be put in the tenth grade with other sixteen year-olds. Table 7-3 shows the level of education from our sample survey before they immigrated. They were all in the tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grades at the time of our survey.

TABLE 7-3
FORMER GRADE LEVEL OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT
STUDENTS IN CHINATOWN HIGH SCHOOL
BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Former Grade	Number	Percent
Lower than 6th Grade	25	9
6th Grade	28	10
7th Grade	15	6
8th Grade	40	15
9th Grade	48	18
10th Grade	56	21
11th Grade	37	14
12th Grade	18	7
	<u>267</u>	<u>100</u>

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

The above table reveals that 58 percent or much better than one-half of the students were placed in classes beyond their former school level attainment. Obviously these students were in water over their heads because of the differences in placement practice between the school system in the homeland and the school system in the United States. Consequently, these students had to contend with more advanced work as well as the entire spectrum of language difficulties and cultural adjustment.

Inasmuch as we could not look at any student grades from the official records, we had to resort to indirect means to obtain some indication of academic achievement. We felt that the easiest way was to ask the students themselves, so we took a vantage position outside of the bilingual counselor's office and talked to some of the students who came for their exit interviews before graduation. These interviews, conducted after the students' interviews with the bilingual counselor, of necessity, were brief and were only conducted with a few who consented to talk to us. Therefore, the interpretation of the data must take these several factors into consideration. Brief case histories of fourteen students are presented below:

Case Studies

Case 1: Male. Born in 1957. Arrived September 1975 from Hong Kong. First year tenth grade, failed three subjects; eleventh grade average: 88; twelfth grade average: 87.5. Graduated 1978. Accepted at New York City Community College to study hotel management. Worked twenty hours per week in garment factory hanging dresses.

Case 2: Male. Born 1960. Arrived September 1975 from Hong Kong. Brother to Case 1. Average grades: tenth grade: 85; eleventh grade: 86.7; twelfth grade: 92. Accepted at SUNY, Stony Brook to study computer science. Worked twenty-four hours per week delivering food orders.

Case 3: Female. Born 1959. Arrived 1975 from Hong Kong. First year multiple failures. Attended Manpower Training classes for clericals in 1976. Returned to high school; graduated 1978 with 79.5 average. Worked twenty-five hours in garment factory.

Case 4: Female. Born 1958. Arrived 1977. Failed American history, Spanish, hygiene. Transferred to secretarial school.

Case 5: Female. Born 1959. Arrived 1974 from Hong Kong. Average first year 71; second year 73. Accepted at community college to study data processing. Worked thirty hours per week in sewing factory.

Case 6: Male. Born 1957. Arrived 1975 from Mainland China. Four semester averages: 94, 92, 92, 87. Graduated with honors. Accepted at Stony Brook, SUNY to study computer science. Worked twenty hours per week as cashier.

Case 7: Male. Born 1959. Arrived 1975. Four semester averages: 91, 90, 80, 84. Perfect attendance. Accepted at SUNY, University of Buffalo to study electronics. Worked twenty hours per week in supermarket.

Case 8: Male. Born 1957. Arrived 1974 from Hong Kong. Four semester averages: 85, 90, 80, 80. Accepted at Staten Island Community College to study data processing. Worked twenty-five hours per week pressing clothes.

Case 9: Female. Born 1960. Arrived 1975 from Hong Kong. First year grades: World History-D; Biology-D; Health Education-Unsatisfactory. Subsequent year averages: 91, 89, 85. Perfect attendance. Accepted at New York State College at Binghamton.

Case 10: Female. Born 1957. Arrived 1975 from Mainland China. Averages: 78.4, 92.9. Accepted at SUNY, Stony Brook in math program.

Case 11: Male. Born 1957. Arrived 1975. In 1976 multiple failures, many absences. Worked thirty-six hours per week in laundry. Dropped out and went to work for an airline.

Case 12: Male. Born 1958. Arrived 1976 from Hong Kong. Averages: 67, 83, 81. Accepted at Brooklyn College to study computer science. Worked in restaurants on weekends.

Case 13: Male. Born 1957. Arrived 1975 from Burma. First year failed many subjects. Twelfth grade average 73. Accepted at City College New York to study science.

Case 14: Male. Born 1959. Arrived 1974 from Taiwan. Ill health. Failed health education and social studies. Averages: 84, 81, 80.

The above fourteen cases were about one-fifth of the 1978 graduates in the Chinatown high school bilingual program, but the fact that they were about to graduate biases the picture considerably. In the absence of access to students grades, however, we had to rely upon some method to come to some indication of academic performance. Under these conditions, we had to make do with what we could get, which in this case was quick interviews with the students themselves.

Note from the dates of birth that many of the students were twenty to twenty-one years old at the time, an age somewhat older than the

average high school graduate. Most indicated that their first year was a tough one. Failures were common that year, but it seems that in subsequent years things began to improve, and grades picked up enough for the students to pass and eventually graduate.

The school record of these immigrant youths is fair to excellent considering the multiple handicaps under which they operated. To get some sense of how the other students, besides the graduating class, were faring with their school work, we relied upon one question in the survey questionnaire administered to students in both bilingual programs in the two high schools. The findings from this survey will be discussed at length in later chapters, but it is useful to look now at the response elicited by one of the questions: Are you satisfied with your school work? Three-fifths of those replying said yes; two-fifths said no (See Table 14-3). As for the reasons why, many checked that the teachers were nice, they were grateful for a free education, and that they felt they were learning a great deal. The unfavorable comments were fewer. The leading reasons for dissatisfaction with school work was their poor English and lack of order in the classroom. Considering that 117 of the 270 high school students surveyed had been in this country for less than a year, and other 77 for less than two years, it is a marvel that they had learned enough to be able to do their written assignments, work at outside jobs for many hours, and still pass their courses with decent grades.

Work After School

The one significant fact that stands out in the case studies of

the Chinese immigrant students is their heavy work load. Most of the students interviewed had jobs that required more than twenty hours of their time per week. It was not only the high school students who had jobs, but the junior high students as well. Even some grade school students went to the garment factories after school to help their mothers hang up the garments, turn the belts, or prepare the garments for sewing. At the Chinatown elementary school, the principal particularly pointed out the prevalence of children going to the factories after school. He did not attach any value judgment to this fact, however, because he was fully cognizant of the dangers of hanging around in the streets and the lack of recreational facilities where the children could play. At least in the factories, the children were with their mothers and in a small way contributing to the family income.

How does one tie in the heavy workload of these immigrant teenagers and youths with their process of adaptation in the new land? Because all their waking hours are so fully occupied with school and work, they have no time to get into trouble. They have a real sense of the work world in lowly dead-end jobs in which they see their parents toiling day after day. They may realize that education is the key to a better job and a better life, so that their motivation is sufficiently high to do well in school.

In a sense they are fortunate that the community provides jobs like the ones the students hold, either in the garment factories, in the groceries stores, and in the restaurants. By working in these ethnic enterprises, the young immigrants are still surrounded by a familiar environment, where the Chinese language is spoken, where the values of

hard work are quite evident, and where social control is extremely strong under the watchful eyes of parents or relatives. Most of these young people are not only earning spending money for themselves; they are contributing to the family purse as well. In this way, the sense of family duty and obligation is instilled.

Attendance Rates

At all of the schools with high percentages of Chinese student enrollment, the attendance rates were exceptionally high. For instance, for the school year 1976 to 1977, the attendance rate at the Chinatown elementary school was 93 percent. At the satellite Chinese community elementary school it was 91 percent. For the junior highs, the rates were 91 percent and 89 percent respectively. For the high schools, it was 77 percent and 84 percent respectively.² Contrast these rates with the city-wide one of 82 percent. The city-wide average masks the lower rates in the high schools, which may run as low as 58 percent.³

2. New York City Board of Education. "Community School Profiles, 1976-1977."

3. Ibid.

Graduates

A follow-up of the graduates of the Chinese bilingual program in the Chinatown high school from 1975 to 1978 was done by the guidance counselor, and her findings are given in Table 7-4. Note the threefold increase in graduates over the course of three years. This may be due in large part to the implementation of the bilingual program in 1976. Note also that over 90 percent of the graduates in the last two years went on to college!

TABLE 7-4 .

FUTURE PLANS OF CHINATOWN HIGH SCHOOL'S CHINESE
BILINGUAL PROGRAM GRADUATES
1975-1978

Future Plans	1975 -1976	1976 -1977	1977 -1978
Work	3	1	0
College:			
2 year	1	27	23
4 year	8	37	46
Manpower Training Institute	5	5	3
Military Service	0	0	2
No information	8	1	1
Total	25	71	75

SOURCE: High school bilingual program guidance counselor

An attempt was made to find data on the number of college-bound students in the bilingual education program at the satellite community high school, but comparable data were unavailable. No figures by ethnicity were kept by the college office counselor. The bilingual program had been established a mere two years previously, and there was no bilingual guidance counselor. According to the director of the

bilingual program at the satellite community high school, none of her students was ready for graduation. All were still in the tenth or eleventh grades. To get some inkling of where Chinese graduates from this high school, in general, were heading, this researcher combed the 1979 graduating class roster for Chinese-sounding names. There were 84. Of these, 70 planned to go on to four-year colleges and 14 planned to go on to two-year colleges. In other words, 100 percent were heading for colleges. However, there was no way of telling how many of these students were immigrants and how many were American-born.

Dropouts or Discharges

What about those who did not graduate? How many dropped by the way-side? What happened to them? Why did they leave school? Again, we turned to the same guidance counselor who had kept excellent records of her discharges.⁴ These are tabulated in Table 7-5. Note the dramatic drop in the total numbers of students who were discharged from the bilingual program at the Chinatown high school, from 122 in 1976 to 77 in 1977 and to 32 in 1978. Each year, the numbers were approximately halved. One can surmise from the large percentage who went on to college and the dramatic increase in graduates that the bilingual program did encourage the immigrant children to finish their high school education and perhaps aim higher.

An attempt was made to find data on the number of discharged students in the bilingual program at the satellite community high school, but

4. Not all discharges are dropouts as can be seen from Tables 7-5 and 7-6. Some are transfers, and some move away.

TABLE 7-5

DISCHARGED CHINESE STUDENTS FROM THE BILINGUAL PROGRAM
AT CHINATOWN HIGH SCHOOL
1975-1978

Reason for Leaving School	1975 -1976	1976 -1977	1977 -1978
Transferred to another school ¹	42	31	8
Working at a job	22	6	5
Returned to Hong Kong/Taiwan	1	1	2
Transferred to Manpower Training Inst.	7	4	4
Marriage	1	0	0
Already completed H.S. in HK/TW/China	1	2	2
Illness or death in family	0	1	0
Personal or mental health problem ²	1	7	0
Moved away (no follow-up)	10	3	2
Gangs ³	5	1	3
Financial hardship	8	1	1
No reason given	24	20	5
Total Discharged	122	77	32

SOURCE: High school bilingual program counselor

- NOTE: 1. To nearby alternative school or other schools in the City.
 2. Most personal problems involved difficulty getting along with parents.
 3. Suspended because of gang activity.

TABLE 7-6

DISCHARGED STUDENTS WITH CHINESE SURNAMES
FROM SATELLITE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL
1976-1979

Reason for Leaving School	1976 -1977	1977 -1978	1978 -1979
Transferred to another school	10	8	11
Working at job	0	1	0
Moved out of New York City	18	5	17
Returned to Taiwan/Hong Kong	1	5	2
Equivalency diploma	1	4	1
Died	0	0	1
Home instruction	1	0	0
Dropout, 17 years +	17	9	15
No reason given	2	1	6
Total Discharged	50	33	52

SOURCE: High school attendance office

NOTE: Includes American-born as well as immigrant students

comparable data were unavailable. No figures by ethnicity were kept by the attendance office, but this researcher tried to construct a profile by going over the discharge records and tabulating those with Chinese-sounding names. Consequently the figures for discharged students included American-born Chinese as well as foreign-born immigrants. Table 7-6 gives a breakdown of the discharges by reason for the three years 1976 to 1979.

It was apparent from a study of the reasons for discharge from the satellite community school that many students moved out of New York City to such faraway places as California, Texas, Illinois, and others. This phenomenon was not true in the Chinatown high school; transfers to schools in other parts of the city were more common there. The dropout rate was greater in the satellite community high school. It could not be determined why this was so except to say that the bilingual program at this school was not established until the 1977-1978 school year, and the staff did not include a bilingual guidance counselor. The lack of both could have been responsible for the higher dropout rate.

Critical Remarks

Less this report card sound too rosy, there were some reservations and critical remarks made by the students and teachers. One very profound comment, made by a young girl, was puzzling to me at first, but it has stuck in my mind and persists as an enigma. When I asked if the students enjoyed the more permissive atmosphere of American schools, I found that many did not know how to handle their newfound freedom. The girl's reply was, "Too much freedom is no freedom." She went on to explain her seemingly contradictory statement by saying, "We are con-

stantly asked to make decisions. Where would you like to go? What do you want to do? Which one do you want? What do you think? I don't know what to do. It is so hard to make decisions. I'm not used to it. I even find it painful, so I end up doing nothing."

If teachers were to recognize that Chinese immigrant children do come from a school situation and home environment that is more structured, less egalitarian, and more authoritative than that of their fellow students, they might be better able to help the Chinese student make choices and explore options. It would also be helpful if the classroom environment were more structured until the immigrant became accustomed to a more relaxed atmosphere.

Teacher Criticisms: The warm, supportive attitude of the teachers is oftentimes counterbalanced by their critical attitudes toward the cultural traits of the children or the behavior of the children's parents. Examples of the criticisms heard from teachers are:

1. The children act like little adults.
2. The children do not fight back even when they are hit and abused. They just stand there and take it.
3. The mothers are overprotective. They bring their children to school and pick them up. At lunchtime, many mothers even bring food to school and feed their children.
4. The parents do not allow their children to go anywhere after school. They must go straight home or to the factories where the mothers work.
5. The children work too many hours in the factories or in the stores. They come to school very tired.

6. The parents do not keep their children at home even when they are sick. If the schools wants to send the sick child home, the child prefers to stay in school because there is no one home.

7. If a Chinese child gets sick, the parents do not take him to a Western doctor. They cook up a herbal brew for the child or they rub him with some Chinese ointment. They also pinch him on the neck until he is red and blue because they believe this relieves his fever and cures him. Some of us teachers used to think that the child was being abused.

8. The Chinese parents must learn to be less autocratic and less absolute in their authority over the children. This is America, not China!

9. The parents discourage their children from playing or interacting with children of other ethnic groups. They are very clannish.

To respond to these remarks by the teachers, the following chapter deals with specific instances of bicultural conflict, which cause misunderstanding and sometimes create difficulty for the children. The fact that the Chinese practice and believe in their own medical system, which is so totally different from Western medical practice is a concrete example of this.

Summary of Findings

By and large, a positive interaction exists between teachers and Chinese pupils in the schools visited and studied. A cultural carryover of respect for the teacher and a high value placed upon education are important contributing factors. Chinese children pose less of a behavioral problem than others in the student body, thus meriting further teacher favor. The attendance rates for schools with large Chinese enrollment were high.

The academic achievement of the Chinese immigrant children was good in spite of the language barrier because they are accustomed to a much more rigorous standard in the Hong Kong or Taiwan schools. According to the teachers, the first year was the most difficult. Afterwards, the going was easier.

Many of the children--even some in the elementary schools--worked after school hours. In the Chinatown high school, 20 percent of the students surveyed worked twenty-five hours or more. In the satellite high school, the percentage was 17. (See Table 10-1.)

Of the graduates from the Chinatown high school bilingual program, over 90 percent went on to college. College was almost a certain sequel for the graduates of both high schools.

Discharges from the Chinatown high school bilingual program dropped drastically from 122 in 1976 to 32 in 1978. Some of these were transfers. True dropouts were few. Discharges from the satellite community high school revealed that many were moving away from New York City.

Teacher criticisms include student passivity, a non-questioning attitude, discomfort in dealing with a relatively loosely structured class room atmosphere, parental overprotectiveness and methods of treating the sick child, and a tendency to stick with their own ethnic group.

Theoretical Implications

Reference Group Theory: In their study of the American soldier, Samuel A. Stouffer, et al. developed the concept of relative deprivation.⁵ They found that men in the Army, essentially living under the same conditions and undergoing the same experiences, viewed their situation with varying attitudes and perceptions. For example, the actually more deprived group of soldiers seemed little more critical than the less deprived. Black soldiers stationed in the South felt less deprived when they compared themselves against black civilians in the South, but they felt more deprived when they compared themselves to black civilians in the North. In short, the sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction was a function of expectations and achievements relative to others in the same situation. W. I. Thomas called it "definition of the situation."⁶

Stouffer, et al. were eliciting patterns of response to a basically deprivational situation, which was compulsory military service. The concept of relative deprivation was utilized to account for feelings of dissatisfaction, but the more significant aspect of the concept is its stress upon social and psychological experience as relative. The practice of comparing one's own situation with a reference person or group can also result in satisfaction, and in the case of Chinese immigrant children, the obverse of relative deprivation would be viewing oneself in a position of relative advantage.

5. Samuel A. Stouffer, et al. The American Soldier (Princeton University Press, 1949).

6. W. I. Thomas. "Relationship of Research to the Social Process," Essays on Research in the Social Sciences: Papers Presented in a General Seminar Conducted by the Committee on Training of the Brookings Institution (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution 1930-31) pp. 174+

In most instances, these children came from a less desirable environment than the one they found themselves in in New York City. The population congestion in Hong Kong or in Mainland China was certainly worse than that found in New York. Housing was more crowded. Material goods were less plentiful. Education was not easily obtained, and if obtained, often at great sacrifice. The political situation was unstable in both Hong Kong and Taiwan, and if they came from Mainland China, the feeling of relief from political oppression was even greater. Coming to the United States was viewed as a golden opportunity, and to quote Jay Sommer, "Free public education is the legendary gold that paves the streets of America."⁷

Viewed against the reference group from which they came, therefore, the children and their parents considered themselves lucky and fortunate to be in the United States, and they strove to make the best of their opportunity. Measured against the lower standards and demands of American public schools, the Chinese children did not find their schoolwork overwhelming in spite of their language handicap. The perception of these children of their situation was one of relative advantage and satisfaction. In fact, Hurh and Kim described the initial stage soon after arrival as one of euphoria and excitement, having finally made it safely to the country they had aspired to settle in and happiness in being reunited with family, friends, or relatives. In their study of Korean immigrants in America, Hurh and Kim drew a hypothetical model of six adaptive stages resembling a J-curve.

The six stages are: (1) Excitement (2) Exigency (3) Resolution (4) Optimum (5) Identification crisis (6) Marginality acceptance.

7. Jay Sommer. "Public Education: America's Street of Gold," American Educator (Summer, 1981) p. 25

After the initial excitement, the exigency stage sets in. This stage is characterized by "disjuncture between one's high expectations and one's perception of limited ability and opportunity leading a a condition of cognitive ambivalence and exigency." As time goes on, the immigrant resolves to make the best of it (stage 3) leading to limited success, (optimum stage), but usually this phase is accompanied by a shifting of the immigrants' reference group from his own ethnic group to that of the dominant white group. The immigrants would now compare their life conditions to that of white Americans, not to their pre-emigration status nor to their fellow immigrants. Thus the identification crisis stage follows in which the immigrants begin to discover the immutable race barrier which blocks their way toward structural assimilation over which they have no control. The last stage is the acceptance of one's marginality.⁸

Our study of Chinese immigrant children dealt primarily with recent arrivals, so that the euphoria or excitement stage predominated to lend an aura of successful entry into American life. If Hurh and Kim's model hold, however, the successive stages of their transition will lead to ups and downs in their psychological outlook, which will come at a later date.

Cultural Insulation. For the sake of gaining access to large numbers of Chinese immigrant children, the fieldwork for this study, perforce, was targeted at schools and the two communities with large numbers of Chinese students. As a result, the foreign-ness of American ways and

8. Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim. "Korean Immigrants in America: A Structural Analysis of Ethnic Confinement and Adhesive Adaptation." (National Institute of Mental Health, December 1980) pp. 253-290

the sense of being a minority group member was not as acute as being the lone member in a sea of alien faces. The newly arrived immigrants were cushioned and surrounded by others like themselves. One could speak Chinese and still be understood by someone. One could follow the same customs as in the old country and not be ridiculed. There were white faces and black faces and Hispanic faces to contend with, and this was a new situation, but there were enough yellow faces around to be reassuring. The ethnic communities were decompression chambers, which made the process of adaptation a more comfortable one. As pointed out previously in this chapter, the students' contacts outside of the school, family, and community were very limited. Even though these children and youths had migrated from the Far East to the United States, they were still culturally insulated by their concentration in ethnic communities.

Symbolic Interactionism. As George Herbert Mead postulated, each person adjusts his perception and his actions to the expectations of "generalized others."⁹ In the school, the most "significant other" is the teacher, and the position of the teacher is further enhanced by the exalted respect accorded the scholar in Chinese tradition. Since the students are very deferential toward the teachers, are less boisterous and better behaved in the classroom, are diligent in their studies, and are more easily controlled, the teachers react by being more favorably disposed toward the Chinese students and by expecting better academic performance from them. In response, the students try to live up to the expectations of the teachers and by basking in the teachers' favor. The reciprocal positive impressions that teachers and students have of each other bolster the students' spirits and help them in their adjustment.

9. George Herbert Mead. Mind, Self and Society. Edited by Charles Morris (University of Chicago Press, 1934)

Presently, the schools and American society are more appreciative of cultural diversity. Instead of trying to immediately divest the newly arrived immigrant of his cultural heritage, some attempts are made to bridge the gap gradually, and programs such as ESL or bilingual education have been instituted, whereas formerly, new immigrants were expected to swim or sink. The more receptive social climate that now exists undoubtedly makes the life of the new immigrant less difficult and easier to cope, and the results show up in less trauma and fewer problems.

CHAPTER VIII: BILINGUAL EDUCATION

What steps are being taken by the schools to help children who have just been set down on American soil and who speak a language other than English? How are they being received and dealt with? Our contention is that the process is as important as the goals, and it is not enough merely to relate the techniques or strategies, but to look closely at how they are implemented empirically and to see what results actually flow from good intentions to help. In this chapter, we shall look at how the school tries to help the non-English-speaking child overcome the language barrier.

Learning the Language

Imagine for a moment that you have lost your power of speech and that it will take a great deal of effort on your part to regain it. At the same time, in order to survive and carry on your daily activities, you have to communicate. Sign language, body language, and pantomime will work to a degree, but how can you tell someone in sign language that George Washington was the first president of the United States? If you can imagine this perhaps you can feel for the immigrant child who has to deal not only with the total adjustment of being uprooted

and transplanted in a new country, but also with the sudden loss of almost all his ability to communicate.

Luckily, the immigrant child has a recourse; compulsory education laws decree that he must go to school, so he may find himself sitting in a classroom within a few days of his arrival. The school's first task is to teach the child English as quickly as possible so he can join his peers in the regular classes for his age group. The school's task is no less difficult than that of the immigrant child.

In this country children are placed in a class according to chronological age. A child starts school at age five or six, and promotion is generally routine. He completes elementary school at twelve, junior high at fifteen, and high school at eighteen. Age and grade level are fairly well synchronized.

The immigrant child may not fit into this mold. He may have started school late or repeated a grade or two because he failed his exams or otherwise was unable to measure up. Yet, when he comes to this country, he is generally placed into a grade corresponding to his age.

If he attends a school where he is an isolated Chinese immigrant, he is expected to keep up with the class work. He may get no special help in English at all, although a sympathetic teacher may ask a classmate to look after him a bit. Or she may be somewhat more lenient in grading him. Or she may keep him after class to give extra help. The options open to the teacher are few. The lesson plan and course schedule make no allowance for the child who does not speak English. His failure or success in keeping up is obscured by his nonparticipation

and silence. According to a number of students to whom we talked, they were in a semi-daze for the first year.

In schools where immigrant children attend in greater numbers their difficulty with the language is immediately apparent because their problem is aggregated. One child can be overlooked, but a larger number cannot. How do the schools attempt to deal with the problem? There seem to be three approaches: sink or swim, English as a second language (ESL), and bilingual education.

Sink or Swim

The philosophy behind this approach is self-explanatory: put the child in his chronological age class "cold turkey," and he will be forced to learn. For those in the younger age groups, this method, although frightening and shocking at first, can work. It works better on the younger child than the teenager, for example, the mind of the younger child is flexible and receptive to the learning of languages, and the vocabulary and subject content of his lessons are not as advanced. For the teenager, this approach is questionable.

Proponents of the sink-or-swim approach maintain that this is what most immigrants did in the past and they managed.¹ The only thing they forgot to mention is the number who could not swim and who sank to the bottom, out of sight and out of mind.

1. In fact, Ling Chi Wang documented in his article, "How San Francisco School Administrators Block Bilingual Education," East/West, January 28, 1976, that in 1974 in San Francisco, of Chinese-speaking children, 1,138 were getting ESL, 193 were getting bilingual education, and 1,000 were getting no help at all.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Many schools adopt this approach. The immigrant child is placed in his chronological age class, but special attention is given to teaching him "survival English," the necessary phrases to meet his basic needs. The amount of ESL that a child gets depends upon the resources of the school or school district and the importance that the school administrators attach to it. In some schools, the immigrant children may take ESL only once or twice a week, whereas in other schools ESL is part of the daily curriculum. In the former case, a roving teacher makes the rounds of a number of schools, and the students are pulled out of their regular subject classes on the days that the ESL teacher comes. If the teacher comes at 11:00 A.M. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, for example, all non-English-speaking children go to ESL instead of going to their math or hygiene or social studies classes. The drawbacks to this system are obvious: the children miss their regular subject classes, and both their ESL and subject classes are spotty.

In classes like these that I have observed, the Chinese children are placed in ESL classes predominantly filled by Spanish-speaking students. Most ESL teachers are Spanish-speaking and some are monolingual. ESL teachers say that the principles of teaching ESL are the same for any foreign language pupil and that it is not important for the teacher to know the pupil's primary language. This premise can be challenged.

In the ESL classes, instruction in the formal structure and grammar of the English language is subordinated to fulfilling the need for the immigrant child to communicate orally. Some of the basic phrases and vocabulary necessary in our day-to-day activities are taken for granted,

and we do not realize how confusing they may be to someone totally unfamiliar with the nuances of American expression. For example, how many ways can we express the time of day? We may say 4:45, a quarter to five, or fifteen minutes to five. Then there is A.M. or P.M., and a further refinement would be in the morning, noon, afternoon, evening, and night. Differentiating between these terms to express the time of day is only one of the many fine points that a newcomer must cope with continually.

In the six schools that we studied, each teacher taught ESL differently and each teacher chose his or her curriculum materials according to personal preference (see Table 8-1). Obviously, the classes were conducted as the teacher elected, so there was no uniformity. Some used pictures cut out of magazines as visual aids, others used first- and second-grade basal readers, while still others took advantage of specialized ESL curriculum materials such as the Lado English Series, the Scott Foresman English Around the World Series, and the Addison-Wesley New Horizons in English Series. One teacher used the silent method: She spoke as little as possible and used props to substitute for certain questions and words. This way, the teacher would not have to use up class time repeating the question or instruction. For instance, holding a long red plastic rod would mean, "What is Pedro wearing?" A yellow rod might stand for, "You used the wrong tense." A green rod might mean, "Repeat the sentence." and so forth. Of course, the association of the props with the words would have to be established first and could be changed with each new lesson. This was a novel way of forcing the student to do most of the talking, since as the teacher pointed the rods, the students would respond and repeat.

TABLE 8-1
LANGUAGE PROGRAMS FOR CHINESE
IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

<u>School</u>	<u>Program</u>
Chinatown Elementary School	Three bilingual classes combining 1st & 2nd, 3rd & 4th, 5th & 6th grades. Classes taught in both English and Chinese.
Satellite Community Elementary School	Three hours of ESL pull-out weekly (two 1½-hour sessions). No bilingual program. Buddy system of tutoring by fifth graders about 15 to 20 minutes in the morning. Tutors meet with English teacher once each week to report on progress.
Chinatown Junior High School	Twelve hours of intensive ESL weekly. New arrivals first placed in an orientation class, from which they progress to Orientation/Transition, and on to Transition class before they are placed in regular classes. Each class is progressively more advanced. Bilingual approach* used. Lessons taught in English. Bilingual teacher may answer in Chinese or students may ask questions in Chinese. Class may be assisted by bilingual paraprofessional. Chinese offered as a foreign language.
Satellite Community Junior High School	Five hours ESL pull-out weekly; no bilingual education program.
Chinatown High School	Well-organized bilingual/bicultural program in its third year of operation. Bilingual classes in history, math, and science; bilingual approach* for other subjects. Students take 12 hours ESL weekly for four semesters before going on to fulfill graduation requirements for English. Chinese offered as a foreign language.
Satellite Community High School	Bilingual program in its second year using bilingual approach*. Chinese dialect used is Mandarin rather than Cantonese. Ten hours of ESL weekly the first year, five the second year. Chinese offered as a foreign language.

* Bilingual approach means class taught primarily in English, but explanation or interpretation may be given in Chinese by teacher or bilingual paraprofessional.

SOURCE: Personal observation and on-site research.

I was told that a student had to hear a phrase or sentence thirty-two times before it became part of his vocabulary or speech. I think one teacher took this pedagogical theory too literally by requiring that every phrase be repeated by every student in the class twice. By the time it was repeated for the tenth time, the entire class, including myself, had tuned out the phrase and were bored silly.

The use of the elementary basal readers was also inappropriate. Fifth graders using the first-grade readers modified simply could not relate to the subject matter or the pictures in the texts.

Bilingual Education

It is easy to confuse ESL with bilingual education, the school themselves sometimes are not too clear about the distinction. ESL is the teaching of functional English to persons who are already conversant in another language. Bilingual education means using two languages as the medium of instruction in subject areas where course content may be lost on a person who does not have command of the second language. For example, a Chinese teenager, sixteen years of age, is put into the tenth grade when he comes here from Hong Kong. He simply cannot make up ten years of English sufficiently to deal with his courses in history, economics, science, math, hygiene, and social studies. Of course, he is taking ESL, which teaches him simple phrases of speech, but this does not enable him to do his reading and writing assignments for the other courses. The possible outcomes are that he will get lost and fall behind, or he will become discouraged and give up. The rationale behind bilingual education is to provide instruction in both Chinese and English to allow such a

student to learn his history, social studies, math, and so forth with assistance given him in his native tongue.

This concept was recognized by the Lau v. Nichols decision handed down by the Supreme Court in 1974, which stated:

. . . There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.

Even before the decision was handed down, Congress had already authorized appropriations for bilingual education under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title VII (also known as the Bilingual Education Act) as early as 1968. In the act's first five years of operation, federally funded bilingual programs representing twenty-four languages serviced 180,000 children in forty-one states. Obviously, bilingual education is not solely for Spanish-speaking or Chinese-speaking children.

Some states have their own laws mandating bilingual/bicultural education, and the U.S. Congress has mandated that a five-year plan be drawn up to expand bilingual education services. In New York City, there is no mandate, but there is a consent decree reached between the Board of Education and Aspira whereby the Board agreed to work with Puerto Rican groups to implement bilingual programs. By the end of 1977, 537 of the city's 931 schools offered Spanish bilingual programs with a total of 61,190 students enrolled.²

2. Lena Williams, "Bilingual Education Program Stirs Controversy for New York Board," New York Times (November 24, 1977) B8.

No such decree was worked out with any Chinese organization. Consequently, bilingual programs for the Chinese are few and of very recent origin. They are largely supported by state and federal funds, and only in isolated instances are they part of the school budget. In other words, bilingual education for the Chinese is a stepchild. It is not an integral part of the curriculum, but is looked upon only as a frill to be dispensed with as soon as federal and state funds cease. Were it not for the fact that proposals were submitted and grants approved from Title VII, federal sources, and Chapter 720 state funds, there would be no Chinese bilingual program at all.

The first bilingual program for Chinese-speaking students was initiated three years prior to our field work in this study in the Chinatown district. The programs were modest, to say the least.

The expansion came about solely because a number of dedicated and concerned Chinese-American teachers wrote proposals, solicited funds, and worked unceasingly to establish the programs. Even then, the number of students serviced and the personnel hired for the programs were minimal. Bilingual paraprofessionals are the largest group of personnel employed (see Table 8-2). These people assist the teacher in the classroom and carry the load of translating, interpreting, and tutoring, yet they have no professional status.

In New York City schools, federal funds cannot be used to pay classroom teachers. Consequently, even if the coordinators were able to obtain funds to hire bilingual teachers who can teach in both Chinese and English, these funds could not be used to pay for the most important aspect of bilingual education--the teachers themselves. Such funds can be used only for resource teachers, the ones who develop curriculum materials.

TABLE 8-2
CHINESE BILINGUAL PROGRAMS IN NEW YORK CITY
1977-1978

Participating School Level	No. of Schools	No. of Students	Personnel	Source of Funds
Elementary K-6 and Junior High 7-9	11 4	682 236	Coordinators 2 Classroom teachers 19 Resource teachers 4 Paraprofessionals 31 Guidance Counsellors 3	Titles I, VII Chapter 720 Units 12, 13
High Schools 9-12	3	667	Coordinator 1 P/T Classroom teachers 22 F/T Resource teacher 2 Area Specialists 3 Guidance Counsellor 1 Paraprofessionals 14	Titles I, VII Chapter 720 Tax Levies
Auxiliary Center	1	50	Teacher 1 Paraprofessionals 2	Title VII
Total	19	1,585		

SOURCE: New York City Board of Education, Office of Bilingual Education.

Evaluation of Bilingual Education

Does bilingual education help? Does it enable immigrant children, brought up and versed in another language to gain a more meaningful education when they first arrive in this country? Does bilingual education help the children make a smoother transition into American society? A number of evaluation studies that were published in 1977 were highly critical of bilingual education. These included the Rand Report, the American Institute for Research Report, and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) Report.³ All three compared limited English-speaking children enrolled in Hispanic bilingual programs that had been in operation for at least four years with children in regular classes who were of the same socio-economic background. The major findings were:

1. In English reading and vocabulary, the bilingual education (BE) students' performance was poorer than that of the students in the regular classes.

2. In Spanish reading and vocabulary, however, the BE students performed better than those in the regular classes.

3. In math, the BE students scored higher than expected.

4. Costs per BE student averaged \$400 more than for the regular students.

5. Two-thirds of the students enrolled in the bilingual education program were not limited English-speaking, and once in a program, students tended to remain. Only 15-percent transferred to regular classes even after they could function well enough in English.

3. U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. "Evaluation of the Impact of ESEA Title VII Spanish/English Bilingual Education Programs," Interim Report (April, 1977) See also "Doubts About Bilingual Education Raised in a Study Released by U.S." New York Times (May 9, 1978).

Are the findings from these three studies applicable to the Chinese bilingual education programs in New York City? No. Not one Chinese bilingual education program was included in any of the three studies mentioned. None of the Chinese programs had been in existence long enough to be included. Our own evaluation as to whether the bilingual education programs helped Chinese immigrant children is based on teacher comments, parents attitudes, student response, and our own observations and assessments.

Teachers' Comments

New York City had just been through a financial wringer, and the schools were hit hard. In 1975, 6,000 teachers were laid off, and new hiring was out of the question except for those teachers trained in bilingual education. Teachers with a bilingual background were given priority over those with seniority, and this set off a fight for job security that unleashed its full wrath upon bilingual education.

New York City's population has been declining and changing in composition. As seen in Tables 5-1 and 5-3, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians are increasing while whites flee to the suburbs or send their children to private schools. School enrollment is down due to the lower birthrate, so that teaching jobs are scarce. Those who do not have a second language facility feel that their jobs are threatened; they mask this fear by attacking bilingual education itself. Under the circumstances, teacher attitudes are colored by economic and political considerations. If they accept bilingual education, they may be jeopardizing their own jobs.

Teaching in two languages takes highly developed skills. One must be fluent in both languages and in subject content as well. The teacher must be sensitive to the student who has just been uprooted. And he/she

must be aware of the possible conflicts in cultural values as well. Meeting the first criterion alone is difficult enough. In many instances, a person is fluent in one language and functional in another. For example, if the teacher is fluent in Chinese but speaks with an accent in English, students will not learn standard spoken English. If the teacher is fluent in English and speaks Chinese but is not well versed in the written language, she may find it difficult to get her lesson across when it comes to the translation. To be conversant in two languages with facility and be able to teach biology or economics or any other subject calls for talents which are in short supply.

Obviously, these demands on the bilingual teacher make it more difficult to teach a bilingual class. Even those who are quite facile in the language must spend extra time looking for the appropriate curriculum materials or creating their own. This, too, adds to their burden. According to some of the bilingual teachers we spoke with, they must spend a great deal of time preparing their lessons and looking up translations of the terms they are unfamiliar with. It is a double burden that they shoulder because they are dedicated. These disadvantages naturally affect the teachers' attitudes toward bilingual education.

One teacher who had taught bilingual classes felt that teaching in both languages was harder on the teacher and easier on the students. Another overconscientious teacher became ill from overwork after two years in the bilingual program. A third chose to go back to her regular classes because she felt that the students came to lean on bilingual education. It would be hard for them to do without it when they were on their own in college. A fourth said that with bilingual classes, the students can

keep up with their work during a stressful period of their lives when they have to make so many adjustments. Strong students are further strengthened by a spur in their sides, and they may survive the sink-or-swim philosophy. The weak ones, however, will fall by the wayside without bilingual education.

In our research, we sensed a hesitancy on the part of the teachers to make a judgment about the bilingual programs in their schools. A former bilingual education teacher, however, had strong criticisms. She felt that "bilingual education slows down the process of learning English, and it draws out the laziness in the student." Her philosophy was that if one wants to succeed, one must strive to learn. "Bilingual education takes away the challenge."⁴ Another of her criticisms was that bilingual classes segregate the immigrant children and thus lessens their opportunity to deal with others not like themselves. She also felt that the bilingual program only delayed the students from dealing with the English learning until college, at which time the problem may be compounded. She had a number of suggestions for alternatives to bilingual education:

1. Use English as the only medium of teaching in the classroom, but provide Chinese-speaking tutors.

2. Provide students with stipends so that they do not have to work and can spend more time to catch up with their school work.

3. Tutor the recent immigrant arrivals at first instead of placing them in classes.

4. Limit bilingual education to the early grades for the American-born whose parents feel that the maintenance of their native tongue is important.

4. Personal interview.

In a letter to the editor of the New York Times, an administrator at one of the schools in our study made a scathing attack on bilingual education. When questioned about the Chinese program, which was only about two years old at that time, he voiced an opinion totally different than the one expressed in the Times. To quote his assessment of the Chinese bilingual program, he said: "The Chinese bilingual program is a very solid, substantial program. That's the way a bilingual program should function, and that is why, in my opinion, it is such a superb success in the school. It should serve as a model for any bilingual program in the United States."⁵

In a way it is unfair to judge the programs that have just been in existence for only two or three years. In the rush to implement the Supreme Court decision of Lau v. Nichols, little time was given to long-term overall planning. At the same time, commitment to bilingual education has only been half-hearted. The programs are structured so that they will abort or self-destruct within a short period of time, thereby fulfilling the doomed-to-fail prophecy. For example, in Table 8-2, we see that the largest number of bilingual personnel--forty-seven or almost one-half--were paraprofessionals. There were only twenty-six full-time teachers and twenty-two part-time ones for 1,585 students. Funds committed to bilingual education come from non-budgeted sources, which are uncertain from year to year. Unless someone takes it upon himself to apply for grants, there will be no money. Restrictions against use of federal funds for the hiring of classroom teachers also hamper the optimum use of

5. Personal interview.

bilingual resources. Add to this the political atmosphere and the economic issues of job competition, and you have a situation complicated by factors that do not address the fundamental question whether bilingual/bicultural education helps the immigrant children in their transition.

Parents' Attitudes

How did the parents feel? Their feelings were ambivalent and sometimes unrealistic. They wanted their children to learn English as quickly as possible, yet they were deathly afraid that the children would lose their command of Chinese and become estranged from them. Their expectations of their children's achievement were much too high. They felt that their children ought to do well in school. Their hopes were pinned on it. If the children fell behind or did not bring home good grades, the parents were extremely disappointed. They were influenced by the whirl of debate that went on about bilingual education. Those who were ambitious for their children insisted on the sink-or-swim approach, arguing that the only way their children could get ahead was to devote full attention to mastering the English language. Immigrant parents in New York tended to think that the primary emphasis should be on learning English because their children already knew some Chinese, whereas second-generation parents who gave up or had no chance to learn Chinese in their formative years now felt the void in their lives and wanted their children to be exposed to their cultural heritage. Thus, there was another entirely different impulse behind the child's retention of his primary language--that of maintenance. Some parents wanted their children in bilingual classes so that they could learn English and Chinese simultaneously. The issue in this case was not one of facilitating the immigrant's

entry into the mainstream as quickly as possible, but of maintaining his mother tongue.

Student Attitudes

How did the students feel about bilingual education? All of the recent immigrant children to whom we talked mentioned language as their most formidable problem. Some would sit in the classroom with a blank look on their faces. Those in the back of the room would fiddle or doodle. All were extremely hesitant or timid about opening their mouths. Some were downright fearful and apprehensive. Strange faces, strange ways, a foreign language they could not understand--all added up to anxiety and stress during the first year or so after the immigrant child's arrival in this country.

In our survey questionnaire administered to the high school students, one of the questions sought to find out the students' attitudes toward bilingual education; almost all of them were enrolled in the bilingual programs. The students' opinions were just as ambivalent as their parents'. Table 8-3 shows the answers we got to the question, "What is your opinion about bilingual education? Check all those that apply."

The responses given indicate that opinion is divided right down the middle. There was very little difference in the responses between the boys and the girls and in the favorable or unfavorable opinions. For example, 153 students said that bilingual education helped them understand better, yet 125 checked that they would rather be in the regular classes. On the other hand, 95, or about one-third, liked bilingual education, yet 85 felt that the bilingual program was for slow learners and 118 said that it impeded their learning English. Few would quit school if there were no bilingual programs.

TABLE 8-3

ATTITUDE OF HIGH SCHOOL BILINGUAL PROGRAM
STUDENTS TOWARD BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Attitude	Males (131)	Females (138)	Total (269)
<u>Favorable</u>			
Helps me understand better	80	73	153
Helps me retain Chinese	24	45	69
Like bilingual education	45	50	95
Would quit if no bilin. ed.	5	8	13
Total			<u>330</u>
<u>Unfavorable</u>			
Rather be in regular classes	61	64	125
Bilin. ed. for slow learners	38	47	85
Learn English slower	62	56	118
Total			<u>328</u>

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

There is a strong stigma attached to being in the bilingual classes. Some think that such classes are for the dumber students, which is not actually the case. On the contrary, if there were no bilingual education program, the immigrant children would be put into slower track classes because they certainly would be unable to keep up at first with the "special progress" or "academic track" students. The worse part of this alternative is that students in the slower track classes generally exhibit behavioral problems that are disruptive of classroom learning.

In interviews with us, some students made the constructive suggestion that the teacher use less Chinese and more English, resorting to Chinese only when and if necessary.

The students we interviewed were eager to learn, their motivation was high. Given a little encouragement and some extra help, they could do well. In fact, by the second year, a somewhat miraculous "great leap forward" could be observed. This is confirmed by the students' records and by the teachers interviewed. When asked how long it generally took for the immigrant child to feel that he can cope and handle his lessons, teachers invariably answered, "One year." For those in the Chinatown schools, the period was a little longer. The younger the child, the quicker he adapts. The high school student has more difficulty, and his sense of frustration with the language barrier is more keenly felt.

In New York City, where the emphasis on bilingual education is transitional rather than maintenance the children are not retained in the bilingual or ESL programs if they can move on. There is constant movement in and out of the programs as new immigrants come to the school and the "graduates" move out. Loose guidelines state that the students should complete their transition within two years.

Language, a Creative and Psychological Force

In the haste to gain a tool whereby one can begin to deal with one's new environment, other facets of language that should be taken into account are often lost. According to Dean Marta Sotomayer of the University of Houston School of Social Work, language has many functions other than that of communication.

The mental function determines the perception and definition of reality. Language is the intermediary of ideas, which allows people not only to think in that language, but also to think through the vehicle of language itself. Thus, it is a creative force, molding one's thoughts and inevitably influencing behavior. . . .

Language is also a cohesive force that promotes a sense of belonging and group solidarity. Psychologically language plays an important role in the formation of the self-concept. It is generally agreed that a positive self-perception is crucial to functioning adequately and comfortably in one's surroundings. The sense of belonging, vital to the development of the self-concept, becomes blurred if one's language, cultural patterns, and ethnic experiences are not reflected and supported, but given a negative connotation.⁴

In other words, low self-image, lack of motivation, and unsatisfactory performance are often interrelated in a child who is hampered by a language barrier. Repeated failures can only result in loss of confidence and self-esteem. Children with negative self-images are threatened and frightened by new or demanding tasks. They construct defense mechanisms for protection that may prevent them from being receptive to new experiences. They approach learning with fear and anxiety, which reduces their ability to learn.

Over the three-year period that the Chinese bilingual program

4. "Language, Culture, and Ethnicity in Developing Self-Concept," Social Casework (April 1977) pp. 195-203.

was in existence in the Chinatown high school, Chinese student discharges dropped from 114 in 1976 to 77 in 1977 to 32 in 1978. The dean of boys also mentioned that a number of teenagers who had joined gangs were induced to come back to school with the implementation of bilingual classes. More students were encouraged to complete their high school education with the bilingual and counseling help provided. In assessing the value of bilingual education programs, the evaluators should look at these aspects of the language question as well as at pre-test/post-test reading scores. They should also look at these by-products of bilingual education.

This researcher found that the guidance counselors hired from bilingual education funds were the most important components in the bilingual programs. These were the people who kept close watch over the students to spot any impending difficulties and deal with them immediately. For example, the moment a student is marked absent or late, a call goes to the family to find out why. If a student is out for three days, a visit is paid to the home. If the student is encountering problems with his school work, he is called into the counselor's office for a chat to discover the source of the problem and to deal with it right away. The counselor keeps track of the student's total setting: himself, his family, his job (if any), and his school work. Such supportive service is one of the most valuable aspects of the bilingual program.

SUMMARY

True Chinese bilingual education programs in New York City's public schools were only implemented in 1975. What passed for bilingual education prior to that was English as a Second Language programs in which

immigrant children were pulled out of their regular classes for special sessions in survival English. Much controversy has revolved around the teaching of subject content in two languages. The differences of opinion have been colored by political considerations, economic issues, ethnocentrism, monetary funding, fears of loss of ethnic identity, and concerns about prospects for the future without a strong base in English. These issues have clouded the fundamental one of whether or not bilingual education is an aid to immigrant children in their adjustment to a new life in this country.

The "fringe benefits" of bilingual education must be assessed along with the learning of English and subject content. Among these benefits are higher student retention rate, more graduates, higher self-esteem that comes with acceptance of one's own ethnicity, and the scaling of the language barrier that may be an impediment to creativity and psychological well-being.

CHAPTER IX: BICULTURAL CONFLICT

The moment a child is born, he begins to absorb the culture of his primary group; these ways are so ingrained they become second nature to him. Imagine for a moment how wrenching it must be for an immigrant child who finds his cumulative life experiences completely invalidated and who must learn a whole new set of speech patterns and behavior when he settles in a new country. The severity of this culture shock is underlined by Teper's definition of culture:

Culture is called a habit system in which 'truths' that have been perpetuated by a group over centuries have permeated the unconscious. This basic belief system, from which 'rational' conclusions spring, may be so deeply ingrained that it becomes indistinguishable from human perception--the way one sees, feels, believes, knows. It is the continuity of cultural assumptions and patterns that gives order to one's world, reduces an infinite variety of options to a manageable stream of beliefs, gives a person a firm footing in time and space, and binds the lone individual to the communality of a group.¹

In our fieldwork, we found that the language barrier was the problem most commonly mentioned by the immigrant Chinese. Language looms largest because it is the conduit through which we interact with other people. It is the means by which we think, learn, and express ourselves. Less obvious is the basis upon which we speak or act or think. If there are bicultural conflicts, these may engender problems and psychological difficulties, which may not be immediately apparent but may nevertheless

1. Shirley Teper, "Ethnicity, Race and Human Development" (New York Institute on Pluralism and Group Identity of the American Jewish Committee, 1977) p. 20.

impact on the development of immigrant children.

In this chapter, we want to point out some of the cultural conflicts that commonly confront the Chinese child in the home and particularly in the schools. Oftentimes, teachers and parents are not aware of these conflicts and ascribe other meanings or other motives to the child's behavior, frequently in a disapproving fashion. Such censure confuses the child and quite often forces him to choose between what he is taught at home and what is commonly accepted by American society. In his desire to be accepted and to be liked, he may want to throw off that which is second nature to him; this may cause anguish and pain not only to himself but also to his parents and family. A few specific examples of bicultural conflict are presented to show how everyday occurrences can result in dilemmas for Chinese immigrant children.

Aggressiveness

In Chinese culture, the soldier or the man who resorts to violence is at the bottom of the social ladder. The sage or gentleman uses his wits, not his fists. So the Chinese child is taught not to fight. The American father will take his son out to the backyard and give him a few lessons in self-defense at the age of puberty. He teaches his son that the ability to fight is a sign of manhood. The Chinese parent teaches his son the exact opposite: Stay out of fights.² Yet, when the Chinese child goes to the school playground, he becomes the victim of bullies who

2. Richard Sollenger, "Chinese American Child Rearing Practices and Juvenile Delinquency," Journal of Social Psychology, vol. 74 (1968) p. 17.

pick on him and call him a sissy. New York's teenagers can be pretty tough and cruel. If the child goes home with a black eye and bruises, his parents will scold him and chastise him. What is he to do? The unresolved conflict about aggressive behavior is a major problem for Chinese American males. They feel that their masculinity has been affected by their childhood upbringing.

What do the teachers or monitors do? In most instances, they are derisive of the Chinese boys. "Why don't the Chinese fight back?" they exclaim. "Why do they stand there and just take it?" This derision only shames the Chinese boys, who feel that their courage is questioned. This bicultural conflict may be reflected in the self-hatred of some Asian American male activists who condemn the passivity of our forefathers in response to the discrimination and oppression they endured. Ignorant about their cultural heritage, the activists want to disassociate themselves from such "weakness," and they search for historical instances in which Asians put up a brave but costly and oftentimes futile fight to prove their manhood. The outbreak of gang violence may be another manifestation of the Chinese male's efforts to prove that he is "macho" also. He may be overcompensating for the derision that he has suffered.

Sexuality

In American schools, sexuality is a very strong and pervasive force. Boys and girls start noticing each other in the junior highs; at the high school level, sexual awareness is very pronounced. School is as much a place for male/female association as it is an institution for learning. Not so for the Chinese. Education is highly valued, and it is a serious

business. To give their children an opportunity for a better education may be the primary reason why the parents push their children to study, study, study. Interest in the opposite sex is highly distracting and, according to some old-fashioned parents, is improper. Dating is an unfamiliar concept and sexual attractiveness is underplayed, not flaunted as it is according to American ways.

This difference in attitudes and customs poses another dilemma for both the Chinese boys and girls. In school, the white, black, or Hispanic girls like to talk about clothes, makeup, and the dates they had over the weekend. They talk about brassiere sizes and tampons. The popular girl is the sexy one who dates the most. She is the envy of the other girls.

For the Chinese girl, the openness with which other girls discuss boys and sex is extremely embarrassing. Chinese girls used to bind their breasts, not show them off in tight sweaters. Their attitude toward the opposite sex is quite ambivalent. They feel that they are missing something very exciting when other girls talk about phone calls from their boyfriends or about their dates over the weekends, yet they will shy away and feel very uncomfortable if a boy shows an interest in them.

Most Chinese parents have had no dating experience. Their marriages were by and large arranged by their own parents or through matchmakers. Good girls simply did not go out with boys alone, so the parents are very suspicious and apprehensive about their daughters dating, and they watch them very carefully. Most Chinese girls are not permitted to date, and for the daring girl who tries to go out against her parents' wishes, there will be a price to pay.

It is no easier for the Chinese boys. The pressure to succeed in

school is even greater than for girls, and parental opposition to dating is even more intense. Naturally, the parents want their children to adhere to the old ways, while some children do not agree with their parents and have to carry on their high school romances on the sly. These children are bombarded by television, advertisements, stories, magazines, and real-life examples of boy-girl attraction. The teenager is undergoing puberty and experiencing the instinctive urges surging within him or her. In this society they are titillated, whereas in China they are kept under wraps until they are married.

The problem is exacerbated when teachers make fun of Chinese customs and the parents. I saw an instance of this at one of the Chinatown schools. A young Chinese girl had been forbidden by her parents to walk to school with a young Puerto Rican boy who was in the habit of accompanying her every day. To make sure that the parents were being obeyed, the grandmother would walk behind the girl to see that she did not walk with the boy. Grandma even hung around until her granddaughter went into class, and then she would peer through the window to make sure all was proper before she went home. Naturally, this was embarrassing for the girl, and it must have been noticed by the homeroom teacher. He exploded in anger at the little old lady and made some rather uncomplimentary remarks about this being the United States and that Chinese customs should have been left behind in China. To my mind, this teacher's attitude and remarks could only push the daughter farther away from her parents. What he could have done was explain to the girl, or even to the entire class, the cultural values and traditions of the parents, so that the girl could understand how they thought and why they behaved in such a fashion. Putting

down the parents and their customs is the worst thing he could have done.

Sports

The Chinese attitude toward sports is illustrated by an oft-told tale about two Englishmen who were considered somewhat mad. The two lived in Shanghai where they had gone to do business. In the afternoons, they would each take a racquet, go out in the hot sun, and bat a fuzzy ball across the net. As they ran back and forth across the court, sweat would pour down their faces, and they would be exhausted at the end of the game. To the Chinese onlookers standing on the side, this was sheer lunacy. They would shake their heads in disbelief and ask: "Why do these crazy Englishmen work so hard? They can afford to hire coolies to run around and hit the ball for them." The Chinese attitude toward sports has changed considerably, but it still does not assume the importance that it enjoys in American life.

Turn on any news program on radio or television, and you will find one-third of the air time devoted to sports. Who are the school heroes? The football quarterback, the track star, the baseball pitcher. What are the big events in school? The games. What is used to rally school spirits? The games.

Yet in the traditional Chinese way of thinking, development of the mental faculties was more important than development of the physique. The image of a scholar was one with a sallow face and long fingernails indicating that he spent long hours with his books and not had to do physical labor. Games that require brute strength, such as football and boxing were not even played in China. Kung fu or other disciplines of the martial arts did not call for physical strength as much as concentration, skill,

and agility. In the minds of many Chinese, sports are viewed as frivolous play and a waste of time and energy. Add to this the generally smaller physique of the Chinese immigrant student in comparison to his classmates, and we do not find many of them on any of the school teams.

What does this mean to the Chinese immigrant students, especially the boys? On the one hand, they may think that the heavy emphasis upon sports is a displaced value. They may want to participate, but they are either too small in stature or unable to devote the time necessary for practice to make the school teams. If the "letter men" are the big wheels, the Chinese student will feel that his kind are just the little guys. But most important of all, an entire dimension of American school life is lost to the Chinese immigrant children.

Tattling

Should one report a wrongdoing? Should one tell the teacher that a schoolmate is cheating on his exam? Should one report to the school authorities that a fellow student is trying to extort money from him? The American values on this score are ambiguous and confusing. For example, in the West Point scandal a few years ago, most of the cadets involved were not cheaters themselves but they knew about the cheating and did not report it to the authorities. Their honor code required that they tell, but the unwritten code among their fellow cadets said that they should not tattle or "fink." If they had reported the cheating of their fellow cadets, they would have been socially ostracized. There is a dilemma for the American here as well.

This bicultural conflict was noted by Denise Kandel and Gerald S. Lesser in their book, Youth in Two Worlds, in which their reference groups

were Danish and American children. The Danish children, like the Chinese, feel duty bound to report wrongdoing. There is no dichotomy of consequences here. Authorities and peers are consistent in their attitude in this respect, and this consistency helps to maintain social control. The teacher cannot be expected to have four pairs of eyes and see everything. The parents cannot be everywhere at once to know what their child is doing during the day. If the siblings or schoolmates will help by reporting wrongdoing, the task of teaching the child is shared and made easier for the adults. But when social ostracism stands in the way of enforcing ethical values, an intense conflict ensues and contributes to the breakdown of social control.

Demonstration of Affection

A commonly voiced concern among Chinese children is, "My parents do not love me. They never kiss or hug me. They are so cold, distant, and remote." The children long for human warmth and affection because they see it on the movie and television screens, and they read about it in books and magazines. Because their experiences with mother and father and the other members of the family as well are so formal and distant, they come to the conclusion that love is lacking. In China, where such behavior is the norm, children do not question it. But in this country, where expressions of affection are outwardly effusive, and commonly exhibited, they feel deprived.

This lack of demonstrative affection extends also to the spouse and friends. To the Chinese, physical intimacy and love are private matters

3. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1972).

never exhibited in public. Even in handshaking, the traditional Chinese way was to clasp one's own hands in greeting. Kissing and hugging a friend would be most inappropriate, and to kiss one's spouse in public would be considered shameless.

Nevertheless, Chinese children in this country are attracted to the physical expressions of love and affection. While they crave it for themselves, they are often unable to reciprocate or be demonstrative in their relations with their own spouses, children, or friends because of their detached emotional upbringing.

In the schools, this contrast in culture is made all the sharper because of the large numbers of Hispanics in the same schools. In general, the Hispanics are very outgoing and are not the least bit inhibited about embracing, holding hands, or kissing even a casual acquaintance. The Chinese children may interpret these gestures of friendliness as overstepping the bounds of propriety, but more often than not they wish they could shed their reserve shells and reach out to others in a more informal manner. On the other hand, the aloofness of the Chinese students is often wrongly interpreted as unfriendliness, standoffishness, as a desire to keep apart. If all the students were made aware of these cultural differences, they would not misread the intentions and behavior of one another.

Education

That education is a highly prized cultural value among the Chinese is commonly known, and the fact that Chinese children generally do well scholastically may be due to the hard push parents exert in this direction. None of this means, however, that these children do not experience a bicultural conflict regarding education when they see that the bright student is not

the one who is respected and looked up to in American schools. Labels such as "bookworm," "egghead," and "teacher's pet" are applied to the intelligent students, and these terms are not laudatory, but derisive. When parents urge their children to study hard and get good grades, the children know that the payoff will not be social acceptance by their schoolmates. The rewards are not consistent with values taught at home.

Nevertheless, the Chinese immigrant high school students indicated in their survey questionnaire that they prized the opportunity to get an education. In fact, they identified the opportunity to get a free education as one of the most important reasons why they are satisfied with their school work. Of 143 students who said that they were satisfied with their school work, 135 mentioned this one factor. Education was not easily available to everyone in China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan. It is attained at great personal sacrifice on the part of the parents. It is costly and it is earned by diligence and industry on the part of the student. In this country, school is free through high school. Everyone has to go to school until sixteen years of age in New York, and it is not a matter of students trying to gain admittance by passing rigorous entrance exams, but a matter of authorities trying to keep the drop-out rates low that characterizes the educational system here. Since education is free and easy to get, it is often taken lightly.

New York academic standards are lower than those in Hong Kong or Taiwan, and the school work is easier to keep up with. As a result, there is less distinction attached to being able to stay in school or graduate. What the Chinese immigrant students prize highly has less value in the larger society, and again the newcomers to this country start to have doubts

about the goals that they are striving for.

Thrift

Approximately eighteen banks are found within the small core area of New York's Chinatown. When the Manhattan Savings Bank opened a new branch in October 1977 it attracted to its coffers \$3 million within a few months time. Most of the large banks are aware that Chinatown is fertile ground for the accumulation of capital because the Chinese tend to save more of what they earn than other ethnic groups in America in spite of the fact that their earnings are small. The savings grow because of two major factors. One is the sense of insecurity common to immigrants, who need a cushion for the uncertainties that they feel acutely. The other is the esteem with which thrift is regarded by the Chinese. A person who is frugal is thought of more highly than is one who can sport material symbols of success.

I was once sent on an assignment to cover the story of a very wealthy Chinese from Bangkok who was reputed to own shipping lines, rice mills, and many other industries. He was a special guest of the United States Department of State, and that evening he was to be honored at the Waldorf-Astoria. I found this gentleman in a very modestly-priced midtown hotel. When he extended his hand to shake mine, I saw that his suit sleeves were frayed.

The value placed upon thrift poses acute bicultural conflict for Chinese immigrant children who see all about them evidence of an economic system that encourages the accumulation and conspicuous consumption of material possessions. A very important segment of the consumer market is now the teenage population. The urge to have stylish clothes, a stereo, a camera, a hi-fi radio, sports equipment, and even a car creates a pain-

ful conflict in the child who is enticed by television and other advertising media, but whose parents reserve a large percentage of their meager earnings for stashing away in the banks.

In school, the girl who gets money to spend on fashionable dresses and the latest rock record feels more poised and confident about herself than do her less materially fortunate classmates. She is also admired, complimented, and envied. In the Chinese community, on the other hand, a Chinese girl who spent a lot of money on clothes and frivolities would soon be the object of grapevine gossip, stigmatized as a less-than-desirable prospective wife or daughter-in-law, whereas praises would be sung for the more modestly dressed girl who saved her money.

From my students I hear a commonly voiced complaint about their parents as "money-hungry." They give their children very little spending money. They do not buy fashionable clothing; rather, they buy only serviceable garments in which the children are ashamed to be seen. The Chinese home is generally not furnished for comfort or aesthetics, so when Chinese children visit the homes of their non-Chinese friends and compare them with their own living quarters, they feel deprived and ashamed of their parents and their family. They certainly do not want to bring their friends home to play, and the teenagers may themselves stay away from home as much as possible, feeling more comfortable with their peers in clubhouses or on the streets. The contrast in spending attitudes between the underdeveloped economy from which many Chinese immigrants have come and the American economy, which emphasizes mass and even wasteful consumption is very sharp, and it creates many an unresolved conflict in the children, who do not realize that cultural differences lay behind it. They think that their parents value money

more than they care for their children, and exhibit this by denying them material possessions that give them pleasure and status in the eyes of their peers.

Credit is another concept foreign to immigrants from the Far East. If one does not have the money, one should not be tempted to buy. Credit is borrowing money, and borrowing should be resorted to only in extreme emergencies. The buy now, pay later idea goes against the Chinese grain. So the Chinese families postpone buying until they have saved up enough to cover the entire purchase price. This attitude is fairly common even when it comes to the purchase of a home. The family will scrimp and economize, putting aside a large portion of its income for this goal, denying itself small pleasures along the way for many, many years until the large sum is accumulated. To the Chinese way of thinking, this singleness of purpose shows character, but to the more hedonistic American mind, this habit of thrift may appear asinine and unnecessary.

Dependency

In her study, "Socialization Patterns Among the Chinese in Hawaii," Nancy F. Young noted the prolonged period of dependency of the children commonly found in the child-rearing practices of the Chinese in Hawaii. She wrote:

Observations of Chinese families in Hawaii indicate that both immigrant and local parents utilize child-rearing techniques that result in parent-oriented, as opposed to peer-oriented behavior. . . . Chinese parents maximize their control over their children by limiting their experiences with models exhibiting non-sanctioned behavior.⁴

4. Amerasia Journal, vol. 1, no. 4 (February 1972) p. 36.

Analyzing and comparing the results of the Chance Independence Training Questionnaire that she administered to six ethnic groups and local (American-born Chinese) as well as immigrant Chinese, she found the mean age of independence training for American-born Chinese to be the lowest while that for immigrant Chinese to be the highest.

TABLE 9-1

MEAN AGE OF INDEPENDENCE TRAINING FOR
SELECTED ETHNIC GROUPS

<u>Ethnic Stock</u>	<u>Mean Age of Independence Training</u>
Local Chinese (American-born)	6.78
Jew	6.83
Protestant	6.87
Negro	7.23
Greek	7.67
French-Canadian	7.99
Italian	8.03
Immigrant Chinese	8.85

SOURCE: Nancy F. Young, Op. cit.

Immigrant mothers exercise constant and strict supervision over their children. They take the children wherever they go, and babysitters are unheard of. They prefer their children to stay home rather than go out to play with their friends. Friends are carefully screened by the mother, and the child is not expected to do things for himself until two years beyond the mean age that a Jewish mother would expect her child to do for himself (see above table).

On the other hand, American-born Chinese parents expect their children to cut the apron strings sooner than any of the other ethnic groups surveyed.

Young did not elaborate and explain why, but it seems that Chinese parents who are American-born have assimilated the American values of independence at an early age and may even have gone overboard in rearing their own children. There are areas of dependence and independence in which Young found divergence. The immigrant Chinese child is expected to be able to take care of himself at an earlier age, but he is discouraged from socializing with people outside the family until a much later age.

The extremes exhibited between the American-born and immigrant Chinese may be indicative of the bicultural conflict that the Chinese in this country feel. As children, they may have felt that their parents were overprotective; this was frequently mentioned by the teachers to whom we talked. We saw evidence of this in the elementary schools in the practice of mothers coming to the school from the garment factories during their own lunch hours to feed their children lunch. Many walked their children to and from school,⁵ even as late as the junior high level, but it was not clear to us whether the parents were justifiably afraid for their children's safety from the gangs or whether they were being overprotective. The teachers thought the mothers were smothering the children and restricting their freedom of action. By adolescence, the children must have felt the same. They were chafing against parental control over what they presumed to be their own business, while the parents thought they were merely doing their parental duty. Teachers and parents do not agree on this score, with the result that parental authority is often undermined by a teacher's scoffing attitude.

5. Since the mothers work on a piece-rate basis, they can leave their machines and go to the schools to pick up their children.

Respect for Authority

The Chinese value of respect for one's elders and for authority is common knowledge and needs no further elaboration here. We have already mentioned that the Chinese immigrant children encountering the disrespect accorded teachers and school authorities for the first time in American classrooms find themselves extremely upset and dismayed. In our interviews with the students, this concern was voiced frequently.

Challenge against established authority has been a notable feature of youth culture over the past two decades. The parents, the teachers, the police, the government, the church--all authority figures in the past--have been knocked down and even reviled. Violence against teachers is the leading problem in schools across the nation. If students do not have respect for the teacher, neither will they have respect for the knowledge that the teacher tries to impart. The issue is a disturbing one, not only for the immigrant children but for the entire American society as well.

Heroes and Heroines

Who are the people who are praised, admired, looked up to, and revered? The idols of different cultures are themselves different types of people, and the values of a society may be deduced from the type of people who are respected and emulated in that culture. In the United States, the most popular figures are movie, television, and stage stars; sports figures; politicians; successful authors; inventors; and scientists; probably in that order. Who are the heroes and heroines of China? If we use literature as a guide, they are the filial sons or daughters, the sacrificing mother; the loyal minister; the patriot or war hero who saves

his country; and revolutionaries who overthrow despotic rulers and set up their own dynasties. Even in modern-day China, the persons honored and emulated are the self-sacrificing workers who put nation above self.

Priests, ministers, and rabbis once commanded prestige in this country, but the status of these men of God has declined. In China, monks or priests have always occupied lowly positions. In contrast to the United States, in China, actors were riff-raff. Women did not act in the theater, so men had to play the female roles. Western influence has brought about changes in the pseudo-Chinese cultures of Hong Kong and Singapore and stage performers and movie stars are now popular and emulated, but this was not always so.

As a rule, Chinese heroes and heroines were people of high moral virtues, and they set the standards of conduct for others. In this country, the more sensational the exposé of the private lives of our national leaders or entertainment figures, the more our curiosity is aroused. How movie stars retain their popularity in spite of the relentless campaigns to strip them naked is very difficult for someone not brought up in the United States to comprehend. An old adage says, "No man is a hero to his valet." Yet, the very fact that American heroes and heroines survive and thrive on notoriety and self-confession can only mean that the American people secretly admire such behavior. One might say, Chinese heroes are saints; American heroes are sinners.

Individualism

Dr. Francis L.K. Hsu, noted anthropologist, has written extensively about individualism as a prominent characteristic of American life.

According to Dr. Hsu, the basic ingredient of rugged individualism is self-reliance. The individual constantly tells himself and others that he controls his own destiny and that he does not need help from others. The individual-centered person enjoins himself to find means of fulfilling his own desires and ambitions.

Individualism is the driving force behind the competitiveness and creativity that has pushed this nation forward. Loose family ties, superficial human relationships, little community control, and weak traditions have given the individual leeway to strike out on his own without being hindered by sentimentality, convention, and tradition. Self-interest has been a powerful incentive.

In contrast, Dr. Hsu contends, the Chinese are situation-centered. Their way of life encourages the individual to find a satisfactory adjustment with the external environment of men and things. The Chinese individual sees the world in relativistic terms. He is dependent upon others and others are dependent upon him. Like bricks in a wall, one lends support to the other and they all hold up the society as a whole. If even one brick becomes loose, the wall is considerably weakened; interlocked, the wall is strong. The wall is the network of human relations. The individual subordinates his own wishes and ambitions for the common good.⁶

Dr. Kenneth Abbott, in his book Harmony and Individualism, also points out that the Western ideas of creativity and individualism are not accented in Chinese and must be held within accepted norms. One of the

6. Americans and Chinese: Reflections on Two Cultures and Their People (New York: American Museum of Science Books, 1972) and "Rugged Individualism Reconsidered," The Colorado Quarterly, vol. IX, no. 2 (Autumn 1960).

reasons for this is the importance ascribed to maintenance of harmony. Harmony is the key concept in all relationships between god(s) and man and between man and man. It is the highest good.⁷

To the Chinese, the sense of duty and obligation takes precedence over self-gratification. (It is not uncommon to find Chinese teenagers handing over their entire paychecks to their parents for family use or for young Chinese males to pursue a course of study chosen for them by their parents rather than one of their own choosing.) Responsibility toward distant kin is more keenly felt by the Chinese than by other Americans. Honor and glory accrue not only to the individual but to all those who helped him climb the ladder. This sense of being part of something greater than oneself gives the Chinese a feeling of belonging and security in the knowledge that they do not stand alone. On the other hand, individual freedom of action is very much restricted.

The foregoing are but examples of the many areas of bicultural conflicts that confront a newcomer to these shores. In sum, they are:

- Chinese children are brought up to refrain from aggressive behavior, whereas the masculine image in this country stresses the macho type. Chinese males are particularly troubled by this bicultural conflict.
- Sexual attractiveness is expressed subtly according to Chinese custom, whereas it is played up according to American customs. This is an area of special concern for the high-school-age Chinese American female.

7. Op. cit. (Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service, 1970). See also "Culture Change and the Persistence of the Chinese Personality," in George DeVos (ed.), In Response to Change (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1976).

- Sports are a consuming pastime for the American people, whereas it takes a backseat to scholastic achievement for the Chinese.
- Chinese children feel that they duty-bound to report wrongdoing; yet tattling or "ratting" is a serious offense in the eyes of their American peers.
- Chinese children in this country are attracted by the physical expressions of love and affection customary here, but they are inhibited by their less demonstrative upbringing. At the same time, they may question their parents' love in light of the more overt affection they observe among their peers' parents.
- Education and scholastic achievement are not as highly valued in the United States as they are in China.
- Thrift is a worthy character trait according to the Chinese way of thinking, whereas conspicuous consumption is favored in the United States. The two ways of thinking are incompatible and do cause conflict for the Chinese children.
- Immigrant Chinese parents do not encourage early independence in their children. They discourage their children from socializing outside the family until a much later age than do other ethnic groups.
- Immigrant Chinese children find it hard to accept the lack of respect for authority--especially toward teachers--among their peers in school.
- Chinese heroes and heroines tend to be persons of high moral caliber. American idols tend to be entertainment figures, sports stars, or persons who have achieved tangible success in terms of

wealth or material attainment. The more sensational the private lives of these people, the more they attract public attention.

- The Chinese try to fit themselves into the scheme of things whereas the American way is based on individualism.

Such better known examples of cultural conflict as respect for elders, modesty and humility, male superiority, and others have been omitted here because they have been dealt with at length elsewhere.

Marginality

There are two divergent trains of thought regarding cultural conflict. Robert E. Park first coined the term "marginal man" for this predicament. Park stressed that "marginal men are--precisely because of their ambiguous position from a cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or sociostructural standpoint --strongly motivated to make creative adjustments in situations of change, and in the course of this adjustment process, to develop innovations in social behavior."⁸ However, the evidence is not clear. Marginal individuals are more prone to succumb to anomie and thus become carriers of social disorganization rather than to creative change. Everett Stonequist in his work, The Marginal Man, brings out the latter viewpoint. He wrote:

The marginal personality is most clearly portrayed in those individuals who are unwittingly initiated into two or more historic traditions, languages, political loyalties, moral codes, or religions. This occurs for instance as a result of migration. . . .

When the standards of two or more social groups come into active contrast or conflict, the individual who is identified

8. International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1968) vol 4, p. 427.

with both groups experiences the conflict as an acute personal difficulty or mental tension. . . .⁹

So the marginal man . . . is one who is poised in psychological uncertainty between two (or more) social worlds; reflecting in his soul the discords and harmonies, repulsions and attractions of these worlds, one of which is often 'dominant' over the other; within which membership is implicitly if not explicitly based upon birth or ancestry (race or nationality); and where exclusion removes the individual from a system of group relations.¹⁰

Adults tend to perceive their marginality as a sense of wanting to be an accepted member of a group or groups and conversely a sense of exclusion from such groups. Children, on the other hand, perceive of their marginality as a dilemma. They are faced with a situation where courses of action are diametrically opposed or radically different. They do not see the dilemma as rising from cultural differences; they just see it as an impasse. The choices are painful and more often than not immobilizing. Not having the maturity to evaluate or modify their courses of action or to adjust their values, they do nothing; the vacuousness of their indecision or their inability to decide is extremely uncomfortable.

For Chinese immigrant children who live in New York's Chinatown or in the satellite Chinatowns, these conflicts are moderated to a large degree because there are other Chinese children around to mitigate the dilemmas that they encounter. When they are among their own, the Chinese ways are better known and better accepted. The Chinese customs and traditions are not denigrated to the degree that they would be if the immigrant child were the only one to face the conflict on his or her own. Even so, teachers and parents should be made aware of these conflicts to avoid exacerbat-

9. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937) pp. 3-4.

10. Ibid. p. 8.

ing the differences and to inculcate in both the Chinese and the non-Chinese a healthy respect for cultural differences.

Robert Park's sanguine outlook, however, leads us to expect that discomfort generated by the conditions of the marginal state may lead to new forms of adaptive behavior more in tune with the changed environment in a new homeland. To him, marginality is the soil from which creative change sprouts.

CHAPTER X: AFTER-SCHOOL HOURS

Work in Garment Factories

Even at the elementary school level, children hurried off to the garment factories right after school. That was where Mother was, and they went to join her or to report to her for assignment of their daily chores before they went home to an empty apartment. Many of the children stayed beside Mother's sewing machine doing their homework or helping her ready the garments for sewing. The bosses did not object to the children being underfoot. They accepted the daily presence of children after three o'clock as the normal course of events. After the children finished their homework, and if they did not have work to do, they played with each other among the empty boxes or between the bundles of garments piled high.

Elementary Level. Children aged ten, eleven, or twelve often were given jobs that they could handle, and this became steady employment for them. Putting plastic bags over finished garments, turning belts inside out, cutting threads, or folding finished garments do not involve too much strength or skill, so these were tasks that the children performed. They were paid a penny or two for each garment hung or for each belt turned. On average days, they earned two to three dollars, which would be added to the mother's paycheck.

Of three children interviewed at the Chinatown elementary school who worked in a garment factory, one boy said, "I work every day from three to eight. Sometimes, until twelve midnight. I stay with my mother and I go home when she goes home." A girl said, "Most of the time we leave the factory at seven or eight." Another boy said, "We leave at six-thirty, usually." The hours worked depend upon the season and how long the mother chooses to work. She is paid on a piece-rate basis so she can generally set her own hours. When there is a rush job or a deadline on a shipment, however, the boss will ask the women to stay later and finish the job lot.

Jobs at the garment factories are the most common, but the children perform other work as well. These include delivering take-out orders from the restaurants, peeling onions and shrimp, making won-ton or meat dumplings, filling small containers with soy sauce or mustard, sweeping out stores, or running errands. The variety of jobs are endless, and more often than not they are performed for relatives or parents who own the restaurant or store. One has to have some kind of family connection to get a job.

Junior-High Level. At the junior-high and high-school level, however, the expectation of parents that children will contribute to the family income is greater. At the junior high in Chinatown, I talked to six children out of fourteen who were in the seventh grade orientation class (the class for the most recent immigrants). This is what I discovered:

Student 1: Girl. Helps her mother in factory until 8:00 p.m. daily. Does not have to, but wants to be close to her mother.

Student 2: Girl. Six members in family. Mother and three older sisters work in garment factory. She helps after school. Father dead.

Student 3: Girl. Does not work but would like to get job.

Student 4: Girl. Does not work. Father works for an American employer as chef.

Student 5: Girl. Nine members in family. Parents, three older sisters, and grandmother work in garment factory. Younger members go after school. All get off at 5:00 or 6:00 P.M. They go home, cook and eat together.

Student 6: Boy. Five in family. All work at the same factory, including older brother, 17, and younger sister, 10. He is 14.

In another class, the teacher asked for a show of hands from his seventh graders who held jobs after school. Of the 71 students, 20 worked and 4 went to Chinese school. It seems that the more recent immigrant families are very anxious for their children to work, most likely because of economic necessity brought on by the huge expenses incurred for transportation and relocation.

At the Chinatown junior high school, a number of teachers did mention that the children were very sleepy in the mornings. At first they thought the children stayed up late watching television, but discovered that the children had worked until late at night. One Chinese-American teacher commented:

The immigrant Chinese are very conscious of money. Money seems to be the overwhelming goal in their lives. They work very hard and they expect the children to help out. Once a teenager gets the feel of money in his hands, he wants to go to work and he wants to drop out, especially if he is having difficulty with the language and his school work.

Fortunately, the parents want their children to finish school, but at the same time, the children are expected to contribute in part to the family expenses.

In the satellite community schools, the children are located far from the heavy concentration of garment factories and restaurants found in Chinatown. Work was not readily available to these youngsters. Besides, as we noted, the suburban immigrants usually have more of a financial cushion and are not as frantic about economic security. We found only a few students who had after-school jobs in the elementary or junior high schools in the satellite community.

High School Level. In the high schools, we had two sources of data about the extent of after-school employment. Neither is based on scientific sampling, but both are indicative of the overall situation. One was the records kept by the bilingual program guidance counselor consisting of 435 students in the bilingual program in the Chinatown high school for the year 1976. Over 80 percent of these students indicated that they worked twenty hours or more per week, and 43 percent said that it was necessary for them to contribute to the support of the family. The other source was the survey questionnaire that we administered in the same school in 1978. These are not exactly the same students, although there may be some overlap. Tabulation of the hours spent by the 270 students surveyed showed that approximately one-half of the Chinatown high school students worked sixteen hours or more and about one-fifth worked twenty-five hours or more per week (See Table 10-1). On the other hand, about one-third did not work at all. The groups from our two sources are not identical so the figures are not comparable. In our interviews with the students, however, we gained the impression that the students put in a substantial number of hours at jobs. Fewer satellite community high school students worked at regular jobs and not many

had household chores either. It was presumed that since the mothers worked, the domestic chores may have been relegated to the children, but this turned out not to be so. Either the mothers shouldered the extra burden or household duties were neglected. More likely it was the latter.

Table 10-1
WEEKLY HOURS SPENT ON JOB, CHORES, OR TELEVISION BY
CHINATOWN AND SATELLITE COMMUNITY
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Hours	Job			Chores			Tele- vision
	C.T.	Sat.	Total	C.T.	Sat.	Total	
	N=199	N=71	N=270	N=199	N=71	N=270	N=270
0	31%	61%	39%	45%	51%	47%	26%
1-5	5	1	4	22	21	21	14
6-10	6	7	6	16	10	14	22
11-15	11	1	8	9	8	9	24
16-20	16	3	13	3	1	3	11
21-25	12	10	11	3	4	3	3
25+	20	17	19	3	4	3	0

Source: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978.

Economic Value of Children

To many sideline onlookers or well-meaning persons, the long hours put in--even by very young children--in the garment factories or at other jobs smack of child labor or child exploitation. In the United States, children are not expected to contribute to the family purse, and when they are utilized to produce economically, social disapprobation is strong.

In agrarian or other societies, a child's contribution to the family gives him a sense of worth. At an early age, children are given responsibility for household chores. As they grow older, they are expected naturally to participate in the family economic enterprise, which may be on the farm, at a trade, or in the shop. "The evolution of our society from a rural to an urban-based family system, from an extended to a nuclear family system, and from a labor intensive to a machine economy has made the child no longer an economic asset," writes Orville Brim. Thus, "We are, in this nation, moving into an era that may be historically the most precarious for America's children. . . . Marked increases in the cost of raising a child cause individual parents and the economy generally, to view child-bearing and children-rearing as an economic liability, in competition with other values."¹ The lower economic value of children is clearly reflected in the declining fertility ratio. In 1880, the average number of children per woman of childbearing age was seven.² In the 1980s, the number is less than two.³

Although the working hours of Chinese children in Chinatown may be long and tiresome, the children do gain by feeling that they are produc-

1. Orville G. Brim, Jr. "Societal Influences on Children and New Actors in the Field," National Council for Children and Television Forum Special Issue: "The State of the Child" (Winter 1979), vol. 2, no. 1. p. 24.

2. C. Christian Beels, "The Case of the Vanishing Mommy," New York Times Magazine (July 4, 1976) p. 19.

3. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Social Indicators III (December 1980).

tive and helpful to the family unit. They are kept busy so that they do not have time to get into mischief. At the same time, they are not only under the watchful eyes of their mothers but a host of other women in the factories as well. Their upbringing is diffused and shared by the mother's co-workers. For instance, if a child gets too rambunctious, the ladies might admonish him to stop running around and go help your mother. "Can't you see how hard she is working?" These words instill a sense of duty to the mother and discourage the child from being too rowdy. If a child is balky and disobedient, the disapproval of a score of ladies nearby will diffuse and lighten the mother's task of child-rearing because she has a support group to back up her authority. Too often, in the nuclear family, the mother is almost alone in her responsibility of child-rearing, and the isolation in itself can become an overwhelming burden.⁴

Recreation

In the lower grades, the children invariably reported that they had few recreational outlets after school. Their one most important pastime was watching television. If they did not go to the factory to be with their mothers, they stayed home and turned on the television. The streets certainly were not safe for play. Watching television is not unique to the Chinese immigrant children. According to the Neilson reports, pre-schoolers in the United States watch an average of thirty-three hours of television per week. Six- to eleven-year-olds average twenty-nine hours, while teenagers get in from twenty-four to twenty-six hours.⁵

4. Beels, Op. cit. pp. 28-46

5. American Teacher (November 1978) p. 14

Probably because of the long hours spent at jobs, the Chinese teenagers do not watch much television.

Aside from going to the movies occasionally, watching television, participating in sports, and reading for pleasure, the high school students indicated that they had few other recreational outlets. Very few went to dances or parties or social events. In fact, the lack of recreation for these young people is very striking. Chinese student clubs or organizations at the high schools or colleges used to sponsor dances or parties, but gang intrusion into social events and dances have all but killed these activities. Since 1971 gang members would try to crash these social events. If thwarted, they would brandish their guns, and on a number of occasions shot up the place. Thereafter, Chinese-American clubs no longer dared to have dances. So there are few opportunities for young people to get together. The effects of this vacuum can be deleterious to these young people who have little opportunity to acquire the social graces and ease needed to associate and deal with people. As one Chinese-American principal put it, "Our youth are becoming 'socially retarded.'" Remember the adage: All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy? This lack of finesse in the social sphere becomes apparent only when these young people come out to work after graduation from high school or college. In a survey of City College of New York graduates conducted by this writer, many of those interviewed mentioned their lack of social graces and contacts as a huge barrier to career advancement. The "dull-boy" syndrome had shown up to plague them in their adult years.

After-School Centers

School lasts from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., right? Wrong. For some of the Chinese children in Chinatown, the school day extends from 8:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. In the morning, free breakfast is served to give the children something in their stomachs to provide them enough energy to get through the morning. Hot, nutritious lunches are also served in mid-day. In January 1979 at the Chinatown elementary school of our study, 809 out of the 847 students were signed up for free breakfast and 795 for free lunch. At the Chinatown junior high school 200 out of a total of 470 students were served free breakfast and 400 were served free lunch.

The principal of the elementary school said, "Some people say that we are surrogate parents in feeding the children two meals out of three, but I don't mind doing these things even if they are not properly within the province of the school. Children used to pass out in the mornings before we served breakfast. I would like to see these services coordinated under the school."

When the three o'clock bell rings, the normal American pattern for school children is to go home, eat a snack, go out to play or do chores, wash up, eat dinner, do homework, watch television for a while, and go to bed. For the Chinese children there are four main activities: go to the factory where mother is, go to Chinese school, go home and do the homework and chores or watch television, or go to an after-school center.

Most of the after-school centers are located right in the schools, utilizing school facilities to look after the children until their parents come for them at 6:00 P.M. The Chinatown Planning Council (CPC)

operates the largest after-school programs in seven of the public schools enrolling large numbers of Chinese children. The centers pick up right where the schools leave off. As soon as the children come into the center, they are served a nutritious snack consisting of juice or milk, fruit or raw vegetables, and cookies or sometimes Chinese pastries.

The children are expected to do their homework while teachers and tutors supervise them. After the homework is done, the children can play, do arts and crafts, take part in skits, and have music lessons; in some of the after-school centers, Chinese lessons are offered. The Chinatown Planning Council after-school centers are staffed by professional personnel, and they provide a secure, creative, and healthy experience for the children of working parents. In addition, a family service worker maintains contact with the families to provide referral services for other problems that may arise.

The facilities of the seven CPC after-school centers can accommodate only approximately 1,000 children.⁶ The waiting lists are long. The fee is based upon a sliding scale; the parents pay what they can, but most pay very little. Another 500 children attend after-school centers run by churches and other voluntary organizations. Some are funded and some are not. Those endowed with little money can serve only as baby-sitting agencies to keep the children company or keep them from harm. They cannot provide the professional supervision that the after-school centers mentioned above can. Obviously, the 1,500 slots available are a long way from meeting the needs of the applicants for such services.

6. Interview with Charles Wang of the Chinatown Planning Council.

Parents who cannot get their children admitted to the after-school centers must either take them to the factories or restaurants with them, leave them at home to fend for themselves, or leave the children to look for other after-school diversions with their peers.

Day Care

Day-care center facilities for preschoolers are equally scarce. As of 1978, only three centers--the Chinatown Day Care Center, the Hamilton-Madison House Day Care, and the Educational Alliance--accommodated about 250 children. In our research in the community, we came across many horror stories of children left alone in apartments. One, a two-year-old girl, was tied up in front of the television every day. Her mother would come back occasionally to check on her.⁷ Another three-year-old girl took care of herself, spending her time with the television from morning until her sisters came home from school at 3:00 P.M.⁸ A ten-year-old boy was discovered by the school principal to be living alone.⁹ His father worked in Philadelphia and came to New York once a week to look in on his son.

Youth Centers

Places where older children can go after school hours are in a constant state of flux. The Community Service Society withdrew from Chinatown in 1976. The YMCA program has almost no participants because it charges a fee for membership. A Youth Consortium consisting of Project

7. Interview with director of Family Consultation Service Center.

8. Interview with one of the sisters of the girl.

9. Interview with Richard Kramer.

Reach, Project Hing Dai (Big Brother-Little Brother), and Young Life was aborted in 1978 when funding was cut off by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of the City of New York. Only Project Reach was retained under the aegis of the Chinatown Planning Council. A new group, Better Chinatown Project, was founded in 1978 and is housed in an old school building. These two organizations still provide services like tutoring, counseling, recreation, arts and crafts, music and painting, and an opportunity for young people to get together in a supervised, wholesome atmosphere. The Chinese Benevolent Association sponsors basketball tournaments in its gym. However, these few facilities are only skeletal and they are far from filling the need.

Parental Concern

For the immigrant parents, it is a new experience to leave their children without adult supervision. In the home country, the mothers generally did not work, and if they did, invariably there would be any number of relatives or neighbors around to look after the children. Parents are not the only ones who supervise the children's upbringing. Aunts, uncles, grandparents, older siblings all exert some influence. To have to leave their children untended or in someone else's care must be a guilt-laden experience for the parents.

Summary of Findings

A significant number of immigrant children and youth worked after school. These even included children at the elementary school level. The hours were long. Of the high school students surveyed, 32 percent in Chinatown and 27 percent in the satellite community worked twenty

hours or more per week. The demands of school and job leave very little time for recreation or play.

A few after-school centers serve approximately 1,500 children in Chinatown. Obviously, these few slots are a long way from meeting the needs of the applicants for such services.

The Chinatown youth centers have been in a constant state of flux, here one day and gone the next depending upon funding, which is uncertain from year to year. The facilities are skeletal in relationship to need.

In Chinatown, opportunities for socializing, for sports, or for cultural appreciation are extremely limited. Life for the immigrant child is the serious business of school and work. What little time left over is spent on watching television. The streets are unsafe, and social activities, like parties and dances, are few. The lack of experience in knowing how to relate to other people in a social setting may result in what one Chinese American principal of a New York City high school labeled "social retardation." To him, symptoms of this malady were already quite apparent.

CHAPTER XI: THE DEVIANTS--CHINATOWN GANGS

If there are positive forces that help immigrant children in their transition from one culture to another, there are also negative influences that prey upon the weak and vulnerable. The most pernicious of these are the youth gangs that have terrorized the community.¹ Their wanton shooting and killing, their high-handed extortion, their tactics to coerce other youth to join their ranks, and their total disregard for the safety of innocent bystanders have gripped the community in utter and unspeakable fear.

It is no coincidence that the waxing of the youth gangs has accompanied the phenomenal increase in immigration since 1965. Prior to that time, the lack of juvenile offenders among the Chinese had drawn the attention of social scientists and law enforcement officers. Chinese children had been held up as models of behavior and Chinatown was always the safest neighborhood in the city. In the past, restaurants and businesses stayed open until 1:00 A.M. Now iron gates and metal shutters clang shut over store fronts by 9:00 P.M.

How does one explain the phenomenon? As long as youth gangs roam

1. See Betty Lee Sung, "Gangs in New York's Chinatown," (Department of Asian Studies, City College of New York, 1977). This report gives considerable detail about the gang situation, presenting interviews with the police, community leaders, gang members themselves, social or agency workers, and the press. Thus a multi-faceted picture of the gangs was drawn by the people who are daily involved with the gang problem.

the streets, how can we report that Chinese immigrant children are managing quite well after an initial period of difficulty. The answer is that the two groups are separate and apart. The large majority, who are in the schools, are serious and concerned about their future, and they are taking the conventional route through hard work and education. The gang members are more attracted by the lure of easy money, the excitement of the streets, and the camaraderie of the peer group. School work takes a backseat to these enticements, and the gang members drop out of school or is truant.

What leads some youths astray while most strive diligently to adjust to their new homeland in an exemplary manner? Is there a characteristic profile of the gang member? Are there underlying currents that have given rise to this surge in violent and disruptive behavior? The reasons are many. First among them is the spectacular increase in number of children in the Chinatown community since the liberalization of the immigration laws. As pointed out previously, Chinese children, once a rarity on the American scene, now total more than 20,000 in the New York City school system alone. The Chinese American population, once a predominantly adult male society, is now balanced out with women and children.

A lack of juveniles naturally means an absence of juvenile delinquents, but the sudden presence of large numbers of young people can embolden those who held back from antisocial behavior before. It is common knowledge that a loner who may hesitate to step out of bounds or protest his treatment will, when he is part of a crowd, muster courage from the group and behave in a manner quite contrary to his usual self. There is no doubt that the increase in number of Chinese teenagers has a direct connection with the upsurge in gang activities.

Gang members in New York's Chinatown are almost exclusively foreign-born immigrants who are having difficulty adjusting to a new way of life in a new country. Disillusioned, they find the easy buck more appealing than the laborious tasks of school and work. They may be coerced into joining a gang against their will or may choose to join because the gang fills a void in their lives. Given a sizable number of vulnerable young people, the tongs quickly seized upon the opportunity to advance their own ends. In large measure, the tongs are responsible for the rising incidence of gang activity.

Tongs

The tongs are secret societies engaged in illicit activities such as extortion for protection, gambling, prostitution, and drugs. They have been part of the history of the Chinese in the United States since its earliest days.² They were the highbinders who imported girls for prostitution. They controlled the opium dens and the gambling parlors. They collected money for protection of legitimate as well as illegitimate businesses.

In the United States the image of the Chinese American has been tarnished repeatedly by the tong wars that erupted periodically until the 1930s. Those conflicts persisted as rival tongs sought exclusive control over certain streets of Chinatown and certain segments of the Chinese population. For their own safety, the Chinese had to pay protection money to either one or the other tong. Gambling houses in particular

2. See Carl Glick and Hong Sheng-Hwa, Swords of Silence (New York: Whittlesey House, 1947); Richard Dillion, The Hatchetmen: Tong Wars in San Francisco (New York: Coward McCann, 1962); and Carol Green Wilson, Chinatown Quest (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1931).

allocated a percentage of their profits to the tongs; likewise the opium dens and houses of prostitution. Hatchetmen, employed by the tongs, enforced the decrees of the tong leaders, or highbinders, by splitting open the skulls of adversaries with hatchets.

Whenever the interests of the competing tongs were at odds, open warfare ensued. These wars became so vicious that American authorities threatened to deport en masse the tong leaders and combatants. This deterred the fighting. Common cause in defending China against Japan during World War II united the Chinese in the United States and led to a lull in tong activity from the 1930s until the 1960s.

In New York, there are two main tongs: The Hip Sing and the On Leong. With the huge influx of new immigrants into Chinatown after 1965, the ground was laid for a comeback for the tongs. Opium was a thing of the past; with the sex ratio becoming more balanced among the Chinese, prostitution was unprofitable; but gambling has continued to flourish. Newcomers, with little outlet for recreation in Chinatown, found excitement and thrills in the bones and cards. Long hours and hard work brought them a few dollars, but gambling offered the prospect of getting rich quick. In New York's Chinatown, \$600,000 easily passes over the gambling tables weekly.

To protect this flourishing industry, the tongs needed strong-arm bodies. They needed lookouts for raids. They needed guards. They needed escorts for those with large winnings. But more often, they needed people to collect gambling debts. Hatchetmen were passé, whereas young boys, preferably under the age of sixteen, were well suited to their purposes. They were hot-headed and willing to take chances.

If they were caught, they were largely immune from severe punishment since the laws of the state until 1978 were extremely lenient toward youthful offenders. Eighteen months was the maximum sentence for murder, and when the youth reached sixteen his record was wiped clean. Teenagers could literally commit murder with impunity, and many did.

The Major Gangs

The tongs do not hire boys individually. They contract with a gang leader for the services of the group. Money is paid the gang leader, and he apportions it to his followers. Gangs fight over which of them will be in the employ of the tongs, so that, in addition to aggression on behalf of the gambling houses, each gang also has to defend itself against a possible takeover by another gang.

Being in with the right gang means getting good money: \$200 to \$300 a week, an astronomical sum to a teenager who could hope to earn only a few dollars washing dishes, waiting on tables, or making deliveries. Some receive more and some less depending upon their rank in the gang hierarchy.

Gangs come and go; some may disband, but new ones crop up in their place. Gangs with names like the White Eagles, Quon Yings, and Ernie's Boys had their heyday in the late sixties. By 1971, the Black Eagles and Flying Dragons were the top gangs. The Eagles worked for On Leong, the Dragons for Hip Sing. On Leong has the more profitable turf of Mott Street. Hip Sing controls Pell Street, Division Street, and the Bowery. A lesser gang, the Ghost Shadows, covered East Broadway, Hester Street, and Eldridge Street. In 1973, the Black Eagles enraged the elders of On Leong by extorting money from the same merchants who were paying

for protection and by robbing those whom they were paid to protect. The last straw came when an Eagle poured tea down the brocade jacket of an On Leong elder. On Leong withdrew its support of the Black Eagles and installed the Ghost Shadows in their place. The years 1976-1977 were the pinnacle of these two gangs' reign of terror. By 1979, racked by internal dissension, they seemed to be on the way out.

Gang Activities

The level and extent of gang activity are well mirrored in the headlines of the New York press. In the late sixties an occasional article would appear in the papers, but the articles have increased in frequency as the seventies wore on, indicating stepped-up activity on the part of the gangs. (See Table 11-1)

TABLE 11-1

GANG-RELATED ARRESTS OF CHINESE IN NEW YORK CITY'S FIFTH POLICE PRECINCT, 1955-1978

<u>Year</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>No.</u>
1955	1	1963	8	1971	47
1956	1	1964	3	1972	58
1957	1	1965	9	1973	112
1958	3	1966	8	1974	160
1959	1	1967	21	1975	85
1960	0	1968	13	1976	135
1961	2	1969	59	1977	74
1962	7	1970	58	1978	68

SOURCE: New York City Police Department, Fifth Precinct

Instead of confining themselves to protecting gambling interests, the gangs began systematic extortion of legitimate businesses. Either the business made regular payoffs with protection money or the young hoodlums would tear up the store or restaurant, threaten the owner and his family with bodily harm, sit in the premises so that the regular customers would be scared away, eat in the restaurants or take merchandise and not pay, or as an example to others, shoot the hapless proprietor in cold blood.

Few stores in Chinatown escaped the extortionists. The gang members paced the streets and visited the stores frequently, their usual tactic being to ask for a donation for a "brother in need." Most businessmen paid up quietly without reporting to the police. To report the incident meant retaliation from the gangs; not to report and to pay off continually meant bleeding to death economically. Without report of the incident, there could be no arrest or prosecution. The situation was nightmarish. The gangs had the merchants by the neck and were strangling them slowly.

To insure their control over certain streets in Chinatown, the gangs had to defend their territory against other gangs. The resulting gang warfare was the most terrifying prospect of all. It was not uncommon for one gang to swoop down with guns blazing on members from another gang. Innocent bystanders, caught in the crossfires, often were the victims of such confrontations. The savagery of the gangs was expressed most vehemently when the gangs fought one another. They literally hacked away at one another with cleavers and guns. In one instance, a group of Flying Dragons eating in a restaurant were caught off guard by the entrance of

a group of Ghost Shadows. Neither group had their guns with them, so some Ghost Shadows ran into the kitchen, grabbed a meat cleaver and tried to chop off the leg of a Flying Dragon. The rubouts resulting from intra- or inter-gang rivalries made up most of the murder statistics for deaths attributed to gang violence.

As we have already established, one of the main functions New York's Chinatown serves is as a social gathering place for life's important events: births, deaths, and weddings. Wedding banquets in particular bring friends and relatives from all over the country, and they usually come decked out in their jewelry and finery. The gangs soon seized upon these occasions to rob guests of their money and jewels. They would brazenly walk in amidst the festivities, ask the guests to drop their jewels and money into shopping bags, and just as brazenly walk out. This tactic was also employed in movie houses: gang members were known to walk up and down the aisles collecting watches and wallets from the patrons watching the film. The movie houses consistently denied such activity for fear that such news would kill their business. They paid the gangs heavily for protection from other gangs, but this did not insure them immunity from their own "protectors" or from other gang members trying for a take-over.

In fact, the gang members became so cocky that they often defied the tong leaders themselves, some of whom complained that they had gotten on to the back of a tiger and did not know how to get off. An abortive attempt was made by the tongs to disassociate themselves from the gangs by hiring a white security agency to guard the gambling houses and provide merchants protection from the gangs. The gangs responded by throwing

bombs into the tong headquarters and by applying for jobs as guards in the security agency. Merchants quickly recognized behind the new uniforms the faces of those who used to extort from them as gang members.

Police Response

The police said that their hands were tied. During the period of my fieldwork, only one policeman of Chinese extraction was on the entire city police force. The few that had been hired in a special recruitment campaign were quickly laid off when the New York City's budget crunch occurred. Two men in the Fifth Precinct, which covers the principal streets of Chinatown, were assigned to deal with the gangs. They built up thick folders on the gang members and probably knew more about them than the gang members knew about themselves. The two detectives walked among the gangs on the streets and knew them by name and by sight. Yet they made few arrests and obtained fewer convictions.

An attempt was made to ascertain the number of arrests from official sources such as the Uniform Crime Reports³ and the computerized crime statistics of the New York Police Department, but these data were so erroneous that they had to be discarded at once. For example, the Uniform Crime Reports stated that there were only five Chinese arrests for homicide and attempted homicide in the entire United States in 1976, whereas the Fifth Police Precinct had twenty-seven arrests in that precinct alone. (See Table 11-2)

3. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports for the United States (Washington, D.C., issued annually)

TABLE 11-2
CHINESE YOUTH ARRESTS BY CRIME IN
NEW YORK CITY'S FIFTH POLICE PRECINCT, 1975-1978

Crime	1975	1976	1977	1978
Murder & Attempted Murder	1	27	5	1
Possession of Weapons	19	38	7	15
Assaults	21	13	2	11
Extortion	0	12	13	10
Robberies	14	27	32	9
Burglaries	9	1	0	5
Rapes	15	0	0	0
Other	6	17	15	17
TOTAL	85	135	74	68

SOURCE: New York City Police Department, Fifth Precinct

Table 11-1 attests to the phenomenal increase in arrests of Chinese youths under twenty-one from the occasional one or few a year to the hundreds of arrests in the 1970s, but these arrests were only the tip of the iceberg. They in no way reflected the actual perpetration of criminal acts in New York's Chinatown. The merchants and residents were simply too scared to report the crimes, and if they did they would back down immediately if they had to go to the police station to file a complaint or had to testify in court. As mentioned previously, juvenile offenders under sixteen years of age usually got off with a slight tap on the wrist even if convicted. They would soon be back on the streets to exact their revenge. In essence, the gangs almost had carte blanche to do whatever they wanted. Over a period of two years (mid-1975 to mid-1977) only one gang member, a Black Eagle, was sentence to prison for shooting a Ghost Shadow, and he was convicted only because there were two non-Chinese witnesses to the act.⁴

From January to October 1977, over thirty killings were reported in Chinatown, and there may have been more⁵ that were not reported, but not one resulted in a conviction. A hired assassin stabbed M.B. Lee, the unofficial mayor of Chinatown, in the stomach for trying to get the Chinese people to testify in court; Lee survived the attempt on his life. To salvage their authority and respect in the community, the police and city administration launched an all-out campaign to find the criminal; it resulted in Chik Keung Pang's arrest and conviction

4. Mark Jacobson, "New York's Other Mafia," Village Voice (January 31, 1977) p. 16

5. Berkeley Rice, "The New Gangs of Chinatown," Psychology Today (May 1977) p. 61

in March 1978.⁶ In a way, the capture of the would-be assassin goes to show that the police can obtain results if a concerted effort is made to make sure that crime does not go unpunished. In this instance, the criminal had to be brought to justice because the unofficial mayor was trying to help the police. He also had friends in City Hall. If his would-be assassin escaped punishment, the police and city administrators would look like fools. If the same efforts had been made toward the thirty other unsolved killings that year, the gangs may not have gotten so far out of hand.

Gang Membership

Gang membership is not large and it fluctuates drastically. The police think there are only about 200 to 300 members at the most; 150 or less are hard core.⁷ But it takes only an isolated few "Sons of Sam" or "Boston Stranglers" to terrorize an entire city, and New York's Chinatown comprises only a few city blocks. According to a member of the Ghost Shadows, there were about 130 members in his gang in 1977; and he said 50 of them were females. The Eagles, both White and Black, had a total of about 115 members in their groups. The White Eagles were older; the Black Eagles were usually their younger brothers. The Flying Dragons had about 70 to 80 members; 20 to 30 of them were girls.

6. "Chinatown Stabber Jailed," New York Times (March 7, 1978)

7. Betty Lee Sung, "Gangs in New York's Chinatown," p. 80

TABLE 11-3

TOTAL ARRESTS OF CHINESE BY CAUSE IN
NEW YORK CITY'S FIFTH POLICE PRECINCT, 1975-1978

Month	Gang Related				Gambling				Other				Total			
	1975	1976	1977	1978	1975	1976	1977	1978	1975	1976	1977	1978	1975	1976	1977	1978
Jan.	11	12	4	5	0	0	52	0	4	3	0	7	15	15	56	12
Feb.	17	4	1	7	50	1	0	20	4	9	4	7	71	14	5	34
Mar.	4	2	7	10	15	0	0	4	2	11	10	5	21	13	17	19
Apr.	9	0	14	8	21	49	19	45	9	3	7	7	39	52	40	60
May	11	12	11	8	0	13	31	25	6	8	3	9	17	33	45	42
June	4	12	11	6	0	0	12	10	1	6	5	12	5	18	28	28
July	1	14	3	6	0	0	15	0	2	13	7	3	3	27	25	9
Aug.	10	8	7	1	0	0	31	0	10	6	5	4	20	14	43	5
Sept.	0	10	6	5	0	0	24	15	7	5	7	8	7	25	37	28
Oct.	5	40	3	4	0	0	18	24	5	5	0	3	10	45	21	31
Nov.	12	17	1	6	0	14	5	4	3	1	3	1	15	32	9	11
Dec.	1	4	6	2	0	23	51	1	9	3	5	3	10	30	62	6
TOTAL	85	135	74	68	86	100	258	148	62	73	56	69	233	308	388	285

SOURCE: New York City Police Department, Fifth Precinct.

NOTE: Most offenses committed by Chinese are for gambling or they are gang-related. It seems that as gambling arrests go down, gang related offenses rise.

The gang members are constantly on the lookout for new blood to replenish or bolster their ranks. They hang around the high schools and junior highs looking for likely prospects among teenagers who are having trouble in school. They spot the truants and the dropouts. They want the ones who are physically fit, yet easily cowed and misled. Strong-arm tactics are employed to recruit the youths. Sometimes the girls are kidnapped and made to do the bidding of the gang members. The most terrifying experience of Chinese teenagers is to be confronted by gang recruiters. And to show how unsuspecting and naive children can be trapped in the vicious grip of the gangs, I followed one young boy through his ordeal to show how he, the school authorities, his family, the social workers, and the courts handled the problem. It was fumbling all the way.

Case Study (Psuedo-name Bip)

The day I went to Bip's home, his father told me that his son had left for Hong Kong the previous night. Four policemen had accompanied him and his mother to the airport to see that he got on the plane safely. The police had learned that Bip was marked for "rubbing out." Bip was thirteen years old.

Counselor's Account. I had met Bip in the Chinatown junior high when I inquired if there were some immigrant children who seemed to be having difficulty adjusting. Bip had come to the guidance counselor's attention because of his excessive absences and cuts. She had talked to him on numerous occasions and found that he could hardly read. His record card showed that he was failing in almost every subject, yet she could not believe that Bip was a slow learner or low in intelligence.

The counselor had already arranged for Bip to take the communication disorders test at Hunter College, and a social worker was going to take him up there.

An appointment was made for Bip to meet me at the counselor's office. The first time he never showed up. He had cut out right after lunch. He came for the second appointment, and we had a long, long chat.

Bip's spoken English was good. He enunciated very clearly and had no accent in spite of the fact that he had been in the country for only three years. Physically, he was big for his age, a little on the plump side, with fair smooth skin; he was not a bad-looking fellow at all. In fact, he was very talkative, extremely open, very innocent and naive. One could almost describe him as cherubic.

He was in the seventh grade although he had finished only third grade in Hong Kong. He remembered that school work there was very hard for him and that he had been hit by the teacher quite often and sometimes put in a dark room because he did not do his homework. At the junior high, he was taking math, science, social studies, language, art, music, woodshop, and typing. He was not interested in math because he had already learned some of it in the Hong Kong school. He liked social studies. In all his subjects, however, he said he could not read his assignments. He repeatedly told me that he found it difficult to read although I found that he talked easily and readily. He was getting help from a number of sources for his reading. One was the reading lab at the school, to which he had been going for a month. The hours were from 3 P.M. until 6 P.M. According to Bip, the lab had helped him a little but he had a defeatist attitude and felt that he could not do the work before he even tried.

Bip's Account. Bip told some fancy stories. He said he stole a "madelo" with some kids from an Italian man. When asked what a "madelo" was, he said, "It makes a big bang and can blow this door off." He said he had a gun, but it was broken. He wanted to steal a car because he wanted a car. He went to stay with some gang members once from Sunday until Tuesday. Afterwards, his father would not let him go out on weekends, and he felt that he was a prisoner in his home. When asked what he did when he cut out from school, he said he rode his bicycle around the neighborhood, played ball, went around with his friends. Sometimes he worked delivering papers for a store for which he was paid two dollars an hour.

It was alleged that he and a friend had gone to another school and had threatened a child with a knife. Looking at this young boy of thirteen across the table from me, I could not imagine him hurting anyone. Asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, he said, "A doctor, because a doctor makes a lot of money."

"Who are your friends?" I asked. Bip mentioned an older boy in the main building of the Chinatown junior high school and some Hispanic and black boys. He had Chinese friends as well, but they were not "best friends." One Chinese friend had accompanied Bip to our interview and had sat with us the entire time. The two boys were close, but the second boy was doing quite well in school (90 average), despite the fact that he had been in the United States only two years.

Teacher's Account. I sought out Bip's homeroom teacher, who confirmed my impression that Bip had a defeatist attitude. "Bip believes he cannot succeed. He become frustrated very easily. He's basically quit the American educational system. Yet I think he is definitely intelligent.

The teacher filled me in further on Bip's schooling. "This class is made up of language-deficient children. They have been here too long for the ESL class and are too slow for the regular mainstream class. I teach the students both English and social studies. In English, we work phonetically because Chinese phonetics are obviously different from English phonetics. We work with sounding out words, so that hopefully when they leave here in June they will be able to sound out every English word in an attempt to read it. They will not know all the meanings or all the words because their vocabulary is still rudimentary and will have to be built up gradually. Students like Bip who are very deficient should have another teacher work intensively with them. Bip understands everything that is explained to him, and he answers my questions in English, but when it comes to written work he makes a small attempt and then gives up."

Does Bip pay attention in class? Does he misbehave? "Bip seems interested. He pays attention as long as I am verbalizing. If we go to the reading exercises, he will quit and just sit quietly. He is not a discipline problem at all. He is an attendance problem. The first time I heard he was in another school shaking down a kid with a knife I was absolutely shocked. I've been in this school twelve years now, and Bip does not appear to be a typical gang member although there were only two that I know of. One was shot in the movies. One was a runner for the gambling houses. All of a sudden he fell down the elevator shaft one day and was killed. Some people say he was executed."

What was the teacher's assessment of the problem? "Frustration is a key factor. Bip needs some sort of praise, some sort of success. He

needs to bolster his ego so that when he tells people he is part of a gang, he feels important; this may be the success factor that Bip craves."

Court's Account. A few days later when I inquired about Bip at the school, I learned that he had been absent since I last spoke to him and that he was now under court supervision. Bip's father had petitioned the court to make him a PINS (Person in Need of Supervision) case. The father felt that he could no longer handle his son, and he had asked the court to assume responsibility. I learned that a social worker and legal advisor had been assigned to Bip and that he had appeared before a juvenile court judge. The case was beginning to assume proportions that I had not imagined. I paid a visit to the social worker, having first called Bip's father to obtain permission for both the social worker and the judge to reveal anything about the case.

The social worker and the legal advisor felt that it was their obligation and duty to protect Bip's legal interests, which they interpreted to mean that Bip was not to be put into a foster home if they could help it. Being put in a foster home sounded like being sent to prison. The urgency of Bip's plight demanded other courses of action, but neither the social worker nor the legal advisor had alternatives to offer.

The father was pleading for help. He asked if the social worker could find him a private school where he could send Bip to remove him from his present friends and influences, which he thought were leading his son astray. He was willing to pay up to \$2,000 per year for tuition and board for a place outside New York City. The social worker had called a number of places, but she told me that the private schools were asking for \$5,000. The father could not afford this amount on his meager salary

so he dropped this prospect and tried to keep his son at home. He felt frustrated and disappointed. To send his son back out into the streets or into the school was to put his life in jeopardy. Events were moving too swiftly for the bureaucracy and the family to handle in a leisurely fashion. The father withdrew his son from court supervision and took matters back into his own hands.

Next, I interviewed the Family Court judge who had heard Bip's case. In his eleven years on the bench, the judge mentioned that few Chinese boys had appeared before him, but more were coming to his attention of late. He could not recall the particulars of Bip's case, but after re-viewing the records he said that the father had first asked for help and that the court responded by providing a social worker and legal counsel to help Bip work out his problems.

Father's Account. I made an appointment to see the father. I was surprised when he asked me to come at two in the afternoon. I found him living in the heart of Chinatown in a third-floor walk-up apartment taking care of a newborn infant and a little girl of one and a half. One could barely squeeze into the tiny space called an apartment. We sat at the kitchen table that took up about a third of the room. An old gas jet stove, a refrigerator, and a television were the rest of the furnishings. Part of the room had been partitioned off to hold a bed that took up the entire floor space. The only way to get into the room was to climb over the bed. This is where the parents slept. There must have been another bedroom for the three children, but I did not see it. The only space to turn around in was in front of the stove, and I would say it was no bigger than four feet square. There was only one window

in the entire apartment, so that it was very dark and dreary inside in spite of the fact that the sun was shining outside.

The father was a very soft-spoken, gentle man judging by the way he fed the baby and handled the little girl. I explained to him that I wanted to know about his son to learn what kind of difficulties immigrant children encounter so that we can devise ways to help others like Bip. The father was very understanding and perfectly willing to cooperate with me. He said he had gone through a very trying period with his son, and that is when he told me that Bip had been escorted to the airport by four policemen the night before. The mother had taken him to Hong Kong to live with relatives. She had given birth to the baby just ten days earlier but Bip's life was in danger and that took precedence. It seemed that he had been peripherally involved with the gangs. He wanted out, but found that the idea was not received with approval by them. He knew who the members were. He knew where they hung out. He knew too much for his own good and therefore, had to be done away with.

The father was in his forties. He had come to the United States much earlier, but his family did not join him until three years ago. He worked as a cook and his wife worked on his day off in the sewing factory. Most of the time she stayed home to take care of the children.

"Bip didn't like to stay home," said the father. "He always wanted to be out on the streets running around with other boys." I looked around at the cramped living quarters and could well understand why the two rooms held no attraction for a restless teenager. Obviously, family member contacts were close, for the father said he spent whatever time

he could talking to Bip, teaching him, and urging him to be a good boy. Apparently the father's words fell on deaf ears, and the father felt totally helpless to keep his son from bad company and harm. In desperation, he had been willing to turn Bip over to the courts.

I asked him if he had ever heard of special agencies such as the Chinese Family Consultation Center or Project Reach (a pre-delinquent agency) that might have helped him. I also inquired whether he had kinfolk who might have exerted some control over Bip, but the father said he was so ashamed of his son's behavior he did not want anyone in Chinatown to learn about it.⁸

Apparently, Bip's flirtation with the gangs brought about a drastic change in the family. The mother would eventually return to the United States, but her son was to remain in Hong Kong. Meantime, the father could not work because he had to care for the younger children. And I knew Bip would be very unhappy because he had told me that he did not like Hong Kong and that he had been very happy when he heard that he was coming to the United States. Besides, I think he had forgotten a great deal of his Chinese; when I spoke to him in Chinese, he told me that he didn't understand Chinese very well any more. If Bip had to start all over again in Chinese school in Hong Kong, he would have to make another drastic adjustment without his parents beside him. His disillusionment with school and his flirtation with the gangs had cost him very dearly, but at least he did not pay with his life.

8. Loss of face and feelings of shame are such strongly ingrained Chinese cultural traits that they often obstruct realistic solutions to problems. There is a tendency for the persons involved to try to cover up the problem by not recognizing it or letting anyone know about it. At the same time, persons trying to help are hampered in their efforts by repeated denials that anything is wrong.

Summation. The events in Bip's case followed each other swiftly. Altogether, it was a matter of weeks from the time I first met Bip to his forced departure from the United States. It is my firm belief that had he not left the country, he would have been another gang casualty. I followed the case in all its ramifications because it is a classic example of how young, naive teenagers are trapped in a vicious cycle from which it seems difficult, if not impossible to extricate themselves once they go beyond a certain point. Events start out simply enough: A young boy cannot handle his school work because of a reading disability. The first symptoms are cutting classes and truancy. The more exciting world of the streets beckons, and a young boy in his early teens cannot resist. In this instance, Bip was fortunate in that he had loving and concerned parents, but being truant meant that he was a prime target for gang recruitment. He could have become a hardcore gang member, shooting, extorting, killing, and perhaps ending up being killed himself or incarcerated. Bip only flirted with the gangs and he did not like what he saw, but the gangs would not let go. Their code was total commitment or death.

What about societal assistance? The school, in its way, did try to help with the reading lab and the special class. Did the courts, the social worker, or the legal advisor help Bip or the distraught parents who were beside themselves with worry? The important thing was to remove Bip from the reach of the gang members who were out to get him, whereas the social worker wanted to keep him at home. She was operating with mistaken notions, and it is my belief that she did not or could not devote too much time to finding a reasonable private school in which to

place Bip even for a short period of time. If the father had turned to some of the Chinatown family agencies, they would have understood the urgency of the situation. Agencies like Project Reach were set up to help teenagers stay out of gangs. On their staff are street workers who know the gang members, who know the gang mentality and traditions, and who are experienced in dealing with situations like these. An agency no longer in existence, Project Hing Dai (Big Brother/Little Brother),⁹ was set up to work directly with the hard-core gang members. In many instances, they were able to defuse potential gang fights by acting as intermediaries. As effective as such agencies may be, the father did not want other Chinese to know about his son's misconduct. In Bip's case, the police were alert in learning about the contract on his life and gave the parents ample warning. The decision to send Bip back to Hong Kong was a drastic step. Its impact on the family may be shattering. On the other hand, Bip may be considered fortunate in having escaped with his life, but the consequences were overwhelming, considering the small seed from which the problem sprang.

Gang Threat

The gang threat is a constant cloud hanging over the heads of Chinese youth living in Chinatown. Parents hurry their sons home from school and forbid them to go out to play. Many want desperately to get out of Chinatown, and they made this statement very emphatically to me and my research associate. The gang threat was just not something one could ignore. As a former Project Reach director said, "If you live

9. They lost their government funding.

in Chinatown, even an ordinary kid will find it hard not to come into contact with the gangs in one way or another. If you are not a jock, you're in a gang. If you are not in a gang, you'd better be protected."¹⁰ One simply cannot go to school, mind one's own business, and go home unscathed. Boys would get waylaid or beaten up in school, in the schoolyard, on the way to school, in the playgrounds, or on the streets. They are afraid to go to the bathroom. Young teenagers had to be part of a group for protection. This was another reason why boys joined, and once in the gang they followed the group; there was no turning back.

Case Study (Psuedo-names Won and Yip)

Dean's Account. I wanted to do a parallel study of deviant youths in the satellite Chinatown area for purposes of comparison, and I made inquiries about incidences of truancy, misbehavior, gang membership, and other manifestations of maladaptation. The teachers were not aware of any cases, so I sought out the dean at the satellite community junior high school. He had been with the school for fourteen years. He could only remember two cases of problem Chinese boys. One was already dead, "executed" gangland style five years earlier. The other was enrolled in school at the time of my research.

I was especially intrigued by this young boy because he had a brother one year younger than he, who was his exact opposite. They had the same parents, lived in the same room, came to the United States at the same time, went to the same school, yet the problem child, whom we shall call Won, was completely different from his brother, whom we shall call Yip.

^{10.} Sung. Op. cit. "Gangs" p. 10

As the dean pointed out, Won's case was not a serious one, and if he were not of Chinese origin, he wouldn't even stand out from the hundreds like him who came into the dean's office regularly. The telltale signs were truancy, cuts, and poor school work. When I spoke to Won, he had been in the United States for four years. The family spoke Mandarin rather than Cantonese, and they had migrated from Taiwan. Won had already forgotten most of his Chinese, and he admitted that he was having trouble with English in spite of the fact that he had attended English school in Taiwan before coming to this country. He was not doing well in school.

Interviews with Won and Yip. Won was a small-framed boy, thin, and very dark in complexion. At first I thought he was of mixed blood, but he said his tan came from the beach and from being out in the ballpark a great deal.

When I met Won and Yip I thought the two brothers were twins, except that Yip had a light complexion compared with Won's. Both were of the same height, same build, and had the same features. Although at thirteen Yip was a year younger than Won, he was in the eighth grade while Won was in the seventh. Won had been put back a year and Yip had skipped a grade. Yip was an excellent student and highly praised by his teachers and his mother. The boys shared a room, but Won expressed a strong dislike for his brother. They did not play together, nor would Won go to his brother for help with his school work. Recreational facilities were no problem in their neighborhood. Both brothers had many friends to play with, but Won chose his friends from another school--a high school in the adjacent town. His best friend was white and older than he. They would go to the beach or go fishing or go to the movies by

bus. Sometimes they would not come home until ten in the evening. Yip's friends, on the other hand, were a grade below him. They were from the same school, but he kept his friends from his former class when he skipped to the eighth grade.

In my interviews with the boys, I detected what I think is a significant factor in the differences in their behavior. When they first arrived in New York, they were put in different classes. Yip said he was utterly lost until another Chinese boy in his class befriended him and helped him out. Won had no such friend. When he had difficulty understanding, there was no one to help him. He began to fall further and further behind in his school work. Won exhibited a strong hostility toward his brother. He may have been jealous of Yip's achievement and was rebelling to get his mother's and his teachers' attention.

The Mother's Account. The parents had been in the United States for six years. They had come first and sent for their children two years later. Both parents were college graduates. Before they emigrated, the father worked as a ship's engineer; the mother worked for the U.S. Army as an English secretary. Now she worked as a cashier in a New Jersey restaurant. On her day off, she invited me to their home.

The mother was a lovely woman in her late thirties. The family lived in a modern apartment house where the faces of the tenants showed a wide variety of ethnic origins. The three-and-one-half room apartment was clean and well kept. There were two bicycles for the boys in the living room. Rent and utilities came to about \$325 a month.

The mother drove to work six days a week from her home in Queens to a restaurant in New Jersey (more than an hour's drive). She left the

house around 10 A.M. and came home after midnight. When the boys came home from school, they were to play until dinnertime, when the maternal grandmother, who lived nearby, would come to fix their dinner and stay with them until 10 P.M.

I asked the mother why she did not move closer to her place of work. She said she wanted to be near her own mother, who could look after the boys in the afternoons. Asked why she didn't find work closer to home, she said she could earn more in the restaurant, which was owned by a relative. Yet when calculated by the hour, she was earning less because she was putting in a twelve-hour day plus two hours commuting time. In addition, the car was an extra expense. To my mind, the mother was qualified for a better job since she was a college graduate and could express herself well in English. Yet she was timid about seeking employment in a non-Chinese setting.

She said she and her husband had once owned and operated a restaurant, but it was not a success because they were inexperienced in this line of work. When they had the restaurant, the boys would come home from school and help out. When the business failed, the father went out of town to train as a chef in a niece's restaurant. Neither parent thought about resuming his or her former career so that the family could be reunited. Instead, they sank into restaurant occupations for which they had no experience and no aptitude. They stayed in such occupations because restaurant work is a conventional field for the Chinese. This disinclination to explore or get out of the few traditional occupations is extremely strong and is a barrier to the solution of some of their problems.

I asked Won if he wanted to go back to Taiwan; he said yes. The reason: his father was there. It turned out, however, that his father

was not in Taiwan. The mother said her husband was in California. The brother said he was in Mississippi. I did not know whom to believe. The fact that family members live apart from one another is not uncommon in Chinese American families. It does not mean that the parents are maritally separated or divorced. When asked who was his hero, Won replied, "My father." Obviously the boy missed his father.

Won's mother said she wished her husband were in New York and that she did not have to go to work so she could stay home and take care of her boys. She confessed that she did not know how to handle her son. She scolded him; she hit him. She sent him away to summer camp, but he came back the next day. She threatened to send him back to Taiwan or to send him away to Mississippi to a friend who had three boys and was willing to let Won live with them. He refused to go. She appealed to Won's love for her and his grandmother. She did not give him an allowance. He had to ask her for spending money, but somehow he had money to take the bus to the beach or go to the movies. Nothing worked. Won was frequently absent from school, and he came home late. The mother was very concerned about her son, but she felt helpless. "Everytime Won is absent from school, the dean at school calls me," she said. "If you misbehave in Taiwan, the school metes out the punishment; it does not keep calling the family. Here, the school cannot do anything with the boy. I can't either."

This rebellious attitude by their offspring is very difficult for immigrant parents to handle. It is a new experience for them to be confronted by a disobedient and disrespectful child. By and large, Chinese immigrant children still retain a strong measure of filial piety and res-

pect for the parents. When they first arrive in this country, they are still obedient. That is why I could only find one case of misbehavior known to the dean at the satellite junior high among the seventh graders.

In checking back with the family a year later, I found that the father was still absent from the home and the mother had the same job. Won had been sent to a private boarding school outside of New York City, so I could not ascertain how he was making out. Yip continued to do well in his studies and had gone on to high school.

A Comparison: Chinatown and Satellite Community

Parallels cannot be drawn between Bip, who lived in Chinatown, and Won, who lived in a satellite community. Obviously, Won's parents came from a much higher socioeconomic and educational background; nonetheless, both fathers worked in restaurants. Won's family was Mandarin-speaking; Bip's was Cantonese-speaking. Both boys had best friends who were not Chinese. When Bip fell behind in his school work and became a truant, he quickly became a target recruit for the gangs. Gang affiliation is for keeps, even for those who join in naiveté. Bip's parents were neither sophisticated nor well-off enough to find a boarding school for their son. Their only recourse was to send him to relatives in Hong Kong. The consequences of his poor marks and truancy were much greater than those for Won. Won's mother had also thought of sending her son back to Taiwan, but in the end she managed to place him in a private boarding school and keep him in this country. Obviously she must have had some financial reserves to be able to do so. But what is fascinating is how two sons from the same womb and same circumstances can react so differently to their common immigrant experience.

Gang Profile

In both of the above cases, the young boys were still in school. The hard-core membership of the gangs are those who have given up, and the streets of Chinatown are their training grounds. I interviewed some of these young lads as well, and a more detailed account of their attitudes and exploits is given in my monograph, "Gangs in New York's Chinatown." An outline of their characteristics is given on the following page. Differences between the Chinatown gangs and other minority gangs are most apparent in the group characteristics. The fact that there is a rapid turnover in membership and that rigorous efforts must be made to coerce others to join means that gang membership is not particularly appealing to the youths if strong-arm tactics must be employed to recruit them or keep them in.

The life span of the gangs is short. The members do not sport any distinctive style in clothing, nor do they wear any emblem or distinguishing identification. They shun publicity. Their victims are other Chinese because they are unfamiliar with and afraid to pick on other ethnic groups. They realize that what they are doing is wrong, so that they do have a conscience. Knowing these traits, people trying to deal with the gang problem can devise levers to defuse the explosive situation.

TABLE 11-4
CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE GANGS

Personal Characteristics

1. Male (mainly)
2. Age 14 - 18 (generally)
3. Immigrant from Hong Kong
(almost without exception)
4. Doing badly in school
5. Truancy, dropout (first signs)
6. Hedonistic values
7. Selfish, me-first attitudes
8. Realize that they are doing wrong

Prime Supporters

1. Gambling establishments or tongs
2. Hired as a gang - money paid to
gang leaders who parcel out money
to followers

Activities

1. For tongs: to provide security and
act as lookout for gambling places,
to escort winners home, protect
territory, enforce gambling debts
2. Extortion of business and profession-
al and service enterprises in China-
town - protection money
3. Fighting off other gangs who try to
move into territory
4. Some mugging and burglaries
5. Murder, if ordered to do so
6. Recruit other members
7. Hang out and have fun together

Group Characteristics

1. Very loosely organized
2. Turnover in membership great
3. Life-span of any one gang short
4. Members recruited constantly to
replenish ranks
5. Most coerced into joining
6. Recruit those 16 years and under
to take advantage of juvenile law
7. Low profile, do not invite public
8. Attempts made to organize them on
national or international basis
unsuccessful

Attraction in Being a Member

1. Easy money
2. Lack of viable opportunities
3. Cameraderie in being member of gr
4. Excitement

Victims

1. Other gang members (primarily)
2. Other Chinese
3. Those who are an easy target in
Chinatown
4. Those who are more vulnerable
5. Those who want to leave the gang

A Lull--Hopefully, Maybe

By 1978, gang activity in New York's Chinatown seemed to slacken. Five bullets were pumped into the leader of the Ghost Shadows the summer before, but he survived the attack. Within the gang's own ranks, members were vying to take over the leadership, and this brought about a three-way split. About a dozen gang members were languishing in jail as a result of a stepped-up police offensive. But most important of all, the police Morals and Vice Squad were busting the gambling joints. Raid after raid kept the gamblers off balance and dried up the money for gang members. How long these raids will continue and how effective they will continue to be is another story. The police crackdown did prove one thing. Vigorous law enforcement can deter gang activity.

An extraneous factor--unrelated to the Chinatown gang situation--came to impact heavily upon the local scene. Nearby Atlantic City on the New Jersey coast opened up to legalized gambling in the late 70s. To entice patrons to their tables, the casinos provide virtually free buses that leave from Chinatown on a regular schedule. For a bus ticket costing \$12 to \$14, the rider gets round-trip transportation, a roll of quarters worth \$10, free lunch, and sometimes a free show. A trip to Atlantic City is an outing, entertainment, and gambling all combined and within the law. As a result, local gambling establishments are losing customers, so they do not need and cannot support as many gang members. With the source of revenues drying up, gang activity has abated appreciably.

Community Reaction to Gangs

The community reaction is one of intense fear. They move out of the neighborhood if at all possible, or they send their sons away to live with relatives in other cities. They pay up on extortion and do not report the incidences to the police because they are afraid of reprisal if they complain or testify. If their own sons are involved, they try to cover up because of loss of face. Recreational facilities are minimal, and there are few youth programs to service the teenagers. The anomaly of it all is that the Chinatowns elders are also tong members.

Larger Society or Police Response

The police complain that the community and gang victims will not cooperate in reporting crime, in coming forth to be witnesses or to be plaintiffs, so they say their hands are tied. However, there was only one Chinese-speaking policeman in the entire New York police force and only two policemen assigned to the Chinatown gang detail. There have been very few apprehensions and even fewer convictions. Juvenile justice is very lenient. Little effort is made to help immigrant youths resist gang recruitment. My recommendation to the schools was that they should have gang-prevention drills just as they have fire-prevention drills. Twelve or thirteen-year-old boys are petrified when first confronted with gang recruiters. They should be told where to go for help and given protection and support so that they will not be drawn into the gangs under duress. Unfortunately, the larger societal attitude is that the Chinese are only killing other Chinese, so there is little cause for alarm. Witness the cutting off of funds from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of the City of New York to three out of the four youth programs in Chinatown in 1978.

Theories of Crime

In looking at the most flagrant example of deviant behavior--the gangs--to manifest itself among Chinese immigrant youth, one is drawn in to relating this manifestation with theories of crime. These run the gamut of the biological to the social and to the economic and psychological. Christians believe that man is born cloaked in sin. Some geneticists would have us believe that hereditary genes are responsible for criminal inclinations. Psychological theories such as internal conflicts and psychopathic behavior are plausible, but only individually applicable. Crime has always been strongly associated with poverty, so that economism has its adherents.

Sociologists have their theories too. Emile Durkheim spoke of the normality of crime and found it functional as a vehicle for innovation.¹¹ By normality, he meant the generality of such phenomena in society, but crime itself is abhorred by all societies and sanctioned by few. When criminal behavior becomes widespread, society may become aroused to correct the underlying conditions, so that crime can serve as a vehicle for change. In the case of the Chinatown gangs, the community has only reacted with fear and flight whereas the larger society has tended to ignore the problem, preferring to look the other way when recreational facilities or youth programs are proposed. See list of responses by the community and larger society given on the following page.

11. Lewis Coser and Bernard Rosenberg. Sociological Theory, 3rd Ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1969) p. 570

Differential Association. The most prevalent theory about the causation of crime--that of differential association--was formulated by Edwin H. Sutherland and Donald R. Cressey. The theory postulates that criminal behavior may be stated either in terms of the processes which are operating at the moment of the occurrence of crime or in terms of the processes operating in the earlier history of the criminal. Criminal behavior is learned, and a person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation.¹² The objective situation is important to the occurrence of crime largely to the extent that it provides an opportunity for a person to act. On the other, if the person has been immunized in his or her socialization against violation of societal mores or laws, criminal behavior will not result, even if the opportunity presents itself.

To repeat, Sutherland and Cressey maintain that criminal behavior is learned, and this theory certainly is supported by the circumstances and environment in New York's Lower East Side where Chinatown is located. The Chinese teenager is exposed daily to behavior like vandalism, hanging out, fighting, mugging, truancy, and aggression. The point was brought out very clearly to me in my conversation with a Puerto Rican sociologist who lived in the Chinatown area and who went to the same schools used in our research. When he talked about the Puerto Rican gangs of his childhood, his eyes lit up and his whole expression became animated. He confessed that he was "too cowardly" to take part in the gang exploits in his neighborhood, but he hung out with gang members because he was fascinated by their pranks, their deeds, and their fight-

12. Edwin H. Sutherland and Donald R. Cressey. Principles of Criminology (Philadelphia: J.B. Lipincott, 1939) and Lewis Coser. Op. cit. pp. 584-588.

ing. He would listen in rapt attention to the gang members as they boasted of their exploits, and secretly he admired and envied their bravado. Since he was a good student he served their purpose by helping some gang members with their school work and by being a good listener.

The primary code of ethics in the gangs is: Never "rat." This sociologist was witness to or knew about many gang activities, but he never told. He was suspended from school three times because he had information that the school authorities wanted but he would not reveal. After each suspension, his star rose higher with the gang members, and to this day, even as a college instructor, the sociologist believes firmly that his suspensions were worth the esteem he had gained in the eyes of his peers.

He lived in a housing project directly across the street from the junior high school in Chinatown used in our study. He said that from his window he used to see marauding gangs throwing stones through the school windows and vandalizing school property. He also watched from his safe perch the gang fights that took place in the small park across from the school. These events were thrilling spectacles to the teenage boy, and if he had not been such a good student and had he not found satisfaction in his studies, he would have easily opted for the excitement of the gang life. The lure of being a part of the gangs is very strong--especially at the preadolescent age. During this period, boys show a pronounced tendency to engage in team activities. It is of utmost importance for them to be part of a peer group.¹³ If a Chinese immigrant teenager comes into a neighborhood where he is daily exposed

13. Paul Hanley Furfey. The Gang Age (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1928).

to gang activities, and if his character and home defenses are weak, he may easily succumb to gang recruitment.

Delinquent Subculture. In his book, Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gangs, Albert K. Cohen maintains that delinquent behavior is a subculture of its own. "The delinquent is the rogue male. His conduct may be viewed not only negatively, as a device for attacking and derogating the respectable culture; positively it may be viewed as the exploitation of modes of behavior which are renounced by middle-class culture incompatible with its ends, but which are not without a certain aura of glamor and romance."¹⁴

The subculture of the gangs stresses the willingness of the members to fight, to take on dangerous assignments, to eliminate rival gangs, and to enrich themselves at the expense of others. A reckless few soon build up their reputations and attract followings because of their "cool" and "courage," but none last too long or survive to enjoy their "gains." In spite of these gang norms, most of the Chinese gang members whom I interviewed did not approve of what they were doing. They had a guilty conscience. They knew it was wrong and detrimental to their own future. Once these youths reached a certain stage of maturity, they began to see the futility and error of their ways. This is a very optimistic sign that accounts for the exodus of most gang members at around age 18. These facts tell us that gang activity is not internalized as an accepted norm, nor is it in the community tradition to condone it. In the fact, the residents live in terror and fear, but they feel impotent to deal with the situation. They pay up when extorted

14. (New York: Free Press, 1955) p. 140.

and will not report such incidents to the police. The dangers of reprisal are all too real.

Social Disorganization. Charles Cooley's theory of social disorganization is also applicable in the case of the Chinatown gangs.

We are dependent for moral health upon intimate association with a group of some sort, usually consisting of our family, neighbors, and other friends. It is the interchange of ideas and feelings with this group and a constant sense of its opinions that makes the standards of right and wrong seem real to us. We may not wholly adopt its judgments, or that of any member of it, but the social interplay is necessary to keep the higher processes of the mind in action at all. Now it is the general effect of social displacement to tear us away more or less completely from such groups. When we move to town or go to another country, or get into a different social class, or adopt ideas that alienate us from our former associates, it is not at all certain that we shall form new relations equally intimate and cogent with the old. A common result, therefore, is a partial moral isolation and atrophy of the moral sense.¹⁶

These conditions certainly apply to the Chinese population in New York's Chinatown, where most of the residents are recent immigrants. And almost without exception, members of the youth gangs are immigrants from Hong Kong. These people have been uprooted and transplanted into foreign soil. The values, the norms, the culture are completely different. The nuclear family is isolated from the kinship group, and primary relations break down. Even the nuclear family has undergone transformation because both parents must work long, hard hours in occupations that demand absence from the home for long periods during the day and evening. The school becomes the main socializing agent, but it is an impersonal and secondary institution. Long hours are spent in front of the television and the message of this medium is the advocacy of material acquisitions--values that are at odds with

16. Charles Cooley. The Social Process (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918) pp. 180-181.

Chinese teachings. Young males, at the teenage stage in particular, must reach out to form ties with the peer group, and it is during this stage that they are most susceptible to the attraction of belonging to a group that promises camaraderie and the excitement of forbidden activity. Combine these factors with lack of social control from the parents and kinship group who themselves are groping for adjustment in the new society, and you have the classic conditions that lead to a breakdown of the moral sense.

The very reason that new immigrants go into Chinatown is to recreate a sense of the primary groups that they are accustomed to. Yet it is precisely within Chinatowns that the youths are drawn or are coerced into gangs. Chinese youth who live beyond Chinatown are seldom found in gangs. They are removed from the gang recruiters and their strong-arm tactics. Distance separates them from the enticement and excitement of peer groups running together. Isolated teenagers in alien surroundings dare not step out of bounds whereas within Chinatown they muster courage from the group. When parents find out their sons have been threatened or have become active in gangs, their first reaction is to move away or send their sons away, thus removing them further from the most basic primary group--the family--as well as away from the ethnic community, so that in fact we have a contradiction. Social disorganization results from the removal of immigrants from their primary group ties in the homeland, yet efforts to recreate these ties by gravitating to and concentrating in Chinatown have had the reverse effect of the neighborhood becoming a breeding ground for gangs.

CHAPTER XII: PEER GROUPS

Although peer groups can be the villains dragging the confused, misled, and sometimes unwilling youngsters into gangs or otherwise leading them astray, peer groups can also be extremely supportive and helpful to the newcomer. This point was highlighted in the case of Won and Yip mentioned in the previous chapter. Yip was an exemplary student while his brother Won was a truant and discipline problem. Yip had quickly found a friend who helped him in school upon his arrival in this country, whereas Won, the truant brother, had no one.

Peer Group Support System

Mrs. Virginia Kee, who has taught in the public schools in Chinatown for more than fifteen years, particularly recommended a peer-group support system as the answer to the gang problem as well as to the pervasive phenomenon of absentee parents in Chinese immigrant families.

She said:

I've observed the teenage scene for many years, and I have noticed that when the immigrants first come in, if they can build themselves a support system, then they can be strong enough to withstand being drawn in, pulled in, or pushed into the gang system. But that support system must be built up and encouraged when they first come to school.

When they come to the United States, the parents are so busy they don't know what is happening at school. They don't really understand this society. They can't give that same comfort to the youngsters because the parents themselves are struggling. How much can they give in the way of encouragement and support to the children? Very little, although the love and caring is there. Somehow, the ones who do well, I have noticed, are the

ones who can pull themselves together and provide a peer support system for each other throughout the difficult years. The person who does not belong to this type of situation will soon seek this type of support from the gangs.

I try to encourage the formation of these peer groups in my class. That means when they are in the playground, they will be there to help each other if someone comes and tries to intimidate or extort money from them. They will be there together when they have a problem, and they don't know how to solve it. They will tell each other where the library or post office is. They will share whatever information they have with one another. They will tell each other what tests count and which teacher is helpful. They will help each other with college applications. This way they learn from one another. A person is so much stronger when he has that.

"Willard W. Hartup, director of the University of Minnesota's Institute of Child Development, is among those who view the quality of a child's interaction with friends as a powerful diagnostic index. 'Among the most sensitive indicators of faulty development,' he observes, 'are failure by the child to engage in the activities of the peer culture, and to occupy a relatively comfortable place in it.'"¹

Because peer relationships convey so much about a child's potential for emotional difficulties, it is hardly surprising that there is embedded in them, too, the seeds of healthy development as well. 'There are some necessities in children's development,' says Hartup, 'that require interaction with co-equals--that is, individuals who have the same kind of developmental status and competencies in the cognitive and social areas as they do. The relations between adults and children have evolved to serve a very special set of functions--to ensure basic survival, to help keep the child safe from physical danger and harm, and to help build relations with authority figures. But in some very critical areas of adjustment, relations with coequals are the key.

Many contemporary child development experts would agree. The imprint of peers on the child's personality is second only in importance to that of parents, and in some areas, it is actually predominant. It is largely through the child's interactions with peers that many of life's most important

1. Julius Segal and Herbert Yahraes, A Child's Journey (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978) p. 234

attitudes and behaviors are shaped in the young--for example, learning to find sexual expression, to display and modulate aggressive instincts, to live by ethical standards, even to overcome disabling fears and anxieties and gain a sense of emotional security.²

Reverse Roles of Parent and Children

The comments of both Mrs. Kee and Dr. Hartup about harnessing the positive aspects of peer influence are especially à propos to the Chinese immigrant family, in which, as we have already observed, the parents tend to lose a great deal of the respect and authority that they had in the old country when they come to the United States. As soon as the children come to this country, they enter school and are exposed to American ways. They begin to learn English and are not as afraid as their parents to venture out and get around. They are exposed to hours of television, and their eager young minds quickly absorb the message of the medium. The new ideas and ways of the American people are quite different from those of their parents, who must provide the rice for the dinner table by long, hard hours of work. Invariably, the father must take a job on a lower rung of the occupational ladder, (see fathers' occupations, Table 13-1) and he suffers from the loss of status and self-esteem. The parents simply do not have the same opportunity as their children to learn English, so they are dependent upon their children to communicate with the outside world. The child takes the mother to the store, answers the telephone, interprets the gas bill, translates letters, and deals with many of the day-to-day situations in which the parents are totally bewildered

2. Ibid., p. 237

and incapable of coping with. Instead of the child looking to his parents for guidance, support, and leadership, the roles are reversed. (See Graph G, Chapter XIII, The Immigrant Family.) Under these conditions, parental respect and authority are undermined. To fill the vacuum left by the parents, peer groups become increasingly important.

In our questionnaire administered to recent immigrant Chinese high school students, we asked: When you have a problem like the ones given below, whom do you go to? We had anticipated that they would probably turn to different people depending upon the nature of the problem, so three types of problems were used as examples: school work, skin (medical), and future career. The responses are given in Table 12-1.

TABLE 12-1

PERSONS TURNED TO WHEN FACED WITH PROBLEM BY CHINESE
IMMIGRANT STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

Problem	No One		Father		Mother		Sibling		Friend		Teacher		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	100%
School Work	20	9	14	6	19	8	58	26	79	35	34	15	224
Skin Problem	41	19	18	8	98	46	29	14	26	12	2	1	214
Future Career	20	10	42	21	25	13	33	17	76	38	3	2	199
Total	81	13	74	12	142	23	120	19	181	29	39	6	637

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

It is obvious that more respondents turn to their friends or siblings except when it is a medical problem. In that case, the children will still look to their mothers primarily. But whether it is an immediate issue of school work or one involving future career, the immigrant youths turn to their peers, and more often to their friends than to their siblings.

Drastic Departure from Cultural Norms

This phenomenon can be said to be a distinct departure from the Chinese cultural norm and it calls for major adjustment on the part of both immigrant parents and children. In traditional Chinese society, stress is put upon the vertical relationships within the family. Ties between parents and children are the strongest; they are family ties, hence permanent and immutable. One is born into a family and one's position within it is secure.

In the dominant American culture, the peer group exerts a very strong pull against the family at a very early age. To be psychologically normal in the Western sense, one must gradually detach oneself from one's parents and seek a niche among one's own peers. Whereas parental affection is taken for granted, peer acceptance is a horizontal relationship that must be worked at.³ There is a great deal of anxiety attached to being accepted and liked by one's classmates, playmates, colleagues, and friends. Family ties provide a cushion of permanence and security, but peer relationships are ever changing and changeable.

3. Francis Hsu, Blanche G. Watrous, and Edith Lord, "Culture Pattern and Adolescent Behavior," International Journal of Social Psychiatry, vol. 7, no. 1 (1961) p. 199.

When their children begin to put distance between them, even to feel ashamed of them, the immigrant parents become very upset and chagrined. Before emigrating, they enjoyed respect and obedience. After coming to this country they begin to sense that their children are slipping away from them, and their sorrow is great.

Friends

Do you have a close friend? Only 33 out of 131 males and 22 out of 139 females said yes (see Table 12-2). Through the high school years, most of the students we surveyed had friends of their own sex and very few dated (see Table 12-3). Of the males, two-thirds had never or seldom dated. Of the females, one-half had never or seldom dated.

TABLE 12-2

FRIENDS OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

Type of Friend	Males (131)		Females (139)	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Close friend	33	25	22	16
Female friend	4	3	60	43
Male friend	59	45	11	8
American-born friend	21	16	24	17
Foreign-born friend	58	44	64	46
Black friend	0	0	0	0
Puerto Rican friend	0	0	2	1
White friend	1	1	2	1
No response	39	30	38	28

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

NOTE: Of course many students had more than one friend so that total adds up to more than 131 males and 139 females, and percentages add up to more than 100.

TABLE 12-3

FREQUENCY OF DATING BY CHINESE IMMIGRANT STUDENTS
IN HIGH SCHOOL BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

Frequency	Male		Female	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Never	50	38	43	31
Seldom	37	28	30	22
Occasionally	25	19	46	33
Frequently	9	7	12	9
No response	10	8	8	6
Total	131	100	139	100

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

Immigrant youths are not as accustomed to the free and easy intermingling of the sexes as Western teenagers are. Only one generation removed from their parents, whose marriage may have been match-made with go-betweens, they are still shy and reserved. Though these young people may long for association with members of the opposite sex, they are still too inhibited to be comfortable in a dating situation. The awkwardness of the Chinese male on a date was brought out by Melford Weiss in his article, "Selective Acculturation and the Dating Process: The Pattern-
ing of Chinese-Caucasian Interracial Dating":

Chinese-American girls report that getting-to-know-you chatter with most Chinese-American boys is basically shallow and tends to revolve around common experiences as Chinese. Males are often considered to be egocentric and to rarely consider the girl as an equal partner in a common dating activity. . . . Chinese-American dating activities are often limited to evening hours and to private or predominantly Chinese settings with the drive-in movie a favorite. . . ."⁴

4. In Amy Tachiki, et al, (eds.) Roots: An Asian American Reader (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1971) pp. 37-43.

Nevertheless, dating is such an important part of the high school years that these young people must feel the strain of the bicultural conflict.

Segregation

Immigrant teenagers tend to stick with others like themselves. The males chose foreign-born Chinese males as friends and the females chose foreign-born females as friends. That some chose American-born members of the same sex as friends is encouraging and refutes somewhat the contention that there is a sharp cleavage between the American-born and the foreign-born. A fact stands out with respect to socializing with members of other ethnic groups. Hardly an immigrant student had black, Puerto Rican, or white friends. This separatism among the racial groups was especially evident in our school visits and observations of the children and youths in the lunchrooms and at play. In the lunchrooms, the various ethnic groups did not mix at all: The Chinese children had their own tables; the black children sat with other blacks, and the Hispanics with their own kind. The sexes also sat apart although the tables were not delineated for boys or girls. The boys just naturally went to one end of the lunchroom, and the girls sat at the other end.

There was usually a great deal of horseplay among the students in the lunchroom while they lined up for their lunches. The Chinese immigrant students were no less boisterous than the others, hitting the fellows and teasing the girls. While standing in line, the Hispanic boys would tease the Chinese girls, but after they got their lunches, each group went to its own table, and the interaction between the races ceased while they ate.

After gulping down their lunches in great haste, the students would run out to the playgrounds to play ball, run around, or talk with their friends. Others would go to the gym to play ball. On the occasions when I watched the boys and girls at play in the Chinatown junior high school gym, I noticed that the Chinese students would throw the basketball into the basket at one end of the court, while the Hispanics and blacks shared the other basket. It was as if the baskets were marked "Chinese" and "Hispanic." An invisible boundary separated the groups. They simply did not mix.

The same held true for the Chinatown high school although the separatism was not so pronounced in the satellite community junior high. The Chinese students were scattered in all sections of the classes, so there was ample opportunity for them to mix with other groups. In checking through the class rosters, I found no more than six Chinese names in any one section or class. There was no opportunity for me to observe any out-of-class interaction between the ethnic groups at the satellite community high school because the school ran on an end-to-end double session with no lunch period and no recess period. After school, the students went home.

The bilingual classes tend to separate the groups along ethnic lines. Since they are separated for lessons throughout the day, there is very little opportunity for the various groups to intermingle socially. Drastic cutbacks in the New York City school budget during this period forced the elimination of many after-school programs that might have provided more opportunity for intermingling. These would have been

intramural sports, recreational clubs, hobby groups, handicraft classes, school trips, dances, and other social events.

This tendency to stick with one's own group is a deterrent to reaching out to the larger society in which one must eventually find oneself. Unless one is content to be bound to Chinatown or a narrow circle of Chinese friends, adjustment to the wider society later is necessary but will prove more difficult after graduation than it was during the school years. Part of the responsibility for this segregation falls on the shoulders of the Chinese children and their parents who discourage social interaction with non-Chinese because they are suspicious of foreigners and fearful that their own ways may be undermined by contact with other groups. But the eventual consequences will be that the Chinese find themselves very ill at ease in any mixed social setting. As I have pointed out in my study, A Survey of Chinese-American Manpower and Employment, advancement and upward mobility beyond a certain level will depend more upon social factors than on competence.⁵ To be uncomfortable in a non-Chinese social setting is a psychological as well as an economic barrier to one's well-being later on in life. Neither school nor parents should neglect the social aspects of a child's upbringing.

At the same time, social scientists can see how strong the force is to maintain one's ethnic exclusiveness, so they can appreciate the degree of resistance toward assimilation.

5. (New York: Praeger, 1976) p. 64.

Conclusions

Peer groups are assuming a much larger and more important role in the lives of Chinese immigrant children and youth than they formerly occupied under traditional Chinese culture. Whereas children used to look to their parents and elders for direction and counsel, they now turn to their peers. In their choice of friends, Chinese immigrant children tend to choose someone of their own sex and own ethnic group as well as someone who is foreign-born like themselves. There is very little socializing or intermingling with other groups.

Dating is an infrequent and probably unfamiliar experience for the newly arrived Chinese young people in high school. Along with the tendency of ethnic groups to stick to themselves, the social isolation of Chinese children may create problems of awkwardness in a non-ethnic setting later in life. On the other hand, the tenaciousness that even school children cling to their own ethnic groups is a sociological phenomenon that merits further investigation.

CHAPTER XIII: THE IMMIGRANT FAMILY

Throughout this study, our hypothesis has been that immigration is a powerful agent, causing changes that have a ripple effect upon all aspects of life. Even that most stable of Chinese institutions -- the family -- has metamorphosed in the new land of the United States, departing from the idealized, Confucian, traditional models described in fiction and in sociological studies about the Chinese family in China.¹ The families of the immigrants who came to this country have always been distinctive in that:

- They have had a long history of dismemberment.
- Females have played a larger and more independent role.
- Families are smaller in size than the traditional Chinese family.
- The births of children are more widely spaced.
- There may be two distinct sets of children, one older and reared in China, another younger and born in the United States.
- Family reunification in this country has been in relays.

Dismemberment

One of the most peculiar features of the Chinese immigrant family has been the prolonged separation of the men from their parents, wives,

1. Studies by Francis Hsu, "The Myth of Chinese Family Size," American Journal of Sociology (1943), and C.K. Yang, The Chinese Family in the Communist Revolution (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1959) have revealed that the so-called traditional Confucian Chinese family was more of a myth than a fact.

and children. As Charles Frederick Marden put it, such a family was mutilated or missing a member; it was not whole.² The men were in this country while their wives and children stayed in China. To a large extent, the reason for this initially was that the men intended to come to this country for only a short while to earn sufficient money and return to their family hearth in the homeland. Before this original intent could be modified, the exclusion laws against Chinese immigration froze the situation, making it economically unfeasible or legally impossible for the women to come. As is well known, Chinese immigration to the United States, for almost a hundred years, was predominantly adult males. In 1890, the sex ratio was 2679:100, or approximately twenty-seven males to every Chinese female.³ Even as late as 1970, the sex ratio was unbalanced with 110 males to every 100 females. Obviously, there was not even the slightest resemblance of family life for these men deprived of the conjugal relationships with their wives, the presence of their loved ones, and the comforts of home. The men led lonely, celibate lives. On the other hand, they were family men responsible for the support of their families in China. Duty and obligation kept their noses to the grindstone, and if they were fortunate they managed a trip or two back to their homes over the years.

Family separation characterized most of the Chinese families with members in the United States from the 1850s to the 1950s. Four factors brought about change. The first was the repeal of the exclusion acts against Chinese immigration in 1943, which also gave the Chinese the

2. Minorities in American Society (New York: American Book Co., 1952).

3. Betty Lee Sung. The Story of the Chinese in America (New York: Collier Books, 1971) p. 320.

right to become naturalized citizens and to bring their wives and children in as non-quota immigrants. The second was the passage of the War Brides Act in 1946. The third was the Communist overthrow of the Nationalist government in 1949. But the small quota for China of 105 per year continued to act as an insuperable barrier to speedy reunification. The mutilated family was still much in evidence in the 1960s, and conditions did not ameliorate until the fourth factor, the liberalization of the immigration laws in 1965, came about.

Writing in the Washington Post, columnist Colman McCarthy advocated " . . . looking at every piece of major legislation and every program in terms of what it does to the family."⁴ Former Vice-President Walter Mondale said that nearly all the human problems he had seen were created by family breakdowns, and he called for "family impact statements," much like the environmental impact statements.⁵ My contention here is that the discriminatory immigration laws enacted against the Chinese are a classical example of how legislation has severely impacted against Chinese American families to the extent of dictating their form, their size, their make-up, and family member interactions.

The mutilated family was an adaptation to the exclusion acts and highly restrictive quotas, where the men had to leave their wives and children behind. On the other hand, miscegenation laws enacted in fourteen states with high concentrations of Chinese, prevented the men from establishing interracial unions.⁶ In essence, a long-distance family was better than no family at all, and the Chinese suffered

4. "The Government's and the Family's Obligation to the Family," Washington Post (January 29, 1977) p. A15

5. Ibid. \

6. Sung, Op. cit. pp. 254-259.

the separation, the sporadic conjugal relationships, and the lack of home comforts as the best-of-all-evils response to the laws. In turn, the other distinct characteristics of the Chinese American family, such as the smaller size, the two-tier offspring cohorts, etc. are corollary consequences of the dismembered, mutilated family. Karl Marx has shown how technology impacted upon the social structure of society. Laws can also impact the same way.

Prominent Female Role

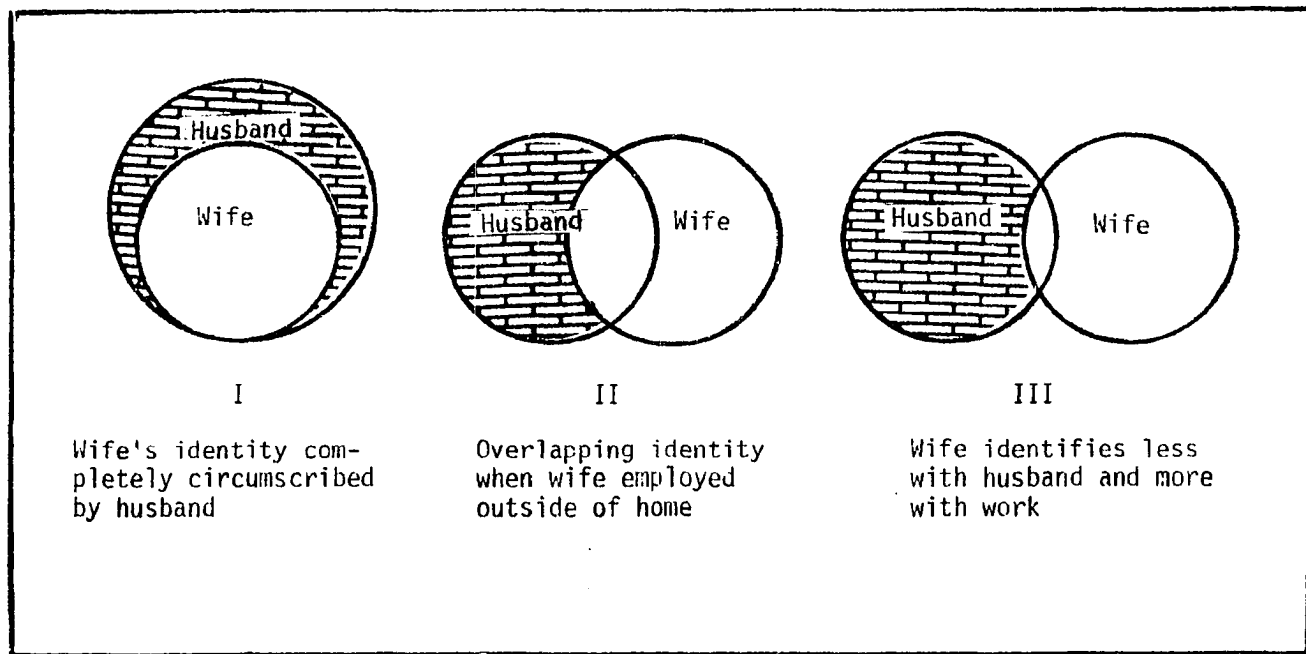
I have lived in and visited villages in southern China in the 1930s and the 1970s where the inhabitants were overwhelmingly women, children, and older folk. The able-bodied men were abroad, and their absence was conspicuous. The family income came in bi-monthly or quarterly checks from the United States. Women performed most of the tasks and made the family decisions. The children had never seen their fathers or had seen them only on their infrequent trips back to China. Even husbands and wives, separated by thousands of miles and lengthy intervals between trips, were strangers to one another. Parental bonds were stronger, held together by blood ties and the cardinal virtue of filial piety. Female influence in child-rearing was dominant. The children were surrounded by their mothers, aunts, grandmothers, and perhaps grandfathers returned from abroad. Parallels can be drawn between these families and those of the New England fishermen who used to be away at sea for long periods of time or military families in time of war. There were few male models to emulate; Freud would be hard put to explain his Oedipus complex in this kind of family

situation where no father is around to compete with the son for the mother's attention.

The physical absence of the men created a departure from the prevailing patriarchal familial structure. Even if the immigrant family could not be labeled a matriarchial one, it was definitely female dominant. The women from such families enjoyed a modicum of independence and authority that their sisters in traditional families did not have. They had to make the daily decisions affecting the life of the family, and they learned how to handle money and deal with people outside of the home. Naturally, these women would be extremely self-reliant. Their lives were centered totally around their children and their parents-in-law. The husband-wife relationship was a minor aspect of the marriage to be played out occasionally during the husband's return trips to China. Nevertheless, in China, the wife's identity was completely circumscribed by her husband. She would sever almost all her relations with her family and identify totally with her husband's family. She would serve his parents, bear his children who would take his name. Even though her husband was not present, it was her duty and obligation to maintain his home.

Graph E shows the transformation of identity when the Chinese wife comes to New York City. Invariably she will take a job in the garment factory immediately. Now she has an identity outside of the home, albeit an insignificant one. Her income gives her a measure of economic power, and she is in contact with people outside of the family. The dominant part of her identity is still with her husband, but no longer exclusively so, hence the overlapping circles in Graph E.

GRAPH E
CHANGING HUSBAND/WIFE IDENTITY ROLES



In time, the progression may tend toward the evolving American model of husband and wife having separate identities yet maintaining the marital bond between them. Already the transformation from Stage I toward Stage II is a radical change for the Chinese immigrant wife.

Family Size and Spacing of Children

The mutilated family structure has spawned other peculiar characteristics in the immigrant Chinese family. One is family size. The number of children depended upon the frequency of the husband's trips home, and if these were infrequent, the number of offspring were correspondingly few. Traditionally, the Chinese have valued large families and many sons. Forced to live apart by the circumstance of U.S. immigration barriers and thus unable to have more children, immigrant families were invariably smaller. Not only were the children fewer, their births were more widely spaced. The years separating the siblings again inevitably depended upon the frequency of the father's return trips. Consequently, in many immigrant Chinese families the age gap between siblings is greater than usual. In fact, the parents may have sets of children widely spaced. The more common situation is an older set born in China when the father made his periodic trips home and another set born in the United States after the family was brought to this country. Though the siblings may be brothers and sisters born of the same parents, the age gap between them may be so great that they have little in common with one another.

Relay Immigration

If the men came first and the wives and children joined them subsequently, one may characterize this phenomena as immigration in relays. This pattern of immigration is fairly common among other immigrant groups as well as the Chinese and is somewhat culturally or politically determined; many families, of course, do immigrate together as a group. The situation gives rise to a set of adjustment problems in addition to the one of transplantation because the immediate family members must get to know one another when reunited. One girl said, "At first, I could not bring myself to call this strange man 'Father.' The words stuck to my tongue." Sons who had been indulged by their mothers looked upon their fathers as intruders into their close family circle. Wives had to relinquish their control over the purse strings and their authority as heads of the household. The men had to get to know their women and children, some of whom they had never seen before. In spite of these tremendous stresses and strains, the family shell has withstood the battering, but there have been major alterations within the family.

Status and Role

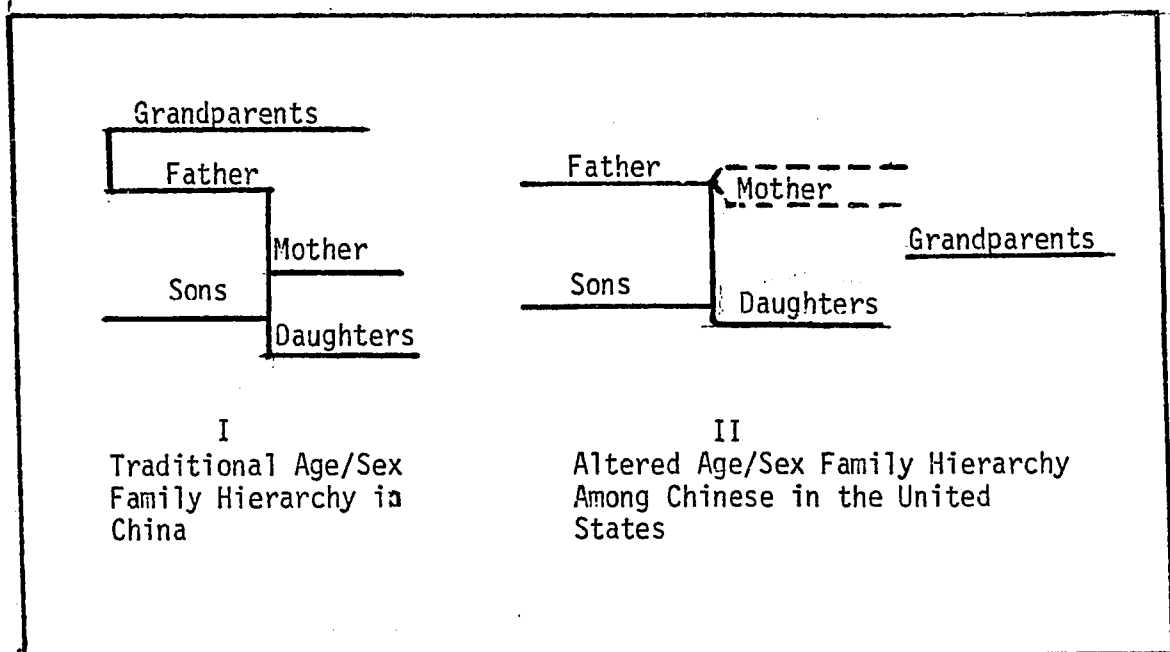
In the traditional Chinese family, every man, woman, and child has a definite place within a culturally prescribed hierarchy clearly determined by age and sex. If everyone knows his or her place and acts accordingly, order is assured. The grandparents or the elderly occupy the highest status rank by virtue of age and generation. The males stand considerably above the females of the same generation. Graph F

diagrams the change in age and sex status hierarchy in the Chinese family after immigration. The father's status is invariably lowered. The working wife's or mother's status is raised to either slightly below the father or even slightly above if she happens to be the main provider. In the more egalitarian American society, the daughter's status is also raised to only slightly below that of the sons rather than being substantially lower. The grandparents are in an amorphous position. Being elderly, they generally cannot contribute economically to the family purse. More often than not, instead of being the fount of wisdom and experience and clearly like fish out of water, they become highly dependent and somewhat useless. Under such conditions, their status is lowered to a position somewhere between that of the parents and the offspring.

In addition to status or position, people have roles to play and these roles delineate the way they relate to one another and to society at large. If a society is stable, the role changes are minor. If a society is in a stage of flux, the roles may have to be altered drastically to fit the environment and the circumstances.⁷

7. Georgene Seward and Robert C. Williamson, eds., Sex Roles in Changing Society (New York: Random House, 1970) pp. 371-373.

GRAPH F
AGE AND SEX STATUS HIERARCHY IN THE CHINESE FAMILY



Father's Lower Status. If the father has been the source of the checks that were sent regularly back to Hong Kong or China, he indubitably enjoyed the elevated status due him as the family provider. He also enjoyed a high social status as a "guest of the Golden Mountains."⁸

As has already been established, the more recent immigrants tend to be among the professional class, but when they come to these shores, they find that they must take lower echelon jobs. The language barrier is the biggest hurdle they face. A lawyer, an accountant, a teacher, or business man in Hong Kong cannot simply pick up his former profession or business here. At the beginning, he must accept what work there is, and if he is dependent upon his relatives or friends to find him a job, that job is inevitably in the restaurant business. See Table 13-1 showing occupations of parents before and after immigration.

Note that only one out of ten fathers who had held professional positions prior to immigration could find a similar one after immigration. Half the businessmen and five-sixth of the skilled laborers had to take lower-rung jobs, and it is obvious that these jobs (108) are concentrated in restaurant work. A very high proportion, 75 out of 262, did not respond to this question fully, indicating perhaps that they were unemployed or were reluctant to state what their jobs were. Such a come-down is not only disappointing for the man himself, but it also reduces his status in the eyes of his wife and children. One father whom we interviewed used to own a fleet of taxis in Hong Kong. Now he runs a laundromat. On many occasions he said he regrets

8. Few people in Hong Kong or China concern themselves with how the Chinese earn their money in this country. All they know is that the sum, when magnified by the favorable exchange rate, is generous, so they view this country as the Mountain of Gold.

TABLE 13-1

PARENTS OCCUPATIONS BEFORE AND AFTER IMMIGRATION BY RESIDENCE

	In Chinatown				In Satellite Community				Total			
	Father		Mother		Father		Mother		Father		Mother	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Professional	5	0	1	2	5	1	1	0	10	1	2	2
Businessman	14	3	1	0	20	14	2	3	34	17	3	3
Skilled laborer	24	5	1	0	6	1	1	0	30	6	2	0
Clerical worker	4	0	2	0	7	0	1	0	11	0	3	0
Factory worker	29	28	36	105	8	4	7	35	37	32	43	140
Restaurant worker	18	77	4	1	11	31	1	1	29	108	5	2
Farmer	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	2	0
Seamen	18	1	*	*	4	0	*	*	22	1	*	*
Service worker	16	10	0	0	9	12	0	0	25	22	0	0
Housewife	*	*	91	34	*	*	66	30	*	*	157	64
No response	33	39	26	21	28	36	19	30	61	75	45	51
Total	163	163	163	163	99	99	99	99	262	262	262	262

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

*Not applicable

his decision to come here, but he consoles himself by saying that his children will have a better future in the United States. Another father with whom we spoke used to be a pharmacist; he was unemployed. He considered himself a professional and was loath to accept a lower-status job. A man's work is his identity. To step downward or backward must be a terrible blow to his ego and self-esteem.

Working Wives and Mothers. The wives are not saddled as much with such ego problems. Most have never gone outside the home to earn money before. Table 13-1 shows that 157, or approximately 60 percent, were housewives before immigration, whereas almost all who could be identified as employed worked in the garment factories after their arrival here. Garment factory work is readily available, requires no language ability, is quickly learned, flexible in hours, and close at hand.

Because it is harder for a man than for a woman to find suitable employment, or because a man may find it beneath his dignity to accept a lower-status job, while financial needs are pressing the woman of house goes to work. In many cases, she becomes the main family provider until the husband resigns himself to the fact that restaurant work is about the best that he can hope for. Garment factory work may net more than restaurant work considering the long hours that the newcomer puts in at her sewing machine. She is paid by the piece, and depending upon her speed and the time she puts in, she can gross upward of \$200 a week during the busy season. This is a fantastic sum to a woman who has never earned money before, and it gives her a sense of increased status and power.

This reversal of husband and wife roles has its repercussions within the family circle. It puts an immediate strain on the conjugal relationship at a time when the husband's self-esteem is low and when the entire family is trying to make adjustment to all of the other changes happening so swiftly in their lives.

Elevated Female Status. Unquestionably, female status in the Chinese immigrant family has been altered by the present and important economic role of the mother, by her former independent role as head of the household in the homeland, and by her place in the hearts of her children. She commands an important position in the home. But it is the second-generation female status that jumps immeasurably higher. The key is education. Girls have the same opportunity as boys to go through high school. They still do not enjoy the advantages given their brothers as evidenced by the fact that the ratio of Chinese male graduates to female graduates at City College of New York in 1976 was three to one,⁹ but their high school education will provide them with a ladder to greater freedom of choice and latitude than their mothers had. When asked which is more important, career or marriage, two-thirds of the girls surveyed answered, "Career."¹⁰

9. Survey of City College of New York 1976 Chinese graduates by author.

10. Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978.

Reversal of Parent-Child Roles. Our study was confined to recent immigrant children and youth, so that the Chinese cultural values and roles still persist in the home. However, as the children are exposed more and more to the American way of life, parental ties, control, and influence begin to fade. A reversal in parent-child roles is a frequent occurrence in Chinese-American homes, especially those where the parents are not well educated and do not speak English. Right after immigration, parents and children are in the same place--the starting line. Neither speaks English, but within a few years the children will have attended school and become fairly proficient in English. At that point, the parents will turn increasingly to their children for help. Instead of the parents leading the way and instructing the child, the roles are reversed. Some parents are quite helpless--especially the ones who have had little education, and they lean heavily upon the children. At the same time because of cultural conflicts as the American ways seep into the immigrant families or because the parents are not knowledgeable, the children cannot turn to their parents for guidance or direction. Graph G shows how the traditional parent-child roles have been altered to a more egalitarian role or role reversal.

GRAPH G
PARENT-CHILD ROLE REVERSAL

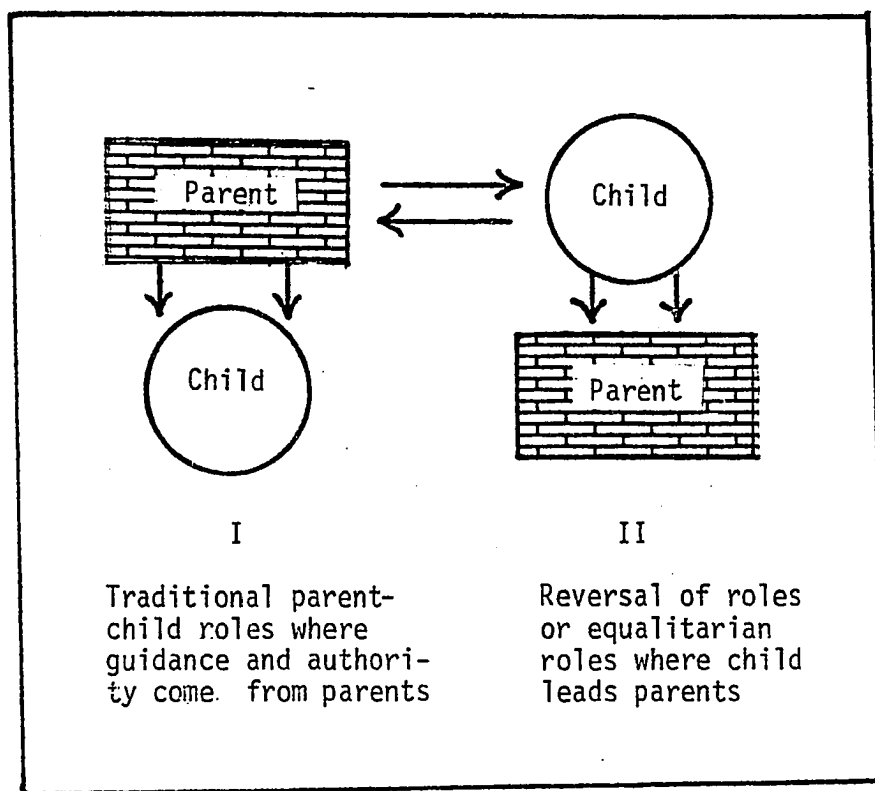


TABLE 13-2
PARENTS' PRESENT OCCUPATION AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

	Level of Education				
	None	Elem.	H.S.	College+	Total
Father's Present Occupation					
Professional	0	0	0	1	1
Businessman	1	1	5	10	17
Skilled laborer	3	2	1	0	6
Factory worker	3	12	15	3	33
Restaurant worker	14	48	44	3	109
Seaman	0	0	1	0	1
Service or unskilled wkr.	3	8	8	3	22
No response	5	21	26	12	64
Total	29	92	100	32	253
Mother's Present Occupation					
Professional	0	0	0	0	0
Business woman	0	0	2	1	3
Skilled laborer	0	0	0	0	0
Clerical worker	0	0	0	0	0
Factory worker	34	66	40	1	141
Restaurant worker	0	1	1	0	2
Housewife or service wkr.	13	24	22	3	62
No response	7	20	10	3	40
Total	54	111	75	8	248

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

The educational level of the parents from our high school student survey is given in Table 13-2 and is correlated with occupation. At least half of the fathers had a high school education or better, but only 32 out of 253 had been to college. The other half had either an elementary school education or none at all. Overwhelmingly, the mothers in our survey group were poorly educated. Yet almost all of the students surveyed aspired to college. The disparity of educational levels between immigrant parents and children can be great and creates a situation in which the parent as model no longer holds. In this function they are obsolete. The children need substitute models, either in their teachers or from leaders in the Chinese community. Unfortunately, role models or leadership in the Chinese communities are sorely lacking.

Families Without Parents

If the wife/mother puts in eight to twelve hours a day at work, she will not be able also to provide the services she formerly provided for her husband and children. Nor will she be there to keep an eye on the children. The most noticeable phenomenon in the Chinese immigrant family is the lack of parental presence. We have already mentioned instances of this. In Table 13-3 we tabulated the number of hours or days that the Chinese high school immigrant students see their parents. For example, 82 percent lived with both mother and father, but 32 percent did not see their fathers from one day to the next and 21 percent never even caught a glimpse of their mothers. If the father worked in a restaurant, his hours are usually 10 A.M. until 11:00 P.M. or midnight. On his one day off, he would sleep late and perhaps manage to see his children for a few hours that day after school, most likely at the evening meal.

TABLE 13-3

CONTACT WITH AND CLOSENESS TO PARENTS
OF CHINESE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

	Father	N=270	Mother	N=270
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Live with parents:				
Yes	222	82	232	86
No	27	10	21	8
No response	21	8	17	6
Hours see parents daily:				
0	86	32	57	21
1-2	40	15	10	4
3-5	96	36	87	32
6-8+	48	18	116	43
Days see parents weekly:				
0	58	21	45	17
1	40	15	10	4
2-5	31	11	19	7
6-7	141	52	196	73
Closeness to parents:				
Distant	17	6	5	2
Not close	46	17	25	9
Somewhat close	78	29	78	29
Very close	106	39	147	54
No response	23	9	15	6

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

The mothers worked equally long hours; that they saw their children more often their husbands did was due to the fact that they frequently took their children to the factory with them or at least would come home to prepare the evening meal. It was disturbing to note that 17 percent of the high school students never saw their mothers--not even for a single day--from one week to the next. This conspicuous absence of parents from the immigrant Chinese home made it extremely difficult for us to talk to the parents. We could not interview the families during the day, but even when we tried to make evening or weekend appointments, we frequently had to go back many times because the mother would suddenly be working overtime or be called in on Sundays to get out an order.

When some children were asked how they felt about their parents not being home, they said they felt lonely, ignored, and neglected. The mother's absence was most keenly felt, and many made the comment that their mothers loved money more than they loved their children. They understood the need for their mothers to work, but they were critical of the long hours that their mothers were away from home. When asked if the parents kept close supervision over them, 53 percent of the male high school students and 66 percent of the females said yes. The remainder said no. So in spite of parental absence from the home, the supervision was felt by the boys half of the time and by the girls two-thirds of the time. When asked who disciplines them, the following pictured emerged:

TABLE 13-4 |
DISCIPLINARIAN IN THE FAMILY

	Males		Females	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
No one	24	29	14	16
Father	15	18	12	14
Mother	37	45	53	60
Other	7	8	9	10
Total	83	100	88	100

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

Obviously, the mother is the main disciplinarian in the home, but it is disturbing to note that 29 percent of the teenage males are disciplined by no one. This lack of parental supervision, guidance, or presence may not have an impact, but I fear that the seeds sown will sprout in later years. Already, we may be seeing the results of it in the eruption of the Chinatown gangs.

There were, however, some positive conditions and strengths within these families that should be noted. In spite of the fact that many of these children hardly knew or saw their fathers, they still felt somewhat close or very close to their fathers. They felt even closer to their mothers (See Table 13-3). These feelings are a strong holdover from the cultural values instilled in them to honor and respect their parents. When asked: "How often do you agree or disagree with your parents?" the girls were found to be more compliant, but neither sex was at great odds with father or mother. In this instance, we are referring to immigrant children and not American-born children of immigrant parents where the generation gap is considerable.¹¹

¹¹. Substantiation of this fact comes from the author's dealing with young people in her more than ten years of teaching at the City College of New York and in her contacts with Chinese families.

TABLE 13-5
AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT WITH PARENTS

Agree with Parents	Males		Females	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Never	19	15	7	5
Sometimes	40	33	44	34
Half time	41	33	43	34
Always	23	19	34	27
Total	123	100	128	100

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

TABLE 13-6
FIVE RANKING AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT WITH PARENTS

<u>MALES</u>	<u>FEMALES</u>
1. Spending money	1. Disobedience
2. Disobedience	2. Spending money
3. Parents too old-fashioned	3. Dating
4. Chores	4. Coming home late
5. Coming home late	5. Parents expect too much.

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

In our interviews and talks with the high school students, even when they had strong disagreements with their parents or when they were somewhat ashamed of how their parents looked or behaved, after having voiced their displeasure they would invariably end up saying, "But he's my father," or "She's my mother." Those pronouncements settled the matter. Parental bonds were ironclad. Children were reluctant to go against their parents' wishes or to incur their displeasure.

Loss of Wider Kinship or Clan Support

The average Chinese family may not be the extended kinship unit described by Olga Lang or Lin Yutang,¹² but stem or nuclear families generally live close enough to one another in China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan to see one another frequently, to be able to call upon each other in times of need, or to derive that sense of security inherent in kinship relationships. When a Chinese family migrates to the United States, it seeks the proximity of kinfolk by crowding into Chinatowns. Family ties still hold, but many of the props have been pulled out by economic conditions and American values.

One complaint heard frequently is that people have no time for one another anymore. For economic survival, everyone works long hours at jobs. Restaurants are open seven days a week, and their evening and weekend hours take away the time that parents ordinarily spend at home with their families. The piece-rate arrangement in the garment factories pits the women against the clock in their race for the dollar. The one day that they have off is spent catching up with essential household and personal chores. Time is a luxury; no one can afford to stop and chat, to exchange pleasantries, to listen to another's concerns and problems, or even to be sociable. Life is a treadmill, and each person is fully involved in and intent upon staying on the belt. Many of the little niceties of human relations are sacrificed to the work demon.

12. Olga Lang, Chinese Family and Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946) and Lin Yutang, My Country and My People (New York: John Day, 1935).

"People change a lot when they come to this country," is a statement commonly heard. "They become selfish." Whatever the reason, kinfolk are not as willing to lend a helping hand as they were in the homeland. Each one is so overwhelmed by his own problems, you cannot blame him.

The family or village associations, once the rallying points of common ancestry and identity, are fast losing ground as viable institutions. Controlled by elders who cannot and have not kept up with conditions created by the recent huge influx of immigrants, these organizations are declining and disintegrating. The younger people no longer belong or participate. In fact, they don't even have time for their immediate family, much less for their extended family.

The Family Abode

The physical environs of the family are no less important a factor than the makeup or status roles of the members. A description of the two communities from which we drew our subjects and respondents was already detailed in Chapter V. Let us now relate what we learned when we visited the homes of some of the students we interviewed.

Case One. Wendy Chin (all names are pseudonyms) is thirteen years old and attends the Chinatown junior high. She has been in the United States one year. Her father came first; her mother came with the son two years ago; Wendy and her sister came last. They were originally from the mainland, but had lived in Hong Kong for ten years while waiting for their papers. The family lives in a fifth floor walk-up apartment on the fringes of Chinatown bordering on the old Jewish community. They paid a little over \$100 a month for a four-room apartment,

but they had to pay \$800 key money for the privilege of moving in. There are two small bedrooms, one large kitchen, and one elongated entranceway used as the living room. There is a modern toilet, but no bath tub or shower. Obviously the apartment has been fixed up recently, but there are two large leaks in the ceilings of the kitchen and living room, and water has loosened large chunks of plaster. The apartment is one of ten in the building owned by a Chinese landlord.

The apartment was very clean inside, but the hallway was dark and the stairs rickety. Yet Mrs. Chin was very happy that her son had found this place, and one could see that the family members were very close and overjoyed that they were now all united in this country. Mrs. Chin worked in a garment factory hanging up skirts and buttoning up garments. She earned about twenty dollars a day. I did not see Mr. Chin. I was told he goes off to work in the suburbs at 10:00 or 11:00 A.M. and returns after midnight.

Case Two. Su Ling, age thirteen, also from the Chinatown junior high, kept putting me off about visiting her home. In most of the family visits, we had to resort to the door-to-door salesman's technique of putting our foot in the door and trying to talk our way in. Most of the students refused to tell us where they lived. It seemed as if they were ashamed of their homes, and I could see why Su Ling felt that way. I saw Su Ling walking home from school, so I followed her. When she got to the door, I walked up and asked her to invite me in. She consented reluctantly, but told me I could only stay for a short while.

There are two bedrooms in the three-room apartment and a tiny hallway space. The living room is about eight feet square. The parents use one bedroom and six children (boys and girls alike sleep in three bunk-

beds in the other. The bunkbeds line the walls of the room like an inverted U, and if all six children were to jump out of bed at the same time, they would not have space to stand up. The room has only one light fixture on the ceiling, so the beds are utilized only to sleep in. A seventh person sleeps on the living room couch. There is a television, and the tiny hallway holds a sewing machine for the mother to work with at home.

Su Ling said her mother would be very angry at her if she knew that Su Ling had let someone into the house, so I did not linger long.

Case Three. Yuet Han, a young fellow of fourteen, is also from the Chinatown junior high and has been in this country for about six months. His family operates a fish store in the heart of Chinatown, so I dropped in on him one day after school. He was helping out by waiting on customers, and business was brisk. Yuet Han pointed to a woman and said, "That's my mother," but I could not talk to her while she was going back and forth waiting on customers and cleaning the fish. I asked where the family lived. Yuet Han pointed to the back of the store. Propriety prevented me from intruding further into their private lives when the family was so busy at work. Again, I did not see any male figure around who could be the father.

Case Four. The first time my research associate, Dr. Rose Chao, went on a family visit, she was so upset she called me immediately afterward to say that she wasn't going to make another visit unless someone went with her. The shock of what she saw was very vividly described in her preliminary report:

The winter of 1977 was one of the coldest in New York's history. That winter, the Chus, a family of six, slept in their tiny kitchen, about 8' by 10' in their three-room, sixth-floor walk-up. In the kitchen there was a television, four chairs, a kitchen table, and two refrigerators. One was broken and served as a storage cabinet since there was none in the kitchen. A tiny gas stove stood inches from the door with an old sink next to it. There was an electric heater in the center of the room. I was alarmed to find only one electric outlet in the kitchen. It was heavily overloaded with plugs. Since the Chus' apartment was on the top floor, the unmelted snow, accumulated during the two previous snowfalls, had made the ceiling in the apartment very damp. In a corner of the kitchen ceiling near the pipes there was a steady drip.

The front room in the apartment overlooking the street had not been used the entire winter; the temperature in that room only differed a few degrees from the temperature outside. There was no heater in this room. Mrs. Chu kept the window next to the fire escape opened a crack because of the fear of fire. There had been a fire in a building a few blocks away several months ago. Mrs. Chu wanted to be able to open the window so that the family could get out quickly in case of fire. Fear of burning to death was greater than the discomfort of the bitter cold.

Dr. Chao went on to tell how a rat ran across her feet as she was sitting in the apartment. She shuddered to think of the health hazard and physical hazard that these rodents could pose, in particular to the little baby.

More cases of the family living quarters in Chinatown would only be a repeat of the same. The housing stock in Chinatown is ancient and dilapidated. The adjacent area into which the new immigrant families are moving is the infamous Lower East Side. The rents are kept low by rent control, but made expensive by key money. The demand is so great that shortage of housing is acute. It is the overcrowding that stands out as the most glaring problem. Perhaps the crowding is not so keenly felt by the immigrants who have just come out of a sardine can like Hong Kong. Nevertheless, the lack of space and privacy must take its toll on health and nerves.

Housing facilities in the satellite community were ten times better than those in Chinatown. As / mentioned previously, the houses now occupied by the Chinese families were built during the 1950s and 1960s. They are solid two- to three-family brick attached homes with front and backyards. Some are older frame houses, but they have been well-maintained by their owners. The newer houses, rows and rows of them, are almost all the same. There are two six-room apartments on the upper floors, a garage and a three-room unit on the street level. These homes sold in the late 70s for \$90,000 and up. Those renting the six-room units paid from \$350 to \$385 a month. In comparison with apartments in New York City of the same quality, the rentals could be considered reasonable. In general, the furnishings in the homes were modest and more functional than decorative. Invariably, there would be bicycles in the hallway. Books and toys, which were noticeably lacking in the Chinatown homes, were more frequently in evidence in the satellite community homes.

Obviously the higher rentals or cost of purchasing a home meant that the immigrants who went into the satellite Chinatown had more financial resources available to them or else they were willing to spend more of their family income on housing than were the New York Chinatown families.

Case Five. The family arrived two and a half years go, but the father had been here previously. (Again, we see the relay immigration pattern.) The father has a graduate degree in business administration, but he now owns and operates the local grocery store. The wife had been a nurse in Taiwan. The two boys, age nineteen and sixteen, were in high school. The family is Mandarin-speaking.

It was obvious that there was a great deal of discontent in the family. The mother wanted to resume her nursing career, but knew it was an unattainable dream because she could not speak English. Besides, she had to help her husband in the store. The teenage sons wanted to play ball with their friends after school, but they had to help their parents. They resented having to work. The father felt that his sons were lazy and his wife was not giving him the moral support he needed. He complained that all these years he had lived alone in this country. Finally, he managed to bring his wife and sons here, but their expectations of the United States were much greater than could be met. Instead of being grateful, they were disappointed. He felt that with his M.B.A. he could have done better.

Case Six. Mr. Wang owned an efficiency apartment complex of twenty-five apartments in Taiwan, which he rented out to United States military personnel. In Mr. Wang's case, the relay immigration pattern was reversed. He sent his wife and children to this country first. He came a year later. He was very excited at the prospect of coming to the United States, but once here the only job he could get was as a salad chef in a large midtown Manhattan hotel. He did not sell his apartment complex in Taiwan, so he is still collecting rent there to subsidize his living expenses here.

Fewer mothers in the satellite community worked, so that they had more time to spend with their children and among themselves. Dr. Chao reported that she was often welcomed in her home visits because the mothers hoped that she would make a fourth in their mah-jong games.

Considering the differences in the family background between the immigrants who lived in the two communities, it is very difficult for us to make valid comparisons about adjustment and adaptation. It seemed as if the recent immigrant families living in the satellite communities went directly into that neighborhood without being first routed through Chinatown. They tend to have more financial resources, to be better educated, and to speak Mandarin instead of Cantonese. Therefore, we are talking about two different classes of immigrants: those who are well off enough to be able to afford the \$350 rentals or the purchase of a \$90,000 home, and those who must squeeze into the rundown tenements of Chinatown. If there is any truth to the commonly maintained premise that socioeconomic class is an almost infallible indicator of success or failure in the American educational system, then the immigrant children living in the satellite Chinese community will have an inherent advantage in their achievement record in school and in their adaptation to a new life in the United States]¹³ We may not be able to make a valid comparison of the extent and rate of adjustment of immigrant children in the two communities for this reason, but at least we will have uncovered this difference and taken this factor into account accordingly.

13. Prof. W. W. Charters maintains that social class of the parents predicts with almost certainty the success or failure of the offspring in the American educational system. He said that this has been so consistently confirmed by research that it can now be regarded as empirical law. See W.W. Charters, "The Social Background of Teaching," in N.L. Gage, ed., Handbook of Research on Teaching (Skokie, Ill.: Rand McNally & Co., 1963) pp. 739-740.

The Evolving American Family

The changes that have come about in the Chinese immigrant family are not merely changes resulting from their transplantation alone. In addition to the decreasing size and realignment of family relationships, the immigrant families are caught up in the tide of changes taking place in the American family as well. In the evolving American family, the affective and nurturing-of-young functions have superseded the biological function. A strong emotional attachment between husband and wife is the fundamental requisite of family formation. This takes precedence above all, and when the bloom of marital love wears off, the union tends to disintegrate. In today's liberated society, extra-marital sex is easy to come by and is no longer frowned upon. The procreation of children has become an inconsequential aspect judging by the rate of abortions performed. For example, in New York City in 1980, one out of every two pregnancies was terminated by abortion.¹⁴ When children are involved, however, their nurturing and upbringing are strong factors in holding families together, and when men and women want children, they will want to bring them up in a family environment. The American family is seldom a producing economic unit but rather a consuming economic one. Just as many social activities take place outside the home as within it, and family ties are loose and tenuous. Recognizing the weakening functions of the American family, President Jimmy Carter wanted to promulgate a strong family policy, but when he tried to convene a national family conference, the pre-conference planners could not even agree on the definition of a family. Moreover,

¹⁴. New York City Department of Health Statistics, 1980.

the Census Bureau revealed that more than one-fourth of all American households consist of persons living alone or with nonrelatives, and that by 1995, the proportion of nonfamily households will rise to one out of three. The undertow of such a strong current toward family disintegration cannot help but pull the Chinese immigrant family along and effect more changes in it as acculturation into American society takes hold.

CHAPTER XIV: ADJUSTMENT

The ultimate answers sought after in this research are: How are these immigrant children and youth of Chinese origin making out in their new homeland? What is the process of adjustment? Is it a bumpy road or a smooth transition?

Social Adjustment

The determination of whether one is doing well or not depends upon the yardstick applied. Throughout this study, we have dwelled heavily upon the sociological aspects of adjustment. We observed and studied the children and youth in their schools, their homes, their communities, and among their peers. These are group environments. The child is related to the group to see if he fits within the societal norms and expectations. Do his performance and behavior interfere with those around him? If there is no perceivable dislocation or disorganization caused by these children in the school, home, and community, can we say, "All is well?" If disruptions or eruptions have occurred, does this signal social change or must the deviant behavior be brought back into line with the collective interests of the group in question?

Teacher and Parent Expectation

For example, what is expected of children who are immigrants from another culture in an American setting? The expectation--and even the

law mandates it--is that children under sixteen must attend school. If the child shows up in school every day, does his lessons reasonably well as judged by test scores, commits no infraction of the rules and regulations, and causes no trouble, then he is deemed a well-adjusted child. In Chapter VII, we described the Chinese children in a school setting. In spite of the language difficulties experienced, in spite of the strange customs and surroundings into which they are thrust, the overwhelming majority seem to be doing well academically. Their attendance exceeded ninety percent. The teachers are absolutely delighted with their Chinese pupils, for they are obedient and respectful, they make little commotion and even less trouble, they do as they are told, and they make the teacher's life very easy.

Of course, this type of behavior is already part of the Chinese children's upbringing and has merely been transferred from the Chinese school to the American school. For American teachers who are accustomed to less pliant students, the change offers a welcome respite, although many teachers said they wished for a less rigid teacher-pupil relationship. In the eyes of teacher and student alike, by and large, Chinese immigrant children are performing very well in school and may in fact exceed expectation.

Children are expected to obey their parents, to please their parents by doing well in school, to help with family chores, and if necessary, to help toward family financial support. In these respects Chinese immigrant again experience no discontinuity with the ways in which they have been brought up, with the exception perhaps of going to work outside the home. As we showed in Chapter XIII, in spite of

frequent parental absence in the immigrant home, the children identify strongly with their parents and with their families. This identification and attachment may weaken as the immigrant child begins to absorb American values and the American way of thinking, but shortly after immigration, the maintenance of that sense of family loyalty, duty, and obligation marks them as dutiful, well-behaved children. As roles are reversed, however, as the child begins to guide and support the parent, the gap between parent and child will widen and create problems in the future.

Dropout and Truancy

If the indicator, school dropout, is used to measure adjustment, we can come again to a favorable conclusion. In Table 7-5, we saw that the dropout rate among the bilingual high school students was extremely low. Not only do the youth continue with their education beyond the compulsory age of sixteen, but the high schools continue to enroll students twenty and twenty-one years of age. Moreover, and almost without exception, the high school graduates indicated that they would go on to college.

Truancy and cutting are usually the first symptoms of adjustment problems. If the cause of the truancy can be uncovered, as was attempted in the Chinatown high school by a very conscientious guidance counselor, problems can be brought to the surface and dealt with before they become more serious. For example, this guidance counselor would call the family after the third day of absence from school. Many times the parents do not know the child is absent, and alerting

them to this fact usually means the parents will deal with the situation immediately. Once a dialogue is established between the guidance counselor and the parents, both will try to help the child. Two cases come to mind to illustrate this point, but such cases were not common.

Case One. Male student, seventeen years old, in the eleventh grade, started to cut physical education classes. He would leave by the eighth period. The persistent cutting signaled a problem. The guidance counselor called the boy's father and asked the student to come in for a chat. After a few sessions with the counselor, the boy revealed that he was leaving school by the eighth period to avoid the gangs who were threatening him after school. By sneaking out early, he thought he was solving the problem. Further questioning uncovered the fact that he was not eating during his lunch period either. Instead, he went to the library, where he thought he was safe. The boy's grades were suffering from the tension engendered by this fear, but he was attempting to handle the situation by himself instead of letting his family and school counselor help him. This tendency to keep problems to themselves, to evade the situation or to withdraw from dealing with the problem directly is fairly common among immigrant children. Unless an astute observer recognizes the telltale signs, the problem may go undiscovered until it is too late.

Case Two. Young girl, seventeen years old, in the United States nine months, had been absent from school for three days. The counselor looked up the girl's academic record and found that she had been doing quite well in spite of her short period of time in the country. When contacted, the father said his daughter had decided to quit school and

go to work. The counselor did not accept this explanation. She asked the girl to come back to school for a chat. The girl came in dressed completely in black. She was pale and haggard. No one in the family had died, but symbolically she was mourning her mother, who had gone back to Hong Kong with her youngest brother. In their grief and longing for their mother, she and her three siblings had quit school and gone to work in the garment factory with a single purpose in mind. They would work until they had saved enough money for plane fare to be reunited with their beloved mother.

In this family, the common pattern of relay immigration was again evident. The father had come first and after many years separation, he had sent for his family. The mother, however, did not like the United States. It was not clear why the mother picked up and left with the youngest boy. The children, who were very close to their mother, blamed their father for "chasing her away." To punish him, they dressed in black mourning clothes.

In her talks with the guidance counselor, the girl confessed that she wanted to finish school very badly and go on to college. When made to see that the chances of her ever completing her education in Hong Kong were very slim for herself as well as for her brothers and sisters, she began to view the prospect of leaving the United States in a different light. The girl was referred to a psychological counselor from Columbia University doing fieldwork at the school, who helped her to see the situation from her father's viewpoint as well as from her own. With the broadened perspective, she resumed her studies and her resentment against her father subsided.

Again, we see an example of trying to shove the dirt under the rug by refusing to admit to a problem in order to come to grips with it. Here, it was the father who said his daughter wanted to quit school and work. If the guidance counselor had not persisted, this case would have smoldered later to erupt when the children departed. A similar situation occurred in Bip's case, detailed in Chapter XI. The father refused to ask for help from the community agencies because he was afraid of losing face. When claims are made that all is well, further probing may reveal that all is not indeed well. It takes an astute observer attuned to the cultural nuances of denial to find whether there really are problems. That is why the guidance counselor may be an indispensable person for Chinese immigrant students. A competent counselor who can speak their tongue and who is familiar with the cultural leanings can immediately spot a budding problem and deal with it before it gets out of hand, especially since the Chinese try to cover up their difficulties and stoically endure rather than attempt to deal with their problems. As evidenced in the cases described, the counselor in the Chinatown high school's bilingual program defused many psychological bombs before they exploded.

Being Part of a Gang

The most glaring outward manifestation of maladaptive social behavior among immigrant youths is the rapid increase in gangs and their vicious activities. As was noted in Chapter XI, gang membership is made up almost exclusively of immigrant youths. My own thoughts are that the manifestation of New York's Chinese gang problem is not so much rebellion against society as the inducement of big money and the

need to belong to a group for protection. The fact that gang members must threaten and coerce others to join their ranks indicates that being a member is not always a voluntary act. They join out of fear, and fear blocks their exit from the gang. Sometimes a gang member may swagger about and act high and mighty, but when asked whether he would like his younger brother to join, his answer, "I'll beat the hell out of him if he even gets near a gang," will reveal his true feelings.

Money is the drawing card. Hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars are dangled before the naive teenager who, as a recent immigrant, may have had all his props pulled out from under him: He can't speak English. He can't catch up with his school work. The future job prospects look bleak. He has to work long hard hours. The family quarters are cramped, and his parents are away most of the time. His close friends are thousands of miles away, and he hasn't formed close relationships with new friends. He is beaten up and threatened on one hand and enticed by promises of power, money, and status on the other. Money may be the main thing that spells security and fun, and he grasps at it hungrily.

The excitement and glamor of belonging to the Chinese gangs are short-lived. A social worker who works with gang members says the age span for most is from fourteen to eighteen years, and the membership turnover is high. Sometimes there is wholesale depletion of the ranks, which explains why recruitment efforts are vigorous and vicious. Within a short time, peripheral members try to ease out of the gang. They may be sent out of town by their parents, the family may move out of Chinatown, or they may seek help from youth agencies. Those who stay

in beyond their twenties generally are hard-core members, but even they become sick and tired of the kind of life they lead.

In an interview with the editor of Canal Magazine, even the notorious leader of the Ghost Shadows, Nicky Louie, admitted as much. He became a gang member at fifteen. By twenty-three, he was tired, empty, and spent. Ambushed twelve times and pretty close to death on a number of occasions, he still has some slugs rattling around in his lanky frame. When asked what he thought of youth gangs now, he replied without hesitation.

I hope all the young people should think clearly before they act. Being superior is only a brief thrill. Nobody can be the champ forever. Yesterday I was the master of Mott Street. Today, it is somebody else. Who is to guarantee that he won't be pulled down from the stage? This kind of fighting has no ending to it, and it's meaningless. I, myself, am the perfect example of this. An exciting life cannot compensate for my emptiness. I gamble heavy, but it is only a way to paralyze my mental state. The few friends that were with me when I first started out, some died, some in jail. I even had to break up with my beloved. For these couple of years I actually gained nothing.¹

He did gain money. From 1976 to 1977, he said the gang took in as much as \$10,000 a week.² But even this kind of money loses its appeal in a short time for those who have a strong moral foundation grounded in the Chinese culture. Knowing these facts about Chinese gangs, we can take effective measures to stamp out the antisocial activities that they are engaged in. More effort must be made to provide fellowship for the young teenagers in a wholesome, constructive atmosphere, and more effort must be made to deal with the insecurities

1. "Interview with Nicky Louie," Canal Magazine (New York: Better Chinatown Project, December 8, 1978) p. 1

2. Ibid.

of the young immigrant during the adjustment stage. But only when the enticement of big money from the gambling establishments is curtailed, can these other remedies stand a chance of competing successfully against the gangs.

Female Deviants. In our methodology, we started out trying to find and match well-adjusted with maladjusted immigrant children, but we had to abandon that approach when we found that the teachers, guidance counselors, and principals had little but praise for the progress the children were making. Even more difficult than finding boys with problems was finding any irregular behavior with the girls. Female rebellion is generally manifested by running away from home or by promiscuity, but it was impossible to obtain data on either. The girls were very shy and reticent about talking at all. Unless the researcher has a great deal of time to spend with them and gain their confidence, the wall of silence was difficult to penetrate.

Sexual attractiveness is not something that the girls from Hong Kong or Taiwan flaunt. They are reserved and demure. From our observations of the girls in the lunchroom and on the playgrounds, they tended to stick together. Even dating is very limited (see Table 12-3). In conversation with some of the teachers, however, we learned that freer sexual behavior is more pronounced among American-born Chinese, but these are outside the purview of our study. A few girls, however, do attach themselves to male gang members, and these numbers are on the rise.

Psychological Adjustment

Stepping outside of societal bounds can be interpreted as social maladjustment, and it is readily recognized because it is disruptive and infringes upon the lives of other people. Psychological maladjustment is individual and personal, and to most people it is of less concern. If a child makes no demands, sits quietly, seldom opens his mouth, and withdraws when confronted with a problem, he may pass completely unnoticed and may even be praised for causing no trouble. To most parents and most teachers, this is the "good" child. Chinese culture tends to reinforce this kind of behavior. It places a high value on self-control, endurance, tolerance, "face", responsibility, and achievement via conformity.³ Harmony is the keystone. Priority is placed upon the well-being of the group rather than on the individual, so that individual rights, concerns, and happiness are downplayed for the larger good of the family, the clan, the village, or the nation. The Chinese child is socialized to accept this priority as the proper order of things.

Standards of Behavior

Of course, the Western mind finds some of these ideas strange and peculiar. In American terms, normality is measured by different yardsticks. A child is well-adjusted if he is on good terms with his parents, but not too close to be termed dependent, gets along with his peers, is outgoing and independent, can handle problems in a rational manner,

3. Kenneth A. Abbott, Harmony and Individualism (Taipei, Taiwan: Orient Cultural Service, 1970) Chapter VIII.

has an optimistic outlook on life by expecting improvement and advancement, and performs at a level comparable to that of his peers.

By Chinese standards, a "good" child is one who may not necessarily be affectively close to his parents, but who will fulfill his familial obligations to them, who respects and obeys authority, who emulates adult behavior as soon as possible, who is a conformist rather than a maverick, who studies hard and values hard work, who has a more realistic outlook on life by willingness to accept what is, and who will strive to outperform others.

Since there is a wide divergence of standards of what is desirable and acceptable behavior and outlook, it would be folly for us to attempt to measure against the American norm the psychological well-being of a group of recent immigrant children brought up with different concepts of one's purpose in life. We relied, by and large, upon observation and interviews to see if they were frightened, withdrawn, bewildered, sad, uncooperative, hostile, angry, or defiant.

The few cases of unconventional behavior we found have been reported in preceding chapters. In general, the children at the grade-school level experienced but a brief transitional period. Most of the teachers queried said that six months to a year was all that was needed for them to be able to get along comfortably. In fact, the concerns of the parents were that their children were losing their Chinese-speaking ability and their cultural heritage too rapidly. We found the children very spontaneous in classes and quite outgoing in the playgrounds. The one notable feature of their behavior was that they stuck to their own ethnic groups. If there was any interaction,

it was abrasive rather than friendly. The Hispanic or Black boys loved to tease the Chinese girls or playfully make them angry. The Chinese girls generally went around in a group or in pairs and would avoid the boys as much as possible.

As mentioned previously, the Blacks, Hispanics, and Chinese all sat at their separate tables in the lunchroom and played among their own groups on the playground, with little intermingling. I noticed that the Chinese immigrant children regarded the other ethnic groups with a great deal of disdain. They felt that the others were too boisterous, too disruptive in the classroom, and too uninhibited in their personal relations. They felt very uncomfortable when they saw boys and girls kissing and hugging each other, and they would show their annoyance when other students were disruptive in class.

Since whites, other than Hispanics, were a minority in most of the schools that we researched, the Chinese immigrant students had less contact with other white students than with the Hispanics, who were usually the predominant group. This tended to insulate the Chinese from experiences that they would no doubt encounter later on in life--that of racial slurs, name-calling, prejudice and discrimination from whites. As long as the Chinese were the majority group or a sizable number in the schools, racism against them would not have affected them, at least not during the time of this study

For many reasons, the high school students seemed to have greater difficulty than the younger ones in their adjustment. Of course, their lessons were more advanced, they were more deeply set in their ways and not as flexible as their younger compatriots. The language

TABLE 14-1
ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES
OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Area of Difficulty	Rank Order - Difficulty in Adjustment				
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Language barrier	119	32	15	10	30
Worried about college/future	44	35	38	33	39
Picked on	33	19	10	13	26
Gang threats	25	12	14	7	17
Feelings of not belonging	15	15	20	18	23
Financial worries	12	32	30	23	17
Future not bright	12	12	16	20	35
School work	11	18	20	19	21
Different customs	9	18	17	15	27
Powerlessness	8	8	13	22	27
Not used to food	7	4	12	8	26
Differences with parents	3	8	14	11	20

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

NOTE: Students were asked to rank the list of difficulties in left-hand column above in the order in which they experienced the most problems.

was harder for them to pick up, and so many of them had to work after school to contribute to the family purse as well as attend school.

If limited resources were available to help the immigrants in their transition, my recommendation would be to allocate it to upper-level school programs for personalized tutoring, guidance and counseling, and perhaps programs for work-study. The immigrant youths already work and study, but a work-study program should introduce these young people to jobs outside the traditional occupations and outside of the community. This would serve to widen their horizons and bring them into contact with the larger American society.

Areas of Adjustment Difficulties

When asked to rank common areas of difficulty in their adjustment in the survey, students mentioned language as the problem most keenly felt by a very large margin (119) over the next category, which was worry over college or future (44). (See Table 14-1.) Following fairly close behind were being picked on and gang threats. The students perceive these areas as their major concerns, but it is evident that these concerns are not long term but immediate ones. In order of priority, therefore, the high schools should provide more intensive language training, college counseling, and protective measures to safeguard the students from harassment and danger. For recent immigrant children, at least, having differences with parents is a minimal problem. The parent-child relationship is still emotionally close in spite of parental absence. Getting used to new foods and new customs are not troublesome problems. If their language barrier could be dealt with effectively, a major portion of their adjustment difficulties would be solved.

They Wanted to Come

One big plus in the reservoir of personal resources that enables the immigrant children and youth to deal positively with their transplantation is the favorable attitude they have toward immigrating to the United States. To be able to come to this country may have been the culmination of years of effort on the part of the family and is a high-water mark of achievement. They wanted to come, and when asked if they wanted to go back, few said yes although some said they would like to go back for a visit. They may be critical of certain aspects of life in the United States, but they want to stay here. As long as these immigrants measure their condition here against what they so recently left behind, they are happy just to be here, which is the obverse of the theory of relative deprivation.⁴ When asked what they liked most about living in the United States, the high school students checked chance for education as their number one choice by a wide margin (see Table 14-2). Other reasons trailed far behind. And this high motivation to get an education naturally contributes to their high academic achievement.

Outlook

The outlook of the high school students surveyed was ambivalent. More than half of both sexes were satisfied with their school work. Almost all of them planned to go to college--surprisingly, more girls planned to than boys. They were more uncertain about being able to find a good job and even less certain about being able to earn a good

4. S.A. Stouffer, et al. The American Soldier (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1949)

TABLE 14-2
THINGS LIKED MOST ABOUT LIVING
IN THE UNITED STATES

	Rank Order		
	One	Two	Three
Chance for education	160	29	38
Chance to make money	46	59	69
Better chance for children	15	61	67
Political freedom	23	22	72
More material comforts	13	26	77

NOTE: Totals do not add up to number of students surveyed because of no response or more than one reason given for same rank order.

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

income (see Table 14-3). This outlook may be quite realistic; in spite of the fact that the educational attainment of the Chinese in the United States is exceptionally high, the positions they hold and their income are not commensurate with their educational level.⁵

The feelings and beliefs of the same high school students were mixed (see Table 14-4). By and large, they felt that they could succeed if they tried. Surprisingly, 60 percent did not feel that they were better off in the United States in contradiction to the feeling that they did not want to go back. Their aspirations were not low; only 28 to 29 percent would be satisfied if they just had enough. The girls were rather uncertain on this question, as demonstrated by the large number who did not respond. About two out of five students

5. Betty Lee Sung. A Survey of Chinese-American Manpower and Employment (New York: Praeger, 1976) p. 62.

TABLE 14-3
OUTLOOK OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

	Yes		No		NR	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Males</u>						
Satisfied with school work	71	54	50	38	10	8
Plan to go to college	108	82	14	11	9	7
Able to find good job	67	51	42	32	22	17
Able to earn good income	53	40	42	32	36	27
<u>Females</u>						
Satisfied with school work	73	53	51	37	14	10
Plan to go to college	121	88	13	9	4	3
Able to find good job	85	62	34	25	19	14
Able to earn good income	68	49	40	29	30	22

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

TABLE 14-4
FEELINGS AND BELIEFS OF CHINESE IMMIGRANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

	Yes		No		NR	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Males</u>						
Can succeed if try	86	66	43	33	2	1
Better off in U.S.	53	40	78	60	0	0
Satisfied with enough	38	29	85	65	8	6
Chinese discriminated against	53	40	77	59	1	1
Feel inadequate	43	33	86	66	2	1
<u>Females</u>						
Can succeed if try	98	71	40	29	0	0
Better off in U.S.	56	41	82	59	0	0
Satisfied with enough	38	28	85	62	15	11
Chinese discriminated against	61	44	76	55	1	1
Feel inadequate	53	38	84	61	1	1

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978

felt that they were not discriminated against, although these data may be misleading. As pointed out previously, the subjects of this study were in schools with large numbers of Chinese, and in some instances they were numerically the majority group. Their numbers gave them a sense of security. Feelings of inadequacy were not pronounced; only about a third felt inadequate. On future outlook, 9 percent said it was very bad, 39 percent said it was fair, 32 percent good, 10 percent very good, and 5 percent said it was excellent. Although the curve leans toward the pessimistic side, it is a fairly normal distribution.

Values

How much of the Chinese values did the immigrant retain, and how much of the American values had they already absorbed? (See Table 14-5.) Filial piety is still strong, but duty to the family has already been diluted. The idea that boys are better than girls is completely debunked by the girls and even to a large extent by the boys. The majority of both males and females wanted to keep the Chinese customs. The most noticeable feature is the heavy emphasis on getting a good education, the belief in hard work and that work comes before play. These are the cultural strengths that will stand the immigrants in good stead. Strengthened by the belief that they can succeed if they try, the immigrants come with firm convictions to support them in their struggle.

TABLE 14-5
VALUES BELIEVED IN BY
CHINESE IMMIGRANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Values	Males			Females			Total		
	Yes	No	NR	Yes	No	NR	Yes	No	NR
Filial piety	74	49	8	81	45	12	155	94	20
Duty to family	48	66	17	61	61	16	109	127	33
Male priority	55	68	8	13	116	9	68	184	17
Keep Chinese customs	65	47	19	90	35	13	155	82	32
Prize education	102	21	8	110	16	12	212	37	20
Hard work	104	19	8	118	10	10	222	29	18
Don't get involved	57	59	15	66	55	17	123	114	32
Work before play	90	33	8	101	29	8	191	62	16
Parents non-interference	39	76	16	39	88	11	78	164	27
Learn American ways	70	45	16	63	59	16	133	104	32
Money is important	73	47	11	70	56	12	143	103	23

SOURCE: Student Survey Questionnaire, 1978.

The belief that one should not get involved is about fifty-fifty, with more leaning to becoming involved in organizations, community affairs, political issues. This is a departure from the Chinese tradition. More students still conceded that parents have a right to interfere in their children's lives, a strong retention of the Chinese ways. There is an ambivalence in the responses to keeping the Chinese customs and learning American ways. The students want to do both in about the same proportion although the girls are more pro-Chinese. There is no conflict in many areas, among them speaking Chinese and English, eating with fork or chopsticks, observing Chinese manners at home and American manners outside. One can do either depending upon the circumstances, but some very real conflicts, such as those used as examples in Chapter IX do exist.

Is money important? A yes answer would indicate acceptance of material values, but in comparison to hard work and education, money placed much lower in value. It is when these values are reversed, as in the case of the gang members, that deviant behavior results.

Acceptance of Fate

In working with Vietnamese refugees, psychologist Dr. Walter Slote marveled at the equanimity with which some of them overcame their trauma in flight from the country in 1975. In interviewing them, he learned that some of their resilience came from the acceptance of fate inherent in their belief that some events are beyond individual control, and one should just make the best of it. Among their beliefs is one that is accepted also by some in Western culture--astrology. If one's fortunes and misfortunes are preordained by the positions of the stars and planets, then one accepts the situation until the celestial bodies re-align themselves.

A second belief is geomancy, the notion that the surroundings, the ancestral graves, the placement of furniture, the direction of the house must be in alignment with nature and the natural spirits. If things are out of line, fate takes a downward turn. If things are in harmony, all goes well.

A third belief is called fook dock, or benevolence from virtue. One accumulates credits or demerits in heaven five generations before and five generations after one's lifetime. A misdeed or unethical conduct by one's great-great-grandfather may be settled against the great-great-grandson five generations later. Spiritual control is

exerted against an individual who is tempted to do wrong. He is restrained by the thought that he is responsible not only for his own fortunes, but that he may affect the destiny of his progeny for five generations to come. Dr. Slote found that many refugees shrugged off their ordeal by saying, "One of my ancestors was at fault for my plight now." In this way, the responsibility is displaced, and even one's own folly may be blamed on someone else; thus is the burden of guilt shared.

A fourth belief, that embodied by Taoism, advocates acceptance of fate and preaches non-action, for life is an endless cycle and everything will come round again.

Bend and you will be whole
Curl and you will be straight
Keep empty and you will be filled
Grow old and you will be renewed.

Bad fortune is what good fortune leans on
Good fortune is what bad fortune hides in

-- Book of Tao

A fifth belief comes out of Christianity. A very comforting statement, generally uttered in adversity, is "It is God's Will." Why am I in this predicament? Why did So-and-So die? Why did this happen to me? If we believe that God in His infinite wisdom has decreed these things to happen, then it must be for the best. A strong spiritual faith is a great reservoir of strength, and the Vietnamese tap into all these sources. The first four beliefs are also part of the Chinese cultural heritage, for many of the Vietnamese refugees are Chinese ethnics. These inner defenses help them surmount difficulties that overwhelm individuals trying to cope by themselves.

Survival First

Aside from the positive forces mentioned above, which may provide strength and hope to the immigrant families during the difficult period of transplantation and adjustment and may soften the psychological blows, there are a number of negative factors that may mask maladjustment. One factor is that neither parents nor children have very much time to dwell upon their emotional problems. The parents are so exhausted from their work and struggle to establish themselves economically, they simply do not have the energy to think about the more meaningful purposes of human existence. It is survival first. Until they are more secure in the most basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter, they cannot afford to think of whether they are content with their lot.

The children's days are also packed: with school, chores, and work. Their first concern is survival in school, and immigrant children must exert extra effort to compensate for the language barrier. Other issues, such as feeling discriminated against, alienated, uncertain about their identities, and even rejected, must be relegated to a later period when the basics have been satisfied.

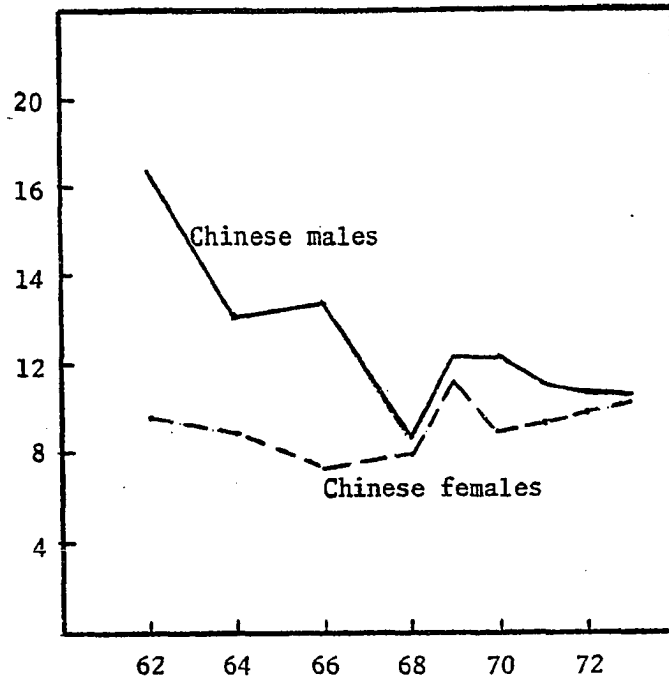
"Face" and Endurance

Evidence of maladjustment may be hidden. "Face" is a very strong cultural trait among the Chinese; they usually try to hide their problems and not admit that anything is wrong. To say that one cannot handle one's children, that one cannot get along with one's spouse, that one feels inadequate is shameful indeed. Add to this the fact that endurance and tolerance are highly valued Chinese character traits. Even if a person is experiencing difficulties, the more tolerance and

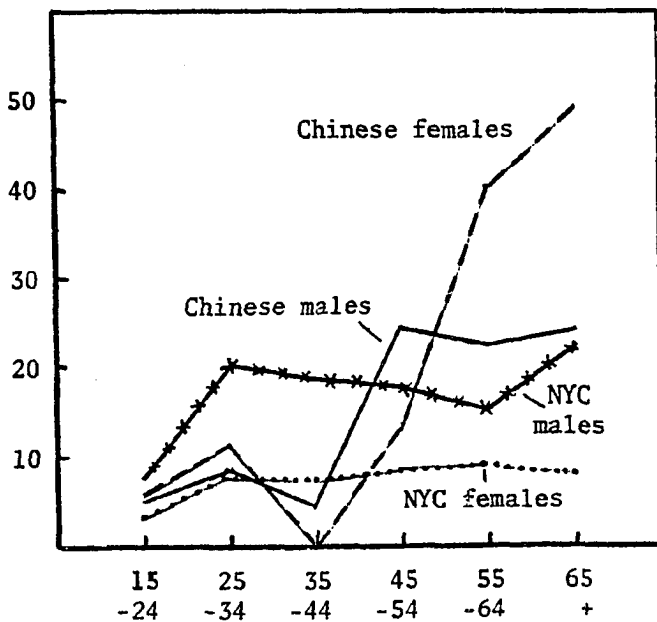
GRAPH H

SUICIDE RATES PER 100,000
FOR CHINESE IN THE
UNITED STATES, 1962-1973

Source: Tom Tam,
"Chinese Suicides",
M.A. Columbia University,
1978



GRAPH I



AGE SPECIFIC SUICIDE RATES
PER 100,000 POPULATION
CHINESE AND NEW YORK CITY,
1974-1976

Source: Tom Tam, *Op. cit.*

endurance exhibited, the more character the person shows, so he wears his cross like an achievement badge. To such a person, obstacles are but challenges to be overcome. The smooth path is for weaklings; the rocky road builds character. As long as there is hope, the hardships of the present can be borne stoically.

Psychological Breakdown

The ultimate in psychological breakdown would be reflected in commitment to mental institutions or in suicides. We attempted to find statistics on the former, but were unsuccessful. Figures for suicides for the Chinese in New York were available, however, from a study by Tom Tam.⁶ The data are presented in Graphs H and I. Graph H gives a historical perspective and shows how the male suicide rate declined drastically when passage of the 1965 Immigration Act permitted the reunification of families. The drop in suicide rate is even more dramatic from 1950, when the male suicide rate was around 30 per 100,000. The present rate of 10 per 100,000 is comparable to the average U.S. suicide rate.

Graph I breaks the suicide rate down by age groups for the United States and New York City by sex, and it is immediately apparent that the rate for Chinese young people is very low. However, the cases in New York that have come to my attention over the past several years all involved teenagers or college students. The most shocking case occurred on November 10, 1978. Two sisters, age seventeen and thirteen, jumped off the roof of their house because their father had forbidden the

6. Tom Tam, "Chinese Suicide: An Investigation of the Problem in the Various Chinese Communities with Particular Emphasis on New York City," Master's Thesis, Columbia University School of Public Health (1978) p. 6.

older sister to date a Puerto Rican boy. The sisters were immigrants.⁷

Three other cases involved children of my acquaintances. All of them were outstanding students from middle-class families. All three felt that they had not performed up to the expectations of their parents, and all three ended their lives in dramatic fashion. One jumped in front of a train, one drank lye, and the third jumped from a twentieth floor window. These three were second-generation American-born Chinese, not immigrants.

In looking at the methods and reasons for suicide among these five cases of teenage and college-age Chinese youths, Alfred Adler's theory that suicide is veiled aggression comes close to explaining them.⁸ These offspring were lashing out at their parents' cultural strictures. They wanted to hurt others by hurting themselves, and they committed suicide in the most melodramatic manner possible. Tam found that in traditional Chinese societies, the suicide rate for the young was high and for the elderly low. The opposite was true in industrialized Western societies. However, the National Center for Health Statistics reported that suicide among the young (age 15 to 24) in the United States has risen dramatically from 5 per 100,000 during the 1940s and 1950s to 12.7 in 1978.⁹

Tam's study provided information up to 1976. Table 14-6 gives more up-to-date figures for Chinese suicides in New York City.

7. New York Times (November 12, 1978) p. 45.

8. Op. cit. Tam. pp. 28-29

9. Joseph Williams. "Young Suicides--Tragic and on the Increase" New York Times (April 25, 1982) p. 10E.

Table 14-6
SUICIDES FOR CHINESE IN NEW YORK CITY, 1976-1980

Age Group	1976		1977		1978		1979		1980	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
15-24	2	1	1	0	1	4	0	0	1	0
25-34	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	0	2	0
35-44	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	1	1
45-54	1	2	1	3	0	0	) 1	2	0	3
55-64	0	1	1	3	0	0	) 1	0	1	0
65-74	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0
75-84	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
85 plus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Total	4	4	5	6	4	6	6	7	9	6

Note 1: Suicides are not always reported as such. Incidences may be higher than figures indicate.

Note 2: The numbers rather than the rates are given because the base population of Chinese in New York was not available.

Source: New York City, Department of Vital Statistics

The Ones on Their Own

In all six schools used in our study, the students had the advantage of not being alone in their transition. The schools were chosen because they had large Chinese enrollments. On the one hand, this facilitated our research; on the other hand, we were studying students in a setting not totally foreign. There was enough of the familiar to ease the adjustment, and there were enough immigrants in the same predicament to lend some comfort. It is easier to accept a bad situation when all are in the same boat. Besides, in these schools, the teachers and staff were understanding and supportive. There was recognition of their language difficulty, as evidenced by the offerings of

English as a second language, orientation classes, and even bilingual classes.

But what of the dispersed immigrant children who do not have such help? We did not interview or observe any of these, and our study may be faulted for this reason, but the logistics would have been monumental. Some schools may have had one or a few immigrant students. In such instances, the school authorities would not allow any records or personal data to be revealed, so that any data would be very difficult to obtain. Nevertheless, it would have been better if there were some measure of comparison between the children who had supportive props and those who were thrown on their own.

For these children we can imagine that the primary problems, besides that of language, would be feelings of loneliness and isolation. Another would be dealing with name-calling and racism. In the Chinatown and satellite Chinatown schools, there were enough Chinese in numbers to ward off racial slurs, but the dispersed may be the one or the few in an entire school. The racial minority experience is another dimension that is new and puzzling to the newcomer. Which group should he align himself with? Which groups will accept him in their games, in their cliques, or in their circle of friends? The lone immigrant student is the odd man out, and if the child cannot make some attachment, he will feel rejected.

In sum, the psychological adjustment of the Chinese immigrant children and youth is affected by their strong desire to come to this country, the opportunity to get an education here, their willingness to work hard, the realistic outlook they have on life, the cultural tradi-

tions from the Orient that sustain them, the fact that the immigrants must concern themselves with satisfaction of the basic needs first, and the belief that character is strengthened by tolerance and endurance.

In time, the above factors may be modified by the process of Americanization. The euphoria of coming to this country will wear off. Inroads will be made into the value placed upon tolerance, endurance, hard work, and acceptance of fate. The economic position of these immigrants will improve. Their reference group will shift from their own ethnic group to white Americans,¹⁰ so their standards will change. A sense of satisfaction will then depend upon the extent and degree to which these young immigrants attain their aspirations.

Summary

Adjustment of Chinese immigrant children and youth was examined within the social context and the psychological context. In other words, do these children and youths fit into society's expectations, and do they feel comfortable within themselves? The children do measure up to teacher expectations, as evidenced by their school records, their low truancy and dropout rates, their good manners, their attendance rates, and the numbers who are college bound. They do measure up to their parents' expectations by studying hard, by working and contributing to the family income, and by maintaining close ties with their parents in spite of parental absence.

Maladaptive behavior has been manifest in the formation of gangs

10. Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim. "Korean Immigrants in America: A Structural Analysis of Ethnic Confinement and Adhesive Adaptation" (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1980) Chapter IX.

and in their vicious activities. The apparent contradiction between the large number who do well and the small number who are deviants can be explained by the fact that those who can keep up with their school work remain in school. The gang members are not in school. Data on female deviants were hard to come by, so it seemed that their numbers were few.

Psychological normality is measured by different yardsticks in the American and Chinese cultures. There is a considerable divergence in standards of what is desirable and acceptable behavior. For example, for adults to be extremely close to one's parents is interpreted as immaturity in Western eyes but is considered a cardinal virtue in Chinese eyes.

The three ranking areas of difficulty most commonly felt by the high school immigrants were language, worries about college and the future, and fear of the gangs and being picked on.

Factors that may have softened the shock of immigration are: the immigrants wanted to come to the United States, they feel that they can succeed if they try, they are willing to work hard, they prize education, and their beliefs predispose them toward acceptance of fate.

Two negative factors that may mask psychological maladjustment are: the immigrant families are too busy trying to meet the basic needs of survival to think about anything else, and they may be masking their problems by denying that they even exist. Psychological breakdowns were not mirrored in the number of suicides reported for young Chinese, and data were unavailable on mental health institution admissions.

CHAPTER XV: CONCLUSION

One of the main purposes of this study was to generate as much information as possible about the Chinese in New York City. We saw in Chapter II that the literature--even that pertaining to the Chinese in the country as a whole--is scanty and still evolving. Specific literature dealing with Chinese immigrant children is almost non-existent. More scholars and authors are writing on the Chinese at present, but the tendency for them is to dwell in the historical past and to base their assumptions on past experiences. Even the protest literature which proliferated during the 1970s was based upon the highly discriminatory treatment meted out to the Chinese in years gone by. Our history is part of our heritage, but urgently needed is information to deal with the rapidly growing Chinese population fed by the immigration stream from the Far East. The Chinese community is changing at a very rapid pace, and conditions true today may be outdated tomorrow. Yet, few writers are dealing with the contemporary scene. They prefer doing their research through secondary sources based upon outdated information, for fieldwork is exhausting, exasperating, time-consuming, and highly risky when there is little precedent and little corroborating material to go by. My contribution to the literature therefore is to do the primary research.

Fact-finding then becomes an end in itself, and accurate reporting

of what is happening among Chinese immigrant children and their families and their communities is essential and basic to further research and theorizing. It is hoped that this study has contributed to the knowledge about the Chinese and has shed some light on the actual experiences that Chinese immigrant children undergo in their adjustment process. Toward these ends and within this study, I have:

1. Provided vital background information about the Chinese population; the rate of immigration; the historical forces that brought about the Chinese immigration pattern; population distribution patterns; the internal forces, structure, and institutions of the Chinese communities in New York City; a description of the school environment and curricula with which the immigrant must deal; and a glimpse into their home lives.

2. Updated the statistics on the numbers of Chinese immigrants, especially the youthful population entering the United States, and I have shown how population figures may be aggregated and projected for intercensal years by using school enrollment figures.

3. Uncovered sources of statistical data pertaining to the Chinese of which many people were unaware. Examples of these are crime statistics, birth and suicide rates, school enrollment figures.

4. Painted a word picture to describe the kind of situation Chinese immigrant children and adolescents encounter when they arrive in this country. By knowing what to expect, it is hoped the children, their families, and people dealing with the newcomers can better anticipate problems that will arise.

5. Brought out those aspects of Chinese culture that are transferable to an American setting and those that have stood the immigrant

children in good stead. Examples of these are the high value placed upon education, the belief that hard work will bring rewards, the respect for authority, and a positive attitude that America is still the land of opportunity. Incidences of maladjustment or deviant behavior invariably confirm a departure from the above Chinese cultural values.

6. Pointed out specific areas where experiences and cultural background are not transferable and must be learned anew. First and foremost among these is the learning of the English language; until some competency is gained, the immigrant will feel impotent. Conflict in cultural values and customs poses equally mystifying problems to the new arrival and may be a source of confusion and embarrassment. Learning to deal with different ethnic groups is puzzling to the Chinese person who has seen none other than Chinese faces, so he tends to stick with his own people.

7. Related the attempts, so far, on the part of the schools and the community to deal with the huge influx of immigrant children and made critical comments on the effectiveness of such programs as English-as-a Second Language, bilingual education, and after-school centers. Noted that a few isolated social service agencies have been funded by the local and federal governments to deal with the special problems of the newcomers, but the need greatly exceeds the availability of service.

8. Shown how interpersonal relationships and roles have been altered within the family to meet the changing needs of the new society. Examples of these are the reliance upon peer-group support rather than parental guidance and the reversal of roles between husband and wife or parent and child. The Chinese family, after it arrives in the United

States, is invariably altered by the economic and social exigencies of the American way of life. Employment opportunities for the fathers are very limited and mothers must work. As a result, parental absence is a common feature of the new life. The children shoulder heavier burdens as well, so there is little time for recreation or socializing.

9. Presented a behind-the-scenes account of how gangs recruit and maintain their numbers and how they have terrorized the Chinese community.

10. Indicated the extent and areas of social and psychological breakdowns and conversely, the strengths and inner resources within these young immigrants to deal successfully with their transplantation..

Role of the Social Institutions

The structural framework of our study was to examine three major social institutions--the community, school, and family--to see what their roles are in relation to helping Chinese immigrant children cope and adapt to a new life in a new homeland. Without question, the transition from a Chinese setting to an American one is a stressful experience. Generally, too much emphasis is placed upon the individual's coping ability to deal with the external demands of the environment, and not enough attention is paid to the influence of social structural variables on personal and social adaptation. In fact, as David Mechanic said, "Major stresses of life are not amenable to individual solutions but depend on highly organized cooperative efforts that transcend those of any individual man, no matter how well developed his personal resources."¹

1. "Social Structure and Personal Adaption: Some Neglected Dimensions," Coping and Adaption, G.V. Coelho et al. (eds.) (New York: Basic Books, 1974) p. 34.

David Mechanic defined institutions as the collective and accumulated experiences that have become a fixed part of the culture of a society to deal effectively with life's problems. "Group organization and cooperation allow for the development of mastery through specialization of functions, pooling of resources and information, developing reciprocal help-giving relationships and the like. . . .The effectiveness of individuals in many spheres of action is dependent almost exclusively on the maintenance of viable forms of organization and cooperation that allow important tasks to be mastered."²

The Community. The very existence of a Chinatown in New York City into which the newly arrived immigrant family can gravitate already serves to alleviate a large number of potential problems. The fears, the anxiety, the insecurity are mitigated to a considerable degree when one can go into a cultural milieu not too much different from that which one left behind. The community performs a vital function as a cultural decompression chamber, and in many ways, it has met important needs of its increasing population.

For one, its boundaries expanded to accommodate the increasing numbers who want to live there, but it is already overcrowded, and it has already run out of space. Consequently, satellite Chinatowns have come into being, testifying to the need of the new immigrants to band together and live in proximity with one another. So far, the tourist industry, the food industry, the garment industry, and the retail shops have been able to provide employment to the newcomers. The community is a social

2. Ibid. p. 35

and recreational center. Social service agencies have sprung up to meet the needs of the residents, and in many ways, they have supplanted the former mutual aid organizations based upon kinship and place of origin.

Unfortunately, the buildings and physical surroundings of Chinatown are ancient, dilapidated, and overcrowded, and vested interests are resistant to change and cannot offer enlightened leadership. Conditions are changing so rapidly that it is difficult to keep up with the pace. Nevertheless, the community has served to mitigate many of the immigrant's problems.

The School. Three chapters of this study were devoted to the role of the school because most of the immigrant children's waking hours are spent within the walls of this institution. The school's primary function is to teach and prepare the children for their future role in society, but with immigrant children, there are the added hurdles of the language barrier and cultural differences. Only within recent years have the United States educational system recognized the special needs of limited English-speaking children, so that special programs like English-as-a Second Language or bilingual education classes have been instituted in the Chinatown schools just since 1975.

The counseling programs set up under the bilingual education programs have been extremely helpful to the Chinese immigrant children in helping them deal with their personal problems. The teachers have been especially supportive of the Chinese children because they are studious, respectful and obedient. In as much as education is highly valued in Chinese culture, the students' good academic performance may be a continuity of the value goal. School performance was measured by

academic record, conduct, attendance, and dropout rate. Marks for these concrete indicators were high and can be taken as clues to a healthy and positive adjustment.

The schools not only perform their functions of educating and socializing the children, but in many instances, they are assuming the role of surrogate parents as well. Oftentimes, two out of the three meals each day are taken in the schools, and after-school centers care for the children after regular school hours. In essence, the schools too, play an important role--if not the most important role--in providing the immigrant children with institutionalized ways to deal with their new experiences. The schools have also devised new ways and they have expanded their services to better serve the students.

The Family. Our research reveals that the immigrant family has undergone the most drastic changes as a result of being transplanted. The status and roles of the family members are changed or reversed. Parental absence is a pervasive phenomenon. The birth rate has declined noticeably. This smaller social unit has not adapted as well as the larger ones. Some of its functions, such as providing supervision, meals, and medical attention, have been relegated to the school. As a result, peer groups have increased in importance, and peer-group influence can be for the better or worse.

Gangs As Indicator of Maladjustment

Gang involvement is the most glaring concrete indicator of maladjustment. Fortunately the numbers involved are small--at the most about 300 out of a total Asian student enrollment of over twenty-five thousand

in New York City. However, this small number has created havoc out of proportion to their numbers.

The theory of differential association for criminal behavior has applicability here. The theory postulates that criminal behavior is learned, and a person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation. The objective situation is important to the occurrence of crime largely due to the extent that it provides an opportunity for a person to act. (See Chapter XI.)

Nowhere was this more evident than when gang violence declined as soon as Atlantic City offered legalized gambling not too far away. When business in the gambling houses fell off, money for support of the gangs dried up, and gang activity dropped as well.

Cooley's theory of social disorganization operates with respect to gang involvement also, but not totally. Disorganization may come about as a result of conflict and confusion about which norms, rules, and values to follow, but it seems that the moral standards of the Chinese immigrant teenagers remain high. Those who live outside of Chinatown might in fact experience more social disorganization, but few exhibit anti-social behavior. It is only when the opportunity presents itself for criminal behavior in Chinatown are disorganized and alienated youths sucked into the gangs.

Adjustment

As stated in Chapter XIV, the yardsticks applied to the determination of whether the immigrant children and youth's transition is smooth

or rocky have been the concrete manifestations of school performance, social behavior, and gang involvement, the rationale being that action and results speak for themselves. Subjective opinions were also elicited from the high school students through a survey questionnaire, which probed into the students' opinions and attitudes. A number of sociological theories may well explain the satisfactory adjustment that the Chinese children have made in their new homeland. The first is the reference group theory, which postulates that "group situations generate differential effects of significant consequence. Group interaction is seen as the major determinant in attitude formation and attitude change, and other phenomena of vital consequence to the individual."³

Where have the Chinese children come from? Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam. What were the conditions there? They lived under either totalitarian forms of government or colonial governments. They may have lived through the horrors of the Vietnamese War, the Chinese civil war, or the Cultural Revolution. Material goods and food were scarce. Their economic future was limited as was their educational opportunities. Emigration to the United States must have been a much sought-after goal. Looking backward to their mother country as a reference point, they cannot help but compare the two and feel that coming to the United States was a godsend.

However, if upon their arrival they were incarcerated in a place like Ellis Island or Angel Island to be suspected or questioned about their right to enter the country; if the laws of the country restricted

3. Muzafer Sherif. "Reference Groups in Human Relations," Sociological Theory, 3rd ed. Lewis A. Coser and Bernard Rosenberg (eds.) (New York: Macmillan Co., 1969) p. 284.

them or made them feel like criminals for being here; if upon landing, they were met with hostility, prejudice and discrimination; if they knew that they would be relegated to permanent inferior status and a limited economic future; if they were to be separated from their families and loved ones without hope of reunification in this country, then one set of intolerable conditions would be substituted for another, and the immigration experience could not help but be a negative one, as it was in the past.

On the other hand, if the immigration laws made it easier to obtain visas; if being Chinese was no longer a reason for being excluded; if the Civil Rights laws had improved the position of minorities, and prejudice and discrimination were no longer blatantly practiced; if the country offered peace and stability, more personal and political freedom, better educational opportunities, hope for the future, more material goods and comforts, and even heighten appreciation of ethnic differences, then the trauma of pulling up roots will be mitigated by the more positive reception in the host country.

The above conditions make reference to the theory of symbolic interactionism. The immigrant defines the situation and indicates to himself that the social climate is receptive and an improvement over what he left behind. It follows that his reaction will be more positive and that he will try hard to grasp the opportunities suddenly made available to him. Having been deprived, he is more appreciative of the opportunities presented. That is why newly arrived immigrants work harder, and the children study more diligently.

The theory of relative deprivation also has applicability here, but in reverse.. Although the residents of Chinatown--by American standards--are living in dilapidated slums, lack recreational facilities, work long hard hours, and earn little, still, in comparison with the conditions they left behind, they feel that their arrival in this country, in and of itself, is the attainment of a cherished goal. They have hopes for the future, and a substantial majority of the high school students believe that they can succeed if they try.

Integration Yes, Assimilation No

In this study, no attempt was made to deal with any of the theories of assimilation such as Milton Gordon's seven-stage assimilation process,⁴ because they are not applicable yet. Newly arrived immigrant children are only in the initial stages of adapting and trying to cope. They still identify completely with their own ethnic group; the umbilical cords are still strongly attached. They are trying to bridge the cultural gap, but this cannot even be described as the first stage of acculturation. Integration may be the more appropriate term to use. As defined by Sommerlad and Berry, "Integration implies interaction between minority and host society resulting in change in cultural amalgam without loss of cultural identity. Assimilation is a unilateral process. Integration is a mutual process. Once an individual identifies with the host society he tends toward assimilation. If he identifies with his own ethnic group, integration results."⁵

4. Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

5. E. Sommerlad and J.W. Berry, "The Role of Ethnic Identification in Distinguishing Between Attitudes Toward Assimilation and Integration of a Minority Racial Group," Human Relations, vol. 23 (1970) pp. 23-29.

Corroboration of Data

To persistent believers in the pathology of the immigrant experience, my data may appear overly sanguine, but a number of other reports have confirmed the high academic attainment of Asian or Oriental children, of which a large proportion are Chinese. Dr. Jayjia Hsia, Assistant Vice President of the Educational Testing Service of Princeton wrote: "We have a large battery of tests on more than 1,000 Berkeley school children who are Japanese and Chinese, about half of whom are fairly recent immigrants from Hong Kong or Taiwan. I find that all of these groups are well above the California norms on the nonverbal tests, and the American born are above the norms, even on the verbal tests and on tests of scholastic achievement."⁶

"Feinberg (1981) reported unexpected numbers of Asian Americans who were valedictorians or recipients of top academic honors in the greater Washington, D.C. area high schools. . . . In schools which served predominantly white middle class suburban students, as well as inner city schools with most disadvantaged pupils, Asian Americans of Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese and Chinese origin carried off top awards in June, 1981."⁷

Resiliency of Children Under Stress

For more than thirty years, Dr. Robert Coles, Pulitzer Prize winner, pediatrician and psychiatrist, has been studying children under stressful

6. Jayjia Hsia, "Cognitive Assessment of Asian Americans," Comparative Research in Bilingual Education: Asian American Perspective Chu-Chang, M. (ed.) (New York: Teachers College Press, in press).
7. L. Feinberg, Asian Students Excelling in Area, U.S. Schools," Washington Post (July 21, 1981) quoted from J. Hsia, Op. cit. See also Robert Lindsey, "The New Asian Immigrants," New York Times Magazine (May 9, 1982).

conditions to see how they cope. He is the author of more than thirty books; his best known one is Children of Crisis in which he wrote about how children in the South dealt with the stressful experience of being vanguards in the desegregation of public schools. Dr. Coles expected emotional scars and psychological damage to come from their experience. On the contrary, Dr. Coles concluded that there is extraordinary resilience, courage, and stamina in children. He also maintains that children often emerge from their painful ordeal much stronger in mind and in character. Were these children exceptional? "No," said Dr. Coles. "They were ordinary children caught up in extraordinary situations."

The subjects of our study--Chinese immigrant children, teenagers, and youth in New York City's Chinatowns--have also exhibited extraordinary resilience, courage and stamina in their transplantation from Chinese soil to American soil. But they were fortunate in that they were aided and supported in their coping process by social institutions that offered them collective solutions to the new challenges facing them.

The Future

The 1980 census counted over 806,000 persons of Chinese ancestry in the United States. This phenomenal increase from 435,000 a decade ago resulted mostly from immigration, so that the immigrant experience is the most pervasive influence upon the Chinese population in the United States, and the immigrant experience will continue to exert an inordinate impact upon the group. However, Chinese immigration to the United States hinges upon a number of macro developments beyond the control of the Chinese

themselves, and these developments will underpin how the Chinese fare under and react to these forces.

The first is adverse U.S. economic conditions, and these will be reflected in two ways against the Chinese. One will be through restriction of the immigration laws, and the other will be a change in the relatively tolerant attitude toward foreigners and minorities that prevailed during the Sixties and Seventies. Already the Immigration Reform Act before Congress in the 1982 session reflects a strong current toward curtailment, in particular, of Asian immigration. The proposed elimination of the fifth preference (for brothers and sisters), the modification of the second preference (for offspring of permanent residents), and the 20,000 cap on the quota for all countries could easily cut Chinese immigration by one-half, if not more (see Table 4-2). These proposed changes would also alter the traditional American policy of priority for family members in favor of the skilled, educated, and monied. As of this writing, the bill has not become law yet. Should Chinese immigration be curtailed, the decrease in the rate of influx will have a strong ripple effect upon the lives of the entire Chinese community in the United States.

If the immigration networking stream ebbs, we may begin to see more growth in the satellite Chinatowns and less explosive growth of New York's Chinatown proper. Immigrant Chinese student enrollment will decline, which will result in less demand for transitional programs such as bilingual education, English as a Second Language, and guidance counseling. Those who do arrive will have to fall back upon the "sink or swim" approach, which will make their adjustment process more difficult. The communities will be able to take a breather from the dizzying rate of increase and to

examine their problems and come up with some answers. Without the intense competition from a continuing stream of incoming immigrants for jobs and economic survival, wage rates may improve slightly for those already here. These are but a few examples of the ripple effect that can come about with any restriction of Chinese immigration.

Should economic conditions worsen further, racism and hostility may again rear their ugly heads if immigrants and minorities are viewed as competitors for scarce jobs and resources. This time, the hostility may emanate from Blacks, who have been disproportionately affected by high unemployment and who feel that they are Americans whereas the immigrants are foreigners.

As conjectured earlier, the adjustment process of the Chinese immigrant children in New York City was facilitated and smoothed by the improved social climate of the Sixties and Seventies, that resulted in generous funding for programs for ethnic minorities. The Eighties are witnessing a drastic reversal of this policy. For example, federal support for bilingual education stood at \$161 million in 1981. It diminished to \$138 million in 1982, and the Reagan administration is pressing hard to reduce it to \$95 million for 1983.⁸ Commitment to affirmative action is all but nil, and minority issues have been relegated to the farthest recesses of national concerns. Since the social climate is worsening for ethnic minorities, their well-being cannot help but suffer.

8. Ernest Holsendolph, "Bilingual Funds: A Problem in Any Language," New York Sunday Times, Fall Survey of Education, Section 12 (November 14, 1982) pp. 42-48.

The second macro development is the political uncertainties surrounding Hong Kong and Taiwan. Fears that the colony of Hong Kong will be reclaimed by China from Great Britain in 1997 when the lease on the New Territories expires has caused Hong Kong real estate and business to nose-dive and the residents to think of emigration. As for Taiwan, the threat is ever-present that Mainland China will reclaim that island as well, also setting up strong push factors toward emigration. The desire of many is to come to the United States. If the proposed restrictions under the Immigration Reform Act do not materialize, the forces operating toward migration from both islands will be strong, thus sustaining the continued heavy influx into the United States.

The third development pertains to the Vietnamese refugees, many who are of Chinese ethnic origin. Those with close affinity to their Chinese heritage will identify more with the Chinese community when they arrive in the United States. They add a new dimension to the Chinese American scene. They are especially noteworthy because their numbers are considerable. In 1980, the census counted 262,000 Vietnamese. By 1982, this number had almost doubled because the refugee quota is more liberal than the immigration quota. How many of these are ethnic Chinese is not certain, but those who came in 1979 as "boat people" were predominantly Chinese. They are categorized as Vietnamese, but they generally gravitate toward the Chinese communities bringing with them their unique experiences and cultural dissimilarities. By sheer force of numbers, they cannot help but affect the make-up, the outlook, and the direction of the more traditional Chinese American communities.

A fourth development is the beginning influx of immigrants from the People's Republic of China. Formerly, when China's borders were closed to the West, Chinese immigrants to the United States came primarily from Hong Kong and secondarily from Taiwan. Both these islands are highly urbanized, industrialized, and Westernized. The residents have been exposed to the English language, to Western technology, and to American culture through publications and films. Therefore, the transition from Hong Kong to New York is not as great as for those who come from Mainland China. The latter have been highly insulated from Western culture. They have been imbued with an entirely different political ideology from the American one. The gap, therefore, is much greater for the Mainland immigrants to bridge, and the transition process will not be as simple as that reported about the children in this study. The educational background and standards of the Mainlanders are lower owing to the excesses during the Cultural Revolution. They were taught to work for the common good rather than for individual advancement. They have been severely deprived in the way of material goods. Many were victims of abuse and persecution because of their ties to relatives in the United States. The trauma of these experiences may affect their coping abilities and stand in the way of their rapid adjustment.

Already the schools are discovering that immigrant children from the People's Republic of China are quite different from those who came before. The newest waves are not supplanting the traditional immigrants from more urbanized and more homogeneous cultural backgrounds, but they are injecting into the Chinese American communities greater diversity, hence greater complexity.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DATA

My interest in the Chinese in the United States has been a life-long one that goes back many decades. I was born in this country and grew up in Washington, D.C. I have lived and studied in China as a little girl, so I am familiar with the land of my ancestors. I speak three Chinese dialects, Toishan, Cantonese, and Mandarin. This language facility is a tremendous asset when it comes to doing research in the community.

My B.A. in economics was obtained from the University of Illinois. My masters degree was in Library Science from Queens College of the City University of New York, and my doctorate is in sociology from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Presently I am an associate professor in the Department of Asian Studies at City College of New York, where I initiated and where I have taught courses in Asian American Studies since 1970. I have written extensively about the Chinese in the United States. A list of my publications is found on the following page.

Besides theory and book learning, I have had plenty of practical experience in child-rearing, having raised four children and four step-children. My husband Charles Chia Mou Chung worked for the United Nations for more than thirty years. During this time, we had many opportunities to travel, and travel is an education in itself. So I bring to the writing of this dissertation a very broad and varied background.

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