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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Wei Wei Lou for the Master of Arts in
Sociology presented January 26, 1988.

Title: Occupational Patterns of Three Generations of Taishan Chinese:
A Reconsideration of the Middleman Minority Theory.

APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

Grant M. Farr, Chairman

Lee J. Haggerty

Leonard D. Cain

Charles M. White

Middleman minority theory explains why certain minorities in America have made impressive socioeconomic achievements. It is found that their occupational patterns play an important role in their socioeconomic success. Middleman minorities usually concentrate in certain occupations and dominate these occupations. The term "middleman" indicates that such ethnic minorities are functioning as middleman between lower and upper class, customer and producer in the host society.

The three preconditions through which middleman minorities get into these occupations are cultural, contextual and situational variables.

The cultural variables concern mainly the homeland of the minorities, the value system of their native culture, and the economic background of the minorities. The second precondition consists of situational variables such as immigrants' intention to return to their homeland. This intention of being "sojourners" prevents assimilation of the ethnic minorities into the host culture. The hostile attitudes and strong structural discrimination are the contextual variables of the third precondition. Structural discrimination closes many job opportunities of the minorities.

These three preconditions determine whether some ethnic minorities choose, and stay in, certain occupations, namely the middleman minority occupations. The typical middleman minority occupations are self-employed small businesses, with family members as employees working long hours. Such businesses are also characterized by ethnic customers, location in ethnic neighborhoods and ethnic partnership. Their funding is usually from ethnic resources and networks. The conclusion is that ethnic solidarity supports and perpetuates occupational patterns of middleman minorities.

Chinese Americans are one of the typical middleman minorities since the cultural background of their homeland, their immigrant experiences in America and their socioeconomic achievement in recent years fit the middleman minority model.

This thesis shows that "middleman minority" is an occupational

pattern rather than a status. This is because the tendency for middleman minority occupations to occur disappears when the three original preconditions change. In other words, only under the circumstances typical of the three preconditions do ethnic minorities have the tendency to engage in middleman minority occupations. As the situation and context change, and when the younger generations of ethnic minorities no longer have the cultural characteristics, the occupational patterns of younger generations will change.

In such sense, being in middleman minority occupations is a special case of assimilation. It is special, because instead of remaining in the lower strata of stratification, some ethnic minorities become middle class. Through the middleman minority occupations, such ethnic minorities go through a special process of assimilation.

Portland Taishan Chinese are the sample population of this study and they are found to be typical of such middleman minorities. Among the sample population, the fathers' occupation is found to be the typical middleman type, and each succeeding generation is less so. The explanation for the above finding is that the fathers' generation chooses their occupation under the three preconditions, the present generation faces less typical cultural, contextual and situational factors and the children's generation faces none of the three preconditions.

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERNS OF THREE GENERATIONS
OF TAISHAN CHINESE: A RECONSIDERATION OF MIDDLEMAN
MINORITY THEORY

by

WEI WEI LOU

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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THIS STUDY IS DEDICATED TO THE OVERSEAS CHINESE

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Chinese Americans are considered to be a typical middleman minority in the United States of America (Bonacich & Modell, 1980; Loewen, 1971; Light, 1972 ; Turner & Bonacich, 1980), because they have been through a development from early sojourners to today's middleman minority citizens. As previous studies show, Chinese-Americans have steadily improved their socioeconomic achievement since their early settlement in America. Similarly, their educational attainment also shows an increase during recent years.

The economic situation of an ethnic group is a major criterion to determine whether it can be considered as a special group of minority, and the educational attainment is often a related criterion which supports the former. Although statistics cannot be the only measurement for socioeconomic conditions of any particular group, there is evidence that during the past decades the Chinese Americans have made impressive socioeconomic achievements. These improvements have distinguished them from other ethnic minorities, i.e., the Blacks or American Indians, who are still at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder of American society.

Although not the main thrust of this discussion, there is some

doubt in making comparisons of the Chinese Americans, Black Americans, and American Indians, since the latter two have been through extraordinary, long term discrimination that other ethnic groups have not experienced. My main point here is to emphasize different factors such as environment (both historical and contemporary) and cultural traits that have influence upon the ethnic minorities in regard to assimilation. Although different ethnic minorities, as groups, achieve various standards of living, educational attainment and occupational patterns, the different influence each has over and the impact each receives from the recipient society can be compared when the process of assimilation is studied. In such sense, the comparison should make the research and the study more meaningful, since it leads to insights of minority-majority relationship.

In looking at middleman minority theories within the more generalized theoretical frame of assimilation, one can certainly conclude that the transition from "sojourner" to "middleman" contributes significantly to the process of assimilation. The question is: what is the nature of this transition in regard to assimilation of the Chinese Americans? More specifically, does the process of getting into the middleman minority pattern slow down the process of assimilation? Or does it provide a catapulting for the younger generations of Chinese Americans in the course of assimilation?

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

One of the major theorists of ethnicity and assimilation is Milton M. Gordon. Viewing the ethnic minorities in the large frame of

American society, Gordon identifies several assimilation variables. He concludes that most of the ethnic minorities will, in general, go through a process of assimilation that includes stages of cultural, structural, marital, and identificational assimilation (Gordon, 1964).

From the first stage, the ethnic minority members will have to face "the change of cultural patterns to those of host society" and, through large-scale entrance into host-societal structure, specifically into marriage institutions, they will reach a condition in which value and power conflict is absent between the ethnic minorities and the host society (Gordon, 1964). More frequently, the literature identifies a break point when large numbers of intermarriages occur between ethnic groups. By the time the third or fourth generation is born, the original ethnic identification of the parents may be very weak in the youths' minds, therefore they themselves are not able to answer "who am I" by referring to any one ethnic origin of either parent, a situation faced by many "unhyphenated whites" (Lieberson, 1985).

Gordon's theoretical model has been repeatedly tested, and proved to obtain great empirical value in many studies. The model works particularly well with the experience of the White ethnic minorities. A White girl with her great-grandfather from Germany (his wife from Norway), her grandmother from Russia, and her mother from France, has no problem telling people that she is "White", "from America" and "American". American society is still a class-structured society, yet among certain ethnic groups, namely the Caucasians, the absence of value and power conflict based on custom, life style and language is almost guaranteed.

While Gordon emphasizes the melting-pot nature of American culture,

we still observe American Blacks who have not been "an assimilable element of the society" (Gordon, 1964). He points out that the process can take different lengths of time for different minorities. For example, although one of the first groups to land in America, the Blacks are still at the first stage of assimilation, namely, cultural assimilation or acculturation which may last indefinitely (Gordon, 1964). Two specific reasons, isolated physical position and unusually marked discrimination, are identified by sociologists in explaining why Blacks and the American Indians remain lower class in social stratification in America (Light, 1972; Loewen, 1971).

While Gordon developed a challenging and provocative exposition on human nature, taking into account both biological predispositions and environmental forces with which they interact to create the human being, his analysis remains a general theory of assimilation. With constant flows of immigrants to the United States of America, some new phenomena, which cannot be explained by the general theory of assimilation, have started to attract the attention of social scientists.

In the past two decades, sociologists of ethnicity have noticed that there are growing socioeconomic gaps among ethnic minorities as a new phenomenon (Light, 1972; Loewen, 1971). By comparing "socio-economic gains of Asian Americans, Blacks and Hispanics" from 1960-1976, Hirshman and Wong (1984) observed that "in general, Asian Americans approach socioeconomic parity with Whites" (p.167). Because of socioeconomic parity with Whites, some ethnic minorities are considered as exceptional cases from those discussed in Gordon's theory. These minorities include Japanese (Bonacich & Modell, 1980), Chinese (Light, 1972),

and Koreans (Pyong Gap Min, 1984). As non-White minorities, these minorities work hard and finally "make it". The explanations of their success, besides the environmental factors that provide them some chance, are generally considered to include the following:

1. cultural background which distinguishes them from the dominant values of the recipient society, i.e. work ethic and value system with cultural characteristics;

2. establishment of ethnic organizations, such as rotating-credit associations, family associations and mutual aid networks (Light, 1972); and through these ethnic organizations, an establishment of ethnic solidarity to enable the minority groups to work as a whole which forms the foundations of ethnic enterprise (Bonacich, 1980);

3. high educational attainment for themselves and their children, which offers them more opportunities in the job market (Hirshman & Wong, 1984).

Based on the stories of economic success of these ethnic minorities and other reasons mentioned above, these minorities are considered middleman minorities.

The term "middleman minority" was first mentioned in a theory of middleman minority established by H. M. Blalock, Jr. (1967). After empirical research and studies, middleman minority theory proposes that certain ethnic minorities "are likely to occupy middle rank positions in the stratification system" (Turner & Bonacich, 1980). To explain the "middle rank positions", Bonacich (1973) points out that these ethnic minorities "play the role of middleman between producer and consumer, the employer and employee, owner and renter, elite and masses". They

are not likely to engage in any direct productivity; rather, they make creative enterprise to open up new fields for a living. Their middle rank makes it possible for them to stand independently between upper and lower classes.

Because of their middle rank, middleman minorities are noted for certain occupations. They are apt to find jobs through which they can make a living by working long hours and using every possible means in obtaining benefits.

According to Blalock (1967):

such minorities (middleman minorities) are often associated with special occupational niches by virtue of a combination of circumstances, plus a cultural heritage that has been used as an adaptive mechanism over a prolonged period (p.167).

Middleman minority theory defines three important categories of variables which create the existence of middleman minorities: cultural, contextual and situational variables. These three categories of variables show different dimensions of the middleman minority perspective. For instance, the importance of distinctive cultural background of the ethnic minorities is one of the cultural variables, the properties of the recipient social system form contextual variables, and the peculiar situation of migrant group is a situational variable.

These three categories of variables are also considered as necessary preconditions for the existence of the middleman minorities. Generally speaking, middleman minorities come from a declining peasantry economy where their traditional way of living was disturbed. In order to find a better livelihood, the immigrants left their home for a strange

land. Once in the recipient society, these minorities remained strangers or sojourners who thought they might "come today, and leave tomorrow" (Siu, 1952).

As Loewen (1971) found in his study of the Mississippi Chinese:

The early Chinese in Mississippi were not true immigrants, intending to become permanent settlers in a new homeland, but were sojourners, temporary residents in a strange country, planning to return to their homeland when their task was accomplished (p.242).

The desire to remit to China sums of money that could enrich their family when invested in land was so strong that Chinese immigrants, as well as other ethnic minorities, chose to "enter a profession that could involve a minimum of fixed investment in the host country, and a maximum of liquid assets that could be returned to China" (Wilmott, 1966). In order to do so, these ethnic minorities keep deeply alive the regional and broader ethnic tie. The best examples for this are ethnically distinctive areas or institutions such as Chinatown, or Little Italy, where some ethnic minorities keep their cultural heritage, their language and social customs.

Another reason for these ethnic minorities to establish and keep ethnic ties among themselves is explained by middleman minority theory as the contextual variable. Different degrees of discrimination over an extended period of time from the recipient society create an environment within which the ethnic minorities have only limited job opportunities.

As Bonacich (1973) noticed:

Middleman minorities are noteworthy for the acute hostility they have faced, including efforts to cut off their means of livelihood,

riots and pogroms, exclusion movements and expulsion, removal to concentration camps, and 'final solutions' (p.549).

Differentiating elements within each group with incompatible goals, Bonacich denies the common belief in sociological literature of a homogeneous, hostile society in which ethnic minorities are located. Instead, she points out that conflicts between different interest groups in the recipient country offer some opportunities for certain ethnic minorities to survive (Bonacich, 1973). Facing many closed areas of employment, such as enterprises with large investments, these minorities, according to the theory, have to take up the jobs abandoned by the majority.

As Light (1972) has argued in his study of ethnic enterprise:

Chinese had principally to look to domestic service, laundry work, restaurants, and small retail stores catering principally to other Chinese. Whites rarely objected to Chinese in domestic service. They usually tolerated Chinese in the laundry trade, since this occupation was not one in which white males cared to engage. Chinese-owned restaurants were also tolerated. Serving cheap appetizing meals, they were able...to win the patronage of the white middle class. For the Chinese in the United States, obtaining a livelihood was a question of scraping the bottom of the barrel after the whites have helped themselves (p.173).

As a result, some ethnic minorities, such as Chinese, who faced a great deal of hostility and discrimination, were able to survive and gain necessary socioeconomic achievement through middleman minority occupations. Their cultural background, the social context of the recipient society, and the situational changes later on, form what middleman minority theory states as the three preconditions in which such

minorities are likely to occur.

In concluding the middleman minority theory, Turner and Bonacich (1980) state that the future of middleman minorities could be:

either they can be faced with increasing societal hostility, to the point of expulsion, or even extermination, or they can become assimilated, through the education of their children, leading to the loss of distinctive culture, the assumption of professional and other more integrated economic roles, and a greater acceptance by majority members as individuals (p.533).

This conclusion is probably premature due to the lack of opportunity to test the theory over an extended period of time. The development of any ethnic minority is not shaped only by the attitudes of the recipient society. This development involves other factors that include economic, political or even international situations that influence both the ethnic minority and the host society. As a matter of fact, it is a very difficult task to predict the future of an ethnic group.

The two possible directions of the middleman minority development are certainly not sufficient to cover the complexity of ethnic minorities. More study is needed to explore other consequences of the middleman minority occupations, which is still the least developed part of middleman minority theory. One of these directions, namely, the disappearance of their distinctive culture, or acculturation, puts middleman minority theory into the larger theoretical framework of assimilation which bears a great significance to the literature and calls for further study.

Furthermore, if the future of a middleman status is a consequen-

tial development of certain ethnic minorities, some clarification is needed to redefine the term middleman minority. Is being middleman a likely tendency of some ethnic minorities at a certain period of their assimilation process, or is it a status? The former seems to be a reasonable answer. That is, when the three preconditions are present, some ethnic minorities might choose middleman occupations to improve their living. Since none of the preconditions remain the same, the middleman occupations may not be preferred by the ethnic minority over the time. This change of occupational preference is easily seen among the offspring, whose life experience is far different from that described by middleman minority theory, although they are the beneficiaries of such occupational choice. Is it possible that middleman minority occupations build a bridge toward assimilation for younger Chinese Americans?

HYPOTHESES

Considerable study and research have been done on the history of Chinese-Americans. Among them, Victor & Brett Nee (1972) studied the Californian Chinese, Char (1975) studied early Chinese in Hawaii, Loewen (1971) took the Mississippi Chinese as his example, and Hsu (1972) compared the Chinese and American value systems which create challenges to Chinese-Americans. Together with other studies on Chinese-Americans all over America, such as Kung's (1962) historical, sociological and economic study, these regional studies enable us to compare cases of Chinese Americans as well as to generalize their socioeconomic situations.

In summary, previous studies show that in the early period

(1868-1920), Chinese immigrants to the United States of America had a history of bitterness. Besides their low social and political status in general, their early occupational opportunities were extremely limited. A discriminatory environment closed almost all their entry points to upward social mobility. They were in fact excluded from the mainstream American life as they were not eligible for citizenship. Later on in this period (1921-1944), Chinese Americans suffered from continuing structural discrimination and prejudice. They lived in Chinatown, tried to protect themselves under the help of ethnic organizations and remained second class citizens. It was approximately at this point, Chinese Americans emerged with middleman minority occupations.

During the post World War II period (1945-1960), after they were finally given the right to become United States citizens, Chinese Americans began to gain access to more jobs as well as to educational opportunities. Some gradually moved out of Chinatown to enhance ways to better their children's future. Soon, Chinese Americans began to make noticeable improvement socioeconomically. Of course, their socioeconomic success was still achieved through tedious, long working hours and their occupations were typical of those described by middleman minority theory. Because of this improvement, they are considered a middleman minority. Obviously, the implication of defining them as middleman minority categorizes them into a group of ethnic minorities that possesses a particular cultural background (i.e., kinship ties, special skills and ethnic associates). More importantly, this particular cultural background becomes an important factor for the ethnic group to improve their socioeconomic conditions. It is a key to understand why some ethnic

minorities, but not others, take certain occupations.

Most previous studies also point out that Chinese Americans in general have a tendency for slow assimilation into the recipient society (Lyman, 1977; Siu, 1952;). They remained strangers for a considerable time period and maintained their cultural heritage more closely than most other ethnic minorities. Both sociologists and public media have focused on the negative side of this slow assimilation process until middleman minority theory shed new light on it. From a very different direction, middleman minority theory revealed the other side of "slow assimilation". That is, under strong structural discrimination, Chinese Americans established ethnic organizations and ethnic solidarity. Instead of adapting to the American way of life and competing with the majority in the job market, Chinese Americans were forced to cling to themselves under the circumstances. They picked up left-over jobs available to them and gradually achieved some improvement.

According to Gordon, the willingness of the ethnic minorities to assimilate is critical to the process of their assimilation as well as their success in the recipient society. They should learn the language, the custom and the life style of the recipient society (Gordon, 1964). Unfortunately, Gordon's variables of assimilation concentrate only on cultural values and ethnic relations which are based on mutual understanding between ethnic minorities and the host society. Although these variables play important roles toward a general relationship of the minorities and majority, they are less likely to explain a complete process of assimilation. Namely, economic factors should be added to the model of assimilation. Without utilizing these variables as useful

surviving codes, the process of assimilation would never be complete. Ethnic minorities ought to use these new "skills", such as language and knowledge of the host society, to find a way of living. Learning the language and gaining the knowledge of the host society only makes sense to ethnic minorities if they are willing to become members of the host society. This learning experience is the first step to assimilation.

Assimilation is a complicated, multidirectional and ongoing process. It is more complex than what Gordon originally proposed. Although the general theory of assimilation is beyond the discussion of this thesis, I intend to explore some related factors that need more attention. Besides the willingness of the minority groups to assimilate, the willingness of the host society to accept them is also critical. When the reciprocal willingness-- that is the willingness to assimilate and the willingness to accept-- is present, an ideal situation for the ethnic minorities to assimilate will occur. At least, it is theoretically so. The reality, however, is more complicated. In most cases, the ethnic minorities, no matter whether they are willing or not, will most likely meet discrimination and prejudice since it takes time for the host society to tolerate the minority difference. Such an environment forms a "pushing" force upon the minorities to "urge" them to assimilate, namely to join the host society. Yet, some minorities, instead of passively receiving the discriminatory environment, adopt survival codes other than language or knowledge of the host society. These survival codes are what the middleman minority theory terms as middleman minority occupations. In such a sense, being in middleman

minority positions offers these minorities one more opportunity and practical reason to cling to themselves. Therefore they strengthen their ethnic solidarity, which is a key factor for them to establish, promote and maintain these survival codes--their middleman minority occupations.

The above argument tries to explain the middleman minority occupational patterns in the framework of assimilation theory. As contradictory as assimilation theory and middleman minority theory are on the surface, there is some possibility that the middleman minority theory deals with one special case of assimilation. This special case arises from the mutual unwillingness of the minorities and the host society, but after some period of time, this mutual unwillingness turns into its opposite. Not only does the unwillingness become willingness, but these two depend on each other. The middleman minority is needed as a buffer between upper and lower classes in the host society. In other words, the middleman minority becomes a special middle class in the host society. This middle class is not politically threatening, not significant in number, and more importantly, it is rather unlikely to climb any further on the upward mobility ladder.

Theoretically, the socioeconomic improvement of the ethnic minorities can only be achieved through good job opportunities. At the later stage of middleman minority development, (i.e. when the offspring of middleman minorities overcome the barriers concerning language and value system through education, and find openings leading toward more job opportunities), the departure point from the ethnic solidarity, it is hypothesized, will occur. Their occupational patterns will take a

different direction from those of their fathers and grandfathers. Even if they remain in similar occupations, their situations and the nature of their jobs will be very different from those of the earlier immigrants. Their participation in ethnic organizations will be less or will become symbolic; and their involvement in broader societal organizations will increase. They also tend to associate more with other ethnic groups rather than with their ethnic group only. At this point, it is possible that the younger generation of the early middleman minorities will become the members of the host society.

So, while the general theory of assimilation explains the usual situation and trend of ethnic minorities, the Chinese Americans seem to need more explanation. On the one hand, they are well-known for slow assimilation, yet on the other they have gained a considerable degree of socioeconomic achievement. Their history and experiences show that their cultural background as an ethnic minority influences their assimilation process, especially their socioeconomic gains through middleman occupations. As they stay longer in American society and as the willingness of recipient society to accept them increases, Chinese immigrants will become more and more assimilated. It is also possible that middleman minority occupations provide a bridge of assimilation for Chinese Americans. This "middleman" bridge is a special link between earlier "sojourner" and today's Chinese Americans, who are "Americans". Because of this bridge, the younger generations of Chinese Americans do not have to suffer as their fathers or forefathers did. Instead, they attain a good education through which they compete with the majority in the job market.

With the assumption that Portland Chinatown Chinese have social characteristics typical to those described by middleman minority, my hypotheses are:

1. When the three preconditions, identified by middleman minority theory as cultural, contextual and situational variables, exist, the Chinese Americans are likely to choose middleman minority occupations.

2. Being in middleman minority occupations creates a bridge for the Chinese Americans on their way to further stages of assimilation, and it eventually leads to a departure point from the so-called ethnic solidarity, which becomes less important to most members.

3. The offspring of the Chinese Americans who have been in middleman minority occupational patterns usually choose occupations different from their fathers or grandfathers (i.e., a non-middleman occupation), as the nature of the three conditions changes.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodological procedures used in this study. It includes: 1) population studied; 2) activity observation; 3) content analysis; 4) survey research; 5) survey procedure; 6) questionnaire development.

Sociological study is difficult because people are the most complicated creatures on earth. They are also among the very few creatures that possess memory of the past, which in turn greatly influences their present. So the understanding of the population requires a multi-dimensional approach. This is the first key step to a valid research. This problem becomes more prominent when the subjects studied are ethnic minority groups.

The influence of the homeland has great impact on ethnic group members, but it is invisible to outsiders. Furthermore, the immediate social environment that an ethnic minority locates in or creates for itself also shapes the life course of the subjects studied.

Due to the above reasons, a multi-dimensional method is designed for this study, since one method alone is not sufficient for a thorough understanding of an ethnic minority with a long history, complex cultural background, and a distinguishable community structure.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Due to the diverse nature of the population with Chinese ancestry in USA, it is possible to distinguish at least four groups. They are:

- 1) the Chinese immigrants who came before World War II, mainly the laborers. This group of Chinese can be termed as Chinatown Chinese. One interesting fact of this group is that it came from two provinces of what is now the People's Republic of China. According to the districts or villages they came from, there are small groups among Chinatown Chinese, such as Taishan (Toishan) group or Meishan group;
- 2) Chinese scholars and students who came shortly after World War II;
- 3) Chinese students, scholars and immigrants who came after 1972; and
- 4) other immigrant groups who came from places other than China (including Taiwan, and Hong Kong) but who identify themselves as "Chinese".

Among the four groups, the Chinatown Chinese are by far the largest group in number all over USA and without doubt the most significant for this study. In Portland, Taishan group has been the leading group of the Chinatown Chinese in many ethnic activities since it was among the first immigrants which put down root along the west coast. Taishan group shares same dialect (Taishan Hua), same district organizations and closely related family associations. Coming from the same county (Taishan) and the kindred areas, Taishan group still keeps a clear boundary as a community and a common identity as a group.

In addition, following the first group of immigrants from Taishan, there came a chain immigration from the same area which makes for continuity. This sense of peoplehood has been kept and developed during

the years through ethnic organizations which were established by the forefathers of Taishan group. Relatively concentrated Taishan residential neighborhoods in Portland and community-supported activities in Chinatown make observations and survey studies possible.

Theoretically speaking, Taishan group is also the best sample for a study of assimilation.

First of all, Taishan group was among the earliest group of Chinese immigrants along the west coast. Like their counterparts in other areas of the United States of America, their socioeconomic achievement was gained through bitter struggles for meager livelihood, lower-ranked occupations while enduring many hardships. They were hired first as goldminers, as railroad workers and as laborers in physically demanding jobs abandoned by the White majority. At the same time, they experienced strong discrimination from a recipient society that complained about Chinamen's "inexpensive dietary habits" (Light, 1972), "unassimilability" (Lyman, 1977), and the absence of desire for "participation in the community life of his adopted land" (Siu, 1952). In order to survive, earlier Chinatown Chinese Americans had tried almost all kinds of left-over jobs that the White majority did not care about.

Whatever jobs they could find, whether it was laundry, domestic service, restaurants or grocery stores, the earlier Chinese immigrants, Taishan group included, prior to World War II were characterized as passive recipients of a discriminatory environment. Too weak to fight and too small in number to draw any public attention for help, they had to find side doors leading toward basic survival. In other words, the

ambivalent attitudes of the American society toward the existence of the foreign immigrants left some holes in the wall of discrimination. Although the mainstream had been closed to the Chinese immigrants, some low-rank occupations were available to them for a modest living. This history of discrimination shows that Chinatown Chinese Americans have had an experience similar to that described by middleman minority theory.

The second reason that Taishan group was chosen as the research sample is that it possesses other traits that characterize a middleman minority. Ethnic organizations were established in the Portland Chinese community as early as the the turn of this century. Many formal and informal Chinese social organizations and the family associations or District Associations have played a major role in helping the Portland Chinatown Chinese, including Taishan group, to establish their enterprises. Family associations have been especially important in assisting the self-employed Chinatown Chinese in terms of labor organization, fund raising, advertising and patronage. These characteristics make Taishan group a valid example of middleman minority.

Thirdly, a study of the third or fourth generation of Taishan group is now possible. Born and raised in American society, the younger generations have little or no contact with the original land their ancestors came from. Since what little Chinese influence they have had comes from their parents, who might have been brought up or educated in the United States, the third and fourth generations are even less Chinese unless they make a special effort. They are also in a very different environment from the one their forefathers had faced. With

much subtle structural discrimination, more occupational and educational opportunities are available to them. So the comparison of the occupational and educational patterns between different generations should provide valid answers to my question discussed in Chapter One. That is, by comparing the different generations, we will be able to see the difference between their occupational patterns, and explore some explanations.

With a historical background, development patterns, community support and occupational characteristics similar to that described by middleman minority theory, one group of the Chinatown Chinese--Taishan group--is the sample of this study.

ACTIVITY OBSERVATION

One dimension of the study of Chinatown Chinese was conducted by observing their community activities. This process lasted for about fifteen months in total (i.e. from May 1986 to August 1987). The sample for this observation is mainly the Taishan group, more precisely a major Chinese ethnic organization which was established and is headed by Taishan group.

I attended the monthly meetings of board of directors of this organization throughout the observation process (May 1986- August 1987). During the first few meetings I remained a non-participant, since I was not familiar with the organizational structure nor the people involved in it. As I became acquainted with the members of the board of directors, I was elected as one of the directors (the main reason was that I

became eligible after I resided in Oregon for six months, the only qualification required for any Chinese to be elected). After this, the nature of my observation took on a more participatory orientation. Since I did not intend to impose any unnecessary interference upon whatever was happening, my participation was kept at the minimum level.

At the very last stage of my observation, this organization started a project to establish the historical exhibition of Portland Chinese. I was officially assigned as the text writer for the exhibition. More intensive library research and investigation of the history of Portland Chinese were needed for the above task, which lead me to a deeper understanding of the Portland Chinese.

Frequent visits to the Chinese churches, where most of the worshippers are of Taishan background were another part of my observation. As an observer only, I visited three Chinese churches during their services and talked with many members. This part of field observation focused on the social activities of the subjects.

A more informal field observation was conducted by visiting the homes of Taishan immigrants, participating in their gatherings, attending weddings and visiting the Chinese cemetery. I consider this process very necessary to a full understanding of Taishan group since any study of people involves more than just the materials covered in books or their formal activities in the public setting. More information with deeper empathy comes from their daily activities through which they feel free to express and display themselves.

As a result, I have gathered notes on the above activities of Portland Chinatown Chinese, especially the Taishan immigrants. The

notes amount to about two hundred notebook pages.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

A content analysis of organizational documents and a bilingual newspaper, OREGON CHINESE NEWS, published by the organization was also conducted to examine the functions of the organization and the ethnic-solidarity portrayed through it. Published since 1962, the OREGON CHINESE NEWS is a quarterly published in Portland. Thankful to the generous help of the organization members, I obtained all the issues from 1973 to mid-1986. These issues cover almost all the public events in the Chinese community, the meeting records of the ethnic organization, the activities of Chinese Language school and other important happenings in the Chinese community during this period of time.

Other documents of the organization which were made available also contain a considerable amount of information of the history and background of the Chinese community in Portland.

SURVEY RESEARCH

Sociological study of human behavior typically involves both qualitative observation, which offers rich analytical information, and generation of quantitative data which consist of standard information. In this particular case, while the observation and content analysis tell much about the life of Taishan immigrants, quantitative information is also sought to generalize accounts for the entire group. Survey research was undertaken to obtain these quantitative data.

Due to some cultural and historical background characteristics, students of history, social work, and other social sciences have found that Asian ethnic minorities have a tendency to respond poorly to mailed survey inquiry (Chen, 1977; Fong, 1974; Fujii, 1980; Sing, Chan & Wang, 1973). In order to avoid similar problems, a structured interview was designed for the survey.

Since my field observation focused on members of Taishan group who are active in the community and ethnic organizations, and my content analysis had a similar emphasis, the sample for the structured survey research was drawn from those who are less active. Among various kinds of ethnic organizations, family associations draw more members, have more social activities and various connections. With ascribed status (i.e., family name), family associations attract Taishan group of all walks of life occupationally. They also provide a comparison pool for generational studies of both occupational and educational patterns. In addition, the members of the family associations were more willing to participate in the survey because family associations exist as an ethnic organization as well as a kinship network, in which traditional Chinese family and kinship authority still plays a role.

Although the family association chosen for study turned out to be a less structured organization than expected, the majority of the survey sample are of the same family name.

SURVEY PROCEDURE

There existed several sources of sample lists. First, the same

family name group listed in the public phone book could be one sample source. The problem with this one, however, is that non-Chinatown Chinese were likely to be chosen. Second, lists of Chinese organization members were available. The problem with such lists is that the sample drawn would be too biased since only members of these organizations were obtained. The third list of names was obtained through the head of one family association in Portland area. I became acquainted with the family association head through some friends. There are problems with this list too. For instance, it is likely that all the members of this association have similar social connections since they are related within the same family kin network. Also, participation in this study could be compulsory for some members might be under the kinship pressure. But in general, the family association is the best available source for a sample.

The head of the family association studied provided me with a few names of family heads, mostly males of middle age. After contacting each over the phone, appointments were made for an interview. Each interviewee was asked to provide more names at the end of the meeting. So with referral of the interviewees, about eighty names were obtained, out of which forty two were actually interviewed. Two interviews conducted over the phone were not included in the analysis.

After I obtained the names and the phone numbers of the interviewees, I would usually call them on the phone to explain the purpose of my survey, how the interview would be conducted and the length of time involved. The interviewees were also informed that their participation was voluntary. They were told that the preferred setting for the

interview would be their home. However, this was not a strict requirement for interview.

The structured interview (see Appendix A) contains two parts. The first part of the schedule, filled out by the interviewees, consisted of a set of questions concerning the respondents' personal attitudes toward certain kinds of listed values and general information concerning the personal background of the interviewees such as age, gender, income and marital status. The reasons to design the first part were 1) some thinking and pondering on the attitudinal questions are necessary; and 2) filling the questionnaires by the interviewees themselves can avoid sensitive circumstances for any embarrassment. My presence while the interviewees filled out the questionnaire could guarantee the response rate too.

The second part of the interview was conducted orally through questions concerning 1) the attitudes of the interviewees toward certain kinds of occupations; 2) their own occupations, especially whether they were self-employed; and their father's occupation, whether the fathers were self-employed; 3) their children's occupation; 4) the educational attainment of the respondents, their parents, and their children. The reason for using oral response was that more information on their opinions could be obtained because they were encouraged to offer more than what was asked (e.g., how Chinese Americans were discriminated against or what type of store their fathers owned).

Since a friendly self-introduction followed by talking encouraged more willing participation, the oral interview was conducted before the interviewees were asked to fill out the written questionnaire. At the

very end of each interview, each interviewee was asked to express opinions or ideas on any issues concerning the research topic. Notes were taken for this part if any information was volunteered.

Among the forty interviews conducted in person, four interviewees asked to take the self-filling part with them and mailed them back later.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The activity observation was aimed at obtaining general qualitative information of the Taishan immigrants and the content analysis revealed the organizational structures and functions. The remaining problem was more focused exploration of empirical relationships. That is, does ethnicity still play important role in the lives of members from Taishan group? And if so, in what way? Which generation of the Taishan group can be identified as middleman minority and what has been the development pattern toward assimilation?

In order to examine these relationships, the following variables are measured:

The demographic backgrounds of the interviewees, such as age, gender, their income, their source of income were established. Also included were some basic questions concerning the interviewees' parents. The questions determined the year of birth, the place of birth and the citizenship of the parents.

Two sets of similar questions are asked to find out the occupational patterns of the interviewees and their fathers. These questions

were designed according to the characteristics of the ethnic minorities described by middleman minority theories (Bonacich & Modell, 1980; Chang, 1982; Light, 1977; Loewen, 1973). By comparing the two generations, the trend of the occupational opportunities and patterns should reveal which generation is more likely to be middleman minority and the changes that have occurred between that generation and the next.

To find out one of the important influential factors upon the generational changes in occupation, questions relating to the educational attainment of the respondents and their parents were designed. Questions asking both English and Chinese school years were asked since the former determines job opportunities in this country and the latter may be related to occupational choice.

Another set of questions was aimed at collecting information about the younger generation. Questions concerning educational attainment, both English and Chinese schooling years, and the occupations of the first three children were asked to explore possible future trends in occupational patterns. Since it was assumed that the children of the respondents were probably all born and raised in the United States of America, no questions were asked about their birth year nor birth place.

Finally, a set of questions was designed to see whether the respondents had a variety of social connections. The ethnic identities of their good and best friends were obtained. These questions were included to examine whether the sample population was fully participating in the mainstream of American life. However, they merely show one complementary dimension of their social life.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATION AND CONTENT ANALYSIS

This chapter discusses the findings of the qualitative data of the study. Observation of activities of Portland Chinatown Chinese focuses on their social and cultural life. The analysis is based on field notes of eighteen months. The content analysis includes twenty eight issues of the OREGON CHINESE NEWS covering thirteen years (1973-1985). This bilingual publication is the official voice of the major ethnic organization in Portland Chinese community and its major topic is the community life of the Portland Chinatown Chinese.

Reports on activity observation and content analysis provide some evidence for my hypotheses, especially regarding the cultural and contextual variables which have played a key role in helping Chinatown Chinese set up and maintain their business enterprises. Since much has been written on how ethnic organizations function in the developing stage of the middleman minority occupations, my focus is on how ethnic organizations and solidarity function, which is among the cultural variables. In other words, my question is, what has happened to the three preconditions which made it possible for Chinese Americans to choose certain occupations? Are they still present? What is the role of ethnic solidarity in maintaining such occupational patterns? How do the different generations view this ethnic solidarity?

PORTLAND CHINATOWN

Portland Chinatown Chinese, including the Taishan group, are not the residents of that ghetto any more. They are living in all the residential areas of Portland now (see Appendix D). However, Chinatown remains a landmark in Portland which symbolizes both the historical part and the continuing presence of the city's Chinese citizens. The major ethnic businesses, such as restaurants, grocery stores, and art craft stores, make Portland' Chinatown a center of Chinese activities. The Chinese school building and the offices of Tongs and family associations are also functioning as the gathering places of their members.

Portland Chinatown Chinese are not culturally identical to non-Chinatown Chinese. Mostly the grandchildren of the goldminers, railroad and cannery workers, Chinatown Chinese have a heritage that combines Chinese cultural characteristics in an American environment, resulting in a distinctive sub-culture. Unlike other groups of Chinese, Chinatown Chinese have more reasons to go to Chinatown than mere grocery shopping. ✓

The older generation of Chinatown Chinese still remember their young days in Chinatown buildings and today they still go there to meet their friends. The younger generation know lots of Chinatown stories, which are closely related with their family history. As to the very few Chinatown bachelors, Chinatown is their home as it was years ago. Even if it has been constantly influenced by the ups and downs of Chinese immigrants, Chinatown remains a major source of ethnic identity for the Chinese population, particularly for Chinatown Chinese.

The existence of today's Chinatown also functions to remind Chinatown Chinese of its once more prosperous past. With only the few bachelors as its residents, Portland Chinatown does not provide a Chinese environment anymore, or much less than Chinatown in San Francisco or Seattle. This is very significant to my study because the symbolic function of Portland Chinatown indicates the partial absence of two preconditions described by middleman minority theory: the cultural and contextual variables. In other words, the mere physical existence of Portland Chinatown only provides some past memories of Chinatown Chinese, and it fails to be an immediate context within which Chinatown Chinese can maintain Chinatown as a strong cultural center for the community.

THE PAST

The long history of Chinese culture and a hundred years of immigration experience provide Chinatown Chinese a rich ethnic past. The two parts of this past are: their memory or legends of China, and their experience in the USA.

Chinatown Chinese treasure their past very much, at least as much as most other ethnic groups. One of their memories they hold on to, for both the young and the old, is of China their homeland. The stories that have been passed around about the old country are still told generations later. Publications and stories about the old homeland remain popular among them partly because very few know it well. The Chinese sentences they can speak and the few characters they can write bring great thrill to them. These symbols are so different from what

they were born with in America but they were once all their ancestors had. Many express strong desire to visit China one day, usually using the phrase "go back to China". Both a father and a daughter told me that someday, they "will go back to the village where great-grandfather came from, stay there and write something about it". An excited mother told me when we met on the street that her son "was going back to China". She said, sadly, she wished she could go too. Many interviewees and acquaintances informed me that one very noticeable change in today's Chinatown Chinese is that they are proud of their food, their art and their heritage. This was not imaginable to the early Chinatown Chinese who worked as mere laborers.

Yet the bitter past of those laborers definitely left a deep mark on the Chinatown Chinese today. The later generations seem to have added this part of the history to the socialization of their children and are used to telling stories over and over again. As a youngster expressed: "Grandpa used to tell me how he worked in the salmon cannery, the hard work; after he died, my dad repeats all the stories".

Even those who are very successful today like to tell stories about their past in the United States of America. A medical doctor still tells his children how he walked 14 miles to school when he went to college for four years. He sold newspapers, worked in restaurants to pay his tuition. He reminds his children that he could not buy a house in certain part of Portland even after he became a doctor. He laughed bitterly when he said that he was awarded a citizenship because this country needed him to fight in World War II.

Such stories are not uncommon to the Chinatown Chinese, and a

history of discrimination and hardships illustrates a typical precondition of middleman minority. As Bonacich and Turner (1980) point out, Chinatown Chinese once had

tense and hostile relations with the majority population. They are frequently singled out as targets of (a) violent attacks; (b) discriminatory laws severely limiting their political power; (c) informal practices of discrimination; and (d) a series of distinctive unfavorable stereotypes about social "clannishness" and economic "shrewdness" and "unscrupulousness" (p. 534).

Chinese ethnic organizations came into existence as a result of these intense and hostile relations with the host society, and so did Chinatown. Consequently, a strong sense of ethnicity was formed to enforce the resistance against discrimination and prejudice. This strong sense of ethnicity persists through generations. As in the case of story telling, one can assume that the older generation also pass down ethnic values when making the stories known.

Chinatown Chinese not only have a bitter past, but they also possess other characteristics similar to that described by middleman minority theory. As was found in OREGON CHINESE NEWS, an official newspaper published by the major Chinese ethnic organization since 1962, a sense of ethnicity is reflected in activities of Chinatown Chinese.

OREGON CHINESE NEWS carries news of certain annual activities of the Chinese community. For instance, every issue has a full description on report of community meetings. Also included are reports on other ethnic organizations, such as family associations, youth activities, or Chinese art show. One major theme of the NEWS is the Chinese Language

School which has trained thousands of Chinese immigrants, both children and adults since its establishment at the beginning of this century. The ethnic organization provides partial funds for the school and the students' tuition make up the difference. The school is in Chinatown, and this is one more reason for many Chinese to go to Chinatown. The school teaches conversational Chinese, Chinese history and literature. Compared to other activities, going to Chinese Language School every Saturday is no doubt the best way to enforce and reenforce Chinese values to the Chinese community. Also in this way, ethnic solidarity is strengthened. More meaningful to the study, this school is one of the contextual factors that has survived the change of time.

OREGON CHINESE NEWS also promotes certain ethnic values.

News on annual scholarships awarded to Chinese students whose GPA is above 3 is always accompanied by big photographs of the winners. The celebration of scholarly accomplishment effectively shows to the children and the community how important it is to work hard and do well in school, which reflects Confucius teaching that intellectuals are superior.

A clear sign of "a resistance to out-marriage" (Bonacich, 1973) also exists in Chinatown Chinese community. The reported weddings held are exclusively about couples of Chinese ancestry, with very few exceptions on interethnic marriage to other Asian ethnic minorities. From the data of interethnic marriages in Oregon from 1972 to 1984, one can find certain numbers of interethnic marriages between Chinese and other ethnic groups (see Appendix C). Twelve percent of the interviewees have non-Chinese spouses. Clearly, the possibility

exists that the newspaper has no intention of making interethnic marriage admirable to the community and therefore chooses not to publish the news. There is no doubt that the predominant number of newly-wed Chinese couples within the Chinese community is the result of ethnic ties. In addition, the Chinese language school, Chinese churches and other ethnic activities are the means through which the couples meet.

Bonacich and Turner (1980) summarize the above characteristics as "prominent social characteristics of (middleman) minorities". They point out that such minorities have

the desire to maintain distinct cultural traits, such as language, values and religious beliefs, and the propensity to cultivate high degrees of internal solidarity through extended kinship ties, school and religious organizations, and preference for endogamy (p.564)

The above observation seems to indicate that the past still remains a major part of those who experienced the bitterness. And the NEWS attempts to keep the distinctive Chinese culture as much as possible. One gets the impression when reading the NEWS that without strong promotion the youth will forget both the bitter past and the distinctive culture.

CHINESE SOCIAL ACTIVISTS

The core of Chinatown Chinese is formed by groups of middle-aged social activists who by profession are usually medical doctors, engineers, architects, clergymen, social workers and business men. Most of them are the sons and grandsons of the early "coolies", the Chinese

laborers who did anything and everything to make a living. These social activists struggled through hardships to achieve what their forefathers had dreamed of and they are very active in many events relating to Chinatown or Chinatown Chinese.

One can easily notice the political awareness of this group of activists. Chinatown Chinese have greatly improved their socioeconomic status in the past few decades; yet, their political status seems much less so improved. While any economic success of ethnic minorities could be followed by political improvement, other factors, such as politically-oriented organizations, professional politicians or country wide social changes, are also necessary.

Portland Chinatown Chinese are not very active in any local politics. With the tendency and tradition to settle their problems among themselves, earlier Portland Chinese, such as the Tong leaders, simply separated their activities from the mainstream life of America. However, today's social activists are different from the early Tong leaders. While the Tong leaders tried to go through some military procedure to offer protection of the community, today's social activists are more than willing to present a law-abiding image for the Chinese community through legal procedures. An attorney is hired for the succession of the organization leaders, and other projects include the Chinatown Gate, the bilingual signs of the Chinatown street, and the newly established historical museum of Oregon Chinese. These efforts are painstaking as these social activists still need the patronage of the White population. Moreover, what they have done is mainly the changes in the physical environment of Chinatown. Yet their efforts

do bring honor and prosperity to Portland Chinatown. When asked about their motivation for doing so, one leading activist put it: "When we did not have the money nor energy to do anything, the public did not think we were there. They thought they just hired a Chinese cook or had cheap meal in a Chinese restaurant. But they should know we Chinese can do more than that". This desire to be recognized seems to be representative of Chinatown Chinese. The Chinatown Chinese community is supportive of the social activists. For instance, small portions of financial support to these projects have been donated by the Chinese community. Taking collective action seems to be appealing to the Chinatown Chinese social activists as necessary steps to promote the public image of Chinese immigrants.

Others among the social activists, namely Chinese Protestant clergymen, conduct their preaching bilingually. They typically read The Bible in English but do the interpretation in Chinese. They also integrate some ethnic characteristics in their preaching. They use Chinese proverbs or sayings to illustrate an idea from The Bible and make an effort to bridge the gap between Christianity and Chinese philosophy and ideology. They also attempt to use humanity and religion to bring to the general public a sense of equality (Woo, 1987). Fully accepting the authority of God, these social activists do not deny their Chinese heritage and the teachings of Confucius. But their practice in latter is certainly secondary to the former. The joint usage of the two perspectives is when they find the two in common.

Both Chinatown social activists and Chinese church social activists are active in promoting social welfare projects for the

Chinese community. The Chinese social service center provides a nursing home and activity center for Chinese elderly in Portland, and the ethnic leaders are planning on an adult home for Portland Chinese too. The interesting point here is that while the Chinese social activists are conscious of the care of the elderly, a typical virtue praised by the Chinese culture, they also have to accept the fact that the care of the old within America is not achievable by the family alone. So, they adopt the American way. Instead of emphasizing the duties and obligations of the children to their elderly, the social activists utilize typical American nursing homes for their aged too. In summary, they develop a unique style of operating their organizations and activities, which seems possible only in American Chinatowns. Of course this makes perfect sense because Chinatown social activists are trying to preserve Chinese ethnicity through legal and socially acceptable means.

Chinese ethnic organizations and social activists are clearly aware of the needs of Chinatown Portland Chinese today. Assuming that the majority of this population have had their basic needs taken care of, they focus their attention more on their public image, social welfare and some special needs (i.e., Chinese language school, Chinese cemetery and Chinese nursing homes) of the Chinese community. On a general agreement that Chinatown Chinese are no longer the poor "coolies" any more, these social activists are working to achieve status in a pluralistic society. An alternative to assimilation, a pluralistic state (i.e., peaceful co-existence with other ethnic groups) seems to be a feasible goal for them to obtain on ethnic solidarity. So far, they are successful.

But this is an important departure from the major concern of the traditional ethnic social activists who raise the issue of racial discrimination as their fighting goal. Due to the the diminishing discrimination at a structural level, Portland Chinese social activists seem to realize that after general socioeconomic achievement becomes possible for this group, as one leader put it: "... , you also got to show them that you can make it politically".

However, their desire to "make it" politically seems extremely limited within the range of the Chinese community. These activities are centered around the most basic well-being of this ethnic group, the physical remodeling of a run-down Chinatown building, or the novelty cultural festivals that attract the public (e.g. the dragon and lion dancing). Other than that, the social activists do not seem to be involved in political issues of the general public.

This characteristic again fits what Bonacich describes as a typical middleman minority. She points out in her theory of middleman minority that such groups "have a tendency to avoid involvement in local politics except in affairs that directly affect their group" (Bonacich, 1973). The reason could be that ethnic minorities are still not in a secure enough position to run any unnecessary risks, either politically or economically. In order to protect their own interest, theoretically speaking, the middleman minorities are also willing to be out of local politics. The limited political involvement of the middleman minorities makes their middle position more secured, since they do not present any threat to the social structure. Ethnic solidarity is definitely what the social activists strive for. The ultimate goal of this solidarity

is "preferential economic treatment" (Bonacich, 1973) of the group. Both the desire to gain political recognition and the reluctance to fully participate in local politics seem to be logical for today's Chinatown Chinese whose occupations are not typical middlemen but who remain middle or lower-middle class in America.

CHINESE BUSINESS

Ethnic solidarity is reflected in ethnic business and enterprises of the Chinatown Chinese. In general, business based on family and kinship ties remains common among the Chinatown Chinese. Although very few live in their stores nowadays, nor in Chinatown, most still keep the operation style of Chinese business in the past. Although it is uncommon for small business in general to do so, small ethnic businesses have certain characteristics.

The ethnic background of employees of today's Chinatown Chinese contains family members, relatives, friends and regular employees (both Chinese and Caucasians). Family members help a lot on a regular basis (i.e., after school or working hours, Sundays or holidays). Family members do not get wages, or get very low wages, for the hours they put in the business. The family members in such a circumstances usually include both close and distant family members. However, such circumstance is different from the early middlemen whose employees were their immediate family members. In other words, without the new immigrant flow from mainland China or Hong Kong just recently, very few self-employed businessmen would be willing to use their own family members. To Chinatown Chinese, these relatives are in a pitiful position and in

great need of help. They do not speak English, do not know the way of the host society nor do they have the money to survive on their own. So, no matter what background these new comers have, medical doctor, or engineer, they are cheap laborers to their Chinatown Chinese relatives. Therefore, the continuation of immigration flow provides a cheap labor chain which keeps the business going. The possibility also exists that these relatives get the "training" needed to open a small business themselves sometime in the future. It will also be very interesting to see whether they will become middlemen minorities too.

The migration flow also provides a constant growth of the customer pool for Chinatown Chinese business. Not only the Chinese population from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, but also the Asian population of Chinese ancestry and background become customers. The declining Portland Chinatown certainly looks busier with the new immigrants, whose frequent visits to the Chinese grocery store are part of their daily routine.

More businesses outside Chinatown make the Chinese enterprise more than what interests a few ethnic groups. The general public is attracted by cheap and appetizing food and groceries which are not to be found in super markets.

The co-ownership of one business is still common among the Chinatown Chinese businesses. Depending on several families instead of only one, such businesses are also extended family enterprises. One advantage of this kind is that the power structure within the owners is based on generational and kinship hierarchy in addition to their business partnership. Thus the devotion to the business has a

multidimensional base. The business deals among the owners also bear a more sharing nature under the same family name. With a dual control, when the partner is from both the business and the family or family associations, the smooth operation of the business is guaranteed.

The co-ownership based on generational and kinship hierarchy is very typical for small business, especially for middleman minority business. One more advantage of such type of business, observed by Bonacich (1973), is that

the primordial tie of blood provides a basis for trust, and is reinforced by multi-purpose formal and informal associations. Solidarity is interjected into economic affairs in two ways: it plays a part in the efficient distribution of resources, and, helps to control internal competition. Resources distributed within the ethnic community include capital, credit and easier terms to purchasers, information and training, and jobs and labor (p.342).

The distribution of information is also found in OREGON CHINESE NEWS which takes a big portion of its space carrying business news for Chinese businesses. For instance, usually seen are announcement of promotions, honors and events occurring to the members of the Chinese community, job opportunities for the Chinese community on behalf of companies, and advertisements promoting Chinese business, restaurants, insurance companies, or art stores. By publishing the news of job opportunities, Chinese community is better informed about certain jobs that they might like to try. Especially when the jobs are of some special interests to the community, it is welcomed by both the members of the community and the companies in need of any help.

A considerable number of pages of ads is a great help to the Chinese business too. When the ads in public newspapers are too expensive for these businesses to afford, the CHINESE OREGON NEWS offers a feasible price to them. Since the newspaper is bilingual, these ads appeal to both the general public and any population that reads Chinese characters. This is very important for the business because ethnic customers are the important customer pool for their business.

The relationships between OREGON CHINESE NEWS, ethnic organizations, and Chinese businesses are best described by Bonacich (1973):

In sum, middleman community organization combined with thrift, enables middleman firms to cut costs at every turn, so that they can compete effectively with other enterprises in the same line. Add to this a preference for liquidable occupations, and the result is tremendous degree of concentration in, and domination of, certain lines of endeavor (p.553).

Many Chinatown Chinese today make frequent visits to Chinatown and Chinese stores. Through these visits, a lot is achieved. They attend community meetings, go to Chinese Language School, celebrate New Year or special occasions, exchange information about the Chinese neighborhoods, and most importantly, they discuss business when they do these activities. These activities perpetuate the remaining middleman type businesses in Chinatown and Chinese community as long as such businesses need that support.

CHAPTER FOUR

SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter is an analysis of the data generated by a questionnaire administered to a sample of forty interviewees. These forty interviewees were chosen from a family association list, the friends and acquaintances of the early interviewees. The main purpose of this survey is to find empirical data to test my hypotheses, especially hypothesis three, which is: the younger generation of Chinese Americans are more likely to choose non-middleman occupations, when the preconditions are absent.

The general background characteristics of the sample population are described in the first part of this chapter. Then a comparison of the occupational patterns of the three generations is made. Finally, the educational attainment of the three generations is compared and examined.

It is necessary to point out that the term "three generations" is identified somewhat arbitrarily, due to the complex background of Chinese Americans and the particular historical periods of China and the USA. Since seventy percent of the interviewees were born between 1912 and 1958, and this period saw less and less structural discrimination against Chinese Americans than before, the sample as a whole is assumed to be second generation even though nine interviewees or 22.5 percent of the sample were born in China. Nonetheless by treat-

ing the sample as second generation, we are able to make comparisons across three generations. We assume broadly that at least some of the interviewees have fathers who were first generation immigrants and these fathers were therefore once "sojourners". This also means that it is possible to observe differences in occupations of the three generations: interviewees' fathers, interviewees, and interviewees' children.

GENERAL BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

The age of the interviewees varies from 20 to 96. This covers a population born from the end of last century and to as recently as twenty years ago. The backgrounds of this group are likely to vary considerably. It is possible that some interviewees are among the early immigrants who worked as laborers, some came after the situation became better for the Chinese immigrants and some were born in this country as third generation.

Only nine interviewees were born in China and none are Chinese citizens. The China-born interviewees are among the elder age group (born between 1891-1947). We can assume those born before 1947, no matter whether born in China or the USA, experienced a more discriminatory environment than those born later. Because of the cultural and contextual factors of being a middleman minority, the typical middleman is foreign born. In this sense, because 77.5 percent of the sample were US born, most of the interviewees are not themselves members of typical middleman minorities.

The rate of interethnic marriage is a classical measurement of assimilation of ethnic groups. As we mentioned in previous chapters,

interethnic marriage is not publicly promoted in the Chinese community. Data on interethnic marriage in Oregon (see Appendix C) show that very few interethnic marriages occurred between the Chinese population and other ethnic minorities. The content analysis of the Oregon Chinese News yields similar results. These and other data suggest that interethnic marriage is uncommon between the Chinese population and other ethnic groups, and this research bears that out. Among 32 married interviewees, sixteen percent have Non-Chinese spouses (5). Three interviewees have Caucasian spouses, one married a Korean and one was going to have a Black bride.

However, the sixteen percent of interethnic marriages which occurred to the sample population does show some variety. Customarily described as Caucasians, the White population is in fact not a homogeneous group. One interviewee whose wife is French does not even relate her with any Caucasian groups in America. The interviewee who was marrying a Black woman within a week of the interview did not seem to be uncomfortable at discussing the event as Leowen had found among Mississippi Chinese (Leowen, 1977). None of the interviewees whose spouses are non-Chinese expressed any feeling of being pressured by the Chinese community, nor their families. Two other interviewees indicated that their ex-spouses were non-Chinese. "That didn't work out, too different", one of them informed me. When asked why, he said: "She seems to love Chinese food more". Among the five interviewees whose spouses are non-Chinese, two were born in China.

The interethnic marriage rate seems to suggest that although some factors are absent in the contextual conditions of the interviewees,

some other ones remain, such as preference for endogamy. Eighty four percent of Chinese-Chinese marriage shows a strong tendency within the Chinese community, and the 16 percent of exogamous marriages imply certain degree of tolerance toward a different choice.

It is believed that middleman minorities have greatly improved their socioeconomic conditions; for instance, they have higher than average income (Hirshman and Wong, 1984). As is observed by some social scientists, Chinese Americans have achieved "above average socioeconomic success" (Peterson, 1971; Hsu, 1971). Two measurements, income and sources of income, were designed as indicators of economic conditions of the sample population.

Information on socioeconomic achievement of the sample population, particularly their annual income, did not show any "above average" distribution. In fact, the average income of 32 interviewees (\$26,957) is lower than the average income of four-person families in 1986, which is \$34,716 (US Bureau of Census, 1987).

The fact that the sample population had a lower than average income could be attributed to several factors. For one thing the sample is too small to adequately represent the Chinese population. That eight people, or 20 percent of the population, did not answer the question also leaves any conclusion in doubt. However, it could also be suggested that Chinese Americans are not a homogeneous group sociologically anymore.

Some Chinese Americans are not among the middle class citizens. In this regard, some of the interviewees are descendants of early Tong leaders who were victims of racial discrimination and Tong wars.

These interviewees bear characteristics different from the majority Chinatown Chinese. They remain single, with little or no education,

TABLE I
PERCENTAGE OF CHINESE INTERVIEWEES'
BY INCOME CATEGORY & SOURCES OF INCOME

INCOME	
less than \$ 5,000	15%
\$5,001 to \$15,000	9
\$15,001 to \$35,000	35
\$35,001 and more	41
	N=32

SOURCES OF INCOME	
wages	50%
property income	13
savings	16
wages, property income & savings	21
	N=32

have no steady jobs nor place of residence. Some of them talked bitterly about the unfortunate past of their forefathers, and some did not talk about the past at all. They seem to believe that their fate was determined to be very unfortunate too. They look like typical "social bums" from any ethnic group. The current literature has not paid very much attention to this group yet. Their existence breaks the myth of the "model minority" image of Chinatown Chinese.

Information on the interviewees' parents was also collected. The two questions asked were the birthplace and the citizenship of the

parents. This information is necessary for describing the background of the interviewees.

The majority of the parents were born in China. Eighty percent of the fathers were born in China and a third of them remained Chinese citizens. Sixty percent of the mothers were born in China, and more than half of them kept their Chinese citizenship. Twenty fathers came between 1892-1920, the decades following the end of gold-rush and the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad. This was the period during which discrimination against Chinese was the worst, therefore jobs were scarce (Manchester, 1978). These fathers therefore suffered from this situation and established families within which the interviewees spent their childhood. The number in the sample population who did not answer this question may suggest that the interviewees are not well-informed about some basic information concerning their parents. Or just like one interviewee told me: "It did not matter which flag they (parents) saluted to, they needed to make a living".

The years of arrival of the parents show that most of the interviewees are second or third generations of the Taishan immigrants. Those who came with their parents came at a young age and became US citizens soon after they were here.

The above information is very important in understanding the cultural context of the interviewees. With parents who spent most of their lives in China, the interviewees are more influenced by a Chinese culture of their parents. The degree of this influence may vary according to the length of time the parents stayed in China, and those parents who spent longer years could have a strong impact on their children.

Yet, no matter how strong this influence is, it is indirect. To the fathers who came from China, their cultural condition was more suited for them to get into middleman occupations, but to most of the interviewees, Chinese culture was second hand.

OCCUPATIONAL PATTERNS OF THE THREE GENERATIONS

Many sociologists of ethnicity have noticed that one key factor of the middleman minority success is in their occupational choices. To the Chinese immigrants, this typical occupational choice is "self-employed, small business (Bonacich, 1973; Kitano, 1974; Light, 1972; Turner & Bonacich, 1980). National data show that Chinese Americans own 52,839 firms in the United States of America, the largest number of enterprises among minorities (see Appendix B). Furthermore, their concentration in and domination of certain occupation is reflected in the number of business, type of business they own, and the passing on of the business within the family-kinship network. Being self-employed is itself a strong indicator of whether a person is a typical middleman minority or not.

The percent of self-employed varies across generations. The self-employed rate is very high among the fathers' generation, 77.5 percent, and it drops to 27.5 percent in the respondents' generation. Further, the children's generation has no trace of being self-employed. This means the percentage of self-employed, an important indicator of middleman minority occupational characteristic, decreases with each generation. This also shows that a change in the middleman minority occupational patterns takes place between the interviewees' generation

and their fathers.

Middleman minority theory also suggests that other factors such as the location of business, items traded and the customers' ethnic background indicate middleman minority characteristics.

The fathers' generation is predominantly self-employed and most have a family business. Their businesses were mostly restaurants, groceries, laundries or import-export companies. The concentration of their business in service and retail is similar with other findings including the official documents of the ethnic minority enterprise in the US (see Appendix B). A comparison of the general background and conditions of the business is listed in Tables II, III, and IV.

The business type of the fathers and the interviewees shows a very different pattern. The percent in services, which includes restaurants, laundries and grocery stores, is highest among the self-employed fathers. The term "commercial" indicates import-export business, real-estate, insurance company and banks; and "professional" indicates occupations such as lawyers, photo studio technicians, medical doctors or architects. The four professional self-employed fathers all had a college education, but they could not find any employers who would hire them.

One interviewee explained that his father had an art degree from a prestigious Chinese university. But his paintings did not sell, and he did not speak English; so he had to open a photo studio, with his wife as his only employee.

While the sample sizes are too small to draw any firm conclusions, the business type, size, number and location of the self-employed fathers

are more typical middleman minority occupations than that of the interviewees. The fathers usually have one small business in Chinatown.

TABLE II

PERCENTAGE OF SELF-EMPLOYED CHINESE INTERVIEWEES
& SELF-EMPLOYED FATHERS' BY BUSINESS SIZE,
BUSINESS LOCATION & NUMBER OF BUSINESS

BUSINESS TYPE		
	father	interviewees
service	52%	30%
commercial	9	20
professional	11	40
both service & commercial	28	10
	N=31	N=9

BUSINESS SIZE		
	father	interviewees
small	50%	70%
medium	30	30
large	20	0
	N=31	N=9

BUSINESS LOCATION		
	father	interviewees
Chinatown	45%	20%
other place	55	80
	N=31	N=9

NUMBER OF BUSINESS		
	father	interviewees
one	65%	70%
two	18	20
three	14	0
six	3	10
	N=31	N=9

Meanwhile we can see that only twenty percent of the self-employed interviewees have their business in Chinatown and their business type includes more variety. Forty percent of them have professional business.

Those self-employed interviewees who have a service business usually inherited it from their fathers. Born and brought up in the business, e.g., a restaurant, such interviewees have a considerably easier time and more experience than their fathers. They are familiar with the trade and skillful in handling it. One important reason for them to take up their fathers' business is that they do not have to start all over. One interviewee who has a graduate degree in engineering said: "The business was there, going on well. He (father) was reluctant to sell it. My younger brothers did not want it. Well, I have been here the longest and felt part of it, so I just took it". This type of business transfer to a son is not uncommon at all among Chinatown Chinese. This also suggests one more explanation of the middleman minority business concentration and domination. Today's self-employed interviewees are mostly the younger generation of their more typical middleman parents. By taking over the family business, these new business owners have a greater advantage than their parents. They also have advantage over their competitors who are less experienced.

The birthplace of the self-employed interviewees sheds light on why they are self-employed. Seventy five percent of the self-employed interviewees were born in China. It is likely that, according to middleman minority theory, without the advantage of being a citizen by birth, the self-employed interviewees have fewer occupational choices and they can only get into certain occupation through the help

of the ethnic organizations and families.

Business location also changed noticeably from the fathers' generation to the interviewees' generation. More than half of the fathers' businesses are (were) in Chinatown, but only very few interviewees still keep their business there. When more Chinese immigrants started to establish residential neighborhood other than Chinatown after they became eligible for citizenship in 1942, Portland Chinatown showed a considerable decline. The once bachelor's society dwindled tremendously when many Chinese started families.

Table VI shows the ethnic background of the customers of the business, and it is an important indicator of why and how self-employed Chinese immigrants maintain their business. Items-traded is also an important indicator since it gives clues of the business resources of ethnic enterprise (Chan & Cheung, 1985). The business growth is brought by successful combination of the two.

According to middleman minority theory, successful ethnic enterprises are usually supported by ethnic customers (Chan & Cheung). This seems to be true for the fathers' generation whose businesses location was in Portland Chinatown. However, the majority of the customers for both the fathers' and the interviewees' businesses are Caucasians, especially for the interviewees' business. When their businesses are not located in Chinatown, they are not likely to have only Chinese customers. As we mentioned before, many of today's Chinatown businesses are gaining support from the newly arrived Asian immigrants. In addition, Chinese restaurants are becoming more and more attractive to the White population who find them economical.

It seems to be true that fewer interviewees' businesses are characterized as typical middleman minority enterprises. These enterprises

TABLE III
PERCENTAGE OF SELF-EMPLOYED CHINESE INTERVIEWEES
& THEIR FATHERS BY COMPARISON OF CUSTOMERS,
ITEMS-TRADE & BUSINESS GROWTH

RACE OF CUSTOMER		
	father	interviewees
Chinese(50% +)	21%	10%
Caucasian(50% +)	64	90
both Chinese (50%) & Caucasian (50%)	15	0
	N=31	N=9
ITEMS TRADED		
	father	interviewees
Chinese	60%	20%
western	34	45
other	6	35
	N=31	N=9
BUSINESS GROWTH		
	father	interviewees
grow	60%	20%
no grow	20	10
broken/sold	20	10
	N=31	N=9

do not depend on ethnically characterized items anymore.

So, as we examine the percentage of both the customers and the items traded in their business, we can see that the fathers' generation depends more on Chinese-oriented resources than that of the interviewees.

A more relaxing environment for the interviewees than their fathers

is also reflected in the type of partnership, background of employees and sources of funding. While the employees of the fathers' generation were made of family members, relatives or both, the interviewees' generation is less so as Table IV shows.

TABLE IV
PERCENTAGE OF SELF-EMPLOYED CHINESE INTERVIEWEES
AND THEIR FATHERS BY TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP,
EMPLOYEE & SOURCES OF FUNDING

TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP		
	father	interviewees
family	57%	50%
relative	20	10
friends	20	20
Caucasian	3	20
	N=31	N=9
EMPLOYEE		
	father	interviewees
family members	44%	20%
relative	26	10
friends	10	0
Caucasian	20	70
	N=31	N=9
SOURCES OF FUNDING		
	father	interviewees
own money	60%	60%
bank loan	15	30
relatives	3	0
rotating credit association	6	10
both family & relative	15	0
	N=31	N=9

There are several reasons for the interviewees to hire fewer family members than their fathers did in their businesses. First of all, most of them are able to afford to hire employees for help and have other sources of funding. While the employees of the fathers' generation were made of family members, relatives or both, the interviewees' generation is less so as Table IV shows. Secondly, more and more of their businesses are professional and need more educated and skilled workers. Almost no family members can provide such service without training. Thirdly, the children of the interviewees have had more opportunities to explore other jobs available to make a living. Unlike the time for the interviewees' fathers or even the interviewees, the third generation won't have to depend on their family business as a life insurance. So, in such circumstance, we can summarize that self-employed fathers actually had a family business where they are (were) the boss, but the self-employed interviewees are simply investing and managing their businesses in which they are the supervisors. The former is characterized by middleman minority occupational patterns and the latter is more common in the mainstream American small business (Zimmer & Aldrich, 1987). Again, the sample is too small to make any firm conclusion.

Data on sources of funding also reveal that none of the interviewees got any funding from the relatives nor extended family. But the fathers' generation seems to rely on the extended family system or ethnic organizations for financial support. Only a few fathers got bank loans, the rest were funded by the family or ethnic circle, such as rotating credit associations, which organizes investment funding for each member of the organization.

Although a considerable number of self-employed interviewees got bank loans for their business, some complained bitterly about the difficulties they ran into with banks when applying for a business loan. One interviewee who wants to have a laundry opened as a second job put it: "They (the bank) won't believe I could be successful at all. They postponed everything. Finally I got some (money) from my brother".

From the comparison of the occupational patterns between the interviewees and their fathers, one can see a clear distinction in their respective development patterns.

The fathers' generation have most typical characteristics of the middleman minority. They were not businessmen before they left China, and relied on the in-group for resources such as loans, credit and business tips (Light, 1972). They kept a basic ethnic customer and employee pool for their business. In general, they filled a "status gap" (Becker, 1956) as middleman minority individuals.

The interviewees are in a very different position. Their occupational patterns point to diverse directions. Twenty-two percent of them are self-employed, with some in restaurant business, professional business and trade business. Thirty-five percent are employees in companies or government agencies. Another twenty two percent are students working for their college degrees. Others are retired service employees or housewives.

The children's occupational patterns were also examined. The information was collected about the first three children. Only sixty percent of the interviewees have children of working age. Among these children, none is self-employed and the majority are professionals.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The average years of education varies greatly from generation to generation. As shown in Table V, each younger generation has a much higher educational attainment than their elders.

Table V shows a high concentration of college and graduate education in interviewees and their children. Although certain interviewees parents have had higher education, the numbers are less significant since most had their education in China. They were considered to be professionals in China, but not recognized at all in America. They had to learn English like other immigrants and started with the low rank jobs to make a living.

TABLE V
PERCENTAGE OF INTERVIEWEES, THEIR FATHERS
& THEIR FIRST THREE CHILDREN BY COMPARISON OF
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	father	mother	interviewee	child 1	child 2	child 3
no school	12.5%	27.5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
completed grade school	20	27	5	10	20	25
completed high school	27.5	30	17.5	15	35	30
completed college & more	40.5	15	75.5	75	45	45
	N=36	N=36	N=38	N=29	N=25	N=18

The situation changed tremendously for the interviewees whose opportunities were broader. The legal system in the USA started to allow Chinese immigrants to have families and become citizens. Plus the self-employed fathers were able to provide financial help to their sons of the interviewees' generation for their education. As the second and the third generation, the American-born interviewees did not have any language barriers. In residential neighborhoods other than Chinatown, they also have more White peers. Their high educational attainment is a result of a combination of factors, such as language skill, good financial support and less structural discrimination. These factors were absent for their fathers.

Clearly, the sample is too small to allow any firm conclusion to be drawn. From the above discussion, we can see that the sample population does not fit the perfect model of middleman minority, although the population does have some strong characteristics described by middleman minority theory. The occupational pattern of the fathers' fits typical middleman minority occupations. The interviewees' occupation, however, is not characterized as middleman minority occupations.

These characteristics disappear completely in the children's generation. This suggests that the term "middleman" refers to a particular occupational pattern rather than a status. The important function of such occupational patterns is that through these occupations, Chinese Americans make socioeconomic improvement. The evidence of such improvement is the high educational attainment of the younger generations. There is no doubt that the educational attainment has

paved the way toward upward social mobility for the younger generations too.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

In the first chapter, it was hypothesized that

(1) Chinese Americans are likely to get into middleman minority occupations when the three preconditions--cultural, contextual, and situational--variables, are present;

(2) middleman minority occupations help the minorities to assimilate into the American society and at the same time ethnic solidarity becomes less important to them;

(3) the younger generation of the middleman minority are more likely to choose non-middleman minority occupations, when the three preconditions typical for middleman minority to occur are changed.

The findings, which include field observations, a content analysis and the survey data, show support for each of these hypotheses. The field observations and the content analysis focused on the cultural and social activities of Portland Chinatown Chinese. Through these activities, ethnic solidarity is functioning to perpetuate middleman minority occupations.

The survey data sought to determine the changing occupational patterns of the successive generations of Taishan group, one of Chinatown Chinese groups. Particularly, the self-employed occupational patterns were examined and compared between the fathers' generation and the interviewees' generation. Through the comparison, a

significant change in occupational patterns was found among the three generations.

In their theory of middleman minorities, Turner and Bonacich (1980) stated 9 propositions

- to account for the conditions promoting the
 - (1) concentration of ethnic populations in middle rank economic roles,
 - (2) the development of patterns of intragroup solidarity,
 - and (3) hostility from the non-ethnic population.
- (p. 566)

The preconditions within which a middleman minority is more likely to emerge are also discussed by Turner and Bonacich, though not one precondition is found to be the most critical for certain minority. It is found in my study that even within one minority group, i.e. Taishan group of Portland Chinatown Chinese, not one condition can be identified as the most critical for different generations.

Due to the different background of the three generations, first of all, the perception of the old hometown is changing. The "retention of kinship ties in the home village" (Bonacich, 1973) is necessary for the older immigrants who came from a declining peasantry economy, did not speak the language, and did not have appropriate skills. Hostility of the host society was strong since job competition was intense and they had no intention to assimilate. The early immigrants were in a very disadvantaged context within which ethnic solidarity was vital for their survival. This was a typical situation for the first generation immigrants. They could only do certain things for a living, which is one reason why they concentrated in certain occupations.

We can see clearly that the three preconditions exist for the

first generation and their occupations do show typical middleman minority occupational characteristics. As Figure I shows, their occupational pattern--small family business with family members as employees, and ethnic population as major customer pool--occurred under such circumstances.

Figure 1: Three Preconditions and the Fathers' Occupation

The situation changed greatly for the next generation when the first generation survived the worst. Although still trying to enforce ethnic solidarity on their children, the first generation immigrants

were also able to provide a better education for their children than they ever had before in the host society. Born in USA or brought over at a very young age, the second generation Chinese Americans faced less

Figure 2: Three Preconditions and Interviewees' Occupation

structural discrimination and more opportunities, especially occupationally. Thus the second generation are no longer the residents of Chinatown, no longer the unskilled labors and no longer the illegal aliens. They might remain in the same occupation their fathers were in, but the situations changes. They have advantage over other competitors since they not only possess the necessary skills of a businessman, but also the support of ethnic solidarity. This is the case typical to the

elderly and middle-aged interviewees.

One can still trace the existence of the the three preconditions for middleman minority to occur, but not as complete as it was for the fathers. The structural discrimination is being weakened, their language barrier is less serious or even absent, yet the cultural traits are still quite persistent. To them, the culture they came from, and their fathers depended on, is still sentimentally important; but it ceases to be a vital factor for their survival.

The third generation members are almost exclusively born in the host society. Besides Chinese Language School which their parents sent them to before they had any choice, and the family association annual picnic, they associate mostly with the host society. China is only a country that was once related to their family history or country their parents might consider as home. As to those who are half Chinese, they have very little reason to identify with China or Chinese culture. The third generation is more likely to have Caucasian friends only, become the employees of big companies, and they do not speak much Chinese even though they might spend years in Chinese Language School. This generation does not follow the occupational patterns of their parents. Their general identity is no longer Chinese, but "American". Such case is typical to the younger interviewees (between age 20-35) and children of elderly and middle-aged interviewees.

Based on the above discussion, three analytical models of relationship are formulated to explain the interrelation of the factors. These models attempt to illustrate the relationship between the three preconditions and the occupational patterns and their educational

Figure 3: Three Preconditions and Children's Occupation

attainment of three generations. It is conceptually established to show how the three preconditions described by middleman minority theory work within each generation developed its particular pattern of occupations.

Theoretically, the most significant discovery of this thesis is that middleman phenomenon seems paradoxically both to have slowed down and speed up the assimilation process of ethnic minorities. On the one hand, the early sojourners established ethnic organizations and ethnic solidarity to assist their businesses. Their dependence on ethnic

solidarity for survival keeps them from being quickly assimilated into the host society. Yet, on the other hand, the ethnic supported enterprises make it possible for them to send their children to higher education. High educational attainment opens up opportunities for their children to compete in the job market. Soon, the younger generation is assimilated. Although such process may take more than one generation or even two generations, it is a process of assimilation which is very different from the conventional pattern.

Future study should focus more on the younger generation and how subtle discrimination influence their occupation choice. Furthermore, the relationship between assimilation process and middleman minority occupational patterns needs more attention.

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APPENDIX A

The Introductory Letter for the Questionnaire

March 5, 1987

Dear friend:

My name is Wei Wei Lou , and I am a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology at Portland State University. I am now working on my master's thesis entitled Occupational Patterns of Three Generations of Taishan Chinese: A Reconsideration of the Middleman Minority Theory.

The purpose of this study is to find out the reason why the Chinese Americans are considered as a successful minority group in the United States of America. In order to complete this study, your participation in a completion of the attached questionnaire is essential. Therefore, your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours

Wei Wei Lou

Occupational Patterns of Three Generations of Taishan
Chinese: A Reconsideration of the Middleman Minority Theory

As a part of the thesis project of Wei Wei Lou
(A candidate for the degree of M.A. in Sociology), under the
supervision of

Prof. Grant Farr (Committee Chair), Ph.D

Prof. Lee Haggerty, Ph.D

Prof. Leonard Cain, Ph.D

of Sociology Department at Portland State University.

Explanations and Instructions

1. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions.
2. The only appropriate answer to each question is the one that
best applies to you.
3. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.
4. Your response will be kept strictly confidential.
5. If you have any questions regarding to this study, call or
write to

Wei Wei lou

Department of Sociology

Portland State University

Portland, OR, 97207

Tele, 464-3926

QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR SURVEY RESEARCH
PART I: SELF-ANSWERING

1. The following are some categories that indicate some personal opinions about life. Please mark how important you feel it is to teach your children .

very important	somewhat important		somewhat unimportant	not important
_____	_____	virtuous	_____	_____
_____	_____	patient	_____	_____
_____	_____	hardworking	_____	_____
_____	_____	successful	_____	_____
_____	_____	ambitious	_____	_____
_____	_____	repay the kindness received	_____	_____
_____	_____	willing to help one's relatives	_____	_____
_____	_____	obey one's authority	_____	_____
_____	_____	respectful to one's elders	_____	_____

2. The following are some occupations that you might wish your children to engage in. Please indicate how much priority you give to the job if you had the choice.

highest priority	high priority		low priority	no priority
_____	_____	governor	_____	_____
_____	_____	union leader	_____	_____
_____	_____	banker	_____	_____
_____	_____	clerk	_____	_____
_____	_____	high school teacher	_____	_____
_____	_____	college professor	_____	_____
_____	_____	restaurant owner	_____	_____
_____	_____	lawyer	_____	_____

_____	_____	doctor/dentist	_____	_____
_____	_____	policeman	_____	_____
_____	_____	athletic	_____	_____
_____	_____	movie star	_____	_____

3. Please indicate how certain you feel that your children could get the occupation if they had the ability and they wanted to.

extremely certain	very certain		somewhat uncertain	not certain
_____	_____	governor	_____	_____
_____	_____	union leader	_____	_____
_____	_____	banker	_____	_____
_____	_____	clerk	_____	_____
_____	_____	high school teacher	_____	_____
_____	_____	college professor	_____	_____
_____	_____	restaurant owner	_____	_____
_____	_____	lawyer	_____	_____
_____	_____	doctor/dentist	_____	_____
_____	_____	policeman	_____	_____
_____	_____	athletic	_____	_____
_____	_____	movie star	_____	_____

4. Will you briefly tell me something about yourself and your family?

yourself	your father	your mother	year of birth
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	place of birth
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	citizenship
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	year of coming to USA (if not born here)

5. What is your marital status?

married single widowed divorced other

5a. If you are married, is your spouse

Chinese Asian Caucasian other

6. Do you have a car? yes, no

6a. If yes, it is new, used, year, model, make

7. Do you mind telling me your income before tax in 1986?

<u> </u> less than \$5,000	<u> </u> \$5,100 to \$8,000
<u> </u> \$8,100 to \$10,000	<u> </u> \$10,001 to \$15,000
<u> </u> \$15,001 to \$20,000	<u> </u> \$20,001 to \$25,000
<u> </u> \$25,001 to \$35,000	<u> </u> \$35,001 to \$45,000
<u> </u> \$45,001 to \$55,000	<u> </u> \$55,001 & more

8. Do you own your own house? yes, no.

9. Would mind listing resources of your income?

 wages%, property income%, stock/bonds%, savings%.
 other%.

10. Are you male?
 female?

PART II: ORAL INTERVIEW

1. Do you think Chinese-Americans are still being discriminated in the United States of America? _____ yes, _____ no.
2. Do you think Chinese-Americans have difficulties in finding a job today in this country? _____ yes, _____ no.
- 2a. If yes, please indicate how important the following reasons are.

very important	important		somewhat unimportant	not important
_____	_____	they are Chinese	_____	_____
_____	_____	they have too many family business	_____	_____
_____	_____	it's hard to get along with others	_____	_____
_____	_____	little promotion is possible	_____	_____
_____	_____	there is little chance for Chinese to be accepted for the job	_____	_____
_____	_____	Chinese lack certain skills	_____	_____
_____	_____	other(specify) _____	_____	_____

3. Do you have a family business (or are you self-employed) ?
_____ yes, _____ no.

- 3a. if yes, how many hours do you work in your own business each week?

40 _____ 50 _____ 60 _____ 70 _____ more that 70 _____

- 3b. if yes, please indicate which category best fits you.

type of business	size of business	location of business
service _____	small _____	Chinatown _____
commercial _____	medium _____	other(specify) _____
professional _____	large _____	_____

number of locations of your business	type of customers
1-3 _____	Chinese (%) _____
4-6 _____	Asians (%) _____
7 & over _____	Caucasians _____
	other(specify) _____

items traded	success of business	type of cooperation
Chinese(%) _____	business grow(%) _____	family only _____
Asian(%) _____	no grow _____	relatives(%) _____
western(%) _____	reduced(%) _____	Chinese friends(%) _____
other(%) _____	broken & sold _____	other(specify) _____

type of employees	type of funding when started
family members(%) _____	own money(%) _____
relatives(%) _____	bank(%) _____
Chinese friends(%) _____	relatives(%) _____
Caucasians(%) _____	rotating credit association(%) _____
other(specify %) _____	other (specify(%) _____

4. Does (Did) your father have a business (Is he self-employed) ?
 _____ yes, _____ no

4a. if yes how many hours does (did) he work for his business each week?

40 _____ 50 _____ 60 _____ 70 _____ more _____

4b. if yes, please indicate which category best fits him.

type of business	size of business	location of business
service _____	small _____	Chinatown _____
commercial _____	medium _____	other(specify) _____
professional _____	large _____	_____

number of business	type of customers
1-3 _____	Chinese(%) _____
4-6 _____	Asians(%) _____
7 & more _____	Caucasians(%) _____
	other(specify %) _____

items traded	success of business	type of cooperation
Chinese(%) _____	business grow(%) _____	family only _____
Asian(%) _____	no grow _____	relatives(%) _____
western(%) _____	reduce(%) _____	Chinese friends(%) _____
other(%) _____	broken & sold _____	other(%) _____

type of employees	type of funding when started
family members _____	own money _____
relatives(%) _____	bank(%) _____
Chinese friends(%) _____	relatives(%) _____
Caucasians(%) _____	rotating credit association% _____
other(%) _____	other%(specify) _____

5. Besides your own business, have you worked for your relatives or Chinese friends in their business?
 _____ yes, _____ no.

5a. if yes, how many hours have you worked each week when you worked full time?

40 50 60 70 more

6. How much formal education have you and your parents completed?

yourself	your father	your mother	
_____	_____	_____	no formal schooling
_____	_____	_____	some grade school
_____	_____	_____	completed grade
_____	_____	_____	some high school
_____	_____	_____	completed high school
_____	_____	_____	some college
_____	_____	_____	completed college
_____	_____	_____	completed graduate work

6a. if you or your parents have some college or more education, what kind of college was that(i.e, literature, or business, dental.)

_____	yourself
_____	your father
_____	your mother

6b. How much Chinese schooling have you and your parents had?

yourself	your father	your mother	
_____	_____	_____	0 years
_____	_____	_____	1-3 years
_____	_____	_____	4-7 years
_____	_____	_____	7-10 years
_____	_____	_____	11 or more

6c. Where did you & your parents have Chinese schooling?

yourself	your father	your mother	
_____	_____	_____	CCBA school
_____	_____	_____	Hong Kong
_____	_____	_____	Taiwan
_____	_____	_____	China
_____	_____	_____	other(specify)
_____	_____	_____	don't know

7. How much formal education have your children had ?

child No. 1 (age)	child No. 2 (age)	child No. 3 (age)	child No. 4 (age)	child No. 5 (age)	
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	no formal schooling
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	completed grade school
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	completed high school
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	completed college
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	completed graduate work

7a. if any of your children are in college, please indicate what they are majoring in (i.e. dental school, business).

_____ child No. 1 (age)
 _____ child No. 2 (age)
 _____ child No. 3 (age)

7b. Have you ever sent your children to Chinese school?
 ____ yes, ____ no.

7c. if you have sent your children to Chinese school, how long have they been there ?

child No. 1 age	child No. 2 age	child No. 3 age	child No. 4 age	
_____	_____	_____	_____	1-3 years
_____	_____	_____	_____	4-6 years
_____	_____	_____	_____	7 or more years

7d. Where do(did) you send your children to school?

_____	_____	_____	_____	CCBA school
_____	_____	_____	_____	Hong Kong
_____	_____	_____	_____	Taiwan
_____	_____	_____	_____	China
_____	_____	_____	_____	other

7e. Can you indicate the sources that finance your children's education ?

your own %	scholarship%	loan from	partial support
		government(%)	from CCBA(%)
		other% (specify)	

8. If you have any adult children, please indicate what kind of occupation are they engaged in (please be as specific as possible) ?

_____ child No. 1
 _____ child No. 2
 _____ child No. 3

9. Do you consider yourself a member of any of the following organizations?

_____ CCBA _____ CACA _____ Tongs _____ family association _____ other(specify)

10. How many Chinese families live within the walking distance from your home?

none____, 1-3____, 4-7____, 7 or more____.

11. How many of your best friends are

Chinese____? Asians____? Caucasians____? other(specify)____?

12. Roughly speaking, will you indicate the number of your friends in terms of their ethnic background?

Chinese(%)____, Asians(%)____, Caucasians(%)____, other(%)____?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

APPENDIX B

SELECTED CHARACTERISITICS OF ASIAN BUSINESSES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1982

group	No. of firms	%firms with paid employees	Av.No. of employees in firms with paid employees	Av.pay per employees	Av.Sales and receipts for firms without paid employees
Asian					
Indian	25,539	25.0	3.2	(\$)7,697	(\$)27,985
Chinese	52,839	26.7	6.5	9,925	28,194
Janpanese	49,039	13.8	4.7	9,354	17,550
Korean	31,769	24.8	3.1	6,897	40,723
Filipino	26,464	11.5	2.7	7,757	14,585

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, May 1986.

APPENDIX C

RATE OF INTERRACIAL MAARIAGE OF OREGON CHINESE (OF BRIDE) From 1972-1984

RACE OF GROOM

CHINES BRIDE

	CHINESE	WHITE	BALCK	OTHER ASIAN	YEAR
32	15	16	0	1	1972
30	16	12	0	2	1973
34	22	12	0	0	1974
31	15	15	0	1	1975
38	12	23	1	2	1976
42	30	9	0	3	1977
29	13	14	0	2	1978
30	14	14	0	2	1979
30	12	14	0	2	1980
49	24	22	1	2	1981
60	35	20	2	3	1982
68	36	26	3	3	1983
62	30	29	0	3	1984
TOTAL 535	274(51.2%)	228(42.6%)	7(1.3%)	26(4.9%)	

Source: Oregon Marriage License Bureau, 1986.

APPENDIX D

DISTRIBUTION OF ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF
CHINESE IN PORTLAND-VANCOUVER
(SMSA) 1980

Source: PORTLAND'S CHANGING LANDSCAPE, ed., Larry Price, Geography Department, Portland State University, 1987.